Producing the Schooled Subject: Techniques of Power in a Primary School Classroom

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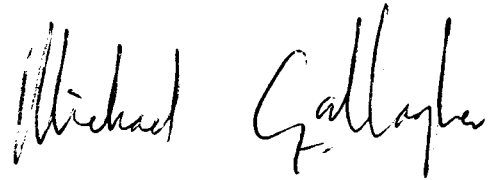
Declaration of originality

Theoretical problems with the concept of authorship notwithstanding, I hereby declare that, for the purposes of assessment, this thesis has been composed by me, based upon my own work. Where the work of others has been borrowed and incorporated, this is indicated clearly in the text using a standardised system of referencing. The work presented here has not, to date, been submitted for any other degree or assessment. Neither has it been published, wholly or partly, in any form.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Thanks must go first and foremost to the children of Primary 3c, later Primary 4c, in Westgate School, Edinburgh, and their teachers, who were instrumental in the production of this thesis. In what follows, I have done my very best to do justice to the hospitality and trust which they showed me over the course of my research. This has not been easy, and I am not sure that I have succeeded.

Thanks also to Liz Bondi and Kay Tisdall, who have consistently provided first class supervision and support over the course of this project. Besides the usual academic assistance, they gave me invaluable encouragement at some critical moments, and also provided emotional support far beyond the call of duty when my life "fell through its ass", to quote a colleague, at the start of 2004.

Finally, thanks to my family for providing love without measure throughout. Particular thanks must go to John, who saw me flagging in the last lap, and insisted that I take a proper holiday entirely at his expense. Without the prospect of a week in the Western Isles at the end of it all, this thesis would have taken much longer to finish.

Abstract

Drawing upon ethnographic work carried out over a year with a class in a state primary school in Edinburgh, this thesis examines the techniques of power exercised by both teachers and children in the process of schooling. In so doing, it seeks to show how these techniques attempt to produce children as educable subjects, resulting in a series of ongoing, dynamic struggles over the social space of the school.

Chapter one introduces the thesis and the questions which it seeks to answer. Chapter two situates my work within the context of recent social research in geography, childhood studies and education research. Chapter three provides an overview of Foucault's work on the relations between power, knowledge and the subject, and addresses some common criticisms of his project. Chapter four then presents a narrative of how I carried out my research. This details the empirical methods I used, explores my theoretical understanding of these methods, and also includes some critical reflections upon my research practice.

Chapters five and six explore the geography of disciplinary power in the classroom. Chapter five begins with a brief exegesis of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault's most well-known work. I review Foucault's conception of docile bodies, before describing a range of techniques used in school by both teachers and children which aim to produce docility. In particular, I explore techniques which aim to produce individuals, both through the spatial separation of children, and through the targeting of non-physical disciplinary measures upon individuals. Chapter six begins with an interpretation of Foucault's infamous account of the Panopticon, before examining techniques of surveillance as they are deployed within the classroom.

Throughout both these chapters, my close and careful reading of Foucault emphasises that the systems of discipline he describes are ideal models rather than, as some scholars have assumed, depictions of the real workings of institutions. My empirical material captures the varied permutations and combinations of disciplinary techniques as they are applied, their spontaneous adaptation by both teachers and children, the resistance tactics used to counter them, and the particular ways in which discipline becomes decentralised through the inculcation of self-surveillance. In addition, I reflect upon my own practice in the classroom, describing how I came to be subjected to some of these disciplinary techniques, and was simultaneously co-opted into administering them, both over my self and over the children. This admission is important, since it locates the problem of discipline in a set of coercive practices which involve not only teachers, but also children and researchers.

Chapter seven begins by introducing the idea of techniques of the self which Foucault develops in his later work. My discussion emphasises that Foucault presents a history designed to inspire ethical reflection, rather than a fully worked-out ethics. Returning to my field notes, I then examine how various techniques of self are used in the classroom as a style of subject-formation somewhat different from the disciplinary techniques discussed earlier. I discuss the central role of self-knowledge in producing educable subjects, and compare and contrast practices of self-knowledge with those driven by an agenda of care.

Finally, chapter eight presents a synthesis of my analysis followed by a brief conclusion. Drawing together the empirical work presented in the thesis, I undermine the distinction between techniques of discipline and techniques of self, drawing attention to the ways in which the former culminate in and co-opt the latter. I then situate my findings in relation to the literature discussed in chapter two. In conclusion, I review my findings briefly, advancing some tentative answers to the questions posed in chapter one.

List of abbreviations

Abbreviations to works by Michel Foucault

AE1   An Aesthetics of Existence, in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman. London and New York : Routledge, 1988. An interview conducted by Alessandro Fontana on 25 April 1984. First published in an abridged form as Aux Sources du Plaisir (Alle Fonti del Piacere), *Panorama*, no. 945, 186-193, 28 May 1984. First published in full as Une Esthétique de L'existence, *Le Monde*, 15-16 July 1984. Translated by Alan Sheridan. An alternative translation appears in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer, New York : Semiotext(e), 1996 (see AE2, below).

AE2   An Aesthetics of Existence, in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer, New York : Semiotext(e), 1996. For details, see AE1, above. Translated by John Johnston.

BC   *The Birth of the Clinic. An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, London : Tavistock, 1973. First published as *Naissance de la Clinique: Une Archéologie du Regard Médical*, Paris : PUF, 1963. Translated by Alan Sheridan.

CP   Clarifications on the Question of Power, in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer, New York : Semiotext(e), 1996. An interview conducted by Pasquale Pasquino in February 1978. First published as Precisazioni sul Potere. Riposta ad Alcuni Critici, *Aut-Aut*, vol. 167/168, pp.3-11, 1978. Translated from the Italian by James Cascaito.

CS   *The Care of the Self. The History of Sexuality Volume 3*, Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1990. First published as *Histoire de la Sexualité III, Le Souci de Soi*, Paris : Gallimard, 1984. Translated by Robert Hurley.

CT1   The Concern for Truth, in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture,*

Interviews and other writings 1977-1984, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman. London and New York : Routledge, 1988. An interview conducted by Francois Ewald. First published as Le Souci de la Verité, Magazine *Littéraire*, no. 207. 18-23, May 1984. Translated by Alan Sheridan. An alternative translation appears in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer. New York : Semiotext(e), 1996 (see CT2, below).

CT2   The Concern for Truth, in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer, New York : Semiotext(e), 1996. See CT1, above. Translated by John Johnston.

DP   *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, London : Allen Lane, 1977. First published as *Surveiller et Punir, Naissance de la Prison*, Paris : Gallimard, 1975. Translated by Alan Sheridan.

EP   The Eye of Power, in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer, New York : Semiotext(e), 1996. An interview conducted by Jean-Pierre Barou and Michelle Perrot. First published as L'oeuil de Pouvoir, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, 55, no. 2578, pp. 6-7, 31 March 1977; also as the preface to Jeremy Bentham, *Le Panoptique*, Paris : Belfond, 1977. Translated by Mark S. Seem.

G   Governmentality, in *The Foucault Effect*, edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, Hemel Hempstead, England : Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992. A lecture given at the Collège de France in February 1978 as part of the series 'Sécurité, territoire et population'. First published in an Italian translation as La "governamentalità", *Aut-Aut*, vol. 167/168, pp.12-29, 1978. Translated from the Italian by by Rosa Braidotti. Translation amended by Colin Gordon.

GE   On the Genealogy of Ethics: Overview of Work in Progress, in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow, New York : Pantheon, 1984. The edited transcript of a series of conversations in English between Michel Foucault, Paul

Rabinow and Hubert Dreyfus at Berkeley in April 1983. First published in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, second edition, Chicago : Chicago University Press. 1983.

IH   Critical Theory/Intellectual History, in *Michel Foucault: Politics. Philosophy. Culture, Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman, London and New York : Routledge, 1988. An interview conducted by Gérard Raulet in May 1982. First published as Structuralism and Post-structuralism: An interview with Michel Foucault, *Telos*, no. 55, 195-211, Spring 1983. Also published in German translation in *Spuren*, 1 & 2, May and June 1983 (see RTT, below). Translated by Jeremy Harding.

IP   The Impossible Prison, in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer, New York : Semiotext(e), 1996. A panel discussion with French historians conducted on 20 May 1978. First published in *L'Impossible Prison*, edited by Michelle Perrot, Paris : Edition de Seuil, 1980. Translated by Colin Gordon. English translation first published as Questions of Method: An Interview with Michel Foucault, *Ideology and Consciousness*, no. 8, Spring 1981.

MC   *Madness and Civilization. A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, London : Tavistock, 1967. First published as *Folie et Déraison. Histoire de la Folie à l'âge Classique*, Paris : Plon, 1961. Translated by Richard Howard.

MS   The Minimalist Self, in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman, London and New York : Routledge, 1988. An interview conducted in English by Stephen Riggins on 22 June 1982 in Toronto. First published as Michel Foucault: An Interview by Stephen Riggins, *Ethos*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp.4-9, Autumn 1983.

NGH   Nietzsche, Genealogy, History, in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, edited by Donald F. Bouchard, Ithaca, New York : Cornell University Press, 1977. First published as Nietzsche, la Genealogie, L'histoire, in

Bachelard, S. et al, *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite*, Paris : PUF, 1971. Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon.

OP On Power, in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman, London and New York : Routledge, 1988. An interview conducted by Pierre Boncenne in 1978. First published as Du Pouvoir, *L'express*, 13 July 1984, pp.56-58

OT *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London and New York : Routledge, 1989. First published as *Les Mots et les Choses. Une archéologie des sciences humaines*, Paris : Gallimard, 1966. Translated by Alan Sheridan.

PC Practising Criticism, in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman, London and New York : Routledge, 1988. An interview conducted by Didier Eribon. First published as Est-t-il donc important de penser? *Libération*, 30 May 1981, p.21. Translated by Alan Sheridan.

PF The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom, in *The Final Foucault*, edited by James Bernauer and David Rasmussen, Cambridge, MA. and London : The MIT Press, 1994. An interview conducted by Raul Fornet-Betancourt, Helmut Becker and Alfredo Gomez-Muller on 20 January, 1984. First published as L'éthique de Souci de Soi Comme Pratique de Liberté, *Concordia,* no. 6, pp. 99-116, 1984. Translated by J. D. Gauthier.

PK Two Lectures, in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon, Hemel Hempstead : Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980. Two lectures given at the Collège de France in January 1976 at the beginning of the series 'Il faut défendre la société'. Translated by Kate Soper. A different translation of these lectures also appears, along with the other lectures from the series, in *Society Must Be Defended*, translated by David Macey, London

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: Penguin Allen Lane, 2003. See SD, below.

PT   Prison Talk, in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon, Hemel Hempstead : Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980. An interview conducted by J.J. Brochier. First published as Entretien sur la prison: le livre et sa méthode, *Magazine Littéraire*, no. 101, pp. 27-33, June 1975. Translated by Colin Gordon.

PR   Foucault, M. Politics and Reason, in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman, London and New York : Routledge, 1988. Two lectures given in English at Stanford University on October 10 and 16, 1979. First published as Omnes et Singulatim: Towards a Criticism of Political Reason, in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, vol.2, edited by Sterling M. McMurrin, Salt Lake City : University of Utah Press, 1981.

PST   Power and Strategies, in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon, Hemel Hempstead : Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980. An interview conducted by the editorial collective of the journal *Les révoltes logiques*: Jean Borreil, Geneviève Fraisse, Jacques Rancière, Pierre Saint-Germain, Michel Souletie, Patrick Vauday and Patrice Vermeren. First published as Pouvoirs et stratégies, *Les révoltes logiques*, vol. 4., pp.89-97, 1977. Translated by Colin Gordon.

PSX   Power and Sex, in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman, London and New York : Routledge, 1988. An interview conducted by Bernard-Henri Lévy. First published as Foucault: Non au sexe roi, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, no. 644, March 12, 1977, pp.92-103. Translated by David J. Parent.

RM   The Return of Morality, in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman,

London and New York : Routledge, 1988. An interview conducted by Gilles Barbadette and Andre Scala on 29 May, 1984. First published as Le Retour de la Morale, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, 28 June 1984, pp. 37-41. Translated by Thomas Levin and Isabelle Lorenz.

RTT   How Much Does it Cost for Reason to Tell the Truth, in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer, New York : Semiotext(e), 1996. A translation into English of the German translation of an interview conducted by Gerard Raulet. See IH, above. This German translation was first published in *Spuren*, 1 & 2, May and June 1983. Translated from the German by Mia Foret and Marion Martius.

SD   *Society Must Be Defended*, edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, London : Penguin Allen Lane, 2003. First published as *Il Faut Défendre la Société*, Paris : Hautes Etudes, Gallimard et Édition de Seuil, 1997. Translated by David Macey.

SKP   Space, Knowledge, and Power, in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow, New York : Pantheon, 1984. An interview conducted by Paul Rabinow. First published in *Skyline, the architecture and design review*, March 1982, pp.16-20. Translated by Christian Hubert.

SP   Afterword: the Subject and Power, in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago : Chicago University Press, 1983. This text comprises two parts: Why Study Power: The Question of the Subject, written by Foucault in English, and How is Power Exercised?, a French manuscript translated by Leslie Sawyer.

ST   Foucault, M. Subjectivity and Truth, in *The Politics of Truth*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer and Lysa Hochroth, USA : Semiotext(e), 1997. Two lectures given in English at Dartmouth College on 17 and 24 November, 1980. Transcribed and edited by Thomas Keenan. Re-edited and footnoted by Mark Blasius. First

published in *Political Theory*, 21, no.2, pp.198-210, May 1993.

TS   Technologies of the self, in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, edited by Huck Gutman, Luther H. Martin and Patrick H. Guton, London : Tavistock, 1988. Lectures given at Vermont University in October 1982.

UP   *The Use of Pleasure. The History of Sexuality Volume 2*, Harmondsworth : Penguin. First published as *Histoire de la Sexualité II, L'usage des Plaisirs*, Paris : Gallimard, 1984. Translated by Robert Hurley.

WA   What is an Author? In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, edited by Donald F. Bouchard, Ithaca, New York : Cornell University Press, 1977. A lecture given at the Collège de France in February 1969. First published as Qu'est ce qu'un Auteur?, *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie*, 1969, vol. 63, pp.73-104. Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon.

WE   What is Enlightenment? in M. Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer and Lysa Hochroth, USA : Semiotext(e), 1997. First published in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow, New York : Pantheon Books, 1984. Translated by Catherine Porter.

WK   *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge*, Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1978. First published as *Histoire de la Sexualité 1. La Volonté de Savoir*, Paris: Gallimard, 1976. Translated by Robert Hurley.

WP   What Our Present Is, in *The Politics of Truth*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer and Lysa Hochroth, USA : Semiotext(e), 1997. An interview conducted by André Berten at the School of Criminology of the University of Louvain, Belgium, in 1981. First published as Entretien avec Michel Foucault, *Le Genre de L'histoire. Les Cahiers du G.R.I.F.F.E.*, no. 37/38, pp.9-19, spring 1988. Translated by Lysa Hochroth.

"Power is not an evil. Power is strategic games...Let us...take something that has been the object of criticism, often justified: the pedagogical institution. I don't see where evil is in the practice of someone who, in a given game of truth, knowing more than another, tells him what he must do, teaches him, transmits knowledge to him, communicates skills to him. The problem is rather to know how you are to avoid in these practices – where power cannot not play and where it is not evil in itself – the effects of domination which will make a child subject to the arbitrary and useless authority of a teacher, or put a student under the power of an abusively authoritarian professor. And so forth. I think these problems should be posed in terms of rule of law, of relational techniques of government and of ethos, of practice of self and freedom."
(Michel Foucault, The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom (PF), p.18)

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Introduction

1.1 A portrait

I live very close to a primary school in the city of Edinburgh. The school is so close that I can see it clearly through my bedroom window. If I look to my left, I can see it right now, as I type. The school playground is perhaps two hundred metres away, separated from my block of tenement flats by two gardens and two wooden fences running parallel to the tenements. The playground is bordered on its right hand side by a set of bright blue metal railings, while its left hand side, where the school entrance is located, is out of my field of view. The playground is divided into two sections, one for the nursery children and one for the older children. These sections are separated by a bright yellow metal fence with a lockable gate. The playground surrounds a squat and irregularly-shaped school building, painted pastel blue and adorned by a number of anti-vandal devices, including metal grilles over the windows and some vicious-looking pronged metal fixtures around the drainpipes close to roof level. These devices seem to be curiously ineffective, as I often see children climbing on the roof of the building in the evenings. Recently, I witnessed two children breaking two of the windows by throwing missiles of some sort, which were presumably small enough to pass through the mesh of the grilles. These windows are currently boarded up.

At present, the teachers and children are on summer vacation. The school is empty and quiet, save for the small groups of children who occasionally play in grounds during the warm July evenings, including the roof-climbers and window-breakers. However, for much of the year, the situation is quite different. Weather permitting, I like to sleep with my window ajar, which means that on weekdays during term-time, I am often awakened at around half past eight in the morning by the high pitched voices of a few children. I roll back to sleep, but am usually awakened once again as the noise begins to build in level, with more voices joining the fray. By five minutes to nine, the children's voices have invariably become a raucous cacophany, a swirling mass of laughter and shouts and chirps and screams – a most peculiar dawn chorus. At nine o'clock precisely, a bell rings loudly, and the roaring of the children continues unabated. Yet at some point within the following two to three minutes, the noise begins to decline. One can sometimes hear the strident tones of a female adult voice at this point. Within about a minute of

this critical threshold, the noise drops to silence, leaving only the twittering of the local birds in its wake. Calm descends, and all is peaceful once more.

Yet a similar phenomenon occurs again at half past ten. This time, a bell rings, and the noise develops quickly, like a stream rushing from behind a breached dam. Looking out of my window as I check my morning's e-mails, I am able to see scores of children within the boundaries of the playground, some running, some walking, others jumping or skipping or playing football or 'tig'. Many of them wear identical red sweatshirts when the weather is warm enough for coats to be left inside. Once again, at ten forty-five, a bell rings; the children continue to play, and the noise continues. And again, within the next few minutes, a threshold point is reached, after which the noise level drops rapidly to silence. Looking outside, I see that the children have disappeared, leaving the playground eerily empty.

I never cease to be fascinated by these phenomena. First, there is the sound which the children make. On some days, this sound seems joyful and carefree. One can home in on the details of the playground noise as one might contemplate the finer points of a work of art. Listening intently, shouts of children's names can be heard, or yelps of delight, or the sound of crying, or the triumphant cry of 'tig!' At other times, the sound of the children seems disturbingly chaotic, the insistent, riotous buzzing of an agitated swarm. If, in either reading or writing, I am trying to think through a delicate analytical point while the children are outside, I often slam the window shut in annoyance. The noise can be invasive, threatening even, an infernal haranguing of the ears. There are also times when its intensity is troubling. It is as if an entire morning's running, jumping, shouting, laughing and screaming have been pent up behind the barriers of discipline, temporarily pressurised only to come rushing out in concentrated form like a head of steam.

Such romantic whimsy conceals a number of more serious concerns. For example, there is the uncanny regularity of the children's appearance and disappearance. One could set clocks by it. Over the course of the year, this phenomenon not only marks the beginning and end of the weeks, but also disappears in commemoration of Christmas, Easter, and the summer. Outwith these times, the children's presence also maintains a fairly precise relationship to the weather: if there is rain falling, then the children do not appear; in all other circumstances, they come outside for the prescribed periods. In other words, despite the chaos of the playground, the children's movement in time and space is in fact highly predictable. This interplay of freedom and determination hints at the existence of a very peculiar apparatus of supervision and control — something which might be analysed, following Foucault, as a set of 'technologies', which in turn

involve particular techniques. This is something to which I will return repeatedly over the course of this thesis.

Of what do these technologies and techniques consist? To put it another way: how is it that the children, though allowed to run and jump and shout at playtimes, can nevertheless be controlled by adults? By what means do the adults manage to achieve this? We might consider the process through which the chaotic mass of children's bodies, distributed throughout the space of the playground, are brought together, made still and silent, and then ushered into a different space. This is no mean feat. Those who do not work with children might take it for granted that teachers should be able to control their charges at will. Yet faced with the full-scale uproar which characterises a primary school playtime, my guess is that most untrained people would be at a loss as to what to do. What kinds of technology could enable teachers to control children so effectively? We might go one step further than this to ask: what kinds of technology could render children *controllable*? Thus what initially appears to be a question about a technology of power turns out to entail a question about how this technology produces a certain kind of human subject.

As Colin Gordon (1980) notes, the use of the term 'technology' in this context is awkward, since it is most often used to indicate non-human forms of machinery. The effect is precisely to 'technologise' humans by undermining the assumption that technology and humans are straightforwardly exclusive. In the case of the school close to my home, we might initially postulate that the containment of the children's movement within the playground is achieved via a set of non-human architectural technologies: railings, fences, walls and so on. Yet the activities of the children who use the school as an informal meeting place in the evenings give the lie to this reading. The same yellow fence which separates the nursery children from the older pupils during school hours is easily vaulted over or used as an improvised tennis net when school is out. The blue railings which fence the children in during the day are climbed over, swung upon or used as goal posts in the evenings. Even the numerous anti-vandal measures are impotent in the face of the roof-climbing ambitions of those who congregate in the evening. During the day time, however, I have never witnessed a child attempting to climb onto the roof. It is almost inconceivable that this would happen during a school playtime. In this case, we might ask: what features of the school as a *social organisation* enable the teachers to put into effect a form of spatial control which cannot be achieved by architecture alone, even when that architecture involves aggressive, seemingly totalitarian measures (barbed wire, spikes, etc.)? This matter is interesting precisely because the technology in question cannot be reduced to a set of simple

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non-human devices. The teachers have no straightforward physical means of restraining the children. Indeed, with the abolition of corporal punishment, teachers in the UK are now subject to stringent legal regulations which forbid them to use the most obvious forms of physical force. So what techniques do they use? Upon what does the effectiveness of these technqiues depend? How do the children respond to them? Is it simply a question of domination and subordination, or is there a more dynamic set of relationships at work?

1.2 Definition of the project

This little excursion through the institutional geography of my own neighbourhood neatly situates my concerns in this thesis. Over the following chapters, my principal aim will be to present an empirically-grounded analysis of some of the techniques of power which feature in the everyday life of a class in a mainstream Scottish state primary school. The theoretical resources for this analysis will be derived from a close and careful reading of the middle to late work of philosophical historian Michel Foucault. In the course of developing this reading, I hope to fulfil a secondary purpose: to contribute to debates in geography and beyond about how Foucault's work might best be put to use.

I do not claim that my study is exhaustive, comprehensive or representative. However, I do think that it offers some intriguing insights into the process of schooling and, as such, might contribute something to an understanding of schooled subjectivity. By this, I mean the ways in which the techniques of power used in schools, rather than being merely trivial or circumstantial, exert a profound formative influence upon people's selves: their ways of acting and thinking, their capacities as subjects of their own will, the very way in which they understand themselves as subjects of their own will, or as subject to other wills, or as knowing beings, or as moral beings. In other words, I am less interested in schools as such, and more interested in the role which schools, in the society in which I live, have to play in producing modern human subjects. I include myself – and perhaps especially myself – in this category. If my readers have attended school for any significant period of their lives, then this category probably includes them too.

As far as I am concerned, the test of the success of my analysis will therefore not be its generalisability or statistical significance, but whether the reader finds anything recognisable in these pages. Living in the UK, where schooling is legally compulsory for children between the ages of five and sixteen, most of the people I have met during my life have been schooled, and of these, most with whom I have discussed the topic have expressed very strong feelings, both positive and negative, about their time at school. If my work provokes, concentrates, reanimates

or redirects these feelings in such a way as to provide the impetus for the reader's further reflection upon themselves and their schooling, then I will be entirely satisfied.

Like many PhD students, I have often struggled to communicate what my work is about to others. For this reason, I would like to make clear here at the outset some of the things which my work is *not*, so as to rule out some of the more obvious misinterpretations immediately.

First and foremost, my work is not pragmatic or utilitarian. By this I mean that it was not designed to provide the kind of constructive criticism of the school system which could be fed into the process of policy formation, and into teaching practice, so as to improve the overall efficiency of school education and thereby contribute to 'the greater good'. Conversely, my study was not designed to produce a radical critique of schooling. It was never my intention to provide the kind of destructive criticism which would arm those who want to tear down the present school system, and neither was it my intention to provide the logical corollary of this: a radically alternative programme of how education ought to be delivered, in which the problems of the current system would all be resolved. It may well be the case that both these kinds of project are important for various reasons. However, like MacIntyre (1985), I am suspicious of the claims of certain forms of social science to managerial and governmental expertise. I see no reason to suppose that, because I have produced a limited amount of knowledge about how power operates in a classroom, I can make valid assertions about how power *ought* to operate in all schools, or indeed how teachers or children might be manipulated to make power to work as it ought. By what authority would I do so? In any case, as Ian Hunter (1996) notes, there is an abundance of this kind of work already available and, in the current political climate, it seems likely that such work will continue to flourish for the foreseeable future.

Consequently, in contrast to both constructively critical utilitarian research and destructively critical radical research, my own study depends upon a sustained – and not always successful – attempt to maintain, if not exactly a neutrality, then at least a deep ambivalence towards schools and schooling. In my field of work, one is constantly tempted from all sides to come down off the fence and declare oneself either for or against schooling. And yet it is my contention that if these stark alternatives can be resisted, a different kind of critical space can be opened up. It is within this space, between the poles of for and against, that my work takes place.

Second, my study is not about education, but about schooling. This distinction is crucial. I am not concerned with the way in which power operates in the process of learning (though this would make a fascinating topic of enquiry in itself), but rather in how power operates in schools, specifically a state funded mainstream Scottish primary school. There are any number of features

which we might use to characterise a school and thereby distinguish it from the more general project of education. In the UK, as in most of the western world, some of the most important of these features include, in no particular order: the restriction of formal teaching roles to adults and formal pupil roles to children; the division of children into classes organised by year group (though this feature may be compromised or abandoned in smaller rural schools); the enclosure of each class in a particular classroom (though this feature may be modified or abandoned in open-plan or semi-open-plan architectures); a relatively high pupil to teacher ratio (25:1 to 28:1 in my study – see chapter four); the employment of teachers who have been trained according to a more or less standardised programme; the ordering of learning activities according to a more or less standardised curriculum, stratified by year on the basis of developmental norms; the use of a timetable to divide each day into discrete segments for different activities; the use of different spaces (the classroom, the gym, the hall, the playground) for different activities; the imposition upon the pupils of a universal set of rules for proper behaviour, with provisions for the use of disciplinary measures if these rules are broken; the imposition upon the staff of a different set of rules, usually more flexibly applied but nevertheless with provision for disciplinary measures if they are broken. In the context of my study, we must add a further important feature, which is compulsory attendance, enforced by the law. This is not strictly the case, since, for example, there are those children whose parents satisfy the law by electing to educate their children at home. Likewise, there are those children whose particular needs mean that school education is impracticable for them, and for whom a more appropriate form of education must be provided according to the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000. However, these children, though significant, are very much in the minority. For most children, attendance at school is a legal requirement.

Third, my study is not concerned with the content of the formal school curriculum, nor with the techniques by which it is taught. The forms of power which produce and reproduce this curriculum would no doubt make a worthy subject of enquiry. However, such topics are outside my remit here. My focus is instead upon the techniques of power which make curriculum teaching possible. In a maths lesson, for example, my interest is not in what mathematical skills the teacher transmits to the children, or in how she transmits these skills, but rather in how she persuades the children to be sufficiently quiet, still and attentive to allow this transmission to take place. This has the methodological consequence of directing my attention away from formal discourses of schooling, and towards the minutiae of classroom practices, particularly spatial practices, and the spontaneous spoken discourse which often accompanies these.

So much for what my study is and is not. Two introductory tasks now remain. First, I want to offer some brief opening comments on Foucault's work, my approach to it, and some of the reasons which make it attractive to me. Second, I will present a short outline map of the structure of this thesis.

1.3 Foucault and the critical ontology of ourselves

It seems appropriate before I begin to clarify why I want to use Foucault's work as a resource for my own. In one of his later lectures (WE), Foucault presents his lifelong task as that of calling the present into question. The questions which he wants to ask of the present are: what are we, as human beings? And, perhaps more importantly, how did we come to be this way? His belief is that there is no fundamental, unchanging essence to human being. We are what we are because we are made that way by the various agents of the culture in which we live, with all its complicated historical inheritances. As I have already remarked, in the culture of early twentieth century western Europe in which I live, schools have a major part to play in shaping the lives of most people. In other words, schools are a social and spatial technology for producing human subjects. Thus if Foucault's work is successful in shedding light on the processes which produce human subjects – and I will attempt to demonstrate throughout this thesis that it is – then it follows that his work should also be useful for understanding the role which schools have to play in these processes. This fact has not been lost on other educational researchers, whose various engagements with Foucault will be reviewed in chapter two.

Foucault describes his project of questioning the present as a "critical ontology of ourselves" (WE, p.127) This attitude encourages people to call into question taken-for-granted elements of their existence in a bid to discover what kinds of hidden limits such things impose upon them, and whether these limits are necessary to their continued existence or not. If these limiting factors turn out to more dispensable than they might at first have seemed, then critique will have raised the possibility of transgressing them, thereby opening up unexpected opportunities for people to transform themselves. Foucault thinks that it is a mistake to think that this kind of critique would happen once and for all, yielding utopian solutions which would guarantee freedom for everyone. Every time in history has its own particular problems, assumptions and limits, and critique is therefore a permanent task.

In WE, Foucault argues that his various studies bring this critique to bear upon three particular aspects of existence: knowledge, power and ethics. He contends that, in contemporary western society at least, these three things are key factors in the formation of human subjects, in

how we understand ourselves as human beings. Thus if we wish to transform ourselves as human beings through a critical ontology of ourselves, we will need to ask three questions: "How are we constituted as subjects of our own knowledge? How are we constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations? How are we constituted as moral subjects of our own actions?" (WE, p.130) While Foucault focuses primarily upon knowledge in his early works, power in his middle works and ethics in his later works, he does not treat these factors as isolated from one another. As will become clear over the course of this thesis, he thinks that knowledge and power depend upon one another for their existence. Similarly, he sees ethics as involving the exercise of power by subjects over themselves, power which in turn entails knowledge of moral codes, of one's own behaviour, and so on.

This returns us to my own interest in examining power as it is exercised in the classroom to produce subjects. Following Foucault, my analysis of power will also pay attention to knowledge and ethics as they feature in school life. The aim of my investigations is thus to raise a series of critical-ontological questions: what forms of power are involved in the process of producing schooled subjects? What else do these forms of power require for their operation, in terms of knowledge and ethics, for example? What kind of limits do these forms of power, knowledge, ethics, and so on place upon schooled subjects? Are these limits necessary, or could they be transgressed? All in all, are the forms of power, knowledge, ethics, and so on which constitute us as modern schooled subjects really indispensable for our existence? Might our freedom be increased by disposing with them?

It should be stressed that Foucault perceives the importance of knowledge, power and ethics only with hindsight, after having spent his life investigating the specific details of subject formation in a range of contexts: psychiatry, clinical medicine, penal justice, the human sciences, language, sexuality, and so forth, each within precise historical limits. Introducing these three factors at the start of my own study might therefore be seen as an over-determining mistake, placing theory before the empirical data, the cart before the horse. Yet all studies must start somewhere. Foucault's triple concerns of knowledge, power and ethics are my points of departure, with the second of these principles in particular guiding me through the analysis of schooling which I want to carry out here. Only at the end of this thesis will it be possible for the reader to decide whether or not these tools have been useful for this particular analysis.

Aside from my interest in subject-formation, the other factor which attracts me to Foucault is my interest in space. In this thesis, space is never far from power. Though it sometimes remains in the background of my analysis, the desire to understand the school as a

social space was what motivated me to begin my research in the first place. Likewise, Foucault is often less than explicit about his interest in space, leaving behind only a handful of brief discussions which directly address the concept in the abstract. Yet when questioned on the subject, he admits that "space is fundamental in any exercise of power" (SKP, p.252). This conviction is borne out in his historical studies, which pay close attention to the forms of spatial organisation through which power has been exercised in the production of human subjects: the ship of fools which made madmen mobile and the asylum which confined and divided them (MC); the medical practices which produced the various social spaces of disease – the home, the teaching hospital, the social body and, above all, the body of the patient (BC); the numerous spaces of disciplinary power, such as monasteries, hospitals, schools, workhouses, factories, reformatories and prisons (DP); and the spaces of government and policing – the city, the state, territory and population (see for example G; PR). In each instance, Foucault's concern is not so much with specific forms of architecture as with programmes of socio-spatial organisation and the kind of spatial techniques used to implement such programmes (see SKP in particular). Little wonder, then, that Anglo-American geographers have repeatedly pointed to the pervasive presence of a profound spatial sensibility at the heart of Foucault's work (see for example Driver, 1985; Philo, 1992a and 2000b; Elden, 2001 and 2003; Soja, 2004).

One further issue requires discussion here. In my exegeses of Foucault's work, I repeatedly call into question what I consider to be superficial or inaccurate interpretations made by other scholars, countering these by paying close attention to the details of his various texts. This form of exegesis might appear to be motivated by the pernicious romantic myth that, if we are careful and attentive, we will be able to interpret Foucault's work in such a way as to yield the complete, final truth of his intentions. This approach is unsustainable, particularly in the light of Foucault's attempts to free literature from the tyranny of the author (in particular see WA). In one of his many interviews, Foucault declares that in his own use of Nietzsche, he is not at all interested in trying to discern the truth of Nietzsche's thought, but "to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest. And if commentators say that I am being faithful or unfaithful to Nietzsche that is of absolutely no interest." (PT, p.53-54). Similarly, my own aim is not to 'get Foucault right' but to make Foucault work in the most interesting and fruitful way possible for my particular project. However, there is a clear difference between creative reading and clumsy misreading. In practice, those who 'get Foucault wrong' do not tend to do so in a creative way, but rather end up using him in a rather simplistic fashion, often creating a straw man who is all too easy to destroy. It seems to me that if one wants to make subtle, interesting, insightful

analyses of social phenomena, then one will need subtle, interesting, and insightful analytical tools. I hope to show that a close and detailed interpretation of Foucault's thought can yield such tools.

1.4 Thesis Outline

The remainder of this thesis is divided up as follows. In chapter two, I review the relevant recent social science literature. I discuss the recently established sub-discipline of children's geographies, examining research on schools within this field. I argue that Foucault is under-represented in this work, despite the significant contribution which his analyses have to make to the social geography of schooling. I then look at work in education research which draws upon Foucault. I argue that while Foucaultian ideas are widespread in this literature, empirical studies which use his work to theorise schooling practices are few in number, and tend to rely upon a narrow, pessimistic reading of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault's most well-known book.

This sets the scene for chapter three, in which I present a detailed overview of Foucault's conceptualisation of power, knowledge and the human subject. Here, my reading follows a number of Foucault scholars who have argued that the common portrayal of his work as a doom-laden, totalitarian account of power is seriously mistaken. I formulate a more careful and balanced account of Foucault, which places *Discipline and Punish* within the wider context of his oeuvre.

With this conceptual apparatus in place, chapter four provides a narrative account of the methods I used to carry out my study, along with their philosophical bases and some of the problems which they raised.

I then introduce the substantive portion of my analysis. Chapter five begins by returning to Foucault to discuss his understanding of disciplinary power, as a means of conceptualising a series of empirical examples of how power was exercised in the classroom. I pay particular attention to those techniques which attempt to produce individuals. These involve the spatial separation and distribution of children, processes designed to encourage them to think of themselves as separate, individual, autonomous beings.

Chapter six returns to Foucault once again for a discussion of his understanding of surveillance. I examine the model of the Panopticon, the discussion of which is perhaps the most oft-cited part of Foucault's work. I then use this theoretical framework to analyse a selection of empirical observations of processes of surveillance in the classroom. Towards the end of this chapter, I explore some of the ways in which I became co-opted into surveillance processes by

the teachers and the children. Over the course of this analysis, I undermine the dominance of the Panopticon in Foucaultian conceptions of power by demonstrating that it is in fact a poor analogue of classroom surveillance. I argue that the Panopticon is best seen as an idealised model of power, a disciplinary programme rather than a disciplinary technology.

Chapter seven breaks with the theme of disciplinary power to look at Foucault's later work on techniques of the self, understood as the means by which subjects exercise power over themselves. After discussing this concept and its place in the wider context of Foucault's oeuvre, I present further empirical material from my fieldwork, detailing various techniques of power which, I argue, can be characterised as techniques of self. These include techniques of self-knowledge as well as techniques in which the care of oneself is the primary aim.

Chapter eight draws together my substantive material on techniques of discipline and techniques of the self. I undermine this distinction somewhat by emphasising how, in practice, classroom discipline depends upon the children's relations to themselves, and how these relations to self are in turn sustained and intensified by disciplinary techniques. I conclude by situating my work first in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter two, and then in relation to the wider project of the critical ontology of ourselves.

2

Literature review

In this chapter, I will review the recent social science research which frames my interests in schooling and space. As will become clear over the course of my discussion, this research suffers somewhat from a lack of disciplinary focus, scattered as it is throughout various texts and journals in the fields of geography, sociology, childhood studies and education research. As a result, there is no straightforwardly intuitive way of dividing up this literature. For the purposes of my discussion, I will use two broad categories, which are by no means mutually exclusive.

The first category includes research in which the spaces of childhood are a primary concern. Much of this literature lies on the intersection of sociology and geography, where sociologists of childhood and human geographers with an interest in children have carved out the new sub-discipline of children's geographies. After introducing some of the key ideas within this rather disparate field, I will identify and discuss in more depth a smaller subset of literature dealing specifically with school spaces. I will show that these geographies of schooling are dominated by two theoretical frameworks. The first derives from the recent work in the sociology of childhood to which I have already referred, while the second, based upon Giddens, is closer to traditional sociology. I will argue that in using these frameworks, sociologists and geographers of school spaces attempt, though not always successfully, to balance an awareness of the role of social structures such as schools with a recognition of children's individual agency in shaping the circumstances of their everyday lives. I will also suggest that there is a notable absence in this literature of any sustained engagement with Foucault's ideas, and that such an engagement might yield important insights into the phenomena at hand.

The second category is education research which draws upon Foucault. I will review this literature, noting that it appears to engage in a much more sustained way with Foucaultian ideas. However, I will then subdivide this literature so as to focus upon those studies which use Foucault to analyse practices of schooling, and as such are directly relevant to my own concerns. I will argue that these studies are few in number, and dominated by a narrow reading of *Discipline and Punish*, which I want to call into question.

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2.1 Children's geographies and the new social studies of childhood

As early as the 1970s, suggestions were made for a possible geography of children (see Bunge, 1973), and during the seventies and eighties a small literature developed around this topic within the discipline of geography. Much of this early work took place in the overlap between behavioural geography and environmental psychology, focusing upon children's awareness of space, their development of cognitive mapping abilities and so forth (see for example Blaut and Stea, 1971; Hart, 1979; Matthews, 1984 and 1987; Gold and Goodey, 1989). This theme continued to be pursued during the 1990s (see for example Matthews, 1992; Blaut, 1997), but that decade also saw the rapid growth of a different strand of children's geographies, taking its inspiration more from historical, sociological and anthropological perspectives on childhood. At the start of the nineties, Sarah James (1990) identified the need for geographers to pay much more attention to the social-spatial dimensions of childhood, calling for research "which critically examines the ways in which children's lives, experiences, attitudes and opportunities are socially and spatially structured" (p.278). By the turn of the century, however, this call seemed to have been answered, and a recognisable sub-discipline of children's geographies formed. Dedicated sessions at major conferences (e.g. RGS-IBG, 1998), special issues in leading geography journals (e.g. *Area*, 1999), the publication of a series of key textbooks (e.g. Matthews, 1992; Aitken, 1994 and 2001a; Holloway and Valentine, 2000a) and the recent inauguration of a journal dedicated to the geographical study of childhood (Matthews, 2003) all seem to confirm Holloway and Valentine's suggestion that "research in children's geographies is now beginning to reach a critical mass." (2000a, p.8).

Despite these consolidatory moves, the boundaries of this new sub-discipline are decidedly indistinct, with most of those involved actively encouraging interdisciplinarity (e.g. Philo, 2000a; Phillips, 2001). For example, the inaugural editorial of *Children's Geographies* called for contributions from no less than eleven social science disciplines, and situated the journal in theoretical territory which would be familiar to academics beyond geography (Matthews, 2003).

This interdisciplinarity is indicative of the debt owed by children's geographies to what Alison James, Chris Jenks and Alan Prout (1998) have termed 'the new social studies of childhood'. At the start of the 1990s, just as Sarah James was voicing the need to examine the

geography of childhood, Alison James and Alan Prout (1997a[1]) identified a newly-emerging paradigm for the study of childhood within the social sciences, the result of "a comprehensive rethink of childhood sociology" (p.3). This paradigm gathered momentum throughout the following decade, gaining considerable influence in sociology and beyond. For example, Prout became the director of the ESRC Children 5-16 Research Programme, a major source of funding for social scientists conducting research with children during the 1990s (Prout, 2002), including several geographers.

According to James and Prout (1997b), this new paradigm has six central tenets. First, childhood is seen as socially constructed. In other words, in the light of accounts charting major historical transformations of the meaning of childhood (most notably Aries, 1973; but see also Cunningham, 1995; Hendrick, 1997a and 1997b), and ethnographic studies demonstrating the variation of childhood between different places and different cultures, childhood can no longer be seen as a biologically given fact. Rather, it must be viewed as a culturally and socially produced category.

Second, and in consequence, childhood is to be seen as a social variable, connected to other social variables such as gender, class, ethnicity or ability. Unified understandings of childhood must be broken down, to be replaced by a sensitivity to the variation of childhood across space and time. The practical consequence of this is that new social studies of childhood have begun to pay attention to the differences *between* children, and between experiences and understandings of childhood.

Third, children are seen as worthy of study in their own right, independent of adults. James and Prout stress that this does not mean that children must be seen outside of or apart from their relationships with adults. Rather, their concern is to counter a tendency within social science to examine children only inasmuch as they shed light on the adult world (see Brannen and O'Brien, 1995). The solution to this problem is almost always couched in humanistic terms: children must be seen as ends and not means; they must not longer be viewed as merely 'adults in the making'. The idea that children should be looked upon as human beings, not human becomings, has become an oft-repeated cliché in the new social studies of childhood, notwithstanding Lee's (2001) justifiable concerns about the philosophical basis of this idea, to which I will return in chapter eight.

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[1] The date given is for the second edition of James and Prout's text; however, their introduction to it, referred to here, was written in 1989.

Fourth, in the new paradigm, children are assumed to be competent social actors, able to participate actively in the construction of their own lives and the cultures in which they live. Again, this humanistic argument is intended to counteract the common tendency of adults, social researchers included, to presume that children are incompetent, passive, powerless and wholly dependent upon adults for guidance. Matthews (2003) describes this attitude as a kind of optimistic prejudice, which must nonetheless be open to revision: "rather than starting with a view that children are ill-informed incompetents, we suggest that a more positive stance would be to assume that children 'can do it' and can make decisions, unless proven otherwise." (p.4)

Fifth, if children are to be treated as competent actors, then it follows that they ought to be encouraged to actively shape the research encounters in which they take part. James and Prout advocate the use of research methods such as ethnography, which foster genuine dialogue and exchange between researchers and children, which allow children to influence the outcomes of research, and give them a prominent and vocal presence in the data produced. A substantial literature addressing these issues in research with children has developed over the last fifteen years. I make reference to this work in chapter four of this thesis.

Finally, research within the new paradigm does not presume to stand outside of the phenomenon of childhood. Social researchers are urged to be reflexive about the ways in which their own practices and the work which they produce actively contributes to the construction of childhood. Research on childhood is therefore always implicitly political. Those who carry out research with children must work hard to make sure that their everyday practices reflect a stringent set of ethical principles about how children ought to be treated.

James and Prout's new paradigm has found favour with social geographers seeking new ways of engaging with children. Equally, sociologists and anthropologists working on childhood have proved receptive to contemporary geographical notions. For example, James et al's (1998) seminal childhood studies text contains a whole chapter on space. Moreover, their framing of space holds considerable appeal for modern human geographers working with a broadly Lefebvrean understanding of space as socially produced, rather than the empty container of Newtonian mechanics (Merrifield, 2000). James et al stress that "social space is never a mere issue of neutral location" (p.39), something which human geographers would ordinarily need to explain at length to anyone outside of their sub-disciplinary field. With such intellectual allies in

sociology, it is hardly surprising to find children's geographers so keen to foster inter-disciplinarity in their field[2].

It is therefore unsurprising that James and Prout's new paradigm can be found at the heart of most recent geographical writing on children. Most often, their six tenets are reduced to two: that childhood is socially constructed, and that children are active social agents. These assumptions are ubiquitous, almost in danger of becoming a mantra to be repeated *ad nauseam* in the introduction to every journal article, book chapter and text within the literature. Nevertheless, geographers have taken James and Prout's suggestions to heart, particularly their insistence upon the variety of childhoods to be found scattered throughout time and space. While some have paid attention to the history of children spaces (Ploszajska, 1994 and 1998; Gagen, 2000a and 2000b), most children's geographers have explored the role of contemporary spaces and places in the construction of childhood and children's lives. Thus, for example, there has been much recent work on urban childhood (e.g. Katz, 1994; Lynch, 1997; Chawla, 1998; Kong, 2000; O'Brien et al, 2003) and, following Philo's (1992b) call, a corresponding interest in children in rural areas (e.g. Katz, 1991; Valentine, 1997; Jones, 1999 and 2000; Matthews et al, 2000a; Tucker and Matthews, 2001), and in rural versus urban childhoods (e.g. Katz, 1994; Nairn et al, 2003). Attention has been paid to children's negotiation of public/private boundaries in space, and how this process constructs children's identities (Valentine, 1996b; Aitken, 2000; Harden, 2000). Studies of key places where childhood is produced have covered the home (Sibley, 1995; Blunt, 1999; Christensen et al, 2000), the street (Hall et al, 1999; Matthews et al, 1999 and 2000b; Beazley, 2000; Young, 2003), playgrounds and commercial play environments (Talen and Anselin, 1998; McKendrick, 1999a; McKendrick et al, 2000a and 2000b), shopping malls (Matthews et al, 2000c) out of school and youth clubs (Hall et al, 1999; Smith and Barker, 2000a and 2000b) and, most pertinently for this thesis, there has been a small amount of work on schooling (see below). These studies explore the relationships between particular spaces, the notions of childhood which they sustain and by which they are sustained, and the varied experiences of the children who inhabit them. A central theoretical idea throughout is that spaces, bodies and identities are mutually constitutive. In other words, these studies aim to

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[2] It is likely that Giddens' structuration theory provides the missing link between sociology of childhood and geography. As Shilling (1991) notes, Giddens, though a sociologist, was influenced by human geographers, particularly Hagerstrand. He therefore understands space both as socially produced and as a crucial factor in all social interactions.

demonstrate not only the difference that space and place make to childhood, but also the difference that children make to the spaces and places in which they live.

2.1.1 Children's geographies of schooling

In setting out an agenda for the geography of children, Matthews and Limb (1999) encourage researchers to look beyond the well-known spaces of childhood, such as the home, the school and the playground. However, within the children's geographies literature there is a surprising lack of recent work on contemporary schooling. For example, in McKendrick's (2000) bibliography of this literature, there are eighteen references pertaining to schools, but on closer inspection much of this work is either historical (e.g. Ploszajska, 1994 and 1998), architecture or design orientated, and therefore dealing with physical rather than social space (e.g. Moore and Lackney, 1993; Sanoff 1993), or focussed upon some concern other than processes of schooling – for example, Smith and Barker's (2000a and 2000b) work on out of school clubs, Holloway and Valentine's work on children using cyberspace in schools (e.g. Valentine and Holloway, 1999) or McKendrick's (1999b) call to see school as but one site amongst many where learning takes place. Over the last thirty years, a number of geographical researchers have examined education from a broadly socialist perspective (see Gray, 1976), but this work has focussed on the spatial distribution and economic geography of schools, at the expense of any more fine-grained engagement with the spatial practices operating inside them (examples include McCune, 1971; Maxfield, 1972; Thomas and Robson, 1984; Bondi, 1987; Bondi and Matthews, 1988; Bradford, 1991 and 1995). Children are notable by their absence from this early geography of education. As Philo (2000a) notes, despite the "vibrancy of scholarship on the spaces of childhood which has found a particular home in academic geography" (p.246), little work has been done on children's everyday experiences of school spaces. Similarly, Valentine (2000) points out that:

> "while a number of…studies have been based on research conducted in institutional settings such as schools or used these locations to recruit participants…there are surprisingly few examples of geographical studies of this setting for children's lives…Yet, institutions such as schools play an important part both in shaping children's collective identities and marking individuals' biographies." (p.258)

A further problem is the multi-disciplinarity of this area of study, which lends the small literature on the social geography of school spaces a certain incoherence. This work is scattered throughout texts and journals in geography, sociology and educational research and, as result,

similar studies based in different disciplines often fail to cite one another. In what follows, I attempt to draw together some of these disparate sources in order to situate my thesis.

Chris Shilling (1991) provides a helpful review which draws out the implicit spatial dimensions of social interaction and social reproduction in several school ethnographies. Shilling's theoretical framework is derived from Giddens' (1984), for whom social space is the crucial medium of all interaction. A full review of Giddens' structuration theory is impossible here (though see Cloke, Philo and Sadler (1991) for a geographically-focussed account), but the key concepts which Shilling uses are worth rehearsing, since they can be detected, either implicitly or explicitly, in most of the more recent social geographies of schools.

For Giddens, structures consist of 'rules' and 'resources'. Rules in this context relate to human behaviour, but not in a deterministic fashion. Rather, they act as guidelines for social intercourse, tacit shared understandings which enable people to predict how others will behave, thus facilitating interaction. Some rules are encoded into formal systems such as language, workplace regulations and the judicial system, while others are more informal, such as gender roles or turn taking in conversation. Importantly, unlike the general laws of natural science, social rules do not exist independently of the society which uses them. They depend for their continued existence upon reproduction through repeated use. In a particular instance of social interaction, the actors involved may follow the rules closely, but they may also bend, deliberately break or disregard them. In schools, a vast number of rules are routinely reproduced, ranging from those enforced by the law (compulsory attendance; the non-corporality of punishment) to those encoded in the school rules (never talk when a teacher is talking; no running in the corridors) to those which remain implicit in pupil-teacher relations (the pupil is ignorant, the teacher is there to remedy this) to those which belong to the children's culture (the special rules governing games such as 'toilet tig') and also those many rules which are not specific to the school environment (children are incompetent; adults are competent; girls are no good at football; Star Wars, Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings are all cool). All of these rules owe their continued existence to the agency of the teachers, pupils, parents, educationalists, politicians, etc., whose daily activities reproduce them. Consequently, all of these rules can also be challenged, modified or refused, either consciously or unconsciously, by these agents.

Resources are material goods and services, along with the apparatus which produces them, and the organisational systems which facilitate access to them. In interaction, resources are drawn upon by actors to reinforce, transform, or challenge rules. For example, in a case of truancy, a headteacher might draw upon services such as social workers, the police and the

courts in order to enforce the rule that all children must go to school. Likewise, boys seeking to reproduce the rule that boys are good at football might draw upon a range of resources: football magazines and sticker annuals, computer games such as Championship Manager, P.E. lessons, school sports teams, parental encouragement and financial support, professional coaching, and so on. Once again, these resources do not exist independently of the people who use them. Patterns of use reproduce and sustain particular resources at the expense of others, such that resources can be accrued or depleted, fought over, transformed, redirected, renewed or abandoned.

Giddens stresses the importance of space in social interaction through the concept of 'locale'. A locale is a context in which interaction occurs, understood as a physical space which is nonetheless socially produced. A classroom, in its physical design and layout, embodies certain social principles: teacher hierarchy, surveillance, the relative importance of group work versus individual work, and so on. Giddens (1984) insists that "Disciplinary spacing is part of the architectural character of schools, both in the separation of classrooms and in the regulated spacing of desks that is often found inside them. There is no doubt that spatial divisions of this sort facilitate the routinized specification and allocation of tasks." (p.135) Yet these features do not determine the kinds of interaction which can take place in the classroom. Though the space may lend itself to the reproduction of surveillance practices, such practices can also be challenged, resisted or transformed within the same space. In this sense, a locale offers a spatialised set of rules and resources to the actors who inhabit it.

Shilling (1991) uses this framework to interpret a number of ethnographic studies, drawing out the role of space in social reproduction which tends to remain implicit in much of this work. At the most basic level, these studies all demonstrate how the social space of schools is constructed in accordance with the general rule that children must submit to adults. From this principle spring any number of subsidiary spatial rules: pupils must not enter the staff room; pupils must occupy classrooms during lesson time; pupils must not occupy classrooms at lunch and break times, and so forth. Of course, these rules are regularly challenged or circumvented, by pupils occupying marginal spaces such as hallways and stairways (MacLeod, 1987), turning up to the wrong lessons or roaming the corridors during lesson time (Willis, 1977), or by more conformist means of staying indoors at break times, such as becoming a library assistant (Shilling and Cousins, 1990).

Shilling's main interest is in how space functions in the reproduction of gender rules and resources. He shows how boys enact patriarchal rules by monopolising resources such as

classroom space, learning materials, computers and leisure spaces. A number of studies have produced similar conclusions about the male domination of school spaces. Carrie Paechter (1989) provides a wide-ranging overview of this research. She notes how, for example, classroom-based studies have shown that boys tend to occupy the immediate zone around the teacher during demonstrations, to the exclusion of girls. She also discusses how staff rooms are often spatially ordered according to a hegemonic masculinity. In one school she studied, a snooker table dominated the staff room, used mostly by male staff. In another school, the area where a group of assertive, young, feminist teachers sat was labelled 'the knitting circle' (p.112). Closer to my own interests, Paechter describes how school spaces are structured so as to maximise the power of a masculine gaze. This gaze in turn produces a particular kind of social space, in which everything must be made visible, turned to account and judged according to a set of normalising criteria. This space separates out individual bodies and produces within them a self which is gendered, aged, classified and ranked according to ability, all with respect to a set of rational, Western, male-centred standards.

Paechter also notes how boys use sports activities as an aggressive means of colonising playground space as a masculine domain. Working within geography, Kira Krenichyn (1999) comes to similar conclusions in her study of how adolescents' gender identities in a New York high school. As in the studies reviewed by Shilling (1991), Krenichyn notes how the students' assertion of their gender identities often took the form of struggles over physical space. For example, at lunch times, the school's small gymnasium was dominated by boys playing basketball, to the exclusion of girls and other boys who did not conform to the masculine sportsman stereotype. The excluded groups tried to establish other spaces for the expression of their identities, breaking the school rules by hanging out in public areas such as stairways, and thereby coming into conflict with the headteacher. The girls also attempted to organise a cheerleading group and lobbied the headteacher to make the necessary spatial resources available to them. However, she resisted, arguing that this would only reproduce the rules of traditional gender roles, casting the boys as active sports players and the girls as mere onlookers. The headteacher's ideal was to provide the girls with resources to challenge these patriarchal rules.

Along similar lines, Melissa Hyams (2000) explores the role of high school in the construction of gender and sexual identity for adolescent Latinas in Los Angeles. Her focus is not on struggles over physical space, but rather on the discourses of identity which sustain and are sustained by practices of schooling. For example, in the school studied by Hyams,

administrators played a significant part in constructing the pupils' sexual identities by monitoring activities such as kissing and touching and reporting their findings to the parents of the young people concerned. In addition, many of the regulations pertaining to students' dress prohibited the wearing of clothes which revealed too much of the girls' bodies. Such practices were justified in terms of protection. The teachers who monitored the girls represented them as passive, sexually vulnerable, the potential victims of sexual harassment, abuse and even rape, while boys were constructed as predatory, aggressive, and a constant threat to the opposite sex. Staff therefore insisted that they had a responsibility to police the bodies of pupils, drawing upon the additional protective authority of parents where they saw fit.

The girls in Hyams' study were all involved in negotiating their sexual and gender identities on a daily basis. Many found small ways of resisting or avoiding the kinds of regulation and categorisation to which they were subjected, strategically concealing their bodies in zip-up sweatshirts in certain spaces, for example. However, none of them seriously challenged the dominant construction of female sexuality as dangerous and in need of control. Most students experienced their gender and sexuality within the terms offered by this discourse, looking upon themselves as powerless, passive and sexually vulnerable.

Shilling and Cousins (1990) provide one of the most detailed social geographies of school to date. They examine the social use of two school libraries, employing some novel analytical concepts to highlight the role of space in the exercise of power in schools. They use the term 'colonisation' to refer to the imposition upon a space of a particular set of values and associated rules for behaviour which run contrary to the formally designated purpose of that space. For example, in the library at Crompton School, a number of older male pupils had colonised the library as a masculine social space for chatting and playing games. As well as imposing such activities upon the space, these students also policed other kinds of activities, openly ridiculing those pupils, particularly younger children and girls, who tried to read or work in the library. Shilling and Cousins suggest that colonisation is useful as a more spatial and less glamourising way of understanding children's resistance strategies, such as those described by Willis (1977) and Corrigan (1979).

'Regulation' is used by Shilling and Cousins to categorise actions which attempt to reinforce the formal purpose of a space. In the school libraries which they studied, this most often took the form of the librarian policing the library and disciplining pupils whose behaviour was not conducive to the production of a quiet space for work. Dickens School library, in contrast to that of Crompton School, was highly regulated. This regulation was achieved through

a number of more specific techniques: strict adherence to a timetable specifying the days and times when particular year groups were allowed to use the library; the arrangement of library furniture so as to maximise visibility for surveillance; verbal reprimands and physical expulsion used in response to behaviour considered inappropriate, such as eating, talking, and playing games. Shilling and Cousins, following Giddens (see above), identify resources which reinforced the librarians' regulatory practices: staff representations of the library as a quiet place for work, the quiet location of the library, and the common room which an alternative space for chatting, eating and playing games. Thus we see how the arrangement of social space within the school supported the exercise of certain forms of power, and vice-versa.

In Dickens School library, two further forms of social use were observed by Shilling and Cousins. First, some children enjoyed the peaceful atmosphere of the library but did not want to work. Accordingly, they found ways of evading surveillance by appearing to work whilst indulging in illicit activities. For example, pairs of students would look at books on shelves whilst quietly chatting to each other. Others used the shelves as cover behind which to eat without being seen, or sat in corners to converse quietly without being overheard by the librarians. Second, a number of children who wanted a safe haven away from the football-dominated playground had opted to become library assistants. This was discovered through interviews with the assistants, most of whom revealed that they were not particularly interested in being librarians. Rather, by taking up this role, these pupils had secured themselves access to a comfortable, non-threatening space during break and lunch times. These kinds of spatial tactics are interesting because they do not fit into the simplistic oppositional schema sketched by the likes of Willis (1977) and Corrigan (1979). They cannot easily be categorised as resistance tactics (they do not involve any conflict), colonisation (they are not an imposition on other students) or conformism.

Echoing Giddens' emphasis on rules and resources, Holloway and Valentine insist upon situating the school within a wider context of shared meanings. Though they acknowledge the classroom as a key site for the transmission and reproduction of notions of race, gender, sexuality and so on, they stress that the purchase of these notions depends upon their circulation within "wider reservoirs of resources" (Holloway and Valentine, 2000b, p.771) outside the confines of school. For example, dominant gender norms are brought into the classroom from other contexts (the family, the media, peer groups, etc.). The various spaces of school then become arenas in which these norms are not simply inculcated, but rather reproduced, exchanged, reinforced, negotiated and contested. This conception allows for the possibility of

pupils resisting their subordination to such norms, and forging strategic resistance alliances for this purpose. Holloway and Valentine note that such resistance tactics are often spatial – for example, girls sitting next to one another in IT lessons to create a space free from sexist harassment by boys, or soliciting teachers to secure a room for a girls-only computer club.

Along similar lines, Shaun Fielding (2000) explores what he terms the 'moral geographies' of a UK primary school. By this, he means the understandings of space and place which are implicit in moral assumptions. In the case of schools, assumptions about how children ought to behave, and specifically how they ought to learn – what one could call moral codes of schooling – contain within them assumptions about *where* children ought to behave in particular ways, and how they ought to be arranged in space for learning to be effective. These moral geographies manifest themselves in a series of prohibitions and coercive techniques designed to train children in 'appropriate' spatial behaviour, as part of a wider process of socialisation. In time, the more effectively socialised school children begin to regulate not only their own spatial conduct, but that of their peers.

Fielding illustrates his argument by contrasting two lessons delivered by different teachers but to the same class of children and in the same classroom. The examples he uses are rather polarised, and his analysis relies uncritically upon problematic gender stereotypes. Nevertheless, his discussion demonstrates how the same physical space can support radically different forms of spatial practice. The dynamic of the classroom space, rather than being a direct function of the school's architecture, has more to do with the interaction of the school's moral framework (what the senior management expect of teachers), the teacher's practices (what the teachers expect of the children), and the children's behaviour (for example, whether they comply with, subvert or resist the teacher's demands).

Inspired in part by human geographers, Gordon et al (2000) attempt to think about space and time together, analysing the time-space paths taken by teachers and students. On the one hand, a school's organisational framework, rules and timetables strictly regulate pupils' time-space paths – one is expected to be in a certain place at a certain time, and there will be serious consequences if one is not. On entering a school, pupils are habituated into prescribed time-space paths, which soon become routine. Yet on the other hand, this routine is regularly challenged by pupils and may break down, often through minor rule-bending, such as students persuading their teacher to let them out of a class a few minutes early. Gordon et al describe a wide range of spatial resistance and negotiation tactics used by school children in their studies. Some simply stayed away from the school space, absenting themselves for many days of the

year. Others moved around when they should have been sitting still, or hid under tables. Some dramatised and ritualised what would ordinarily have been legitimate work activities. One student was observed to quietly side-step the prescribed space-time path in a maths lesson. Through a careful combination of moving around the room collecting and depositing materials. and sitting quietly at his desk, he managed to do no work at all and escape detection by the teacher.

Valentine (2000) also attempts to balance institutional constraints with children's agency in the context of adult-child relations at break times in school, and the role of these relations in producing children's narratives of identity. She argues that children are located in cultural narratives, structures of childhood not of their own making, and are faced with the task of mediating between these narratives and themselves in the construction of their identities. Specifically, Valentine highlights two contrasting Western narratives of childhood.

The first narrative defines children in opposition to adults, positioning them as incompetent, vulnerable and dependent upon adults. This narrative is discussed (and called into question) in virtually all of the new social studies of childhood literature (see in particular James et al, 1998). It is reproduced through institutions such as the nuclear family and the school, which actively construct children as passive dependents.

The second narrative is more recent. It constructs children as liberal individuals, both in legal terms, with children increasingly recognised as having rights, and in economic terms, with children are increasingly seen as consumers. Reinforced by the expansion of higher and adult education, and the weakening of parental authority, this narrative appears to erode the distinction between adults and children (for more on this, see Frones, 1994; Postman, 1994). Valentine (2000) implies that the process of individualisation described by this narrative is "challenging processes of familialisation and institutionalisation." (p.258)

Valentine reads changes in the British school meal system as exemplifying this shift towards the individualisation of children. According to this account, the old regime of school meals was authoritarian, with adults deciding what children would eat, so as to oversee their nutritional welfare, and also monitoring how children ate, in an attempt to civilise them. This was "a very Foucaultian system of discipline and surveillance in which teachers could regulate children's posture, movements, talking, food and water consumption and the timing and manner of their eating to produce 'docile bodies'." (ibid., p.259) However, Valentine argues that the 1980 Education Act, which emphasised consumer choice over schools' responsibility for pupil welfare, set the scene for a very different system of school meal provision. She quotes a head

teacher who says that healthy eating policies have been replaced by a student-centred approach, based around providing what children want to eat. The school thereby "constructs itself as an informal, 'home-like' space, rather than an authoritarian space, where no-one is policing the pupils' corporeal consumption or performances and they are free to articulate their individuality." (ibid., p.260) In such an environment, teacher-pupil relations "are based on principles that owe more to equality and dissolving divisions between adults and children, than hierarchy and deference." (ibid.)

This picture, whilst attractive, must be questioned on several counts. First, the suggestion that pupils are not policed but are "free to articulate their individuality" through their food choices is premised upon a naïve liberal humanism which is at odds with Valentine's acknowledgement of the powerful role of cultural narratives and social structures in regulating children's lives. Peer group cultures, parental influences (and reactions against them), British food culture and the intensive commercial agriculture on which it is based, the free market, advertising and the media – all of these clearly circumscribe the meal-time options available to school children. Following Giddens, I would argue that these things are best understood as rules and resources which may be reproduced, reinforced, refused, transformed and so on by children on a daily basis.

Second, the narrative of the erosion of the distinction between children and adults, whilst powerful as a *narrative*, cannot be supposed to correspond neatly to children's everyday *experiences* of childhood. As Aitken (2001b) notes, while the changes described by Valentine signal an important transformation of childhood, they are best seen as breaches of the adult/child divide. Their importance therefore depends upon the continued existence of the very divide which they appear to undermine. Modern schools still depend fundamentally upon Valentine's first narrative. It is the basis of divisions of school labour; it structures how people are categorised, defined and treated in school; and it lies at the heart of divisions of school space.

Instructive here is Dympna Devine's (2002) examination of the regulation of children's time and space in three Irish primary schools from a children's rights perspective. She solicited pupils' views on the way in which their schools control their space and time, and found (perhaps unsurprisingly) that many children resented their powerlessness and the lack of consultation in the process of planning classroom layouts, timetabling and rule-making. Though in general they liked their teachers and wanted to have good relationships with them, the children were dissatisfied with their status as subordinate and inferior to the teachers. Some pointed out the injustice of the privileges afforded to teachers and suggested that everyone, adults and children

alike, should follow the same rules. Others invoked democratic ideals, suggesting that children should be allowed to vote for rules. At the same time, however, some children accepted the validity of adult hegemony, reproducing understandings of themselves as incompetent, and as only important inasmuch as they provided teachers with jobs. Devine's work shows how, despite much political rhetoric about children's rights, schools still construct children as inferior and subordinate beings. She stresses that the discourse of rights, evident in curriculum teaching about citizenship in schools, must be backed up by practices which reflect children's capacity to be citizens, not merely citizens-in-the-making.

Yet liberal democratic concepts of freedom and individuality become even more problematic when examined from the Foucaultian perspective to which Valentine (2000) herself refers. She argues that processes of individualisation are challenging children's institutionalisation. In *Discipline and Punish*, however, Foucault argues that individualisation is one of the key functions of disciplinary institutions. One of Foucault's most disconcerting insights is his recognition that individuals are but the products of a subjection which precedes them. I will discuss this idea further in the next chapter, since it has a close bearing upon the analysis which I wish to carry out in this thesis. For now, suffice it to say that I believe further empirical work, more detailed than that presented by Valentine, is required to examine the kinds of individualisation which take place in the classroom, and their effects.

2.1.2 Children's geographies of schooling: a summary analysis

As my discussion has shown, the key tension throughout the work reviewed here is that between the notion of children as competent social actors, as stressed by James and Prout (1997) in their new paradigm for childhood studies, and the conception of the school as an apparatus of control which requires children to submit to the will of teachers. Aitken (1994) notes that schools aim "to socialize children with regard to their roles in life and their places in society...inculcating compliant citizens and productive workers who will be prepared to assume roles considered appropriate to the pretension of their race, class and gender identities." (p.90) Similarly, for all their emphasis on children's agency, James et al (1998) treat the school as a space "dedicated to the control and regulation of the child's body and mind through regimes of discipline, learning, development, maturation and skill." (p.38) Holloway and Valentine (2000b) share this understanding, reiterating the importance of spatial disciplining as a mechanism through which children are controlled: "the spatial disciplining of the timetable...requires children to be in the right place, at the right time, to learn the right things." (p.772)

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It seems clear that the attraction of theorists such as Giddens and Foucault for those studying school spaces lies in their negotiation of this tension between human agency and the structural power of institutions. As Thomas (2000) remarks, "Young people are producers of culture, and of power, in their own right, but their identity formations often occur within the spaces and the agendas of adult institutions. While youth may struggle with institutional norms, most cannot escape the extensive grip of institutions." (p.579) Such institutions are peculiarly paradoxical spaces: they "are structured to encourage kids to become independent and self-reliant, yet most institutions curb expressions of nonconformity." (ibid.)

I would also argue that while Giddens is relatively well represented in the children's geographies of schooling literature, there is a notable absence of close engagement with Foucault's work. Hyams (2000), for example, elucidates the connections between discourse, surveillance practices and the construction of gendered and sexualised human subjects in school along clearly Foucaultian lines. Yet her work does not engage with Foucault's intriguing later investigations into how subjects work upon and transform themselves. As my discussion of Valentine (2000) demonstrates, Foucault is all too easily caricatured on the basis of superficial readings of *Discipline and Punish*, with the result that opportunities for detailed, critical empirical work on phenomena such as individualisation and children's rights are missed. The cursory treatment of Foucault within this empirical geographical literature is all the more surprising given the primacy of space within his various analyses (see Driver, 1985; Philo, 1992a; Elden, 2001 and 2003; see also chapter three of this thesis).

Likewise, throughout the childhood studies literature more generally, while Foucault is often present as a background influence, his work is rarely, if ever, discussed in depth. For example, a recent account of power in childhood research (Robinson and Kellett, 2004) contains a short summary of Foucault's understanding of power, but his ideas are not brought to bear upon the debates at stake. Yet Foucault's work was in large part a critical reaction to the kind of humanistic phenomenology embodied in James and Prout's paradigm, with its doctrine that children must be seen as competent social actors. McNamee (2000) discusses Foucault's concept of 'heterotopia', but her use of this idea is at odds with Foucault's extreme ambivalence about power (see chapter three of this thesis). I would therefore argue that a much more sustained dialogue between Foucault's work and empirical research into children's geographies of schooling is in order. This thesis attempts to initiate such a dialogue, beginning in the next chapter with a careful exegesis of Foucault's principal conceptual tools.

Before launching into this theoretical discussion, however, I want to examine a second broad area of recent social research which is directly relevant to my concerns here. In this literature, by contrast to the work reviewed thus far, Foucault's ideas have been much more prominently brought to bear upon questions of schooling.

2.2 Foucault in Education Research

Over the last fifteen years, Foucault has become popular with education researchers looking for a set of critical perspectives which go beyond the Marxian accounts dominant in the 1970s and 80s (Mourad, 2001). Some of the earliest education researchers to draw upon Foucault were Hoskin (1979) and Jones and Williamson (1979), who took an archaeological approach to the history of schools. These were soon followed by Valerie Walkerdine's (1984) critique of Piagetian developmental psychology, which owed much to Foucault's work on madness, normalisation and the rise of the human sciences. Stephen Ball's edited collection, published in 1990, brought together historical and sociological strands of educational research using Foucault "to render the familiarity of mass education strange" (Ball, 1990a, p.5). In this book, Hoskin (1990) even went so far as to claim that "What he [i.e. Foucault] was doing all the time was an educational analysis, whether he thought he was talking about power or knowledge." (p.29) Since the publication of Ball's book, a diverse literature on Foucault has developed in educational research, and his thought continues to arouse interest and debate in this discipline. In the mid-nineties, a group of American scholars set up a Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association dedicated to Foucaultian studies of education. More recently, at the 2003 British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Foucault was cited in a number of papers (Gale, 2003; McGregor, 2003; Olssen, 2003; Perryman, 2003; Peters, 2003a), and seemed to be a familiar figure to many of the delegates.

For the purposes of this review, Foucaultian educational research can be roughly divided into three categories. First, there are theoretical works which explore the implications of Foucault's ideas for research on education. While *Discipline and Punish* is regularly cited as Foucault's key work, with its obvious implications for analyses of schools, much of this theoretical literature engages with Foucault's later work, including the numerous interviews and lectures he gave on ethics, technologies of the self, governmentality, confession and the hermeneutics of the self, critique and the politics of truth. In Ball's edited collection, James Marshall (1990) paraphrases Foucault (SP), identifying his central and over-riding concern as the philosophy of the subject, "the ways in which discourses and practices have transformed

human beings into subjects of a particular kind. It is important to note that for him, 'subject' is systematically ambiguous; it means both being tied to someone else by control and dependence, and being tied to one's own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge." (p.14). Elsewhere, Marshall adds more detail to this picture (1996; 1998; 2002), examining Foucault's conception of freedom as a practice and discussing what kind of autonomy might be conceivable after Foucault. Similarly, Michael Peters sees Foucault primarily as a philosopher of the subject (2003b). For example, he discusses Foucault's lectures on the Greek practice of *parrhesia*, or truth-telling, arguing that this can be seen as an educational practice of self. In other papers, Peters notes the Wittgensteinian heritage of Foucault's conception of 'truth games' (2000). He suggests that educational research must be seen as engaging in, and not only studying, educational games of truth, which produce all involved – researchers, teachers, and pupils – as subjects with a particular relation to the truth (2003a). In a recent theoretical paper more general in scope, Roger Deacon (2002) provides a detailed overview of the history of the relations between truth and power which Foucault traces, beginning with the Greek techniques of self, through Christian confession and pastoralism, through to the emergence of the problem of government, and the rise of the disciplines as a response to this problem. Deacon's concern seems to be not so much to elaborate upon Foucault's ideas, critique them or put them to use, but rather to organise them into a clear, comprehensible form for an educational research audience.

Francis Schrag (1999) takes a rather different approach, arguing that Foucaultian analyses of schooling are in fact little different to the Marx-influenced accounts which they purport to go beyond. He contends that Foucault's popularity amongst Anglo-American educational theorists is due primarily to a compatibility between his suspicious, pessimistic rhetoric and the current state of education politics. Scholars who once held great hopes for the transformation of schooling, but have since been bitterly disappointed by the failure of educational reforms to effect social change, are able through Foucault to "announce their resignation to the status quo while appearing to protest it." (p.381)

In addition, Schrag points out that Foucault's conception of the role of the intellectual is very attractive to scholars in this position. Foucault maintains that thought "always animates everyday behaviour" (PC, p.155), and that as such every act of thought is itself political. The intellectual should therefore not provide a comprehensive normative framework to guide action, but rather question accepted ways of thinking so as to transform thought (IP, p.284). For Schrag, "Notions such as this make it possible for scholars, especially those with a flair for theorizing, to believe that, no matter how esoteric or precious their formulations, and no matter how limited

their audiences, they are, even as they theorize, social activists engaged in laying the ground for social transformation." (p.382) These criticisms are certainly worth attending to as significant notes of caution, and as we will see in the following chapter, Schrag is not alone in his suspicion of the over-arching pessimism of *Discipline and Punish*. However, Schrag's understanding of Foucault is one-sided. Like many of Foucault's critics, he makes the mistake of reading *Discipline and Punish* as a totalistic theory of power in which "individual human actors and human choices play little or no role." (Schrag, 1999, p.379) This view fails to capture the paradox of the subject which, as the quote from Marshall suggests (see above), lies at the heart of Foucault's thought. As I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, this perspective is unsustainable in the light of a closer reading of Foucault's oeuvre, particularly his later work on technologies of the self.

Second, there are historical works, Foucaultian genealogies of various educational technologies. These are not so much concerned with producing detailed, comprehensive chronologies, but with what Popkewitz et al (2001) call 'cultural histories', and what Foucault, following Nietzsche (see NGH), called genealogies: histories which chart how currently accepted ways of thinking about education, and, more precisely, of posing educational problems, became dominant and taken-for-granted. This work is wide-ranging, including both general accounts of the rise of schooling (Jones and Williamson, 1979; Hunter, 1996) and a series of more specialised histories covering topics as diverse as the history of the examination (Hoskin, 1979 and 1990), Lancaster's system of school organisation (Hogan, 1989), the origins of the physical organisation of school spaces (Markus, 1993), the rise of educational psychology (Wooldridge, 1995), the history of school uniforms (Meadmore and Symes, 1996; Dussel, 2001), the history of educational reform in Iceland (Johannesson, 2001), and the use of mental hygiene films as an apparatus of moral control in post-war American schools (Besley, 2002). Though it predates most of Foucault's work, Philippe Ariès's classic text (1973), with its sustained discussion of the role of schooling in producing modern childhood, also fits into this category. Given the contemporary focus of this thesis, constraints of space unfortunately do not permit a more thorough discussion of this fascinating historical work.

Third, there are works which are broadly sociological, focusing upon contemporary educational systems. For the purposes of this thesis, these can be further divided into two sub-categories. On the one hand, there are those works which focus upon the discourses of education at a structural level, analysing such material as education theory texts, policy documents, school management handbooks, classroom strategies taught to teachers, and other representations of

education technologies. Examples of such work include John Knight et al's (1990) deconstruction of Australian multicultural education policy, Ball's (1990b) analysis of the rise of managerialism, Jennifer Gore's (1993) Foucaultian critique of so-called radical, critical and feminist pedagogies, Neil Selwyn's (2000) examination of policy documents discussing the UK National Grid for Learning, Erica McWilliam's (Meadmore et al, 2000) scathing appraisal of one recent educational philosophy text, and Graham and Neu's (2004) account of standardized testing as a technique of government.

On the other hand, there are a few works which, like this thesis, use Foucaultian perspectives to interpret what is said and done within the immediate spaces of education, principally the classroom. Rather than focusing on structural features, policies and official discourses, such studies use small scale qualitative empirical work to examine the micro-scale, everyday practices of teachers and pupils in schools.

Some of this work examines curriculum practices. For example, Dennis Atkinson (1998) looks at how art education practices, such as teachers' prescriptions about how to draw in perspective, construct pupils as subjects. However, as I noted in chapter one, I am interested in the forms of power which make curriculum teaching possible, rather than in those forms embodied by the curriculum. Atkinson's work is fascinating, but leaves unanswered the question of how it is that the normalising practices of the curriculum are able to be carried out in the first place.

There are also those Foucaultian empirical studies which focus on how teachers are subjected to disciplinary power. For example, Mary Bushnell (2003) uses interviews with New York teachers to critique the rise of accountability and the increasing monitoring and regulation of teaching practice. She argues that teachers, unlike other professionals, are increasingly denied autonomy through "[i]nappropriate and externally constructed surveillance" which "perpetuates teachers' subordinate status, restricts their pedagogical choices, and dampens their intellectual freedom." (p.253) Bushnell examines four particularly problematic disciplinary technologies: curricular standards, pedagogy, standardized tests and school loudspeaker systems. All of these represent attempts by the state and school managers to make schooling routine, rational, predictable and hence manageable according to industrial and bureaucratic principles. The spontaneity and creativity which Bushnell's teachers see as vital to learning are actively discouraged by tactics such as the imposition of standardized curricular materials, which pre-script interactions between teachers and pupils.

Bushnell notes some practices of resistance used by teachers, but her appraisal of these is pessimistic. Where unionised attempts at improving teacher conditions have been successful, these have taken the form of salary increases, a duty-free lunch hour, retirement benefits and other such material compensations which fail to address any of the day-to-day practical problems associated with the rise of managerialism in school. All too often, according to Bushnell, teacher's frustrations are aired in private or in the staffroom, but never congeal into political action. She concludes that "teacher's resistances are superficial, providing the illusion of change without challenging existing relationships of power." (p.268)

Taking a slightly different approach, but still from a teacher-centred perspective, Jane Perryman (2002, 2003) looks at a British inner-city comprehensive school in which she taught for three years, and which was placed under OfSTED Special Measures for two of those years. She uses material produced from both her own experience and interviews with other teachers to analyse practices of surveillance used by OfSTED, the associated process of discourse change within the school, and the teachers' feelings about these. Her findings are strongly reminiscent of the panoptic model of power which Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish*: teachers feeling that they were being "put into little boxes and having to keep within boundaries" (2003, p.8); the frequency of inspections leading staff to act as though surveillance were continuous, even when the inspectors were not in school; the homogenisation of teaching methods, similar to that described by Bushnell, in which "lessons were run to a strict formula and the Headteacher and senior management team monitored this rigorously" (ibid., p.9); the use of safe, predictable lesson strategies focussed on ensuring the pupils' good behaviour at the expense of creating imaginative learning opportunities. I will return to examine Foucault's own use of the Panopticon in detail in section 6.1.

What neither Bushnell nor Perryman discuss in any detail is how the surveillance of teachers by school managers, policymakers and OfSTED inspectors is often replicated further down the school hierarchy, in relations between teachers and children, and amongst children. For example, Bushnell (2003) quotes one teacher who says of her principal that "I just do whatever she tells me to do, and that's the way it is. There's no dialogue." (p.267) Yet in disciplinary matters at least, this is often how school pupils experience their relationships with teachers. As Pignatelli argues (1988), Foucaultian analyses of education are able to make visible practices which attempt to render both teachers *and* pupils docile. For example, Liz Jones and Tony Brown (2001) examine interactions in a nursery classroom, both amongst children and between teachers and children, from a Foucaultian perspective. Their focus is upon the discourses of

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identity which are reproduced through these interactions. In particular, they show how one feminist teacher unintentionally reproduced an essentialist discourse of gender identity, through her reading of one child's masculine role play as the manifestation of his inner identity. With hindsight, the teacher was able to understand the child's behaviour as the fantastical enactment of one role amongst others, rather than an expression of a single, fundamental subjectivity. She was able to perceive how by intervening to disrupt his play, she had inadvertently perpetuated a coercive form of identity politics, and closed down a creative space in which alternatives were being tried out.

Julie Allan (1996, 1997 and 1999) discusses how Foucaultian concepts might be applied to the analysis of special educational needs (SEN), and reports on empirical work in which she used these concepts to examine how mainstream education is experienced by children with impairments and special educational needs. Like Jones and Brown, her focus is upon the discursive practices through which these pupils' identities are produced in school. Allan shows how these practices collide in a complex, ongoing process of negotiation and struggle between the children themselves, their mainstream peers and their teachers. She pays close attention to how children with SEN use tactics of resistance and transgression in their attempts to negotiate the normal/disabled divide in school. In particular, the last chapter of her book (Allan, 1999) draws upon Foucault's later work on techniques of the self to suggest that inclusive education can be seen as an ethical project in which mainstream pupils, those with SEN, their teachers and researchers are required to work upon themselves so as to transform themselves (see chapter seven of this thesis). Allan (1996) also remarks upon the spatial dimension of Foucault's work, and connects this to SEN strategies such as integration, although her treatment of this theme is somewhat cursory.

Closer to my own substantive concerns, Trevor Welland (2001) presents an analysis of the disciplinary techniques to which students in a theological college were subjected by their superiors. Through participant observation and semi-structured interviews, Welland discovered that one of the college's central aims was to prepare students for life in a state of total visibility once ordained. Various regulatory techniques of space and time are used for this purpose. Being residential, the college ensured that students lived in such close proximity to one another that they were always subject to the surveillance of their peers. Consequently, several students remarked on the high level of peer judgement within the college, stating that informal networks led to the circulation of detailed information about matters such as students' drinking habits, sexual activity and sexual orientation. The students also experienced close monitoring by staff.

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For example, in chapel, each student is assigned a particular seating position which they must occupy during each service. The staff sat on a raised dais at the rear, from where they were able to see which students were present and absent, and how they were conducting themselves. The students, meanwhile, faced the front, and were therefore unable to discern when they were being watched, leading many to feel under constant surveillance. A rigid timetable, enforced, as in schools, by the ringing of a bell, imposed an almost monastic routine upon the students, leaving absences and deviations clearly visible.

2.2.1 Foucault in Education Research: a summary analysis

In education research, Foucault is currently one of the most popular theorists. Education scholars have drawn upon his ideas as a source of inspiration for various theoretical, historical and empirical works. However, there exists something of a mismatch between the former and the latter. While Foucaultian educational theorists such as Marshall and Peters have explored much of Foucault's later work on technologies of self, empirical analyses set within educational institutions, such as those carried out by Bushnell, Perryman, Allan and Welland, refer primarily to the model of power as total subjection which dominates the most well-known passages of *Discipline and Punish*. In their failure to draw out the deeply ambiguous conception of power at the heart of Foucault's work, and in their interpretation of the Panopticon as a description of how power operates in educational institutions, these authors risk lapsing into the kind of apolitical pessimism about which Schrag (1999, see above) is so concerned. The acts of resistance which these authors document are generally disorganised, incoherent and ultimately ineffectual, a mere pissing in the wind of total panoptic power. The exception here is Julie Allan, whose work is based upon a much more nuanced appreciation of Foucault's work as a whole. The consequences of this are clear: Allan's outlook, though never utopian, is unmistakeably optimistic, and her writing conveys a clear sense of the possibilities for change inherent in the dynamics of educational institutions. This seems to me to be a much more creative use of Foucaultian ideas. After all, Foucault insisted that his aim in carrying out critical ontologies such as *Discipline and Punish* was not to produce despair, but rather to raise the possibility of thinking differently about power, knowledge and human subjects:

"people often judge what I have done to be a sort of complicated, rather excessive analysis which leads to the result that finally we are imprisoned in our own system. The chords which bind us are numerous and the knots which history has tied around us are oh so difficult to untie. In fact, I do just the opposite when I studied

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something like madness or prisons...It is a matter of making things more fragile through this historical analysis...to show that nonetheless, these are only strategies and therefore...by changing strategies, taking things differently, finally what appears obvious to us is not at all so obvious." (WP, p.160-161)

This strongly suggests that the pessimistic, totalitarian readings of Foucault which dominate most of the empirical work reviewed here must be called into question. It is my contention that closer attention to the subtleties of Foucault's account of power might be able to move empirical work on schooling beyond the dismal impasse of entrapment with which we are left by those such as Perryman and Bushnell. In the next chapter of my thesis, I will begin to explore some of these subtleties in Foucault's oeuvre. However, first I want to summarise the literature reviewed thus far.

2.3 Literature review: summary

My discussion of the existing literature on children's geographies of schooling and Foucaultian studies of education has identified two major problems. First, there are few studies which put Foucault's insights to work in empirical investigations of contemporary spaces of education, particularly within geography. I have suggested that these insights have much to offer geographies of schooling, given the sophisticated understanding of the interdependency of individual agency and institutional power at the heart of Foucault's work, and the central importance of space within his various histories.

The second problem is that most of those empirical studies in education research which do use Foucault tend to draw predominantly upon a simplistic and pessimistic reading of *Discipline and Punish*. Their tone is one of helplessness in the face of the disciplinary power inherent in institutional education. I believe that, as a result, these studies fail to capitalise on the potential of Foucault's analytical tools to transform our understanding of schools and their role in the production of human subjects.

This thesis attempts to address both of these problems. In the next chapter, I will begin a close and careful exegesis of Foucault's work so as to place *Discipline and Punish* in the wider context of Foucault's oeuvre, particularly his later work on technologies of the self. This will provide a general theoretical framework, upon which I will then expand at the beginning of each of my three substantive chapters. Framed in this way, these chapters will present empirical material in an attempt to analyse the geography of power in the classroom, and its role in the production of schooled subjects. As such, my analysis will contribute to the rather limited and

fragmented literature on the social geography of schooling which I have reviewed in this chapter.

3

Power, knowledge, and the subject

In the previous two chapters, I have suggested that Foucault's work might have important insights to offer to research on the social geography of schooling. I have also argued that the little existing empirical work in this area which engages with his ideas often does so in a rather narrow way. In this chapter, I will attempt to begin a more careful exegesis of Foucault's key concepts, in preparation for the substantive chapters of this thesis, which use those concepts to analyse classroom practices.

In spite of the diversity of his enquiries, in his later work, Foucault identifies a purpose common to all of his research: "to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects." (SP, p.208) His thesis, in the most general terms, is that these modern modes of subject formation involve the exercise of power and knowledge in close connection to one another. Each of his substantive studies examines the relations between the various kinds of powers, knowledges and subjects found in particular historical and geographical contexts. Thus *Madness and Civilization* (MC) maps out a history of how mad subjects have been produced by certain kinds of psychiatric knowledge, allied to spatial exercises of power – confinement, exile, and so on. Foucault's following study, *The Birth of the Clinic* (BC), explores the institutionalisation of disease in late eighteenth century Europe, paying particular attention to the rise of French teaching hospitals. Again, this analysis draws attention to dramatic changes in the spaces of medicine, and in medical techniques of power, particularly the observing 'gaze' of the clinicians and their students. Foucault discusses the kinds of knowledge which this new gaze produced, and the ways in which this knowledge constructed the patient as an instance of disease. *The Order of Things* (OT) is a more wide-ranging treatise on the history of the human sciences in Europe. Foucault's achievement here is to demonstrate that the figure of 'Man', who is both the knowing subject and the object of knowledge in human biology, linguistics, political economy, sociology, psychology and so on, was not a pre-given entity for these sciences. Rather, this 'Man' is the effect of these forms of knowing and the knowledge they produce. *Discipline and Punish* (DP), Foucault's most well-known book, describes the historical production of yet another kind of subject – the delinquent – through techniques of punishment, incarceration, and 'discipline'. The latter is Foucault's term for forms

of power which are not violent or destructive, but seek rather to produce docile subjects through processes of training, correction, normalisation and surveillance. These techniques involve the spatial separation and distribution of individuals, through the use of prison cells for example. Such techniques of power are also sustained by the knowledge which they produce, through procedures of examination and classification. Foucault's latter work, much of which is presented in *The History Of Sexuality* (WK; UP; CS), moves away from the focus on institutions to examine the forms of power-knowledge which fashion people into sexual subjects. In particular, Foucault became fascinated by the Greek theme of care of the self. He thought that the relationship one has to oneself, including forms of self-reflection and self-knowledge, could be a key force in fashioning subjectivity.

To get to the heart of this triple constellation of power, knowledge and the human subject, it will be necessary to discuss these terms and the relations between them in more detail.

3.1 What is power?

Most commentators agree that it is pointless to demand a coherent general theory of power from Foucault, since he explicitly refrains from offering one (see for example Driver, 1985; Philo, 1992a; McHoul and Grace, 1993; Ransom, 1997). He states quite categorically that "when I examine relationships of power, I create no theory of power. I examine how relationships of power interact...I am no theoretician of power. The question of power in itself doesn't interest me." (RTT, p.360-361)

Nevertheless, as McHoul and Grace (1993) note, Foucault's work does involve theori*sations* of power based upon a series of historical interrogations. It is therefore possible to discuss how Foucault theorises power, with the proviso that such theorisations will always be tentative, partial and historically specific. This is because Foucault is a staunch nominalist, rejecting the idea that human and social phenomena have essential, unchanging essences. He resists defining power in a metaphysical way, insisting that "something called Power...which is assumed to exist universally in a concentrated or diffuse form, does not exist. Power exists only when it is put into action." (SP, p.219) Foucault stresses that "power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society." (WK, p.93) And again, "Power is relations; power is not a thing" (WP, p.155) He therefore prefers to leave the question "what is power?" open, enquiring instead into *how* power is exercised, under what conditions and with

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what effects. Such enquiries must be contextual and specific, as reflected by the particular historical and institutional focuses of Foucault's empirical studies.

However, in one of his later papers, Foucault does offer a more general theorisation of the kind of power in which he is interested, as "a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future...it incites, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely" (SP, p.220) This power over actions is distinct from both power over objects (which Foucault terms 'capacity') and the power to communicate, although these different kinds of power may be linked to one another in certain circumstances.

This formulation has two very important implications. First, this power over actions can only come into operation where a number of different actions are possible. Let us take the example of a teacher telling a pupil to sit still at her desk. In this situation, the pupil is able to act in a range of ways. She might sit still, but equally she might shuffle on her chair, or kneel on the chair, or lean backwards on the chair's rear legs. Or she might abandon the chair altogether and sit on the desk, or walk across the room to speak to a friend. Precisely because all these actions are possible, the teacher attempts to exercise power over the pupil by demanding that she sit still. If the teacher is not successful, she might try different tactics: threatening sanctions, such as deprivation of break time, detention, parental involvement and so on. This might increase the likelihood of the teacher's power producing its intended effect, but it would not alter the fact that the pupil is still confronted with a range of possible actions. Some have now become more difficult, but they exist nonetheless.

Let us now imagine a much more extreme situation, where the teacher forces the pupil to sit still at her desk by using a set of iron shackles fastened to her chair, which is now bolted to the floor. In Foucault's terms, the relationship between the teacher and the pupil is no longer one of power, but one of complete physical constraint. The teacher does not need to exercise power over the pupil to make her sit still, precisely because the pupil now has no choice but to do so. Such deterministic relationships are relatively rare in the Western liberal-democratic societies with which Foucault's analyses are concerned and, as the example I have used demonstrates, they have a minimal role to play in modern schooling. Of more interest to both Foucault and to me are relationships in which those who are subjected always have a degree of freedom: "power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free." (ibid., p.221) This means,

crucially, that the effectiveness of a given form of power always depends upon the complicity of those over whom that power is being exercised.

The second implication is that power relations are the basic fabric of social life, simply because "to live in society is to live in such a way that action upon other action is possible – and in fact ongoing. A society without power relations can only be an abstraction." (ibid. p.222-223) The political consequences of this are far-reaching. One cannot hope to liberate society by removing power relations altogether, since this would destroy society. Instead, radical politics must involve (i) critique: pointing out the problems of current configurations of power relations; and (ii) activism: working to transform these power relations so as to address the problems identified by critique. Both of these processes are themselves exercises of power (and of knowledge – see below).

3.1.1 Economic models of power

It should already be clear that Foucault's understanding of power differs substantially from those understandings of power which predominate in contemporary western societies. These, Foucault suggests, are largely based on economic models. In the liberal juridical conception, for example, "power is regarded as a right which can be possessed in the way one possesses a commodity" (SD, p.13). For Foucault, this is a fetishization of power akin to the fetishization of commodities remarked upon by Marx in *Capital*. To take an example, I might consider that, as a citizen of the UK, I possess the power to vote in a general election and thereby determine the means by which I am governed. Yet Foucault would stress that this power does not exist in the abstract, since it is the power *to do* something specific. This power only exists when I perform the action of voting. If I do not vote, then voting for me is of the order of an unrealised capacity, or a potential, not a power. For Foucault, power's status as a noun is a grammatical mistake solidified into language; it is better thought of as a verb. I can no more possess power than I can possess breathing or running. This is a crucial point missed by sympathetic commentators such as Edward Said (1986) and unsympathetic ones such as Nancy Hartsock (1990). They presume that Foucault's perspective on power is that of someone who has no power imagining what could be done and speculating about what he could imagine if he had power (see Said, 1986, p.151). Yet Foucault did not think that power was something that could be 'had'[3].

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[3] In an interview (PSX), Foucault explicitly rejects the question "What would you do if you had the power?" as irrelevant to his project (p.124).

There is a further problem with the liberal conception of power: its individualism. If I do vote, the power that I exercise cannot be thought of as independent of a whole network of relations: for example, relations between the various people in central government; between these people and the election candidates; between the people in government and those responsible for supervising and counting the ballot; and between the ballot supervisors and myself. If any of these relationships change or break down, the power which I am able to exercise will also be transformed. Therefore the assertion that, as an individual, I possess the power to vote is true only in the weakest sense. As part of an analysis of the power to vote, this assertion would be of little use, since it tends to obscure the more important mechanisms which make voting possible. For such an analysis to bear fruit, one would have to look beyond such claims about who has power, how much power they have, etc. and turn one's attention instead to the network of relations through which this power is exercised:

> "Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation." (PK, p.98)

So much for the liberal juridical model of power. The other dominant economic model of power is found in popular forms of Marxism, where power is reduced to its economic functionality[4]. The Marxist model divides people into two classes according to their economic status: the bourgeoisie (those who own means of production) and the proletariat (those who do not). Power is then understood as a force whose fundamental function is to perpetuate the domination of the latter by the former so as to maintain capitalist relations of production. The bourgeoisie possess the apparatus of production, and therefore they also possess the power to dominate, oppress and exploit the proletariat. The proletariat possess only their labour power, which they must sell to the bourgeoisie in order to survive, thus leaving themselves powerless. They are therefore urged to regain control of the apparatus of production in order to regain power.

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4 The model of power referred to here, and by Foucault, as 'the Marxist model' is a common-sense understanding of class oppression based loosely on the substance of Marx's key writings. It is not intended to represent a more careful, close and nuanced reading of Marx's oeuvre. Indeed, as Driver (1985) points out, there is a great deal of compatibility between Marx and Foucault, with the latter clearly deriving his interest in relations of production from the former.

Foucault thinks that, like the liberal juridical conception, this model of power is seriously flawed. First, while he accepts that power is closely tied to economic relations, he does not think that it is reducible to them. The power of, say, a foreman to compel his workers to labour is based upon an economic relationship, but the power of a priest to illicit confessions from his congregation is not.

Second, in the Marxist model, power is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Yet as we have already seen, Foucault refuses to accept that power can be concentrated in the hands of a particular set of people. As he infamously asserts, "Power is everywhere" (WK, p.93)[5]. The net-like anatomy of power means that it is distributed throughout society rather than, as is often supposed, concentrated in some central body, such as the state. This is not to diminish the central role of the state in exercising power. Rather, it is to insist that the state is not the origin or repository of power, but merely another set of networks through which power is exercised over other power relations within the social body: "one could say that power relations have been progressively governmentalized, that is to say, elaborated, rationalized, and centralized in the form of, or under the auspices of, state institutions." (SP, p.224)[6] I will return to this notion of 'governmentality' in due course.

Again, this has major implications for the analysis of power. Foucault stresses that power cannot be viewed as something which flows from the top of a social hierarchy downwards – from the state to the people, from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, and so on:

> "One must rather conduct an ascending analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been – and continue to be – invested, colonised, utilised, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc., by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination." (PK, p.99)

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[5] Foucault stressed that the omnipresence of power does not assure its omnipotence (see in particular CP). Both Colin Gordon (1980) and John Ransom (1997) emphasise this point in the face of Foucault's critics.

[6] Driver (1985) argues that Foucault's analyses, particularly *Discipline and Punish*, ignore or underemphasise the role of the state as a mediator of power relations. "What is needed," he suggests, "is a closer examination of the relationship between power as it operates through the state and power as it is practised at the individual level." (p.439) Yet in his later work Foucault seems to respond to such criticism by reframing his work in terms of governmentality (see my discussion below). In particular, Foucault's 1978 lecture series on 'Sécurité, territoire et population' (from which G is taken) and the two lectures on political reason which he gave at Stanford University in 1979 (PR) discuss the historical development of state rationality, and as such provide at least the beginnings of the kind of analysis which Driver thinks is lacking.

This approach embodies Foucault's empiricism. Sceptical of grand theories, he claims to be more interested in looking at the specific details of particular phenomena at the smallest scale: "I believe that anything can be deduced from the general phenomenon of the dominance of the bourgeois class. What needs to be done is something quite different. One needs to investigate historically, and beginning from the lowest level, how mechanisms of power have been able to function." (ibid., p.100) In this study, for example, it will not be sufficient to rely on a simplistic model in which the school is posited as an all-powerful structure, the teachers are viewed as the malign agents of that power, and the children are looked upon as powerless, subjugated and oppressed. Instead, attention will be paid to the various forms of power exercised at the smallest scale by the children, the teachers and myself.

This approach also reflects Foucault's commitment to Nietzsche's theory that, in the social world, "a power-will is acted out in all that happens" (Nietzsche, 1994, p.56). Power is not something which operates only occasionally, through the lofty decisions of governments or the financial transactions of large corporations. As 'actions upon actions', power also animates many more mundane, everyday practices. Carrying out social research involves a whole series of power relations, for example. And as this thesis will show, so does the schooling of children. This is not to suggest that all of these kinds of power are identical. It is the task of analysis to distinguish between the myriad forms of power operating in a given context.

It is worth labouring this diverse, everyday quality of power as understood by Foucault. For all his talk of multiple micro-powers, some of his commentators still seem to think that he imagines power as something operating through the anonymous machinations of social institutions, inaccessible and therefore unassailable. For example, Said (1986) says that "Many of the people who admire and have learned from Foucault, including myself, have commented on the undifferentiated power he seemed to ascribe to modern society." (1986, p.151) He goes on to claim that Foucault imagined power to be "irresistible and unopposable" (ibid.) Though some of the more gloomy (and hence more memorable) rhetoric of *Discipline and Punish* seems to suggest this, as I will demonstrate repeatedly throughout this thesis, Foucault's work as a whole does not support this view.

The liberal and Marxist economic models of power suffer from a further problem. Both attribute a certain subjective consciousness to the exercise of power. In the liberal model, the individual consciously consents to the laws of the social contract. He then chooses to exercise the rights guaranteed by that contract in certain ways. For example, I freely decide to live in a liberal democracy, and freely decide that I will vote for a particular candidate in an election.

According to this model, as a rational, free, autonomous individual, the way in which I wield my power perfectly expresses my conscious intentions. In the Marxist model, meanwhile, a more malicious, Machiavellian consciousness is attributed to the bourgeoisie. Their oppressive use of power is thought to represent a hidden agenda of ruthless exploitation for profit. This figure of the scheming capitalist has a number of obvious analogues: the lying politician who deceives his voters for personal advantage; the priest who uses his status as a cover for child abuse; the corrupt and violent policeman; the teacher who hates children; and so on. In each case, just as in the liberal model, the way in which power is used (or abused) is thought to reflect the conscious intentions of the person in question.

Once again, Foucault argues that this is a fantasy, based on a broadly humanistic understanding of the subject as a conscious agent, which obscures the way in which power really operates. He agrees that power is intentional inasmuch as it is always calculated to satisfy a series of aims and objectives. But "this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject" (WK, p.95). In other words, subjects do not have a monopoly on the effects of their actions. For example, as a university tutor, my intention might be to enlighten a group of students. Yet a whole series of factors beyond my conscious control might frustrate this intention. My teaching manner might intimidate, infuriate or confuse some of the students. The personal psychology of each student would unavoidably mediate my teaching in ways which could not possibly be predicted. The institutional setting would almost certainly shape our interactions in ways beyond both our control and our immediate awareness. Even if I succeeded in enlightening just one of the students, the process of enlightenment would have other effects not intended by me, both upon the student in question and upon the other people to whom the student was related. The nature, extent and significance of all of these effects could only be determined with hindsight.

In general, then, the complexity of the social world means that social actions always have unintended effects. In some cases, the intentions and the effects of an action may bear little relation to one another, and may even be directly contradictory. For example, in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shows how prisons, as an apparatus intended to reform criminals, thereby enabling them to participate in society, in fact do no such thing. Their effect is rather to make delinquency manageable, to render those with criminal tendencies more predictable, and therefore less dangerous. Foucault does not think that this means that the expressed intentions of penal reformers were disingenuous. But he does think that these intentions shift attention away from the real, material function of prisons. In other words, in the analysis of power, the

conscious intentions of those involved are irrelevant, simply because the rationality of power is not to be found in the minds of those who exercise it: "we know perfectly well that even if we reach the point of designating exactly all those people, all those "decision-makers," we will still not really know why and how the decision was made, how it came to be accepted by everybody, and how it is that it hurts a particular category of person" (OP, p.103-104). The rationality of techniques of power must therefore be sought in their effects. Thus Foucault insists that those investigating power must

> "refrain from posing the labyrinthine and unanswerable question: 'Who then has power and what has he in mind? What is the aim of someone who possesses power?' Instead, it is a case of studying power at the point where its intention, if it has one, is completely invested in its real and effective practices. What is needed is a study of power in its external visage, at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application...where it installs itself and produces real effects." (PK, p.97)

3.1.2 The repressive hypothesis

So far, I have shown that Foucault seeks a provisional, non-economic model which would look upon power as something which (i) cannot be possessed or accumulated, but which exists only in action, when it is exercised, and which (ii) is therefore diffused throughout society rather than concentrated in a class, a state, or an institution; (iii) is not necessarily tied to economic processes; and (iv) does not express the conscious intentions of an individual or a group.

One such model is that of power as a repressing force. The power of the priest, for example, could be said to be exercised when he incites his congregation to renounce the pleasures of the flesh, thereby repressing their 'natural' sexual urges. The priest's conscious intentions may be benign, since he has the wellbeing of his flock at heart. Yet the effects of this technique of power would be repressive. This model of power is familiar in western societies. It can be found, for example, in the work of Wilhelm Reich and, most famously, in Freud.

However, Foucault also has objections to this model. First, it posits a subject which exists prior to power and possesses a set of essential, natural characteristics, some of which are later seized upon and repressed by power. Let us persist with the example of sex. In the beginning, so the 'repressive hypothesis' goes, man and woman were unashamed of their innocent, natural sexuality. Then came an oppressive force – Christianity, the bourgeoisie, industrial capitalism, or something similarly suspicious – which exercised a prohibitive power over man and woman, so that they came to despise their sexual bodies.

Foucault does not accept this myth. As we will see shortly, he insists that subjects only come into existence through the exercise of various kinds of power, so there is no question of a subject prior to power. Whilst he acknowledges that some kinds of power can be said to repress, Foucault is more interested in looking at the kinds of power which produce subjects. More precisely, he wants to see how powers which from one perspective appear repressive can also be said to have productive effects. For example, at the start of *The History of Sexuality*, he points out that processes commonly understood to have repressed sexuality in fact produced a wealth of discourse on the topic. Confession before a priest might be viewed as repressive, but it also produces discourse on sex. This discourse cannot be understood as solely repressive since it plays a key role in constituting the confessor as a sexual subject.

This repressive myth also has dubious utopian implications. Caricatured slightly, these look something like this: if the bonds of this repression can be loosened by some supposedly benign agent (drugs, therapists, new age 'spirituality', pagan festivals, etc.), then a state of sexual liberation might be reached in which man and woman finally return to their original state of harmony with nature. That this state has not been reached is due not to some fault with the diagnosis, nor with the cure, but is merely testament to the severity of the repression.

Foucault is deeply suspicious of such notions. As I have already noted, he does not believe that there is any natural, essential human nature to which humans might return once freed from power; rather, power is a condition of our existence as social subjects. Further, he does not accept that liberation can ever be guaranteed. Freedom, as a form of the exercise of power, is an ongoing practice, not a commodity to be recovered once and for all. It is also contextual. Liberty is nothing more or less than the struggle of an individual or group against those particular powers which seek to dominate and constrain them. Borrowing from the Greeks, Foucault suggests that "Rather than speaking of an essential freedom, it would be better to speak of an "agonism" – of a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitation and struggle; less of a face-to-face confrontation which paralyses both sides than a permanent provocation." (SP, p.222)

3.1.3 Power as warfare, power as government

Foucault thinks that this permanent provocation is captured well by a model of power based on warfare. He explores this in depth in his 1976 lecture course at the College de France (SD). From *Discipline and Punish* onwards, he repeatedly uses metaphors of strategy and tactics to describe techniques of power, and suggests that Clausewitz's famous suggestion, that war is

politics continued by other means, could be turned around: politics could equally be thought of as war continued by other means.

One of the most important implications of this agonistic, war-like power concerns resistance. Some of Foucault's critics denounce *Discipline and Punish* as a totalistic account of our entrapment within an inescapable web of power (see for example Alcoff, 1990; McNay, 1992). Even those who profess admiration for Foucault feel compelled to complain that with his "profoundly pessimistic view [of power] went also a singular lack of interest in the forces of effective resistance to it." (Said, 1986, p.151). Foucault admits that his work from the mid seventies over-emphasises the importance of technologies of domination (see for example TS, p.17; ST, p.182), and in his later writing he tries to address this problem[7]. One way in which he does this is by clarifying the relationship between power and resistance.

Let us return to the purely imaginary example of the pupil shackled to her chair by a totalitarian teacher (see above). Under these conditions, there is no possibility of resistance, but neither is there any need for the teacher to exercise power, since the pupil's movement – or lack of it – has been completely determined in advance. This situation is like a war which does not need to be fought because the victory of one party is assured from the outset. Yet this is nonsensical. Wars depend fundamentally on the indeterminacy of the outcome, which is why Foucault finds them appropriate as a metaphor for power.

Foucault does accept that there are some extreme cases where an oppressive, dominating power is taken to its ultimate conclusion, becoming deterministic. In a war, it is conceivable that one faction could physically annihilate the other completely by mass murder. Alternatively, prisoners could be taken and subjected to such extreme techniques of psychological torture that the end result could be described as determination. Yet situations of this kind are extremely rare, both in warfare and in social life, and as we have already seen, Foucault thinks that they cannot really be described as power relations. They are better described as relations of force, of total constraint, determination or annihilation. More usually, wars are concluded with the surrender of one side to the other, at which point a relationship of warfare is transformed into a political relationship – which, by definition, is negotiable. Even if one party dominates the other, a political relationship must always fall short of complete determination. In other words, resistance is the logical counterpart of power, which is why power struggles are always ongoing:

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[7] I will return to this in detail in chapter seven.

"there are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. It exists all the more by being in the same place as power" (PST, p.142)

This resistance "does not pre-date the power which it opposes. It is coextensive with it and absolutely its contemporary...as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy." (PSX, p.122-123) It is difficult to see how the objections of those such as Said can be sustained in the light of such remarks.

We have seen that Foucault was not interested in developing a general theory of power, but rather in developing a set of analytical tools designed to shed light on particular phenomena: madness, punishment, sex, and so on. He therefore tried out different metaphors and conceptions of power in different projects, refining them as his work evolved. While he favoured the metaphor of war during the early to mid-seventies (this metaphor dominates in DP and WK, and also in his 1976 lecture series SD), towards the end of that decade, he began to experiment with the concept of 'governmentality' as an alternative way of understanding power, which would again shift the emphasis of his analyses away from technologies of domination (see in particular G, the first lecture from his 1978 series). Characteristically, Foucault's definition of the term was loose and not altogether consistent, varying over time and depending upon the context. Broadly speaking, it refers to the kinds of power exercised in the management of groups of people, from families and school classes to Church congregations and national populations.

The crucial factor here is the liberal democratic idea that the agency of the governed is necessary for the effectiveness of government. The kind of government in which Foucault is interested does not operate by crudely imposing the will of one party (the bourgeoisie, the state, the employer, the teacher) upon a subordinate party (the proletariat, the citizen, the employee, the pupil). Instead, there is a much more subtle interplay between the hierarchical, coercive power of the governor over the governed, and the governed subject's power over herself, which we might call freedom or autonomy. As Graham Burchell (1996) notes, "government in general is understood as a way of acting to affect the way in which individuals *conduct themselves*" (p.20, emphasis as in original). This process involves "a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which impose coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself." (ST, p.182) In chapter seven, I

will return to elaborate at length upon the idea of how individuals exercise power over themselves. For the time being, it will suffice to say that, as Burchell points out, the metaphor of government is attractive as a way of understanding power precisely because it precludes the kind of totalistic conceptions attributed to Foucault by his critics (see above). It demands that analysis move beyond simplistic oppositional models of power, looking instead at the ways in which coercion both requires the complicity of the coerced, and is at the same time limited by the extent of this complicity.

Before moving on, I want to summarise the various general features of Foucault's approach to power as I have outlined them so far. It should be stressed that these are not fundamental attributes of power, but rather tentative suggestions for how power might be analysed in an empirical study.

1. For Foucault, power is not some uniform, stable entity, but something which exists only when it is put into action, in a specific relationship or network of relationships. It will therefore vary according to the characteristics of these relationships.

2. Power is a way of acting upon actions. As such, it can only operate where a range of actions are possible for the person over whom the power is exercised. Its effectiveness thus depends upon the complicity of that person.

3. Relations of power are not closely analogous to economic relationships. Since it is not a commodity, power cannot be concentrated in the hands of a particular set of people or enshrined within a particular institution or architectural form. Instead, power is distributed throughout the whole of society, exercised via a multitude of diverse, small-scale, local practices and relationships. These may then be colonised by larger structures, such as states, but the power of these larger structures depends wholly upon the existence of the small-scale instances of power.

4. Power manifests its purposes in its real effects, not in the conscious intentions of those who exercise it.

5. Power is primarily productive rather than repressive.

6. Because power depends upon the complicity of the person who is subjected, it always creates the possibility of resistance. It therefore often takes the form of an ongoing struggle between adversaries, which may be usefully described

through metaphors of warfare: strategies, tactics, etc. Alternatively, power may be better approached as a process of government, in which the coercive power of the governor and the autonomous power of the governed may be mutually reinforcing in certain circumstances, whilst coming into conflict in others.

3.2 Power-knowledge

If power for Foucault is a primarily productive force, then what does it produce? Where Marx is preoccupied with the production of wealth, Foucault is more interested in the production of two quite different phenomena: knowledge, and human subjects. He believes that the production of these phenomena have been eclipsed by the economic focus of liberalism and Marxism, leaving important questions unasked and unanswered.

In his analyses of the production of knowledge, Foucault's terminology can sometimes be confusing. In some instances he writes about knowledge, while at other times he refers to truth. For the purposes of this discussion, it is worth noting that for Foucault knowledge always articulates a truth of some sort, even if it is a truth which is fabricated, partial, restricted and misleading. Without some kind of truth-status, knowledge would not be knowledge at all. Thus knowledge and truth, though not identical, are closely related.

This raises the question of what Foucault means by truth, which is far from straightforward in his writing. I do not wish to explore that question in any depth here, but it will be necessary to make a few important remarks.

First, Foucault thinks that truth is not a simple, unitary phenomenon, but something much more complex: "I believe too much in the truth not to assume that there are different truths and different ways of saying it." (AE2 p. 453). It is worth noting that this is *not* the same as claiming that the truth is always relative to a particular culture, historical period, institution, group, individual, etc. Nor does it amount to the claim that all statements put forth as truths are equally truthful. Second, Foucault does not think that truth can easily be dispensed with. His own projects question the truths produced by the human sciences and by disciplinary practices, but they do so by producing different truths which he thinks are politically important. Third, he is often less interested in asking what the truth is than in asking how it is that certain kinds of truth have come to be valued so highly in our society. After all, as Nietzsche pointed out, truths are often dangerous, destructive and unsettling:

"Why, in fact, are we attached to the truth? Why the truth rather than lies? Why the truth rather than myth? Why the truth rather than illusion? And I think that, instead of trying to determine what truth, as opposed to error, is, it might be more interesting to take up the problem posed by Nietzsche: how is it that, in our societies, "the truth" has been given this value, thus placing us absolutely under its thrall?" (OP, p.107)

This brings us to the heart of Foucault's understanding of knowledge and truth. For if the truth holds us absolutely under its thrall, then "truth is no doubt a form of power" (ibid.) By extension, knowledge of the truth is also a form of power.

Yet Foucault also thinks that knowledge of the truth cannot come into existence except through the exercise of a will to knowledge. In other words, knowledge of something does not simply appear out of thin air. Rather, it must be produced through the efforts of some entity – a child, a teacher, a researcher, a prison, a school, a state – which seeks to know, and which mobilises the power available to it in pursuit of this knowledge. Thus "power produces...it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production." (DP, p.194) Hence the tightly knit couplet power-knowledge which, for Foucault, is one of the most important features of our society. It is worth quoting him at length here:

> "in a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth...we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need to function: we *must* speak the truth; we are constrained or condemned to confess or to discover the truth...we must produce truth as we must produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place." (PK, p.93-94)

Two further points must be emphasised. First, care must be taken when using power-knowledge. Just as "anything can be deduced from the general phenomenon of the dominance of the bourgeois class" (PK, p.100), anything can be deduced from the general phenomenon of the interconnectedness of power and knowledge. This means that, in any given social situation, power-knowledge can be shown to be a mere fact of social life in a very formulaic way: taking knowledge x and power y, show how x = y. This was not how Foucault used power-knowledge;

indeed, had he done so, his empirical analyses could not have been carried out: "I think that in the public's eye I am the one who has said that knowledge has become indistinguishable from power...If I had said, or wanted to say, that knowledge was power I would have said it. and having said it, I would no longer have anything to say, since in identifying them I would have had no reason to try to show their different relationships." (CT2 p.462) "The very fact that I pose the question of their relations proves that I do not *identify* them." (IH, p.43) David Hoy (1986b) is therefore mistaken when he asserts that from Foucault's perspective, "there is little point in speaking even about the relations between power and knowledge since these are not so readily distinguishable." (p.129) The fact that, in our society, power and knowledge always accompany each other, and are therefore impossible to dissociate from one another, does not mean that they are the same thing, or that their relationship to one another will always be the same regardless of the context. Showing their different relationships in a range of different contexts was a core purpose of Foucault's various studies. These studies demonstrate that power-knowledge is best used as an analytical tool, a starting point for detailed investigations into the relations between particular kinds of power and particular kinds of knowledge in specific social and historical contexts.

Second, as Gordon (1980) notes, power must not be seen as that which produces false knowledges, which can then be undermined by exposing this hidden connection. Power-knowledge "is not a scalpel serving to extract from the body of good, true science those ideologies which act as comprador allies of repressive power." (ibid., p.237) Rather, power establishes true knowledge. Power is powerful precisely because it is able to produce truths. If it were only able to repress truth, power would not be so highly valued in our society. There is a corollary to this: knowledge free of power is an impossibility.

We are now ready to discuss the final element in Foucault's triad: the human subject.

3.3 Subjects and subjection

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault writes that the "real, non-corporal soul [i.e. the subject] is not a substance; it is the element in which are articulated the effects of a certain type of power and the reference of a certain type of knowledge, the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge, and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power" (DP, p.29). This seems to support his claim that he is interested in power-knowledge only in as much as it provides a way of understanding "the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects." (SP, p.208) In other words, he thinks that both power

and knowledge, working in close combination, are the key forces in the production of subjects, a process which he calls *assujetissement*, 'subjectivation' or, more simply, 'subjection'. But what does he mean by the term 'subject'?

Foucault's nominalism extends to his understanding of subjects. That is, he believes "that there is no sovereign, founding subject, a universal form of subject to be found everywhere. I am very sceptical of this view of the subject and very hostile to it." (AE1, p.50) Human beings are not, by nature, subjects. They are transformed into subjects "through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation, of liberty, as in Antiquity, on the basis, of course, of a number of rules, styles, inventions to be found in the cultural environment." (ibid., p.50-51) The latter point is crucial. The way in which these practices of subjection and liberation form each individual subject must be different, since no two subjects are the same; yet these practices are never purely individual, but rather derive from the culture or cultures in which the subject is produced. As this thesis will show, the practices of subjection and liberation operating in the classroom are derived from a variety of cultural sources: Christianity, humanism, utilitarianism, and so on. Their combination within a state funded institution for the compulsory education of children, in the context of a western European capitalist economy in late modernity, is, if not quite unique, then certainly different from the configuration of such practices in, say, Ancient Greece, communist China or pre-revolution France. Just as these subject-forming practices vary over history and geography, so do the kinds of subjects produced. To be more precise, Foucault makes it clear that the very idea of humans as subjects is relatively recent, having risen to dominance in western culture following the Enlightenment. In other times and places human beings have been produced in quite different ways. In Greek Antiquity, for example, the idea that all humans are subjects would have been unintelligible. Their understanding of human beings was quite different: only a small elite of free men were thought to possess a self which could be cultivated (CS).

So what are the features of this 'subject' peculiar to our time? It will be the task of the substantive sections of this thesis to address this question towards what I have called the 'schooled subject' – that particular human subject, both educated and educable, which schools attempt to produce. Like Foucault, I want "to grasp subjection *in its material instance* as a constitution of subjects" (PK, p.97, emphasis added) rather than trying to specify it in advance. However, there is one general feature of the modern subject which warrants some discussion here: its paradoxical status with respect to power.

Foucault notes that "There are two meanings of the word *subject*: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to." (SP. p.212) This we could call the 'subjugated subject'. As Jon Simons (1995) points out, "This meaning bears a connotation of being dominated, constrained or subjugated by some force or by limits." (p.4) As a PhD student, for example, I am subject to my supervisors through their monitoring of my progress, while school pupils are subject to the demands made of them by their teachers. But, Simons continues, there is another meaning to the word subject:

> "In another sense...as in grammar, the subject of the sentence is attributed with agency and is thus empowered to act on the object. According to Foucault...the subject is neither wholly subjected nor entirely self-defining and self-regulating. The subject is indebted to the limits, however oppressive, imposed on him or her for the possibility of being anyone at all, having an identity and capacities to act." (ibid.)

We could call this subject empowered with agency the 'acting subject'. Though they appear to stand in contradiction, the subjugated subject and the acting subject are in fact two sides of the same coin. In one of his lectures on power, Foucault says that "The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle." (PK, p.98) As Judith Butler puts it, "the subject itself is a site of this ambivalence in which the subject emerges both as the *effect* of a prior power and as the *condition of possibility* for a radically conditioned form of agency." (Butler, 1997, p.14-15, emphasis as in original.)

It seems to me that this paradox lies at the heart of what Foucault's critics seem to find so scandalous about his theorisation of how power produces subjects. In *Discipline and Punish*, he makes the disconcerting assertion that "The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself." (DP, p.30) Human subjects may be able to exercise power, but they are only able to do so because they have been produced as subjects capable of thought and action by a power which precedes them. In other words, I can only exercise agency freely if I am able to conduct myself as a bounded, rational, free-willing individual subject. And I am only able to do that thanks to the disciplinary powers which have formed me as such a subject, by subjecting me to their constraints – powers which, since they preceded my agency, I could have had no control over. It seems pessimistic to claim that powers exist against which human subjects are impotent, but utterly diabolical to suggest that human agency should be dependent upon those very powers for

its existence. Foucault seems to present us with a vicious circle: "the agency of the subject appears to be an effect of its subordination. Any effort to oppose that subordination will necessarily presuppose and reinvoke it." (Butler, 1997, p.12) Looked upon in this way, it is easy to see how Foucault is sometimes thought to be "a prophet of entrapment who induces despair" (Simons, 1995, p.3)

What both Simons and Butler recognise is that the paradox of the subject in fact offers a way out of this vicious circle, since there is no reason to suppose that the power of agency will be concordant with the power of subjection: "no continuity is to be assumed between (a) what makes power possible and (b) the kinds of possibilities that power assumes." (Butler, 1997, p.12) As Simons (1995) points out, our "subjective capacities include those of resisting the power that has made us what we are." (p.4) Similarly, Ransom (1997) insists that "The fact that we are *vehicles* of disciplinary power reveals...not the omnipotence of power but its fragility. Such vehicles might go off the designated path in directions that frustrate the purpose for which they were originally developed." (p.36) One way in which subjects may "go off the designated path" is by using their agency to transform themselves, working upon the subjectivity bequeathed to them by discipline and turning it into something much more novel, radical and autonomous. Foucault thinks that this is our best chance of freedom, and it is to these techniques of the self that he turned in his later works.

In chapter seven, I will return to discuss the paradox of the subject and the techniques of the self in more detail. For now, I want to summarise what I have achieved in this chapter.

3.4 Power, knowledge and the subject: summary

In this chapter, I have explored in detail Foucault's understanding of the relations between power, knowledge and human subjects. I have drawn attention to his conception of power as a form of acting upon people's actions, which as such is exercised through relations at the smallest scale, rather than something possessed by a class or institution. I have noted how Foucault understands this kind of action upon actions as both productive of, and sustained by, knowledge and human subjects. Interpreted in this way, Foucault's work provides a resource for understanding the interdependency of structural power and the agency of subjects, a problem which, as I noted in chapter two, is central to the recent literature on children's geographies of schooling.

I have also shown how Foucault's refusal to accept that power, knowledge or subjects have ahistorical essences leads him to insist upon studying the precise forms which these

phenomena take in certain situations. He thinks that these concepts have little value in the abstract, offering them rather as tools with which to confront empirical problems. In keeping with this spirit, the substantive component of this thesis will put these tools to work in an attempt to gain insights into some of the processes at work in a primary school classroom. First, however, I will present an account of how I went about producing the empirical data upon which this analysis will be based.

4

Methods

In this chapter, I will discuss the methods which I used to carry out the research for this thesis. In addition, I will attempt to bring Foucault's project of critical ontology, particularly his understanding of the relations between power, knowledge and the subject as explored in the previous chapter, to bear upon this presentation of my methods.

Reflecting upon and writing about myself and my actions are above all practices which produce self-knowledge. From a Foucaultian perspective, such forms of self-knowledge cannot be understood in isolation from my power as a researcher. Yet these forms of power-knowledge are not merely the products of me as a pre-existing researcher. In producing them, I have examined myself, questioned myself, written and re-written an important segment of my personal history in an attempt to settle upon a more or less coherent story of what I did, when, where and why. Thus methods writing is a process through which I have reconstructed myself as an acting subject, thereby transforming myself in a variety of ways. Likewise, it is a process which constructs my research participants in relation to myself. It against this background, of methods writing understood as but one more form of subject-producing power-knowledge, that I offer the following account.

4.1 What is a methods chapter?

It is commonly supposed that the purpose of a methods chapter is to convey to the reader knowledge of how a piece of research was carried out. Viewed from this perspective, the ideal methods chapter would represent the process of fieldwork as accurately as possible, acting as a mirror in which every detail of the research, including all the problems and uncertainties encountered, would be reflected. The over-riding concern would be for the truth of the research process to be made available by the person or people who carried it out.

Over the last decade, within social science, and in human geography in particular, there have been calls for methods writing which is sufficiently reflexive to capture the messiness of the research process (see for example McDowell, 1992; Nast, 1994; Lareau, 1996; Rose, 1997). Taking up the epistemological challenges issued by sociologists of scientific knowledge (e.g. Kuhn, 1970; Feyerabend, 1975; Bloor, 1976; Fox Keller, 1985; Latour, 1987; Haraway, 1988

and 1991; Harding, 1991; Shapin, 1998), this reflexive approach questions accepted 'truths' about how social research is conducted – that it is linear, coherent, rational, objective, value-free, and so on. However, it does so by arguing that these supposed 'truths' are not really true at all. The *real* truth of research, according to this approach, is both more complex and more interesting. Less conventional, more reflexive, situated, messy accounts of fieldwork therefore spring from the same concern for truth which is commonly understood to motivate methods writing.

There is an obvious danger here. As advocates of situated messiness generally agree, the process of social research is so complicated that no single representation can reflect the whole truth of this process. Such representations can only provide one perspective on this truth. A series of different representations, some of which may contradict one another, are necessary if the complexity of the truth of the research process is to be captured. In Gillian Rose's (1997) terms, the problem is that researchers striving to be reflexive may assume that they are 'transparent' to themselves, and thus able to know the 'whole truth' about themselves and their research practices. For Rose, as for Haraway (1988), this illusion of omniscience must be abandoned. In other words, the obligation to tell the truth necessarily leads to the more fundamental obligations to acknowledge (i) the complexity of the truth, and (ii) the partiality of representations.

The effect of this manoeuvre is to reduce the status of a representation from that of the whole truth to that of a *perspective* on the truth. This means that the problem with conventional, tidy, linear narratives of research is *not* that they do not represent the truth of the research process, since no single representation can do this. Rather, the problem with such accounts is that they *purport* to represent the whole truth of the research process. This distinction is crucial. As Rose recognises, reflexive, messy accounts may fall into the trap of purporting to represent the whole truth just as easily as simple, linear research narratives. In other words, no amount of reflexivity and messiness can resolve the problems of truth-telling, its limits, its effects and its politics.

I therefore want to suggest that methods writing is best understood as a political rather than a philosophical manoeuvre. The intentions of their authors aside, simplistic linear accounts of research have a series of well-documented power-effects: the scientific legitimation of the techniques involved, and, by extension, the conclusions of the research; the erasure of subjective influences; and the consequent justification of claims to objectivity and neutrality. In the face of such problems, it is not so much a question of refuting sanitised truths in favour of messy truths,

but of pointing out that in our culture, sanitised truths tend to contribute to a stagnant, conservative politics of knowledge, while truths which are more partial and messy may undermine this politics, providing resources for more novel, critical and enlightened thinking about how knowledge is produced. Berry Mayall (2000) argues that childhood researchers ought to look upon children's understandings of their lives as knowledge, rather than as merely 'perspectives', or 'views' or 'opinions'. My concern as regards my understanding of my own research practice is precisely the opposite: to demote my knowledge to the status of a perspective, a view, an opinion, something which, though I have taken great care in formulating it, is nonetheless open to contest and revision.

In summary, I want to argue that when writing methods, one must not ask "how can I represent the truth of how I carried out my research?" but rather "what kinds of effects do I want to produce through telling truths about my research?" and "what kinds of truths might produce these effects?" The answers are necessarily contextual. In some instances, telling sanitised, simplified truths may be necessary, while in others, messy truths would be more appropriate. A feedback leaflet for the teachers, parents and children involved in my PhD research would aim to produce very different truth-effects to, say, a paper written for an academic journal. Accordingly, the truths presented in these different contexts would also be very different.

So what kind of truth effects should a methods chapter produce in the context of a PhD thesis? Ideally, I would like my account to achieve four effects:

1. To convince the reader that I have carried out a substantial piece of original research with care and thought.
2. To provide the reader with a context for my substantive data by sketching a basic picture of how I went about producing it.
3. To explore my theoretical understanding of my methods, principally participant observation.
4. To demonstrate a degree of self-awareness and intellectual acuity by critically reflecting upon some of my research practices.

The first of these aims informs the whole of this chapter. I present a detailed chronological narrative of my fieldwork practices to achieve the second of these aims. At points, I move from this narrative to a theorisation of the practices described therein, so as to achieve my third aim. I also interrupt the narrative to make critical reflections upon my research practice so as to satisfy my fourth aim. Limitations of space mean that such reflections will not be exhaustive. It should

be stressed once again that this narrative is neither complete nor authoritative. Rather, its contents are designed specifically to fulfil the aims above.

4.2 Background

I will begin my story in 2001, when, as the major part of an MSc in Social Research, I started work on my first piece of original research into the spaces of primary schools. Working within a broadly Lefebvrean human geography framework (see for example Merrifield, 2000), I wanted to examine the ways in which children and teachers produce social space in school, with a particular focus upon the consequences of these practices for the inclusive education of children with special educational needs. As is often the case in PhD projects, my aims were initially vague, becoming clearer only as the research progressed.

Amongst other things, I felt that I wanted to uncover, and thus make available for analysis, taken-for-granted elements of school life. In this, my debt to Foucault and Nietzsche's geneological methods is clear (see in particular NGH). I wanted to examine those things which, as a scrutinising stranger, I would notice, but of which the children and teachers might not be consciously aware. It seemed clear that interview and focus group techniques alone would be inadequate for this purpose, since I needed to be able to see for myself what was happening in the classroom, from a perspective which was neither that of the teachers nor that of the pupils. But this placed me in an awkward position in relation to recent childhood studies methods literature, in which the traditional model of doing research 'on' children is generally rejected in favour of doing research 'with' children (see for example Alderson, 1995; Morrow and Richards, 1996; Mayall, 2000; Roberts, 2000; Fraser, 2004). This latter approach is broadly phenomenological, treating children as competent social actors in line with James and Prout's new paradigm in childhood studies (see chapter two), and therefore privileging their own understandings of their lives. Such research typically attempts to listen to children so as to capture their own voices, often through the use of creative, participatory techniques (see for example Davis, 1998; Thomas and O'Kane, 1998; Alderson, 2000; O'Kane, 2000; Young and Barrett, 2001; Nieuwenhuys, 2004). Caught between these conflicting theoretical positions, I elected to use the ethnographic method of participant observation, to be supplemented by mapping the children's movements around the classroom (a technique borrowed from Fielding, 2000), and a number of creative focus group activities in which the children were to produce their own material about their space to complement my observational notes.

I carried out my MSc fieldwork over the course of a month, in Westgate Primary School[8], a state funded institution managed by the City of Edinburgh Council Department of Education. The school is located in a suburb of Edinburgh in which financial service occupations are predominant. It has a roll of several hundred pupils, divided into twenty classes. These classes are structured according to year groups ranging from primary one to primary seven. In addition, there are over a hundred pre-school age children in four nursery classes. The school has strong, active leadership, with an enthusiastic female headteacher, a deputy head and two assistant headteachers.

The choice of school was opportunistic in the first instance: a contact in the University's education department suggested it to me when she heard that I was broadly interested in questions of space, because an extension had recently been added to Westgate, creating a unique new building for lower primary children. As it happened, during the research I became less and less interested in the physical space of the school, and this new building became incidental to my investigations.

However, when I visited the school, I was fascinated by the new architecture. I swiftly negotiated fieldwork access with the headteacher. She allocated me to a Primary 2 class of twenty eight six and seven year-olds located in the new building. I immediately took to the children, and got on well with Mrs. Slater, their teacher, a friendly woman in her forties with considerable teaching experience. Their classroom was semi-open plan, located in a newly-built part of the school. The oblong room was enclosed on three sides, but on one of its two shorter sides opened out onto a communal atrium, in which shared creative materials for water play, sand play, art and construction were located. There seemed to be no objections to my project from parents (I sent opt-out forms home; none were returned). The fieldwork, for the most part, proceeded without difficulty.

The main problems I encountered were with the focus group activities. These were designed to find out how the children experience the school's space, and to access their perspectives directly. However, the focus groups demonstrated very clearly that the children were not really interested in talking about their use of space as I conceived of it. At best, they would explain what the different parts of their school were, where they could and couldn't go, and tended to say that they liked their school, but this was all. For example, one focus group was structured around a construction activity, in which I asked the children to make a model of their

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[8] My pseudonym for the school, used to preserve the anonymity of my participants.

school out of wooden blocks and talk about the different spaces, while I recorded the discussion onto minidisc. However, the children were more interested in building castles and traps with the blocks. The more lively characters in the class took an interest in the microphone I was using to record them, and turned the focus group into an impromptu karaoke session. This was great fun, but of little use to the kind of analysis I wanted to make. As Fraser (2004) notes, the phenomenological paradigm of research *with* children requires the development of a shared vocabulary with which the children can relate to the researcher's interests, and vice-versa. However, this vocabulary did not develop. I began to realise that the children's use of space was primarily my concern, not theirs, and that they were effectively resisting my attempts to make them speak in the terms of a discourse which was not their own. This made me feel a discomfort similar to that of Aitken (2001c), who asks, "If a focus on specific research questions...makes it difficult to fully empathize with, or imagine, children's experiences, how can I write for them and establish agendas on their behalf?" (p.127). Like Fine (1992) and Alldred (1998), I became increasingly uneasy with the idea of 'giving voice' to my participants. I felt strongly that the most interesting insights of my research had been produced by my interpretations of what I saw the children doing, and not by their limited comments on their use of space. It became clear that to present these findings, I would either have to manipulate the children's voices in a way which would be ethically dubious, or else be honest and acknowledge my own voice. Choosing the latter option, I used the field notes which I had produced through participant observation as the substantive basis of my thesis.

My MSc research was always envisaged as the first phase of a longer-term ethnographic study of the use of space in primary schools. Importantly, the MSc was a process through which my initially vague research aims had become more focused. I had a clearer idea of the kinds of phenomena I wanted to study: power relations as they manifested themselves in material, spatial practices in a classroom. A full exploration of such practices was clearly beyond the scope of my all-too-brief MSc project, hence my return to Westgate School to carry out the PhD research upon which this thesis is based. For this, I decided to abandon the idea of focus groups and concentrate primarily upon ethnographic participant observation, since this had produced what I found to be the most useful substantive material for my MSc. This meant that I was aligning myself with the Foucaultian/Nietzschean critical approach in which an 'outsider' perspective is

valued for its freedom to question taken-for-granted practices[9]. Consequently, my methods were increasingly at odds with the phenomenological paradigm, currently dominant in childhood studies, which accords social actors – specifically children – special privilege in understanding their own lives.

4.3 The nature of ethnographic understanding

It is a basic principle of research design that the methods should be chosen for their ability to answer the research questions (Hoggart et al, 2002). However, my research questions were far from clear at the outset of my PhD. My interest in inclusion had waned, but my engagement with Foucault was becoming more sustained. I knew that I wanted to investigate disciplinary practices, and that I also wanted to seek an alternative way of conceptualising power through Foucault's later work on techniques of self. I was committed to a model of understanding these phenomena broadly derived from hermeneutics, via the anthropological writing of Clifford Geertz. However, once again, my Foucaultian commitments made me wary of the more naïvely phenomenological dimension of this approach. Thus like Midgley (2004), I feel that I started my research with a particular philosophical orientation, and that this orientation, and not a set of specific questions, was what led me to adopt ethnographic methods. In what follows, I provide a brief overview of this philosophical orientation.

Clifford Geertz (1973) sees ethnography as 'thick description' – the writing down not only of descriptions of culture, but of interpretations of those descriptions. Culture here is defined rather broadly, as systems of meaning produced by people. Geertz's conception of interpretation is influenced by the work of Heidegger and his student Gadamer, who are both concerned with the nature of understanding, though in pursuit of rather different projects.

Heidegger (1962) provides Gadamer's hermeneutics with its ontological foundations. First, for Heidegger, Being itself implies understanding, since the experience of existence relies upon an understanding of this experience precisely as such. In other words, I have not existed as a being (*Dasein*) in the Heideggerian sense until I come to a basic understanding of the very fact of my being: "understanding is not just one of the various possible behaviours of the subject, but

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[9] Describing the experience which inspired *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault (OP) says that it was "training in a psychiatric hospital and being lucky enough to be there neither as a patient nor as a doctor, that is to say, to be able to look at things in a fairly open-minded, fairly neutral way, outside the usual codes – that led me to become aware of this extremely strange reality that we call confinement. What struck me was that this practice of confinement was accepted by both sides as absolutely self-evident...However, I came to realise that it was far from being self-evident" (p.96-97).

the mode of being of [*Dasein*] itself." (Gadamer, 1975, cited in Outhwaite. 1985, p.26) Understanding, as the mode of human Being, is thus the fundamental basis of social reality.

Second, this understanding is achieved through a process of projection, a 'throwing off' onto my own being of what I already know about it – for example, that I have always 'been'. It is on the basis of this prior knowledge that I am able to ascertain that I 'am', and will continue to 'be'. Since this knowledge historically *precedes* my understanding, the defining feature of my understanding of this existence is temporality. In other words, both human existence and human understanding are fundamentally historical:

> "Whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpretation will be founded essentially upon fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception. An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us" (Heidegger, 1962, p.191-192)

In emphasising this historicality, both Heidegger and Gadamer have recourse to the hermeneutic circle, a description of the continual movement made between the whole and the parts of a thing in the process of its interpretation. So, in the case of a book, the words in a sentence give that sentence its meaning, and likewise for the sentences in a paragraph and the paragraphs in a book. At the same time, the meaning of each of the words in a sentence cannot be ascertained in isolation, but must be judged in relation to the meaning of the whole sentence, the meaning of that sentence ascertained with reference to the paragraph in which the sentence is located, and the meaning of the paragraph ascertained in relation to the meaning ascribed to the whole book. The hermeneutic circle is therefore paradoxical: "we attempt to define a thing by the use of attributes which already presume a definition." (Steiner, 1978, p.26) For Heidegger and Gadamer, it is also crucially historical, since this presumed definition must precede entry to the circle – it is a "fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception", a prejudice inherited from the cultural tradition in which one has been educated[10]. Without this prejudice, Gadamer suggests, we would not be able to enter the hermeneutic circle, and understanding would therefore be impossible. This logic is the basis of much ethnographic social research. For example, in childhood studies, Davis et al (2000) understand ethnography as a process in which researchers "put their prejudices and preconceptions to fruitful use" (p.202)

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[10] Education here used in the broadest sense of the word, as the entire process of nurture – as distinct from (but by no means exclusive of) formal education.

So, the prejudices which we inherit from tradition enable us to project an initial meaning upon a part of the text, which is then revised in the light of the emerging meaning of the whole of the text. The hermeneutic circle thus becomes a movement not only between parts and whole, but also between the subject of understanding, with his or her inherited prejudices, and the object of understanding, the text. Consequently, hermeneutic understanding "is neither subjective nor objective, but describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter." (Gadamer, 1989, p.293)

Yet crucially for Gadamer, "Tradition is not simply a permanent precondition; rather, we produce it ourselves inasmuch as we understand, participate in the evolution of tradition and hence further determine it ourselves." (ibid.) His radical contribution to hermeneutics thus consists in a conceptualisation of interpretation as a *productive* process: "Not just occasionally but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a reproductive but always a productive attitude as well." (ibid., p.296) Through this dynamic process, interpretation moves between subject and object to produce a new meaning.

It is this conception of interpretation which underpins Geertz's (1973) discussion of ethnography. Following Ricoeur (1981), Geertz argues that culture, as a system of meaning, should be understood as a text. The task of the ethnographer is the hermeneutic interpretation of this "acted document" (Geertz, 1973, p.10). Through observing a range of acts committed by the people of an unknown culture and interpreting these, the ethnographer begins to synthesise a primitive understanding of the whole of this culture and its systems of signification. This understanding then enables the ethnographer to make more accurate interpretations of individual acts, the parts of this culture. Yet following Gadamer's model, this observing ethnographer must bring their prejudices into the research encounter if interpretation is to take place. The observer must also become a participant, bringing his or her self into the research context:

> "For what do we mean by 'transposing ourselves'? Certainly not just disregarding ourselves. This is necessary, of course, insofar as we must imagine the other situation. But into this other situation we must bring, precisely, ourselves. Only this is the full meaning of 'transposing ourselves'...Transposing ourselves consists neither in the empathy of one individual for another nor in subordinating another person to our own standards; rather, it always involves rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other." (Gadamer, 1989, p.305)

Like Gadamer, Geertz, recognises the productive nature of understanding. He argues, following Schutz (1954), that the practice of ethnography produces, through the circular movement of

understanding, new interpretations: "what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to." (Geertz, 1973, p.9). Ethnography, if done properly, is neither simply the projection by the ethnographer of his or her own prior conceptions onto those who are being studied, nor is it the extraction from them of some pre-existing meaning:

> "We are not, or at least I am not, seeking to become natives (a compromised word in any case) or to mimic them. Only romantics or spies would seem to find point in that. We are seeking, in the widened sense of the term in which it encompasses very much more than talk, to converse with them...Looked at in this way, the aim of anthropology is the enlargement of the universe of human discourse." (Geertz, 1973, p.13-14)

With my perspective grounded in this conception of the research encounter, at the outset of my PhD, my primary concern was no longer to represent the voices of the children involved. I wanted my research to reflect the vitality of the primary school I was studying, and I knew that to achieve this, the children and the things that they would say to me would need to feature very prominently in my final thesis. Nevertheless, my principal aim was to provide a novel analytical perspective on a primary school. This would be neither that of the pupils, nor that of the teachers, but rather my own interpretative fusion of what I would see in school, what the children and teachers would tell me, and the theoretical resources with which I had begun the study.

4.4 Time scale

Having decided to use participant observation, I set about sketching out a projected timetable for my study. Ethnographers place great emphasis upon the virtues of long-term, intensive research, and most successful school ethnographies have involved major time commitments (e.g. Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970 and 1993; Willis, 1977; Woods, 1979; Ball, 1981). I had only three years in which to plan, carry out an write up my research, but I wanted to spend a good portion of that time in the field, so as to develop a sophisticated understanding of life in the classroom.

I decided to follow the children through a period of transition for three reasons. First, I wanted to see how the relations of power between a teacher and her pupils evolved over the course of a school year. At the time of my MSc research, the teacher had been with the class for nearly two years. It was apparent that over this time, she had accumulated a refined knowledge

of each of the individuals in her class, and they had developed a similarly detailed understanding of her ways of working. I had witnessed several techniques of power which depended upon these close relations, and had begun to wonder about how such relations might develop in the long term, particularly if the class were allotted to a different teacher. Second, I was interested to see what would happen to the configuration of power relations as the children progressed through the developmental structure set up by the school. Even by the end of their second primary year, the children were sometimes expected to watch over themselves and over each other without the supervising presence of the teacher. I wondered whether such expectations would become intensified as the children moved into higher year groups. I therefore opted to begin fieldwork at the end of the children's third primary year (end of May 2002) and follow them through into the next school year and to the end of the following spring term (March 2003).

As for the frequency of my visits, my initial plan was to begin fieldwork at a rate of one day per week and increase this gradually, to give the teacher, the children and myself time to adjust to my presence. I anticipated that in the middle of my fieldwork, I might come into school every day, so as to attain full immersion. In the existing literature on school ethnographies, full immersion is valued highly, and is often taken to be a prerequisite for thorough empirical work (see for example Hargreaves, 1967; Everhart, 1977; Corsaro, 1981; Mayall, 1996). Towards the end of the fieldwork period, I intended to decrease the frequency of my visits, again to give all concerned time to adjust to the change. This choice was in part precipitated by my own experience of intense dislocation following the abrupt end of my MSc fieldwork. I thought of this projected schedule as a provisional plan, with the details to be worked out through negotiation with the class teacher. During my MSc work, I had negotiated my time in the classroom on a week-by-week basis with Mrs. Slater, giving her control over which days I was in school. This had allowed her to minimise my disruptive effects by keeping me out of school on days which would be very busy for her, or when she expected the children to be particularly exuberant or 'difficult', such as immediately before and after holidays. This arrangement had made her feel more comfortable about my presence in her classroom, so I intended to retain it for the PhD work.

4.5 Negotiating access and informed consent

In April, I called Mrs. Thomas, the headteacher at Westgate, and explained my intentions. She seemed happy for me to carry out further fieldwork, and we arranged a date when I could go into school to discuss this with Mrs. Lynford, the new class teacher. She was a mature and

experienced teacher, who had taken a break in the middle of her career and then returned to teaching. I had already met her during my MSc fieldwork, and she knew roughly what I had done during that time. As a result, she was very amenable to my project. I explained my consent system of stickers (see below), and told her that she would be able to determine which days I came into school. I also explained my intention to increase the frequency of my visits over the fieldwork, and she seemed comfortable with this.

In early May, I sent Mrs. Thomas a letter formally confirming what had been arranged on my visit (see Appendix I). I also sent a letter to Roy Jobson at the City of Edinburgh Council Education Department, asking for formal permission to undertake the research (see Appendix I). A resource officer from the department replied soon afterwards in the affirmative (see Appendix I).

Having negotiated access with the various school gatekeepers, I needed to obtain consent from the children and their parents. I felt strongly that, since the children (and not their parents) were directly involved with the study, their consent was of prime importance. The consent of parents was, by contrast, a formal rather than an ethical necessity. I therefore chose to use negative consent forms for parental consent. I also felt that both the parents and children ought to be given some feedback on my MSc research, so that their decision about whether to opt out of my PhD project might be better informed. I therefore created a double-sided leaflet which summarised my MSc findings in simple language, and a 'further research' leaflet, which explained my intentions for doing long-term PhD work, and described the form which this work would take, emphasising the voluntary nature of participation in the project, outlining provisions for negotiating consent with the children (see below), and guaranteeing anonymity of all involved. I also produced a negative consent slip, the function of which was explained clearly in the leaflet (see Appendix II). I returned to the school with these materials and showed them to the teacher, who checked them over and kept a copy for the school office. I then distributed a copy to each of the children, leaving extra copies with the teacher to be given to absentees. I arranged with the teacher that, leaving some time for parents to return the negative consent slips if they wished, I would return to school on May 22nd 2002 for my first day of fieldwork. None of these slips were returned.

As for consent with the children, this was envisaged as a much more reflexive, ongoing process. A wealth of recent literature in childhood studies lays great emphasis upon the need for social researchers to recognise children's rights, such as that of consent (Morrow and Richards, 1996; Alldred, 1998; Davis, 1998; Alderson 1995, 2000 and 2004), though this literature,

perhaps remarkably, fails to address the more fundamental question of why such rights should be morally compelling[11]. Nevertheless, as a novice researcher about to enter the field, I took this literature very seriously, and had therefore taken pains to develop an innovative system of consent based on stickers. I had explained to the children that though I was observing the whole class, they each had the right not to participate in my study if they did not want to. I had shown them two sets of stickers, red and blue, and had explained that I would give each of them a sticker at the start of each day. Red meant 'I don't want to be involved' or 'I don't want to talk to Mike', while blue meant 'I'm happy to be involved with the study' or 'I'm happy to talk to Mike'. They were to wear the stickers on their jumpers, so that I could see easily who had opted out. And I had explained that they were allowed to change sticker at any time. I had stressed that I did not mind if they did not want to be part of the study, and that they wouldn't get into trouble either way. My commitment had been that, though I couldn't refrain from observing those who did not want to be involved, I would refrain from writing about them. Aside from the ethical function of the stickers, the children had enjoyed the daily ritual of choosing a colour. Going around handing out the stickers also ensured that I spoke briefly with every child at the start of each day, which was a useful way of consolidating my individual relationship with each member of the class. Thus by the end of my MSc fieldwork, the stickers had become an integral part of my work with the class, and so at the start of the PhD fieldwork, I decided to continue using this technique.

It would be all too easy to leave my account of the stickers here, with the implication that, as I intended, they functioned in practice as a means of negotiating consent. Instead, I want to explore some of the complications which this method produced. First, there was some confusion over the meaning of the stickers. In my MSc, I had told the children that they could wear a red sticker if they did not want me to talk to them, meaning that if they wanted to be left alone, a red sticker would prevent me from intruding into what they were doing. However, at the time, some of them had interpreted this as meaning that I would refuse to talk to them and that I wouldn't help them with their work. At the start of my PhD, I was careful to stress that the stickers were really about writing – blue meant that I would write about you, red meant that I wouldn't. From my perspective, I perceived little difference between talking and writing, since both were part of the process of participant observation. Yet for the children, the difference was

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[11] See MacIntyre, 1985, for an intriguing historical account of how such questions have become unanswerable.

significant, and some of them took a while to adjust to the new writing-focussed meaning of the stickers.

The children also wilfully imposed their own informal meanings upon the stickers, and these usually had little to do with consent, more often being playful or amusing. For example, Kate put her blue sticker on her shirt pocket and told me that I should write about the pocket, while Nattalie did likewise with her shirt collar. On another occasion, Tommy put his blue sticker on his pencil, and suggested I write about that, while James Bond put his on his backside, and joked, "now you can write about my butt!" I was happy to see the children appropriating my methods in creative ways, so I did little to discourage such behaviour. However, sometimes sticker-play was frowned upon by the teachers, who on occasion rebuked the children concerned. In this instances, I felt rather uneasy that a measure introduced to protect the children's rights had ended up getting them into trouble. However, in retrospect, I think that my unease betrays an inability to accept that the stickers had been taken over by the children, and as such were beyond my control. I had not intended the stickers to cause trouble, but neither had I intended them to be play objects. Their fate is but one instance of the more general principle that, in the social world, phenomena always have effects beyond, and sometimes in contradiction to, those intended by their creator. The controlling impulses of the social researcher are but little defence against the glorious unpredictability of society, particularly when the society in question is made up largely of seven and eight year-olds.

For some children, the stickers became status symbols, and as such they tried to get as many of them as possible. I learned early on in my MSc that requests for second stickers had to be refused – once one child had two stickers, all of their friends wanted two stickers as well, and my sticker supplies would soon run out. But several of the children sought ways of circumventing my 'one sticker per person' rule. Tommy was particularly adept at this, often appearing with two or three stickers which he had managed to garner from other children. He and others regularly complained that they had lost their stickers, or insisted that I had not given them one that morning. Sometimes they would hide them in ingenious places. On one occasion, Steven pleaded with me several times that he had lost his sticker, but I refused to give him another one. Conceding defeat, he put his hand up his shirt and peeled the hidden sticker from his armpit, emitting a series of painful noises while I winced. Another time, Steven demonstrated a particular flair for sticker collection when he realised that there was a sure-fire way to get as many as he wanted. Evidently recalling that I had told the class that they could change stickers at any time, he initially requested a blue sticker, only to profess a change of mind a few minutes

later. Abiding by my ethical framework, I gave him a red sticker, and he promptly left his seat to show off his two stickers to the rest of the class. Returning to his seat, he confessed that he didn't mean it, and that he wanted me to write about him after all. David tried the same trick a little later, and this time I refused to give him a red sticker, saying that he could take his blue sticker off, and I would remember not to write about him without the aid of a sticker. After this, I used this line to fend off requests for second stickers, telling the children who insisted that they had lost their stickers, "It's O.K., I remember what colour you were."

Other children responded to the stickers in different ways. Both Helen and Rory Cory took blue every day, and found it amusing that I kept asking them what colour they wanted. On one occasion, Helen snapped at me, "You know my colour, stop asking me." (PhD field notes, Tuesday 4 June 2002), while Rory Cory decided that he didn't need a sticker ever again because he would always be blue. It seemed that these children thought my daily renegotiation of consent to be excessive. Spike, meanwhile, took exception to the limited range of possibilities afforded by two colours. One day, he asked for a blue sticker, but then later changed to a red, on the understanding that this meant that I would write "a wee bit" about him. I agreed, and on several occasions after this we used this arrangement.

All of these examples, it seems to me, point towards the conclusion that the stickers were a fruitful research strategy, but that they did not serve the intended purpose of negotiating consent. While they performed a variety of interesting functions, they did not enable the children to make an informed decision about whether to participate in my research or not. Alderson (1995) writes that "The question for social researchers is how to respect children's rationality and therefore their informed uncoerced consent." (p.69) If this really is the question, then my sticker system failed to answer it. To describe its function as that of negotiating rational, informed, uncoerced consent would be an outright lie.

My experience is much closer to that of Midgley (2004), who felt that the consent given by his participants was based on trust rather than comprehension. In the first place, like Lareau (1996) I found research to be an ongoing, unfolding process of discovery, through which I only gradually came to understand what I was doing. Yet not knowing what one is doing means that it is difficult to inform one's research participants sufficiently to guarantee that their consent is meaningful. Besides, in an empirical project, findings emerge through processes of analysis and writing up which continue long after fieldwork has ceased. Furthermore, the children and teachers in Westgate School occupied a discursive world far removed from my own. Like Vivat (2002), I was repeatedly asked what I was doing, by children and by staff, and I always tried to

give an honest and comprehensible answer. Yet I rarely felt that I had been able to communicate anything approaching an accurate portrait of my work as I understood it at the time. Partly, this was due to my own lack of clarity about my project, and partly it was due to my inability to communicate effectively with non-academics about academic work. But I also felt that my role was largely unintelligible within the structure of the school. I was neither a pupil nor a staff member. I was an adult, but I would sometimes behave more like a child. I was an observer, but not an inspector. I was a geographer, but I seemed to be carrying out sociological research. Above all, I felt that for the children, life within a compulsory, disciplinary framework meant that the voluntary nature of my research was difficult to comprehend. They had not been consulted as to whether I would be coming to visit their class, and this was in line with their expectations. How could they be expected to believe me when I told them that refusing to participate would not get them into any kind of trouble? As it happened, the majority of the children chose blue stickers, with only the more assertive members of the class occasionally choosing red stickers. This only heightened my suspicion that the free choice which appeared to be guaranteed by the stickers was in fact illusory.

If the impossibility of fully informing my participants about what I was doing left me feeling unable to communicate with them about my study, this did not prevent the children from asking questions about my role. Though their curiosity foregrounded my feeling of inadequacy as an uncommunicative researcher, I was nonetheless grateful for their enquiries, since they forced me at least to attempt to verbalise what I was doing. Furthermore, the children's questions were usually quite specific and gave a clear indication of the kind of answer which would be comprehensible to them. The difficulty of trying to pitch my explanations at an unfamiliar audience was thereby ameliorated somewhat. Some children were more curious about my methods than others. In particular, Nattalie and Rory Cory both independently developed dialogues with me about what I was doing. On one occasion, a discussion with Rory Cory turned to the question of anonymity, which the children often asked about, and generally found difficult to understand. Rory Cory asked why I had to keep his name secret in my study. I explained that someone could read what he had said, and if they didn't like it, and they had his name and the name of the school, then they could come and find him. He replied that he would punch the person really hard in the stomach. I laughed, but said that I was worried that the person might be much bigger and stronger than him. He shrugged this off, repeating that he would just punch them in the stomach. Exchanges such as this reinforced my suspicion that, despite our concerted

efforts to understand each other, the children's awareness of the possible consequences of my study was sufficiently limited to preclude the possibility of informed consent.

4.6 Participant observation and my role as a researcher

Ethnography has long been used in the study of educational institutions (Gordon et al, 2001). It is also the favoured method in the more recent social studies of childhood literature (see chapter two), since it involves taking children seriously as competent social actors (James, 2001). However, the approaches of various scholars in both these fields differ substantially. The key tension here is that between participation and observation. This is common to almost all ethnographic methods literature, regardless of the setting. Caricaturing the picture a little, Adler and Adler (1987) place the Chicago School ethnographers (see for example Gold, 1958) towards the observation end of the spectrum, and the ethnomethodologists (see for example Garfinkel, 1967; Pollner and Emerson, 2001) at the opposite extreme of full participation. Whilst the Chicago ethnographers sought to understand the perspectives of the groups they studied by participating in the everyday lives of these groups, they also insisted that a degree of detachment and analytical distance from the study group was necessary for an ethnographer to remain an objective observer. They warned against the dangers of what they termed 'going native': developing such a close relationship with the group being studied that one becomes part of that group, and can no longer observe its members from an exterior position. The ethnomethodologists, however, drew upon hermeneutics and phenomenologists such as Schutz, who argued that the social world cannot be treated as external to and independent of a human observer. From this perspective, the ethnographers' thinking must be founded upon the everyday practices of the member of the culture under study, rather than upon foreign theoretical resources imported from outside the culture being studied. Complete participation is thus required for understanding. Far from being a problem, 'going native' is the only way to achieve this: the researcher has to *become* the other so as to see from an 'insider' perspective.

Most ethnographers situate themselves somewhere between these extremes. Gold (1958), one of the Chicago School, set out a range of four positions, from observer, in which one maintains distance from the group, through observer-as-participant, to participant-as-observer, to full participant, in which one is closely involved with the group. Powdermaker (1967) agreed that the twin concerns of involvement and detachment are at the heart of participant observation: "Involvement is necessary to understand the psychological realities of a culture, that is, its meanings for the indigenous members. Detachment is necessary to construct the abstract reality:

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a network of social relations including the rules and how they function – not necessarily real to the people studied." (p.9) She cast this tension in terms of the roles of friend and stranger, a theme taken up by Everhart (1977) in the context of participant observation in a school. He reiterated the fundamental paradox of "being involved enough to learn about and describe a culture as the participants live it while being detached enough to make the "known" unknown – to understand everyday behaviour in problematic terms." (p.1) He argued that, over the course of a long-term study, the ethnographer must, and probably will, shift from an initially distant stranger role to a more involved friendship role. While acknowledging the importance of becoming a friend, he warned that this process will eventually result in the participant observer losing their analytical perspective, overlooking the kind of taken-for-granted, everyday practices which ethnography seeks to document. He suggested some counter-measures, but ultimately recommended that ethnographers must recognise when they have gone irrevocably native, and respond by concluding their fieldwork activities.

King (1978) took up a non-participating observer role in his study of infant schools, invoking the need to "reduce the effect I may have had upon the events I was trying to observe" (p.5). He was particularly resistant to being drawn into a teaching role, and used his physical height and a studied indifference towards the children's activities to distance himself from them. A more measured approach to such distance is taken by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), who state that, *contra* ethnomethodology,

> "There can be no question of total commitment, "surrender," or "becoming." There must always remain some part held back, some social and intellectual "distance." For it is in the "space" created by this distance that the analytic work of the ethnographer gets done. Without that distance, without such analytic space, the ethnography can be little more than the autobiographical account of a personal conversion." (p.102)

Some school ethnographers have taken up teaching roles so as to participate fully in the life of a school. Hargreaves (1967) used this strategy, while Lacey (1970; 1993) began work as a teacher but moved into a more informal role after the first year of his study. Yet Hammersley (1993) denies that teachers necessarily have a superior perspective on life in a school, arguing that "In general, the chances of the findings being valid can be enhanced by a judicious combination of involvement and estrangement. However, no position...guarantees valid knowledge; and no position prevents it either." (p.219) As Corrigan (1979) points out, there are obvious drawbacks to taking up a teaching role:

"Being labelled as [a teacher] breaks the possibility of gaining certain sorts of information at all. What happens if a pupil smokes? What happens if he (sic) really hates one of your colleagues? What happens if he (sic) knows that a boy is going to try and burn down a section of the school? All of these pieces of information are differently available from the kids to individuals who are labelled as teachers and to others." (p.12)

Corrigan, like Willis (1977) and MacLeod (1987), chose instead to hang out with the school pupils, gravitating towards a group of non-conformist boys. Their outright rejection of school culture provided, for these authors, a bold standpoint from which to mount radical critiques of education. However, as Delamont (2000) points out, this approach risks romanticising aggressive, masculine forms of resistance. Considered from a social justice perspective, such activities are no less oppressive than the social class structures which Corrigan, Willis and others seek to challenge.

In my MSc, my initial approach to participant observation in school had been similar to that of Corsaro (1981; 1997), who entered the classroom as a "peripheral participant" (Corsaro and Molinari, 2000, p.199), initially simply moving into the midst of play areas and letting the children react to him. But by the start of my PhD fieldwork, I already had a well-established role with the children. In some ways, this was similar to the 'least-adult' role advocated by Mandell (1991), though like both Mayall (1996, 2000) and Punch (2001), I allowed the children to use me as an adult when they wished, giving them help with their work for example. Mayall (2000) recounts how she "worked as a general helper around the classroom, accompanied the children through the day, observed and recorded daily events, and chatted to the children about their activities" (p.122), and my own role was much the same. Each day, at nine o'clock, I went into the classroom and sat with the children on the carpet for 'gather round'[12]. Once the children had been given their tasks for the day and were seated at their tables, I went around the room offering stickers to each child. After this, I usually ended up moving around the room to speak to different children. Sometimes, I became a kind of floating classroom assistant, particularly in mathematics lessons, which a number of the children found especially difficult. At other times, I

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[12] 'Gather round' was a form of spatial organisation in which the children were asked to leave what they were doing and come to sit on the carpet. The teacher would usually sit on her chair, while the children 'gathered round' before her. 'Gather round' produced an intimate space in which the teacher could see and easily make eye contact with each child. The teacher used this space for activities such as reading stories to the children, explaining the day's tasks to them, discussing problems which had occurred at playtime, and so on.

was invited by a particular child to sit at a their table for a lesson, so that I was able to participate in the children's conversations and assist them with their work from a stationary position. When not at one of the tables, I often sat on the swivel chair at the computers, which was much more comfortable for me than the tiny chairs at the children's tables (my field notes record how the latter left me with me painful stomach cramps on one occasion). At times when the teacher was overwhelmed by children queuing to have their work marked, I offered to share her load, which she seemed to appreciate. I made it clear to her that I was willing to help in any way possible, and in response she gave me other occasional tasks – running errands to the office, moving tables around the room, distributing art materials, and so on. On one occasion, when the children were studying rocks and fossils, I arranged with the teacher that I would bring in a selection of rock samples collected during my days as a geology student. I delivered a short, informal lesson on these samples, which both the teacher and the children seemed to appreciate. The children also regularly implored me to come out to play with them at break and lunch times, and I generally complied with their demands once I had finished eating. In the playground, to the delight of the children (and the amusement of the playground supervisors), I participated fully in games such as 'cops and robbers', 'sharks' and 'tig'. My experience was very close to that of Sam Punch (2001), who reports that in her own research:

> "A balance had to be struck between being [a] friend, a teacher, a teacher's assistant, an adult and a researcher. I had to be flexible to switch between these different identities, but where possible I let the children decide what role they wanted me to play. For example, when they asked me to play with them at break time I would become their friend, but when during class they asked me how to spell a certain word, I would be more like a teacher." (p.173)

In the early stages of my PhD, my own role involved three main facets. First, I was a researcher, observing and recording what went on in the classroom in my jotter. This part of my role was designed to fulfil the empirical requirements of my research. Second, I was a part-time classroom assistant, helping the children with their work and helping the teacher with various tasks. I felt that assisting in this way was an ethical necessity, since my research was not designed with the express intention of creating outcomes which would provide any tangible benefits for either the children or the teachers involved. By helping out in the classroom, I felt that I was 'paying my way', offering ample compensation for the distraction and disruption I was creating. Third, I was a sort of 'adult-sized child', joining in with the children's conversations and games. Again, by making my presence agreeable, stimulating and fun for the

children, I felt that I was repaying their trust and acceptance of me through my everyday fieldwork practice. In this context, the possibility that my research findings would not directly benefit either the teachers or the children troubled me less than it might otherwise have done. Mrs. Lynford and the children appeared to have found my very presence in the classroom to be beneficial in various ways, quite apart from the possible effects of my final analysis once disseminated.

Each of the three facets of my role was limited: I was never a neutral observer, never a paid classroom assistant, and I never entertained the illusion that I could participate fully in the children's world (see for example Alldred, 1998). Each facet was continually renegotiated between the changing aims of my project, the demands of the teacher and the children, my ethical commitments, and so on. This process of ongoing negotiation will be explored further as my narrative unfolds.

On several occasions during my fieldwork, members of staff made observations to me about gender roles – that the girls seemed to enjoy having a man in the classroom, for example, or that it was nice for the boys to have a male role model. These observations always took me by surprise, first because I had not thought of the situation in these terms, but all the more so because these observations were very obvious. Primary schools are key sites of gender identity formation, and as such are generally characterised by pronounced and complex gender relations (see for example Skelton, 1997; Francis, 1998; Reay, 2001). Barker and Smith (2001) note that in research with children, male researchers tend to be cast as outsiders, since, in the UK at least, the overwhelming majority of children's service providers are female. Similarly, Horton (2001) describes persistent feelings of unease as a man conducting research with primary school children. In Westgate School, there were only two male teachers, which meant that my presence was somewhat incongruous. It therefore seems all the more strange that I was, for the most part, oblivious to this fact at the time.

The only explanation that I can offer for my blindness to gender differences is that my relationships to the children were more finely differentiated than such terms permit. As Aitken (2001c) notes, using the standard identity categories to categorise children "is problematic because, at some point, continually shifting our attention to smaller arenas of difference suggests a hopeless relativism that borders on paralysis. It is clear to me now that these, and any other, categorizations highlight an old conundrum of science because for the most part within-group variation exceeds between-group variation." (p.128) Like Aitken, I thought of the children with whom I worked as a set of individuals, each of whom seemed quite unique to me. Of course, this

was not the case in the initial part of my MSc, when I did not know the children, but I quickly became acquainted with them on individual terms, often in very different ways. Thus the defining features of my relationship with a particular child were never as coarse as gender, age, class or race (see Davis et al, 2000). Instead, they were much more specific things such as: in what lessons does this child most require my help? Does this child like to play with me in the playground? Does this child like to read, or do they prefer art, or do they like maths, or is football their favourite pass-time? Is this child quiet in the classroom, or does he/she talk a lot? Is this child often the target of the teacher's disciplinary interventions or not? In summary, my conceptualisation of the children was based upon categories which derived from the specific context of our daily interactions. I think that this was a result of the highly interactive nature of my initial participant-observer role.

4.7 Writing field notes

In between helping the children with their work, I focussed my attention upon observing what was going on in the classroom, and making jottings about this in a small notepad. Like other classroom researchers (Thorne, 1993; Pollard and Filer, 1996) some children accused me, albeit rather playfully, of being a spy. The sorts of things I wrote about were varied: the work the children did; all kinds of conversations and interactions – between the teacher and individuals or groups of children, between children, and between the children and me; the tactics the teacher used to distribute the children in space, to gain their attention and so on; the children's resistance tactics; my own analytical thoughts about these things; methodological details, from basic accounts of my movement around the room to more speculative reflections on my fieldwork practice. In addition to these inscriptions, I also made verbatim transcriptive jottings (Atkinson, 1992), since many of the interactions I observed were based around verbal exchanges, such as discussions or arguments. My observations were not confined to the classroom. When the class had lessons in other areas of the school, such as the gym, the computer lab or the dance and drama base[13], I tagged along and took my notepad with me. Playground experiences were also recorded in my pad, usually once we had all returned to the classroom.

As discussed above, I was aware that the sticker system I had developed did not negotiate informed consent with the children. I therefore tried, where possible, to ask children whether I could write down specific things which they said. Sometimes I would write something

down, and then decide after the event that I ought to ask the child's permission. If they refused, I would scribble or rub out what I had written.

As the fieldwork progressed, the children became increasingly interested in my notepad and what I was writing down in it. In a bid to maximise the children's participation in my research, like Corsaro and Mollinari (2000) I allowed them to read and write in the pad if they asked to do so. Mostly, they wrote hello messages to me, or insults about other children. I always transcribed these into my field notes, irrespective of the content. At other times, the children made efforts to produce the kind of data they thought I might want, writing about what they were doing in class or how well their work was going. Some children became quite wilful in their relationship to the pad, confiscating it from me for short periods of time. As this hindered my work, I made attempts to recover the pad, and it thus became the focus of small power struggles. Often, individual children came to ask whether I had written about them, and if so what I had written. In response, I would check through my pad, and read them bits of what, if anything, I had written about them.

Upon returning home, I typed up each day's notes on my computer, filling out as much detail as I could remember. When I was particularly tired, writing up the notes would be left until the following day, unless I was in school on consecutive days. In general, I ordered the notes chronologically so that the sequence of events was preserved. In Emerson et al's (1995; 2001) terms, my notes were primarily based around episodes (sets of interactions, told through time and grouped together as an incident), dialogue, and analytical commentary. However, I did not follow the recommended ethnographical practice of separating my field notes into analytical, observational and methodological notes (see for example Schatzman and Strauss, 1973; Lofland and Lofland, 1995). I had tried this strategy during research training, but felt that it produced an artificial separation between theory and observation. It is largely accepted, particularly in qualitative research traditions, that theory always influences observation (e.g. Hoggart et al, 2002), and this was certainly the case for a Foucaultian immersed in a disciplinary setting. I felt dishonest pretending that my observations were not analytical. The separation also seemed to introduce a discontinuity which hindered the development of my thinking as I wrote up my field notes.

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[13] A large multi-purpose space fitted with AV facilities, sometimes used for physical education and also used for such activities as hymn practices, school play rehearsals, watching videos, etc.

The quantity of field notes I produced each day varied considerably. At the start of the fieldwork, the novelty of being in school meant that I sometimes produced in excess of five thousand words of notes from one day. Yet when the school had begun to become familiar, and on days when I was tired or preoccupied, I produced more modest volumes of notes, sometimes as little as one thousand words.

Anonymity was easy to preserve in the field notes because I already had a set of pseudonyms developed for my MSc work. I memorised these, and used them throughout my field notes, so that no un-anonymised base copy was required. Unfortunately, on a brief visit to the class in the early stages of my PhD, I showed the children my MSc thesis. Several of them wanted to know what their 'secret names' were so that they could identify themselves, and I felt an ethical responsibility to tell them. Yet they had then told their 'secret names' to all of their friends, which meant that the pseudonyms had been 'leaked'. For this thesis, I was therefore keen to use a different set of pseudonyms to be sure of preserving anonymity. Since several of the children had told me that they didn't like their 'secret name' and that they wanted to be called something else, I decided to allow the children to devise their own pseudonyms. To keep them as confidential as possible, I decided to wait until after the end of the fieldwork to ask the children what they wanted to be called.

One problem which I encountered when writing up my field notes was the uneven representation of the class in my observations. Inevitably, some children were more confident, more talkative and more attention-grabbing than others, and these children were over-represented in my jottings. Meanwhile, the quieter children who kept a lower profile in the classroom often absent from my observations. Following Delamont's (2000) criticisms of ethnographers such as Willis and Corrigan (see above), I was keen to prevent my notes from being dominated by the small number of children, mainly boys, whose noisy recalcitrance often eclipsed the less noticeable activities of others. As my fieldwork progressed, I attempted to compensate for this by deliberately observing the more low-profile individuals in the class.

In addition to the field notes, I also kept a fieldwork log. This was intended to provide a basic record of what I had done when, and what I had been thinking and reading over the course of my fieldwork. The frequency and detail of my entries in this varied. Sometimes, I logged a very brief description of my time in school. On other occasions, often between fieldwork days, I transcribed large quotes from various philosophy texts I was reading, producing a record of my navigation of the thought of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Foucault.

During late May and early June, I spent one or two days in school each week. Mrs. Lynford said that, with all the disruption and high energy associated with the end of the year, she thought it best if I avoided the last week or so of term. I finished the year having spent eight days in school, from which I had produced a little over twenty-three thousand words of rich, detailed field notes. I had enjoyed the time immensely, re-established friendly relations with the children, and developed what I judged to be a good rapport with Mrs. Lynford. In the main, I felt comfortable with my role as part-researcher, part-classroom assistant, and part-adult-sized child, and satisfied with the data which this role had produced.

4.8 Renegotiating access

Ethnographic methods literature stresses the ongoing nature of negotiating access (e.g. Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). On my last day in school before summer, I spoke to Mrs. Lynford about the next school year. She said that the class would be moving classrooms and changing teachers, but that their new teacher was to be a new member of staff, who would only be arriving in the autumn. This meant that I would have to re-negotiate access after the summer.

In late August, I made a phone call to the school and spoke to the new class teacher, Miss Johnson. I explained about my project, and we arranged that I would come in after school to meet her and discuss the project further on September 2nd, 2003. Ball (1984) notes that research on the initial encounters between teachers and children is often difficult to carry out, because teachers are reluctant to be observed in such critical and uncertain phases of their work. My experience bore this out; my field log reports my meeting with Miss Johnson as follows:

> Went in to see Miss Johnson. She's very young – might even be younger than me – and is still on probation, straight out of teacher training. She was friendly, but seemed very nervous, and was particularly anxious about the scale of my study, and the possibility of me disrupting the children. I put the ball firmly in her court, sensing that care was required. She wants some more time to get familiar with the kids, so she doesn't want me to come in until the 24th, which seems like ages away. I was quite worried by her repetition of the phrase "support me in upholding the classroom rules", which seemed to suggest she might start trying to use me as a disciplinary tool. This is at odds with my study, and won't work in any case since the kids know I'm a complete pushover. So I await the 24th with some trepidation.

On September 24th, I returned to school at last. I spent the day in my usual manner, chatting to the children, helping them with their work, observing them and making jottings. After the children had left for home, I asked the teacher how she felt, and to my surprise, she said that this

was the worst day of the year so far. She said that the children were unsettled and weren't concentrating, perhaps due to my presence, or perhaps due to the disruption caused by an Italian lesson in the morning. Perhaps most tellingly, she said that if I had been a tutor, she would have been marked down for her performance. I reiterated what I had told her at our first meeting: that my aim was to observe what goes on in a school classroom, not to evaluate her effectiveness as a teacher. I stressed that I wouldn't even know how to make such an evaluation, emphasising how surprised I was by her self-evaluation, since it had not occurred to me that she was failing in any way. Nevertheless, Miss Johnson clearly felt uncomfortable with my presence, understandably so given her tenuous position as a probationary teacher, and my long-standing close relationship with the children. She said, apologetically, that she was not comfortable having me in her class for more than one day per week. Wanting to continue my fieldwork, I felt that I had no choice but to accept this condition, stressing to Miss Johnson that the decision was in her hands, and explaining that I would simply take more detailed notes over less time.

This development presented a number of problems. First, the amount of time I was able to spend in school was reduced dramatically, with consequences for the amount of data I could produce, and the quality of my relationships with both Miss Johnson and the children. With the revised schedule, I would become an occasional visitor, whereas I had wanted to become an integral part of classroom life. In practice, this was even more of a problem than expected, since I felt that I had to give Miss Johnson as much control as possible over when I was in school. When at the end of each day we arranged my next visit, I would ask her when was convenient, and she would tend to limit the possibilities. For example, she said that Mondays were always bad, so she did not want me to come in on a Monday. Fridays were also out because they were only a half day. Miss Johnson also wanted to avoid having me in on days when she thought the children would be unsettled or 'high', such as just before or just after vacations, bank holidays, school trips and so on. Taking my own teaching commitments and holidays into account, this limited the available days to less even than one per week. Thus while I had spent eight days in school during little over a month in the previous academic year, I spent only seventeen days over the course of six months with Miss Johnson. My study was starting to look less and less like the other school ethnographies I had read, in most of which full-time daily contact was maintained. Where ethnographers such as Everhart (1977) had progressed from a detached, 'stranger' role towards a more involved 'friend' role over the course of his fieldwork, it appeared that I would have to make the reverse transition.

Second, I knew that Miss Johnson felt uncomfortable with me observing her at work, and this made me feel uncomfortable about carrying out my research. I tried to find ways of offering reassurance, such as discussing how the day had gone after the children had gone home. At these times, I tried to make work more accessible to her by talking about what I had observed during the day. Unfortunately, her perspective was understandably dominated by her need for control over the children, whereas I wanted to look at processes of disciplinary control from an external, critical standpoint. It seemed that we inhabited incommensurable discursive worlds (Midgley, 2004), and as a result, our conversations were rather awkward, since we were often talking at cross-purposes. As the fieldwork progressed, I began to feel uneasy about Miss Johnson's interpretations of my remarks, and eventually I stopped initiating these discussions. Instead, I tried to make it clear to Miss Johnson that I thought she was doing an incredible job, for which I had much admiration. Yet part of my research *did* involve making judgements about her practice, albeit not in the ways which she suspected. I was caught in a double-bind: on the one hand, I felt an ethical obligation not to judge a teacher in fear of judgement; on the other hand, I felt the need to maintain a critical-analytical perspective in my research. For example, early in the fieldwork, the first of these concerns led me to consider showing Miss Johnson some excerpts of my field notes so as to reassure her that I was not evaluating her teaching performance. But then I began to worry about how she would react to my data. For example, reading my presentation of discipline and resistance as an ongoing battle, she might well have interpreted this as an account of her failure to win that battle conclusively, or as a celebration of the children's disobedience. She might have become even more suspicious of me, and perhaps even asked me to leave. I realised that any fieldnotes I gave to her would have to be carefully edited, and this felt dishonest. In the end, feeling mired in this quandary, I abandoned the plan altogether.

4.9 Changing roles and the discomfort of discipline

In Miss Johnson's class, I immediately sensed that my role as a researcher would need to change. Like Mayall (2000), I found that the more intense work regime of the upper primary school demanded some adjustments to my methods. It seemed to me that my role would have to become dominated by classroom assistance activities if I was to justify my continued presence.

As my fieldwork progressed, I became increasingly insecure about my position in the classroom. While Miss Johnson felt that I was judging her, I began to feel that she was judging me. As a probationary teacher, she was afraid of being rejected by the school management if she

failed to perform as they wished. In turn, I became afraid of being rejected by her if I failed to perform as she wished. She had said that the class were easily distracted, and that she needed me to help uphold the classroom rules, and these demands began to loom large, both in my imagination, and in Miss Johnson's behaviour towards me. I became painfully aware of the distraction which my presence caused, and fearing for my expulsion took steps to minimise this. I made attempts to restrict my participation in the classroom to only those activities which were officially sanctioned, i.e. helping the children with their work. Conversations with the children during lessons, which had once been the basis of my fieldwork, now made me feel uncomfortable. It was impossible to prevent the children from chatting to me, but I began to refrain from speaking back to them, other than to suggest that they get on with their work. This felt very awkward, and I was not very good at it; I often still found myself drawn into conversations, only to remember, too late, that I was supposed to be curbing myself. A more effective measure was to remove myself from the children. I no longer sat at their tables during lessons, but rather took up a more distant observer role, sitting in the library corner and watching the class from there. However, this meant that my observations were increasingly confined to the more obvious forms of classroom interaction which could be witnessed at a distance. In consequence, my field notes began to be dominated by the noisy activities of the high-profile recalcitrant boys in the class, something which I had explicitly wanted to avoid (see 4.7, above).

Davis et al (2000) describe some of the ways in which teachers may attempt to co-opt researchers into the school framework. As they note, this can result in researchers feeling pressurised, caught between their will to resist and their desire to retain access. I will discuss this process more thoroughly in chapter six, as part of my substantive analysis. For now, it will suffice to quote Ball (1993), who seems to sum up my experience perfectly:

> "The researcher's task is to make themselves acceptable to all parties in the field, if possible, to take on a research role that allows maximum flexibility in forms of social relations and social interaction. The more complex the setting, the more difficult it becomes to arrive at a workable role and *persona*. In educational research, this issue becomes particularly acute when fieldwork involves relations both with teachers and administrators and students. Researchers will go to inordinate lengths to avoid situations or roles that invest their relations with students with any kind of authority. And yet, the avoidance of authority in some circumstances can damage credibility with teachers. Ethnographers seek to be all things to all people and to sublimate their own personalities, commitments, and beliefs as far as is humanly and ethically possible. But some people find that the adoption of this kind of minimal and malleable self can be uncomfortable on occasions." (p.42)

Returning to Heidegger, I want to conceptualise this uncomfortable struggle over my self as a researcher as a process of mediation. Heidegger argues that the unity essential to the concept of identity cannot be thought of as the kind of unity that demands the subsumption of a set of different parts into a unified, consistent, isomorphic whole. This idea is founded upon erroneous principles: (i) that it is possible to completely eliminate the differences between the parts of ourselves, and (ii) that once those differences had been eliminated, an abiding unified self would remain, since there would be no differences left to divide it.

For Heidegger, these principles are at odds with the very nature of both being and understanding. Though understanding depends upon a pre-existing forestructure, the process of interpretation always involves the revision of this forestructure through an encounter with the object. New interpretations made using this modified forestructure will be different, and hence the process repeats without end. Thus the kind of unity which interpretation must achieve in order to be successful must always be provisional, retaining the diversity of the parts even in the light of the whole, and thereby offering further opportunities for its reinterpretation. In the case of identity, this kind of unity is achieved, as in hermeneutic understanding, through an ongoing mediation between the parts and the whole of the self:

> "[the] Sameness [of identity] implies the relation of "with", that is, a mediation, a connection, a synthesis: the unification into a unity. This is why throughout the history of Western thought identity appears as a unity. But that unity is by no means the stale emptiness of that which, in itself without relation, persists in monotony...it is no longer possible for thinking to represent the unity of identity as mere sameness, and to disregard the mediation that prevails in unity. Wherever this is done, identity is represented only in an abstract manner." (Heidegger, 1969, p.24-25)

This conception allows for a diversity of coexisting subject positions, which was a prevailing feature of my fieldwork experience, but does not abandon the possibility of provisional coherences arising out of the relations between these positions. My research experience bore this out. I felt that, particularly during the early stages of my fieldwork, I was able, despite the multiplicity of my identity as a researcher, to 'hold it all together', and find identities which I could occupy comfortably, if temporarily. Some of these positions were more involved and participatory, as when I helped the children with their work or played with them at break times, while some were more detached and observatory. I was able to refrain from participating in those disciplinary practices which were at odds with the critical dimension of my project, while

becoming more closely involved in what I saw as facilitative and ethically acceptable forms of participation. From these positions, I was able to look, speak, write, and thus to conduct my research without feeling completely undermined by internal contradictions. Neither did I feel the need to deny these contradictions so as to consolidate my position. On the contrary, the process of mediation between the disparate parts of my researcher identity became a conversation which enriched my thinking in the field.

As the fieldwork progressed through the children's primary four year, however, I found this mediation increasingly difficult. It was not so much that I felt unable to participate. Indeed, I was encouraged to continue participating in facilitative activities, but I was also encouraged to participate in disciplinary activities of which I was suspicious, and which made me feel uncomfortable. At the same time, I felt that strict limits were placed upon my participation in those less formal and less overtly goal-orientated interactions through which my close relations with the children had been built up, and which had been instrumental in helping me to produce rich data. Like Gans (1982), I began to feel caught in an internal tug-of-war: my ethics were pulling me away from disciplinary activities, while the school structure was pulling me towards them; my emotional attachments to the children and my commitment to developing ethnographic understanding were pulling me towards participating in informal conversations with the children, while the teacher's expectations were pulling me away from them. My response was to retreat into a more distant observer role, thereby appeasing the teacher's wish for me not to distract the children whilst also opting out of disciplinary responsibilities. Yet this placed great strain on my relationships with the children, and limited my ability to produce thick descriptions of their social world. In short, the contradictions of my role had become so acute as to threaten my integrity. Finding myself indulging in practices which I found deeply problematic and unethical radically undermined the coherence of my identity as a researcher. The process of mediation described by Heidegger was barely possible, leaving me often feeling dislocated, unsure of what I ought to do or mired in insoluble quandaries.

However, my acute discomfort notwithstanding, I think that there is a more positive way to conceptualise my difficulties with discipline. As a research experience, becoming trapped within the very processes which I was studying was invaluable. As colleagues regularly pointed out to me in my bleaker moments, this position gave me a uniquely personal insight into the experience of working within a disciplinary institution. It enabled me to empathise with the teachers and the children who live within that structure. In some of the literature on children in institutions, there is an implicit identification with the children as the oppressed group, and an

implicit accusation of adults as their oppressors. Given my substantive concerns, it is perhaps unsurprising that during my project, I occasionally began to think along such lines. However, finding myself spontaneously participating in oppressive disciplinary practices made it difficult for me to pass judgement on the teachers (and sometimes children) who did likewise. By the end of my fieldwork, I knew very well how alluring the power of discipline could be. This insight is something which could not have been furnished by the more comfortable position which I occupied towards the start of my fieldwork.

4.10 Ending fieldwork and a second school

I managed to sustain some enthusiasm during February, but by the beginning of March I had all but lost interest in my fieldwork. I sensed that through a combination of the limited time I had spent in school and the restricted form of my engagement with the class, my once-close relationships with the children had been eroded, and this upset me. Despite the compromises which I had made, my relationship with Miss Johnson also felt "strained in some hard-to-define way" (PhD field notes, Wednesday 19 March 2003). We were polite and friendly towards each other, but a more substantial rapport had not developed between us. I had not managed to discuss my work with her in any detail, which made me feel guilty of unethical conduct towards her. Throughout March, I decreased my time in school even further by leaving school at lunch time. It was always a relief to go home early. In retrospect, I ought to have ended the fieldwork completely at this point.

Out of school, writing field notes became a chore. Where once the words had come flooding out at the end of the day, I now had to force myself to confront the computer, often leaving days between school visits and writing up. Every word felt like an effort, and I produced no more than two thousand words per day. The notes from this period are terse and flat, with none of the descriptive colour of my earlier data. Having begun to participate in the disciplinary system of the school, I also worried that I had 'gone native'. Certainly, my fieldwork setting had become very familiar to me, and I found it hard to find new perspectives and fresh insights into the mundane details of everyday life in school. Most of my observations seemed merely to be variations on themes I had already identified. My field notes were beginning to reach saturation point.

At the outset, my PhD had been envisaged as a comparative study, in which I would spend time in several local schools. During the refinement of my research design in the first year of my PhD, this dimension was abandoned in favour of a more intensive, long-term project with

the class at Westgate. However, I had always felt regret at being unable to examine other schools. I felt that my experience, though one of close engagement, was very narrow, and I often wondered how similar another school class would be. Having found myself rapidly losing interest in my research, I began to consider the possibility of visiting another school as a way to reinvigorate my thinking. The role of this second school would not be to provide extra substantive material. I already had a large volume of field notes to analyse, and there was no question of a comparison between the schools, since after all this time my position at Westgate was so uniquely entrenched. Rather, I was hoping for an experience which would produce two effects: first, to unsettle me from well-trodden thought-paths; and second, to provide some respite from the awkward and ambivalent position which I had come to occupy in Westgate. I guessed that a few days with a class in another school would be sufficient to achieve these aims.

At the beginning of March, I decided to approach Golden Hill Primary School, also located in Edinburgh. In the course of her own research, my second supervisor had found the headteacher there particularly welcoming and helpful. It therefore seemed likely that negotiating access would be straightforward. I wrote to the school, including a carefully prepared information leaflet describing my study (see Appendix III). I then followed this up with a phone call. The headteacher said that she was very amenable to me spending a few days with one of her classes, and we arranged a date in mid March for me to come in and begin the work. We discussed consent, and the head said that she would make sure that the children and their teacher had advance warning that I would be visiting, and that she would notify the parents in writing, but she did not expect them to be concerned about my project. I wrote once again to the Education Department requesting formal permission, and they replied in the affirmative once again (Appendix III).

As for negotiating consent with the children, this was less crucial than in Westgate, since I had decided in advance that none of the notes I made in Golden Hill would be used as substantive material for the thesis. They would be private observations, to be used by me to stimulate my thinking, and also shown to the teacher and the children if they asked to see them. Formal consent techniques require time to become effective, because the children only come to grasp what a researcher does (and hence what they are consenting *to*) through experience of having a researcher in class – and even then only very imperfectly (see 4.5, above). After consulting my supervisors, I decided to use no formal means of negotiating consent, but to refrain from writing notes about any individual child, focusing instead upon groups of children and the dynamics of the class as a whole. This seemed both practical and non-invasive.

In school, I was allocated to a primary two class (six and seven year olds) and introduced to their teacher. As the children entered their room, several of them greeted me by name, which I took to mean that the headteacher had indeed briefed them about my visit, as agreed. The teacher seemed friendly and interested in my research topic. I spent the day in my usual way, observing, writing jottings – though taking care not to write about individual children or transcribe their conversations – and helping the children with their work. I also went out into the playground with them at lunch and breaktime. At the end of the day, I spoke for some time to the class teacher. We chatted in detail about my research and the methods I was using, and I offered to bring in some of the field notes which I would produce from that day. She said that she would be very interested to see these. We arranged another date for the following week.

Back at home, I turned my jottings into field notes as usual, and was relieved to find the prose flowing easily once again. Spending time with a primary two class where I had no pre-defined role seemed to have rekindled the joy of school research exactly as intended. Feeling quite secure in my relationship with the new teacher, despite the brevity of our contact, I felt no qualms about showing her these field notes as I had promised, and printed out a copy to give to her the following week.

I returned to school and spent another day being re-energised by the relaxed classroom dynamic in Golden Hill. I gave the notes to the teacher, and we discussed them at break time. However, during the morning, I found myself increasingly focusing my observations upon individuals, and making jottings about detailed minutiae rather than classroom dynamics. I suspected that I had begun to slip into the observer role which I had developed at Westgate, even finding myself keeping some distance from the children so as not to disrupt them. This suspicion was borne out when, at the end of the day, the teacher remarked upon how unobtrusive I had seemed, and said that she would have been quite happy for me to approach them and speak to them more. Feeling that the stint at Golden Hill had already served its purpose, and not wishing to slip any further back into my distant-observer role, I decided not to return there, even though the teacher was quite amenable to further visits. I left feeling partly amused and partly annoyed at the irony of having developed such a good rapport with this teacher in such a short time, given that more extensive contact with Miss Johnson had failed to achieve this.

At the end of March, I spent my last half-day in Westgate school. I did not tell the children that it was my last day, but it appeared that Miss Johnson had mentioned it because some of them seemed to know that I was leaving. Some of them even expressed a desire to keep in touch with me. I stayed to eat lunch with the children, and they took a last opportunity to write

in my notebook. My departure was completely unremarkable – I thanked Miss Johnson, said goodbye to a few of the children as I crossed the playground, and returned home. In my field notes, I wrote that "Something seems to have gone horribly wrong, and I can't work out what it is, or even if I'm overly concerned about it." (PhD field notes, Wednesday 26 March 2003).

4.11 Analysis and follow-up

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) advise ethnographers to begin thinking analytically during the fieldwork phase of their work. They seem concerned that, lacking confidence, novice researchers may refrain from analytical speculation until all their data has been collected. I did not experience this problem. On the contrary, my field notes were, if anything, over-analytical in their inception. This is typical of my personality, but it also reflects the unusually low frequency of my school visits. With only one day per week in the classroom, I had plenty of time to carry out intensive reading, particularly of Nietzsche and Foucault, and plenty of time to ruminate upon how their ideas could be brought to bear upon my fieldwork. Consequently, both the focus of my observations in school and the content and form of my fieldnotes were strongly influenced by these thinkers. When the time came to analyse my data formally, this worked to my advantage. A good deal of analytical thinking had been carried out during my fieldwork, and this was written into the notes. What remained was the simpler task of organising the data according to this analysis.

Approaching my complete data set, I found that I had just over seventy thousand words of field notes. To manage these, I suspected that a dedicated coding package might be helpful. My intention was to use my computer as "a supremely effective electronic filing cabinet" (Fielding, 2001) rather than as a theory building tool. I tried out QSR NUD*IST 4, and found it to be quick and very easy to use. Importantly, its tree-like coding structure facilitated the analytical thought processes which had begun during my fieldwork rather than disrupting them.

To produce initial codes, I read through the notes several times noting down salient themes. Three broad categories emerged, with a clearly Foucaultian cast: methodological insights, techniques of discipline, and techniques of self. Each of these had several sub-categories (see Appendix V for the full coding frame). I reproduced this framework in NUD*IST and then imported all of my documents after reformatting them to NUD*IST's specifications. Thereafter, coding proceeded quickly and easily. I opted to make three 'passes' at my data, one for each of the broad categories, each time coding the field notes in chronological order. As I coded, I developed new sub-codes as and when the need appeared to arise. Each time I

developed a new sub code, I would go back through all the documents which I had already coded by that stage, looking for instances where this new code could be applied. The coded fieldnotes were output from NUD*IST, and these became the basis of the substantive chapters of this thesis.

Described in this way, my coding appears to have been a fairly straightforward technical-analytical exercise. In truth, though sometimes the process felt routine, at other times I found re-engagement with my fieldnotes profoundly emotional, not to say taxing. As Jackson (1990) notes, most anthropologists feel strong conflicting emotions towards their field notes. I often experienced re-reading my notes as a kind of 're-living' of the fieldwork documented therein, with all the associated affective baggage. There were many moments of joy, particularly in the first stages of each 'pass' at the data, when I was coding the notes from early in my study. Towards the end of each 'pass', however, I tended to feel anxious and strained, often wandering away from the computer to make cups of tea or find other distractions. The terse, dull notes from the end of my fieldwork always rekindled the feelings of dissatisfaction, loss and fatigue which had accompanied their production.

I have already mentioned how, following Delamont's (2000) concerns, I had tried to prevent the activities of the small number of non-conformist boys in the class from dominating my field notes. I have also noted how this became increasingly difficult as my role became less of a participant and more of an observer-at-a-distance. As I coded my field notes, it became apparent that the excerpts of interest to me were indeed dominated by three children in particular: Bobby, David and Billy. The quieter members of the class, including many of the girls, were under-represented by comparison. In part, this reflected the content of my notes, but I think that the decisive influence here was the coding framework, much of which was organised around my interest in disciplinary practices. In retrospect, it seems unavoidable that, if one wants to analyse disciplinary practices, one's analysis will be dominated by those who are most often, most overtly and most severely subjected to such practices.

After I had completed the coding of my notes, two tasks remained in connection with my fieldwork. I had been avoiding these because I knew that they would involve returning to school, and coding had reminded me repeatedly of how the end of my fieldwork had been so unsatisfactory and emotionally troubling. But as the school year started to draw to a close, I became anxious to address these tasks. First, I wanted to give Miss Johnson and the children some small token of thanks for participating in my project. Second, as mentioned earlier, I had promised the children that they could, if they wished, choose their own pseudonyms. On my last

day, several of them had even reminded me of this commitment. I therefore decided to return to school for an hour or so to distribute thank-you cards and 'secret name' slips. I called Miss Johnson at the school and arranged this.

I designed cards for the children and 'secret name' slips these on my computer (see Appendix IV). I wrote each one by hand, including, when I could think of them, small inscriptions based upon a specific experience or joke which I had shared with each child. I also wrote a letter for the children and parents, informing them that my study had come to a close and thanking them for their participation. I also explained about the secret name slips, and (rather unwisely, with hindsight) invited those who wished to do so to keep in touch with me via my university postal and e-mail addresses or my phone number at the top of the letter. A copy of this letter is also included in Appendix IV. I sealed each card in an individually addressed envelope, together with a copy of the letter, a 'secret name' slip and a self-addressed, stamped envelope (so that the children could return the secret name slips to me). I bought a thank-you card for Miss Johnson, and wrote a message inside thanking her for allowing me into her classroom.

In the classroom, the children were excited to see me. I went about handing out my envelopes, and the children seemed to be very pleased with the thank-you cards. Several of them returned the 'secret name' slips to me immediately. Then I saw the teacher looking at the contents of one of the envelopes. She approached me, and explained, in the nicest possible way, that thought the thank-you cards were lovely, I ought to have shown her a copy of all the materials before giving them to the children. I apologised profusely; she said that no harm was done, because she could easily collect the materials from the children if need be before they went home. I felt extremely embarrassed, particularly because I knew from past experience that it was school procedure to check letters before they went home. Miss Johnson explained that she would have to show the materials to one of the deputy heads, Mrs. Snell, who presently arrived and motioned to me to come outside the classroom. I apologised repeatedly, and both Mrs. Snell and Miss Johnson were extremely understanding. They said that the card was a lovely gesture, but that they felt certain parts of the letter needed to be re-worded (these are highlighted in the copy in Appendix IV). In particular, they felt that my invitation to the children to write, e-mail or telephone me looked very suspicious. I explained that some of the children had asked to stay in touch with me, and they said that they understood, and thought the idea was admirable, but that to a parent, the way I had worded the letter might look dubious. Looking at the letter now, I agree completely with this assessment. Like Horton (2001), I felt acutely awkward and uneasy, my gender, age and marital status suddenly making me doubt even my own motives. To the

teachers, I pleaded complete naïvety, and agreed to make the changes which they recommended. Miss Johnson said that she would collect in all the letters, and then send out a revised version which I could e-mail to her.

When I returned home, I puzzled over my rather cavalier behaviour with this letter. In particular, I wondered why I had not invited either my supervisors or the school to check over what I had written, since this would have been a common-sense precaution. Something must have made me resistant to being vetted by an external authority in this instance. In retrospect, I can only guess that the letter was a last-ditch attempt on my part to salvage my relationships with the children in a way which was not mediated by any disciplinary structure. Unconsciously, perhaps, I think I knew that the letter would not meet ethical standards, and I defiantly distributed it regardless. It was my last act of rebellion, and its failure in the face of the administrative power of the school is telling.

After the troubling fiasco with the letter, I ate lunch with the children, said goodbye to them and then left. Despite the hiccup, the children had been pleased to see me, and I them; this felt like a much more appropriate conclusion to my project.

Over the next few weeks, a number of the children returned their 'secret name' slips to me in the post. For those who did so, I have used their preferred name as they wrote it on the 'secret name' slip. I have invented new pseudonyms for those who did not return their slips. It should be stressed that the children had complete freedom to choose the name of their preference, which has produced an idiosyncratic set of pseudonyms. The substantive sections of this thesis might appear less unusual if I were to alter these pseudonyms, truncating 'James Bond' to 'James', for example. However, this would be unethical, especially since I had promised the children that they could choose their own names. A full list of the pseudonyms, including those used for staff, appears in Appendix VI.

4.12 Methods: summary

In this chapter, I have offered a narrative, written from my own particular perspective, of the process by which I carried out the research for this thesis. This narrative necessarily tells a partial truth, omitting numerous details and imposing a certain coherence upon what often felt like a messy, disjointed set of events. In some places, I have allowed this narrative to flow uninterrupted. At other times, I have disrupted it to critically scrutinise certain facets of my experience, such as the negotiation of consent, or lack thereof. I have also explored in detail the philosophical orientation with which I began my fieldwork, and through which I understood the

ethnographic method of participant observation. I have used this same resource to theorise the process by which my identity as a researcher was mediated throughout the fieldwork, eventually becoming uncomfortably contradictory as I struggled to reconcile opposing demands. I have suggested that, as a result of such demands, conducting critical research in a disciplinary institution was a process fraught with anxieties and tensions, many of which were not easily resolved. Yet I have argued that these moments of awkwardness provided the kind of deep, empathic insights which could not have been produced had I done as I wished and maintained a comfortable distance from disciplinary practices.

Having set out my field of interest (chapter two), my theoretical resources (chapter three) and my methods, the following chapter will introduce the substantive portion of my thesis. I will begin by refining my exegesis of Foucault, focusing upon his conception of disciplinary power. This will then provide a framework through which to interpret my empirical observations of classroom practice.

5

Discipline and docile bodies

In chapter two, I reviewed the existing literature on geographies of schooling. There, I argued that few scholars in that field have engaged in sufficient depth with Foucault's work on the relationships between institutional power and human subjects. I then gave an overview of recent Foucaultian analyses of schools within educational research. I concluded that in this field, while theoretical engagement with Foucault has been extensive, empirical uses of his work have been more limited. Furthermore, I noted that of the few Foucaultian empirical studies which have been undertaken, several are dominated by a pessimistic, totalistic reading of *Discipline and Punish*. In chapter three, I began to present a more nuanced account of Foucault's conception of power, drawing on a wider range of his work.

Returning to my exegesis, I will open this chapter with a closer, more detailed reading of *Discipline and Punish*, discussing in particular the programmatic aim of the 'docile body'. This will then provide an analytical context for the empirical material which follows. I will present observations of a range of techniques of power in the classroom which, I will argue, can be usefully understood as attempts to produce docility. In the latter half of the chapter, I will focus upon individualising techniques, many of which are overtly spatial, and hence of particular interest from a geographical perspective.

In chapter six, I will continue to pursue the theme of disciplinary power, this time focusing upon the geography of surveillance in the classroom. I will begin by refining my exegesis of Foucault, looking in detail at his account of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. Against this background, I will then examine a range of empirical examples of surveillance which I witnessed in the classroom. On the basis of this analysis, I will conclude that the Panopticon, as a disciplinary programme, is in fact a rather poor analogue for the small-scale workings of power in a primary school classroom.

Chapter seven, my third and final substantive discussion, will depart from the notion of power as discipline to focus upon techniques of the self, those forms of power which are exercised by individuals over themselves. Once again, I will begin by making a detailed exegesis of this idea in Foucault's later work, taking particular care to explore its relationship to his earlier work on disciplinary power. Against this background, I will then examine some instances

of relations to self in the classroom so as to explore this alternative dimension of subject-forming practices in the classroom.

5.1 From torture to discipline: Foucault's history of punishment

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault presents a history of western European punishment. His aim is not to provide a balanced, scholarly account which weighs up all the available facts. Instead, he wants to put forward a disconcerting perspective which will raise a number of important and difficult questions about modern society. In particular, as Stuart Elden (2001) is careful to point out, Foucault sees his history of punishment as part of his more general project of a genealogy of the subject, "a history of the modern soul" (DP, p.23; see also chapter three of this thesis). Thus he is not interested in penal history *per se*, but in what light this history can cast on modern forms of subjectivity, as part of "the history of the present" (DP, p.31). This context must be borne in mind when interpreting the text.

Discipline and Punish traces the dramatic transformation, between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, of the way in which power was exercised through punishment. It begins by describing the regime of torture, the dominant form of justice up until the mid eighteenth century. Here, the power of the sovereign to punish was exercised only occasionally, but on those occasions excessively. Practices such as branding, flogging and execution, burning and quartering by horses were spectacular public displays of the monarch's ultimate superiority. Their effect was to remind the king's people of the unsparing physical violence which would be visited upon those who rebelled against his laws. Torture made an example of the criminal. Yet at the same time, the attendance of the populace brought an element of potential instability to these public rituals. The criminal could appear as an anti-hero, especially where the punishment was regarded as unjust, and in some cases the people turned in revolt upon the executioner, rioted, smashed the gallows and freed the condemned man. Torture was an unstable form of punishment, later to be superseded by a more carefully calculated regime.

The latter half of the eighteenth century saw an increasing dissatisfaction with public execution and torture. Lawyers and legal theorists began to portray such practices as revoltingly inhumane, shameful, and dangerous. At a time when crime had become less violent, directed more often against property than against bodies, there were calls for moderation. The severity of the punishment, it was said, ought to be more accurately proportional to that of the crime. At the same time, there was a widespread belief that crime was on the increase. In response, European justice systems adapted by a "double movement": punishments became less severe, but the

number of punishable offences multiplied. Under the old system, minor illegalities (pilfering, smuggling, vagabondage) were tolerated while serious crimes were punished with excessive violence. This system was replaced by a more extensive, more continuous, more rigorous and more rational form of justice:

> "What was emerging no doubt was not so much a new respect for the humanity of the condemned – torture was still frequent in the execution of even minor criminals – as a tendency towards a more finely tuned justice, towards a closer penal mapping of the social body. Following a circular process, the threshold of the passage to violent crimes rises, intolerance to economic offences increases, controls become more thorough, penal interventions at once more premature and more numerous." (DP, p.78)

Thus according to Foucault, what superficially looked like a series of humanitarian reforms was actually a new economy of punishment, more appropriate to the requirements of an age increasingly dominated by industrial modes of production[14].

The reformers laid great emphasis upon the specification and classification of crimes. A new taxonomy was called for, a system of classification in which crimes would be separated and distinguished from one another, assigned their proper place, and matched with corresponding punishments. These punishments would then function as a system of signs, each signifying a particular crime. Penal reformers reasoned that if people could see that every crime had its corresponding punishment, they would be discouraged from criminal behaviour. The code therefore had to be transparently understandable, with the nature of the punishment expressing as directly as possible the nature of the crime: theft punished by the confiscation of property, murder punished by death, arson by burning at the stake, and so on. The aim of these punishments was not to work upon the criminal's body, but rather to work upon the minds of the population at large. Such techniques were efficient. Punishments could be calculated to exercise the least possible violence upon the criminal, with the greatest possible effect in fortifying the consciences of onlookers. This transformation offers a glimpse of the relevance of Foucault's analysis to schooling. Punishment ceases merely to punish the offender. In addition, it now seeks to teach the masses a lesson.

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[14] It should be stressed that while Foucault sees links between economic and social changes, he does not accept that the transformations he identifies in the penal system can be explained by the rise of industrial capitalism alone. For example, he points out that the new disciplinary techniques (see below) were favoured by both capitalist and socialist societies (EP).

5.1.1 The birth of the prison

Against this background of the increasingly individual specification of crimes and punishments, Foucault describes a rather puzzling phenomenon: the adoption of imprisonment as a universal technique of punishment: "In the penal code of 1810, between death and fines, it occupies, in a number of forms, almost the whole field of possible punishments." (ibid., p.115) This is all the more surprising because, until that time, imprisonment was used very little throughout Europe. The common explanation for this transformation is the formation, at this time, of "a number of great models of punitive imprisonment." (ibid., p.120) However, this explanation merely shifts the question, providing no clues as to why these models were created and why they gained widespread acceptance.

Looking at these models, Foucault notes some of their principal features. First, they stipulated that prisoners would be made to work. The primary aim of this was not economic. Rather, it was thought that enforced labour would instil a renewed work ethic in those who had given themselves over to a life of idleness. The prison was to be a space in which work could be organised, supervised, and its intensity and duration adjusted to achieve the most effective reformation of the criminal. "Life was partitioned...according to an absolutely strict time-table, under constant supervision; each moment of the day was devoted to a particular type of activity, and brought with it its own obligations and prohibitions" (ibid., p.124)

Second, the prisoners would be isolated from one another, either in full-time solitary confinement or, in less serious cases, for more limited periods of the day and night. Not only would this reduce promiscuity, conspiracy, and so on, but it would also have the positive effect of forcing criminals into self-reflection. In the endless lonely hours, they would meditate upon their crimes and eventually come to comprehend their guilt. Isolation would provide the optimum climate for the growth of a conscience.

Third, criminals' penalties would no longer be carried out in public, but behind the walls of the prison. No longer a public spectacle, the punishment became confined to the relationship between the criminal and his or her supervisors. The latter were cast in the role of moral instructors, whose task was first to help the prisoners to repent of their wrongdoings, and second to ensure that they did not slip back into their old ways. To achieve this aim, the prison had to become an apparatus of knowledge – not knowledge of the crimes, but knowledge of the criminals. Each was regularly observed and assessed. What were his or her particular vices and weaknesses? How might they best be cured?

These penal techniques did not aim to produce punishments as signs corresponding to various crimes, as in the system envisaged by the eighteenth century reformers. Instead, the prison system was designed operate directly upon the body and soul of the criminal, not so much through a language of criminality as through exercises: "time-tables, compulsory movements, regular activities, solitary meditation, work in common, silence, application, respect, good habits." (ibid., p.128) Thought of in this way, though the prison produces knowledge of its prisoners and circulates this knowledge in discourse, this is not its primary function. Rather, its chief product is a particular kind of subjectivity. It is a machine which attempts to work upon wayward criminals, hammering them into a socially acceptable shape to produce obedient, industrious individuals. It produces discourse only as a means to that end. This is an important point, as David Hoy notes: *"Discipline and Punish* surprised many because it seemed to be admitting that discourse did not constitute social reality. Instead, discursive knowledge is shown to be produced in the service of an expanding social power that increasingly penetrates modern institutions like prisons, armies, schools, and factories." (Hoy, 1986a, p.5)

Thus Foucault presents three 'technologies' of punishment in confrontation in the late eighteenth century: the old monarchical regime of torture, and two new regimes of preventative punishment. The first of these aimed to individualise crimes and punishments, to produce a publicly comprehensible language in which each punishment would signify a corresponding crime. The second aimed to operate in secret, in an enclosed institution, not by producing signs but by training bodies and souls. So how and why was it that, in the end, this latter regime won out over the other two?

5.1.2 Disciplinary power

The answer to these questions lies in the scope of this third regime. As the quote from Hoy suggests, the techniques of institutionalised supervision and training, which Foucault calls 'disciplines', were not confined to punishment. Throughout the eighteenth century, such techniques were developed for various applications in the military, in medicine and hospitals, in psychiatry and lunatic asylums, in industry, in the organisation of factory workshops, and in education, in the formation of new kinds of schools which might cope with large numbers of children. Therefore, as Elden (2001) emphasises, by the time of the birth of the modern prison, disciplinary techniques were well developed within other spheres of social life. It is hardly surprising that these techniques also found their way into the justice system, through the development of prisons.

Foucault calls this process "the swarming of disciplinary mechanisms" (DP, p.211). The techniques of discipline were transferred and adapted from one application to another, spreading and mutating like a virus. They were not simply invented and imposed upon society in one movement in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but have a much longer history, in monastic practices for example (see in particular Aries, 1973), and their development was a piecemeal affair:

> "The 'invention' of this new political anatomy must not be seen as a sudden discovery. It is rather a multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered location, which overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, support one another, distinguish themselves from one another according to their domain of application, converge and gradually produce the blueprint of a general method...On almost every occasion, they were adopted in response to particular needs: an industrial innovation, a renewed outbreak of certain epidemic diseases, the invention of the rifle or the victories of Prussia." (ibid., p.138)

The latter point is important. It would be easy to misunderstand Foucault's analysis, and see discipline as a regime imposed upon the masses by some central authority, such as the state or the bourgeoisie, with the explicit intention of domination. In fact, Foucault insists that disciplinary techniques grow in a much less centralised way, from the bottom up, and in response to specific circumstances. In the case of elementary education in England, for example, the problem facing the nineteenth century Whig reformers was: how can moral values be inculcated in large numbers of pauper children without incurring unacceptably high costs? As Markus (1993) notes, "Without state support, and with only tiny parental contributions...schools had to rely on philanthropic charity, and so efficiency was vital." (p.42) A technology was required in which a single teacher could supervise many children. Disciplinary techniques could provide this, and were therefore adopted and adapted for this purpose. The result was the monitorial school system (see for example Sturt, 1967; Johnson, 1976), in which older, more diligent pupils were placed in charge of groups of younger children, thereby minimising the need for paid teachers. Monitorial schools were set up by two non-governmental organisations: the non-denominational British and Foreign Schools Society, headed by Joseph Lancaster, and the laboriously-named National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales, led by Andrew Bell. The English school system only came under the control of the state much later, by which time the techniques of discipline had already been established.

Foucault's idea of disciplinary swarming finds support in a number of historical accounts which demonstrate the close connections between early schools and other kinds of disciplinary institutions. For example, education historians make much of the connections with religious organisations. While Lancaster was a Quaker, Bell was an Anglican clergyman and his society was supported by the Church of England. Organisations such as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Sunday School movement were also crucial in the development of schools (see for example Morrish, 1970; Markus, 1993). Likewise, workhouses feature prominently in the early history of English schooling (see Driver, 1993). They provided rudimentary training for pauper children, with this provision gradually becoming spatially separated as the schools of industry were built. These were factories with a training function, attached to the poor houses (David, 1980), where children would spin, sew, make shoes or forge iron. As Markus (1993) notes, "production and education were linked in the earliest visions" (p.41), with some influential early schools designed as integral parts of factory sites, such as the Quakers' establishment at Little Britain and, in Scotland, Owen's famous infant school at New Lanark (Whitbread, 1972)[15].

Let us now examine the techniques of discipline in more detail. Their basic aim is to increase the 'docility-utility' of people. In other words, they cultivate a form of docility which ensures the obedience of a body so as to increase its usefulness in a given context. For example, an army attempts to cultivate the docility of its soldiers so as to increase their killing power; a factory cultivates the docility of its workers so as to increase their productivity; a school seeks to cultivate the docility of its pupils so as to make them more easily educable. Discipline is therefore a paradoxical process which "increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)." (DP, p.138)

Since disciplinary power seeks to increase utility, its exercise is not concerned solely with influencing *what* a person will do, but also seeks to influence *how* they do it, "so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines." (ibid.) To achieve this, disciplinary techniques first break down actions into their constituent parts, and then formulate exercises designed to improve the efficiency of each part. The teaching of handwriting in modern schools is a good example of this. The child is taught first how to hold

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[15] It must be noted that the history of schooling in England differs significantly from that of Scotland. In broad terms, Scotland had a coherent system of schools long before England. Indeed, during the nineteenth century utilitarian reformers such as James Mill and Henry Brougham regularly upheld the

a pen properly, with much care given to the placing of fingers and thumbs. Then the child is set to work learning how to form the shape of each letter. Attention is paid to their posture, the position and motion of their hand, wrist and arm. Finally, they are taught how to combine the letters into words, placing them in horizontal lines with the correct spacing between them.

As this example shows, discipline is characterised by an obsession with detail. It begins at the smallest scale: regulating gestures, prescribing rules of attire and comportment, enforcing meticulous standards of hygiene, ensuring that every minute of the day is used effectively. The devil is in the details; therefore nothing must be overlooked:

> "A meticulous observation of detail, and at the same time a political awareness of these small things, for the control and use of men, emerge through the classical age bearing with them a whole set of techniques, a whole corpus of methods and knowledge, descriptions, plans and data. And from such trifles, no doubt, the man of modern humanism was born." (DP, p.141)

This brings us back to Foucault's understanding of power as a productive rather than a repressive force (see chapter three). Through a series of minute techniques, "discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies." (ibid., p.138) I now want to examine this concept in more detail.

5.2 Docile bodies

Foucault's description of docile bodies lies at the heart of *Discipline and Punish*, and has been the subject of much discussion and argument. In understanding what he had in mind, I think it may be helpful to make the distinction between docile bodies as a programmatic aim and docile bodies as a practical reality.

This is all the more important since the apparent focus upon practices and techniques throughout *Discipline and Punish* can sometimes obscure the fact that the section on docile bodies is in fact an analysis of discourse[16]. The documents Foucault offers there as evidence

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Scottish parish schools system as an ideal which should be followed in England (Anderson, 1995). However, both histories have in common the close association between schools and religious institutions.

[16] Many of Foucault's commentators have made much of his enlargement of the archaeological technique, which takes discourse as the object of analysis, into a genealogical analysis of practices, in which discourse appears as one kind of practice amongst others (see for example Hacking, 1986a; Hoy, 1986a; Davidson, 2003). However, Michael Walzer argues that Foucault "is more a theorist than a historian, and the materials out of which he constructs his books consist mostly of the written projects and proposals for [disciplinary] sites, the architectural plans, the handbooks of rules and regulations, rarely of actual accounts of practices and experiences." (1986, p.58)

were written by social reformers seeking to outline their aims, and suggesting techniques by which these aims could be realised. He presents timetables from penal institutions and rules used in military drill; he describes the layout of particular factories and colleges. There is little doubt that all of this corresponded to a set of disciplinary institutions which existed in particular times and places. Yet as those such as Felix Driver (1993) and Julie Allan (1996) note, Foucault does not present much evidence of the everyday workings of these institutions. Were the rules he describes followed to the letter, or sometimes broken? Did reformers achieve their stringent aims, or was there dissent amongst the ranks? In short, what happened when the techniques of discipline were applied to the social world? The later sections of *Discipline and Punish* begin to answer such questions with respect to penality and the prison, but a more detailed, wide ranging analysis of other disciplinary institutions is clearly beyond the scope of the book[17].

As Driver (1994) notes, Foucault comes closest to an empirical account of a disciplinary institution in his description of Mettray, a French penal colony for juvenile offenders which opened in 1840. However, Foucault declares that he chooses to write about Mettray "Because it is the disciplinary form at its most extreme, the model in which are concentrated all the coercive technologies of behaviour." (DP, p.293). Mettray is offered precisely because it is an exceptional, model example, a rare instance in which disciplinary ideals are at their most vivid. Foucault is therefore concerned, once again, with the idealised representations of Mettray provided by the discourse of reformers. The descriptions of Mettray which he quotes are those of Belgian social thinker Edouard Ducpetiaux, while the writings of, for example, former in-mate Jean Genet[18] are notable by their absence. In short, Foucault is interested in how Mettray was designed to operate as a technology of power, not in collecting evidence of how this design, once realised, actually operated on a day-to-day basis.

My position is thus close to that of Colin Gordon (1980), who distinguishes between strategies, technologies and programmes of power, and insists that these must not be conflated:

> "Readers of Foucault sometimes emerge with the dismaying impression of a
> paranoid hyper-rationalist system in which the strategies-technologies-programmes
> of power merge into a monolithic regime of social subjection. The

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[17] Foucault clearly states that "There can be no question here of writing the history of the different disciplinary institutions, with all their individual differences. I simply intend to map on a series of examples some of the essential techniques that most easily spread from one to another." (DP, p.139)

[18] Jean Genet was a delinquent who was incarcerated at Mettray between ages of fifteen and eighteen, during the 1920s. He later became a writer, finding favour with Sartre and the French avant-garde. His experience at Mettray inspired part of his 1946 novel, *Miracle of the Rose*.

misunderstanding here consists in a conflation of historical levels which reads into the text two massive illusions or paralogisms: an illusion of 'realisation' whereby it is supposed that programmes elaborated in certain discourses are integrally transposed to the domain of actual practices and techniques, and an illusion of 'effectivity' whereby certain technical methods of social domination are taken as actually being implemented and enforced upon the social body as a whole." (p.246)

Accordingly, it seems wrong to attribute to Foucault a naively deterministic view of discipline. In other words, he thinks (i) that disciplinary programmes aim to produce docile bodies, and (ii) that these programmes have been crucial to the formation of contemporary society. He does not, however, make the much stronger claim that wherever disciplinary programmes operate they will do so with total effectiveness, producing perfectly docile bodies. To those critics who make this claim (see chapters two and three), Foucault responds that "The analysis of power mechanisms does not seek to demonstrate that power is both anonymous and always victorious. Rather it was a matter of locating the positions and the modes of action of everyone involved as well as the various possibilities for resisting and counter-attacks on either side." (EP, p. 239)

Docile bodies might therefore be seen as an ideal to which disciplinary programmes aspire. Yet care is needed here, for when one of Foucault's interviewers suggests that his conception of discipline is similar to a Weberian 'ideal type', he disagrees quite decisively (IP). His answer is that the disciplinary programmes he analyses were not merely ideas in the heads of reformers. Rather, they took the forms of plans for particular institutions, discussions of techniques of moral reform and so on – all of which were precisely calculated, circulated and communicated, in conversations which really happened, in books that were really written, and so on. In other words, the fact that disciplinary programmes were never perfectly realised or completely effective does not imply that those programmes did not have a reality. As Foucault argues, "That would be to have a very impoverished notion of the real." (IP, p.282) He insists that between the programmatic aims and the practices of power, one can always trace both a certain distance and a certain correspondence. It is the business of empirical studies such as my own to examine these distances and correspondences in detail. Such studies must look at how, in very specific contexts, programmatic aims are reinterpreted in the formulation of disciplinary strategies and tactics, assess how effective these tactics are, and what their limits might be.

Bearing this in mind, I want to outline some key features of docile bodies as a programmatic aim. As such:

Docile bodies are *individuals* – in the physical sense of human beings who are spatially separate from one another; but also in the way they are thought of by others and think of themselves as being separate entities. This separation is marked out by differences: I am a man, whereas you are a woman; I have a different socio-economic status to you; I have a particular psychology, a set of skills, aptitudes and so on. In an institution, the finer grained this analysis and classification, the greater the potential for individualisation. It should be noted that docile individuals rarely operate alone. Rather, by virtue of their individuality, they can be recombined into forces which are much more effective than undifferentiated masses. The military is perhaps the best example of this.

Docile bodies are *obedient* – in three ways:

- docile bodies submit to rules imposed upon them from some outside source. For example, teachers try to find ways of making children obey the rules laid down by their school;

- docile bodies are also able to reproduce rule systems, to be obeyed as well as to obey. Thus teachers are expected both to submit to the rules imposed upon them by senior management staff, and also to ensure that the children in their care submit to the school rules;

- in their most advanced form, docile bodies are able to internalise rules. In other words, they take rules from their surroundings, and then impose these rules upon themselves. They will then obey without requiring any external supervision. In psychoanalytic terms, this is the formation of a superego, or conscience.

Docile bodies are *physically restrained* – this is really just a particular case of obedience which requires some emphasis. Foucault wrote primarily about the docility of *bodies*. Disciplinary techniques aim to work upon people whose bodies are unruly or uncoordinated, and increase their efficiency by rationalising their physicality: correcting posture and gesture, pacifying violent people, quietening noisy people, making the body ordered, routine and predictable. Such restrained bodies can then be controlled and put to use much more effectively.

In the following section, I will discuss some of the techniques which attempted to produce docile bodies in the classroom. I hope to show that the features of docility outlined above are all present as aims in the process of making children educable.

5.3 Docile bodies in school

The production of docile bodies was one of the principal activities in Westgate School. During my MSc fieldwork, I had noted how one teacher divided her task into two parts: "We're not just teaching them knowledge – we're teaching them how to behave." (MSc field notes, Wednesday 23 May 2001). As I witnessed it, 'teaching them how to behave' involved, amongst other things, repeated attempts to render the children's unruly bodies docile.

Sometimes, this docility appeared to be an end in itself. Discipline was used to produce civilised, sociable, obedient beings. But docile bodies were also seen as a means of facilitating the first aim of 'teaching them knowledge'. Indeed, the teachers' various uses of disciplinary techniques seemed to be based on the assumption that discipline was a necessary precursor to learning. Under the circumstances, this assumption was almost certainly justified. In a system where one teacher is required to communicate knowledge and skills to twenty to thirty pupils, those pupils must for the most part be capable of a quiet, attentive, obedient attitude if the teacher is to carry out her task effectively. It is easy to see that if the behaviour of each child in a class of twenty-eight were left completely unregulated, the resulting chaos would drastically reduce the efficiency of the teaching process. The teachers therefore tended to view discipline as a frustrating part of their job, but one which was absolutely essential if they were to teach effectively. Indeed, they sometimes expressed frustration at having to spend time disciplining children instead of teaching them, as in the following monologue from Miss Johnson, the class teacher in primary four:

> "I'm getting tired of dealing with this. I'm paid to teach, I'm not paid to sort out problems from the playground. This has happened one too many times now. And it's a waste of my time. Alison has been waiting to see me, I promised I'd spend fifteen minutes with her to help her with her work, and instead she's had to wait while I deal with this. Do you think that's fair, that she has to wait, when she needs help with her work?"
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5 December 2002)

Similarly, in a private conversation I had with Miss Johnson, she expressed the opinion "that it's nice just to be able to teach, without having to spend so much time on class control. She says it's nice when it feels like [she] and the class are working together instead of having to struggle with each other." (PhD field notes, 21 November 2002)

To produce docile children, the teachers used a range of non-violent coercive techniques, either upon a single child or with a group of children. I will discuss techniques which target individuals in the next chapter. For now, I want to examine some of the techniques used upon groups.

One of the simplest group tactics was to suspend activity, and then make it clear to the children that activity would not resume until certain standards of behaviour had been met:

> Walking back to the classroom, chaos breaks out in the corridor, with children straggling behind, running, talking, shouting, laughing, etc. The teacher stops and regroups the class, insisting that they behave quietly and in an orderly manner before they move off again.
> (PhD field notes, Monday 17 June 2002)

Often, the standards which the teacher imposed related specifically to physical conduct:

> "You know how to sit on the carpet," [the teacher] says to the rest of them. "You do not poke the person next to you."
> (PhD field notes, 3 Wednesday 29 May 2002)

As the quote above implies, by their fourth year in primary school most of the children were well aware of the standards of posture to which the teacher expected them to comply. Moreover, they appeared to be able to uphold these standards when necessary:

> The teacher needs a child to carry out a small task, so she says, "Right, who's been sitting quietly?" Immediately, a ripple runs through the class as they all sit bolt upright, straighten their backs, pull their arms in across their bodies and lift their heads to look at the teacher. The effect is not unlike seeing a set of limp puppets being brought to life by a swift tug on their strings.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

It is interesting to note here how the children did not seem to distinguish between sitting quietly and sitting with the proper posture. In school, physical docility was often closely associated with quietness, and likewise physical expressivity was associated with noise. I will return to this shortly.

As my fieldwork progressed, I was struck more and more by how the school's standards of physical behaviour had become 'second nature' to many of the children. Sometimes, the teacher had to tell them to sit up straight or cross their legs, but on other occasions they needed no prompting:

I look around the room. Each time I see them, the children seem more grown up. They're bigger, yes, but this isn't really it. It's more to do with comportment, how they carry themselves. They sit upright at their chairs, separated from one another. they walk around the room like citizens of the school – hard to define what I mean. They carry themselves more like rational individuals.
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 March 2003)

I don't wish to suggest that struggles over the children's bodies, which were a major part of classroom practice when I first met the class in my MSc fieldwork, had been concluded. Rather, my observations suggest that the primary focus of these struggles had shifted slightly as the children had grown older. The majority of disciplinary tactics now appeared to be directed towards achieving three specific kinds of docility: quietness; and, closely related to this, attention and mental concentration.

5.3.1 Quiet bodies, quiet spaces

One of the dominant themes throughout my fieldnotes is that of achieving quiet. Throughout a typical day, the injunction to be quiet appeared again and again: when the children arrived and came to sit on the carpet; when the teacher was explaining their lessons; when they sat at their tables working; when they lined up for gym; when they lined up after playtime; before they went to lunch; when they returned from lunch; at every juncture, the teacher tried to find ways of regulating the noise level in the classroom. Sometimes, absolute silence was demanded:

> The next-door classes are doing tests, so the teacher implores them all to be especially quiet when changing and taking their gym bags back to the cloakroom.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 June 2002)

> By this time, the noise level in the classroom has risen somewhat, so the teacher says, "I would like to see complete silence just like yesterday. You were fantastic yesterday, so many of you got lots done because you were able to concentrate."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

The teachers usually demanded silence when explaining the lesson to the whole class. but in the lessons themselves, the regulations were often a little more relaxed:

> [Miss Johnson] is keen to stress that she doesn't expect silence, and that it's good to have some talking (the implication is that it's O.K. to be talking to each other about work so as to help one another), but that she expects their attention when she is addressing the class, and therefore needs noise levels to be sufficiently low that she can make herself heard.

As a rule, Miss Johnson seemed willing to tolerate a certain amount of noise. but when this threshold was breached, she insisted upon silence:

> At the end of her explanation, the teacher asks if there are any questions. A few people put their hands up. When it comes to Kate, who has raised her hand, the teacher can't hear what she's asking. She asks her to repeat a couple of times, but to no avail. "You'll have to come out to me Kate, I can't actually hear a word you're saying, there's too many people fidgeting." Interestingly, she doesn't ask the fidgeters to stop, even though they are making quite a row with their pencil tappings and chair shufflings. But as the lesson begins and chatter starts to break out, the teacher says, "5-4-3-2-1-shhh. I don't want to hear a single sound." And at this, silence prevails.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 29 January 2003)

The noise tolerance threshold varied depending upon the context. The lesson activity was a key variable here. When the teacher was hearing readers, or when tests were being carried out, silence was required. For example, one common activity in 'mental maths'[19] was a quick times tables test, in which the teacher asked ten questions on a particular times table to the whole class and they had to write down the answers. No-one but the teacher was supposed to talk during these tests.

In more interactive lessons such as art and physical education, however, there seemed to be a tacit understanding between the teacher and the children that noise levels would be higher. This did not prevent the teacher from making attempts in these lessons to keep the noise level under control. However, it did mean that, on occasion, an element of chaos was tolerated, particularly in gym lessons:

> When Mrs. Gould shouted 'go', all hell broke loose as twenty eight kids flew around the gym frantically flipping twenty eight little plastic cones first one way and then the next. The gym's hard acoustics drummed up a fair cacophany as the game progressed.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 22 May 2002)

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[19] Mental Maths is a more modern term for mental arithmetic. In Westgate, it included a range of different activities in which the children have to perform mathematical calculations mentally, usually without discussing their answers, and usually at speed. Often, some form of scoring and ranking was used to enable the evaluation of individuals' performance and progress.

Apart from these rather rare instances, the only other times at which no noise limits were imposed upon the children were break and lunch times, when they were out in the playground. Here, one sees the inverse image of the connection between physical docility and quietness. It seemed to be taken for granted that a group of children running around – that is, being physically unruly – would make a lot of noise. This was therefore tolerated in the large spaces allocated for physical movement, such as the gym and the playground. In the classroom, however, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons, the children were expected to keep their bodies both still and quiet. A more rational space was demanded for these activities, and to produce this the children's bodies had to be subordinated. In the main, this subordination was imposed by the teacher, but I also saw children imposing the rule of quiet on their peers. Ultimately, they were expected to impose this rule upon themselves, using their own minds to suppress and discipline their unruly bodies. In the following sections, I will examine some of these tactics of producing quiet in more detail.

5.3.2 Teachers' tactics

The teachers used a range of techniques to achieve quiet. These varied in sophistication. The most basic practice was to simply ask the children, as a group, to be quiet. Often, the teachers made a "shhh!" sound to communicate this message. These verbal demands could be made quite forcefully, and were often effective, as some of the quotes above suggest.

Another fairly simple practice was the use of praise and rewards for quietness:

As the children become engrossed in their work, the noise level drops almost to nothing. "That was a lovely moment there," the teacher says. "You were so quiet, that's five points for all the groups."
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

We all processed to the dance base for a short service to celebrate sports day, in which the winners from each class were brought to stand at the front, were clapped and given Mars bars. Everyone was given a sweet for taking part. These were appropriated as a tool for discipline: "The sweeties are only for people who are sitting quietly," said one teacher, as the noise level began to rise. "I won't give sweeties to people who are chatting."
(PhD field notes, Monday 17 June 2002)

Bobby is called up to be awarded five house points from yesterday for being quiet and sitting well.
(PhD field notes, Tuesday 24 September 2002)

Again, these last two quotes emphasise the connection between quietness and proper comportment, summed up in the teacher's phrase "sitting quietly". Quietness seemed to involve a certain physical docility, with implications for the way space was used: one ought to be still, remaining in a fixed position rather than roaming about the room.

Another simple technique through which the teacher achieved quiet and still bodies was the repetition of exercises. In the long term, this technique was used throughout the children's school life. Each day, the children were repeatedly instructed to sit quietly, to line up quietly, and so on, in the hope that this behaviour would eventually become second nature to them. But at a shorter time scale, the teacher sometimes deliberately rehearsed quiet behaviour, demanding that the children repeat an exercise until the whole class was conforming to the school's standards of quietness and docility. In the following example, there were some adult visitors in the classroom, and in this context the children's noisy disorderliness was even less tolerable than usual:

> With the visitors watching, Miss Johnson is clearly anxious to make a good impression, and the noisy rabble of a line which the children form to process to the gym hall simply isn't up to scratch. She tells them to go and sit down again, then they come up again, then they still aren't quiet enough and have to sit down a second time. Finally, the line is deemed quiet and orderly enough to leave the classroom.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

Some of the techniques used to achieve quiet were a little more ingenious. On one occasion, I witnessed Miss Johnson quantifying the amount of lesson time taken up by chatter as a way of demonstrating to the children the consequence of their behaviour:

> Another tactic I see Miss Johnson using is measuring the time it takes the class to go silent after she has asked for their attention. She counts up the minutes on the blackboard. "Four C, I asked you to be quiet three minutes ago. We have so much work to do, and you know that, but you're wasting precious time talking."
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 24 September 2002)

Here, it is interesting to note how such a small amount of time can be invested with such importance. Even a mere three minutes is seen as a wasted opportunity for learning. The need to use every moment of the day productively was stressed by Miss Johnson more and more as the children progressed through primary four. This is reminiscent of Foucault's description of French monitorial or 'mutual improvement' schools, in which "an attempt is...made to assure

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the quality of the time used: constant supervision, the pressure of supervisors, the elimination of anything that might disturb or distract; it is a question of constituting a totally useful time" (DP, p.150)

Another theme which emerges in this excerpt is self knowledge. Miss Johnson often insisted to the class that they knew the appropriate standards of behaviour, and could evaluate their own conduct with respect to these standards. This is something to which I will return in chapter seven.

Another technique I saw the teachers use was that of behaving in an exemplary manner. Mrs. Lynford, the class's primary three teacher, told me explicitly how she tried to teach the children by example:

> The teacher speaks to them in a whisper, so as to enact the quiet persona she wants them to take up. Later, she will tell me that she tries to teach them how to behave – what, I suppose, might be called ethics – by 'do as I do'.
> (PhD field notes, Monday 27 May 2002)

Instead of combating the children's disorderliness with physical or verbal exertion, Mrs. Lynford tried to remain calm, rational and restrained, thereby encouraging them to behave in this way too. Miss Johnson also used similar tactics, as did Mrs. Oliver, the classroom assistant:

> The teacher says, in a low voice, "Go quietly back to your seats, do not disturb the others who have been working so quietly." There are only three children reading with Mrs. Oliver, and she speaks to them in a whisper, so as to encourage them to be quiet.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5th November 2002)

5.3.3 Children's tactics

On several occasions, I witnessed children telling each other to be quiet. The children tended to use the relatively simple tactic of verbal rebuke:

> The children are sitting around their tables working in near-silence, so I cross the room quietly and dump my stuff in the usual place, just next to the writing table. Bobby gives a cheer and waves his hands when he sees me, but Helen rebukes him, hissing, "shhhh!"
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 21 January 2003)

Here, Helen was reproducing the classroom rules imposed upon her by the teacher. She could obey these rules herself, but she could also try to enforce them. I did not witness this behaviour

in all the children, and only a few of them seemed to use these tactics regularly. Yo was one of these:

> With fewer children at each table, distractions are kept to a minimum. Then the swimmers [children who have been away swimming in the morning] arrive, and Yo says, "Miss Johnson, can they be quiet cos we've had a lovely day." To the swimmers, he says, "You're the noisy ones!"
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002)

> Billy starts making noises, and is told to be quiet, first by Miss Johnson, and then by Yo when she continues.
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 5 December 2002)

5.3.4 The 'countdown' technique

Of the classroom techniques for achieving quiet, one which I witnessed frequently involved a countdown to silence. Mostly, the countdown started at three, though on occasion it started at five. This technique is intriguing because it involved both children and teachers in the exercise of disciplinary power. Usually, it was teacher-led, but its effectiveness depended upon co-opting the children into the process of achieving quiet:

> As the children got on with their work, the teacher tested readers at the reading table. To maintain the quiet necessary for carrying out this procedure effectively, Mrs. Lynford used a technique I've observed before, and which Mrs. Gould also used in the gym earlier: '3-2-1-shhh!' It's a simple tactic, in which the teacher begins counting "3-2-1" quite loudly, and the children all join in and say "3-2-1-shhh!" This is much more effective than the teacher asking everyone to be quiet – the difference between hierarchical power and distributed power. In "3-2-1-shhh!", every member of the class is involved in exercising power over their peers and, ultimately, over themselves.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 22 May 2002)

I soon became fascinated by this technique. It was incredibly simple to deploy, and yet the way in which it functioned was quite sophisticated. It seemed to be designed as an activity which the children would enjoy doing, yet which would result in silence. I found the technique highly contagious: part way through my field work, I realised that, without really intending to, I had begun to join in. By enlisting the class as participants in this way, the countdown was more effective than a simple verbal rebuke for two reasons. First, as I observed in my field notes, each child is effectively telling himself or herself to be quiet. Second, the technique can spread rapidly through space, thereby commanding the attention of the whole class.

This second point can be illustrated by comparing the countdown with a simple "shhh!" from the teacher. In the latter case, the teacher would try to keep the whole class quiet by addressing them all at once. However, if the children were making a lot of noise, only a few children would hear the instruction to "shhh!". The teachers would often have to say "shhh!" several times before the whole class would have heard. The countdown, on the other hand, involved all the children joining in. This meant that the children helped to spread the message more effectively through social space. So, in a noisy room, as the teacher started to say "three", a few children would hear this and join in. Some of their classmates sitting further away from the teacher would hear them say "three" and would join in to say "two". More children would hear this, and would join in to say "one". Ideally, by the time the teacher came to saying "shhh!", even the children furthest away from her would have received the message that they must be quiet. Thus by recruiting the children themselves into the process of administering discipline, the highly interactive nature of the social space of the class was turned to the teacher's advantage, vastly increasing the efficiency of her power. Again, this is reminiscent of the nineteenth century monitorial teaching systems of Bell and Lancaster, in which efficiency was increased by recruiting some children to exercise of power over others.

Sometimes, however, the countdown was ineffective, perhaps because the children had become overly familiar with it:

> Then [Mrs. Lynford] initiates a 3-2-1-shh to dispel the Star Wars conversation still in full flow amongst the Scorpions. The tactic fails. "I'm gonnae change my name to Obi-Wan," James Bond declares. "Or Anaken Skywalker."
> (PhD field notes, Monday 27 May 2002)

When this happened, the teacher could revive the tactic by re-training the children to join in:

> As [one of the children] chats to me, the teacher initiates a 3-2-1-shhh. It isn't very effective; she tries again, saying, "Everyone join in please."
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 4 June 2002)

Thus like other disciplinary techniques, the countdown could be used as a repetitive exercise:

> [Mrs. Lynford] made them practice 3-2-1-shhh several times in preparation for the sports.
> (PhD field notes, Monday 17 June 2002)

Since everyone knew the rules of the countdown game, it did not have to be teacher-led. Anyone could initiate the game. The children often did so, sometimes with remarkable success:

> In the gym hall, Miss Johnson tells the children they must all sit very quietly so as to surprise Mrs. Gould. Steven does a 3-2-1-shhh, and then silence prevails.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

5.3.5 Combining tactics

Often, the teachers used a range of tactics in combination as a strategy to achieve quiet:

> The children are still being noisier than the teacher would like, and she urges them to "settle down" several times. Eventually, she gives them a stronger rebuke, while remarking that "Some people haven't said a word all morning because they know they need to get on with their work and concentrate." The noise level rises again, and the teacher loses her patience. "5, 4, 3, 2, 1, shhh! And that is the last time I'm going to tell you. Anyone talking now will lose five minutes golden time[20]. Enough is enough primary four." With this, the class quietens at last. "That's so much better." The silence prevails, and after a few minutes, the teacher awards all of the tables ten points. "You know Mrs. Oliver," she says, "this is like a different class." Mrs. Oliver concurs.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 26 March 2003)

Here, the teacher initially used verbal rebukes, increasing in strength. When these proved ineffective, she initiated a countdown, and reinforced this with the threat of punishment by deprivation. Finally, Miss Johnson reinforced the class's quietness by verbal commendation and the more tangible reward of table points.

This last tactic was particularly cunning. The table points system was a competition between the tables. In other words, what mattered was not the absolute number of points a table had acquired, but whether it had acquired more or less points than the other tables. Awarding all the tables the same number of points therefore produced the illusion that every group had achieved something, whereas in real terms the state of the competition remained exactly the same as before.

5.3.6 Focusing attention and improving concentration: imitation games

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[20] 'Golden time' was a short period on Friday of each week during which the children were allowed to do fun activities. Disobedience during the week was sometimes punished by reducing the length each individual child's allotted golden time.

As I have already suggested, the aim of producing a quiet space full of quiet bodies was usually pedagogical. If a single teacher is to communicate instructions verbally to twenty-eight children, then the space must be sufficiently quiet for her voice to be audible throughout the room. Furthermore, each child must pay attention to what she is saying; as well as being quiet, the children's bodies must be attentive.

The teachers used a selection of rather curious techniques for achieving this kind of focussed, attentive quietness in the classroom. Most of these were based on physical imitation of some sort. Perhaps the most simple imitation technique was that of the teacher putting up her hand:

> Everyone sits on the carpet for snack, and the teacher asks everyone to put up a hand. She does this first, and the class (including me) follow suit.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 29 January 2003)

> The other technique the teachers use is hands up. This works as follows: the class are making a noise and paying no attention to the teacher. Instead of raising her voice, the teacher raises her hand. A few children see this, and they imitate it. Somehow, they become focussed on holding up their hand and stop talking. It doesn't seem to occur to them that they could keep their hands raised and talk at the same time. So then more children notice the first lot with their hands up, see the teacher, and follow suit. And then a few more, and a few more, and within moments all the children are sitting in silence with their hands in the air. I wonder about the foundations of this technique. Presumably, the children have been taught the rules at some point – that they have to imitate the teacher when they see her hand raised, that they have to keep quiet while they do this, etc. I am fascinated by how such techniques capitalise upon principles of group behaviour, in particular the tendency of people to act like 'sheep' and follow what everyone around them is doing.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

This technique is similar to the countdown in its recruitment of the children into the disciplining of themselves and of each other. While the interactivity of the class often worked against disciplinary power, 'hands up', like the countdown, turned this interactivity to the advantage of this power. As a result, discipline was able to spread its effects throughout the social space of the school with remarkable efficiency.

One of the more sophisticated imitation techniques I witnessed was "do this, do that". This was a game in which the teacher performed a physical motion, such as touching her shoulders, and at the same time said either "do this" or "do that". If she said "do this", the children were supposed to imitate her movement; if she said "do that", the children were supposed to ignore her and remain in their previous position. Sometimes, this game was played

at the end of the day, as a fun activity. The whole class, including me, would stand, and anyone who followed a "do that" action would have to sit down. I usually got caught out quite soon. The teacher would speed up to increase the challenge for the children who remained standing, and the last three would be deemed the winners. At other times, however, a shorter version of this game was used at the start of lessons:

> Back in the classroom, it is time for maths. The teacher does a very fast "do this, do that" to wake everyone up. She has a way of speaking and gesturing which injects energy into the class, animating the lesson to get their attention.
> (PhD field notes, Monday 27 May 2002)

> When the children are seated, but being noisy, and the teacher is waiting to start the maths lesson, she begins putting her hands on her head, then her shoulders, then her finger on her lip, and so on. Soon, the whole class is following her, and there is near silence throughout the room.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

Another imitation technique was 'brain gym'. This was a set of exercises which seemed to have their basis in psychology. The teachers introduced them as a way of "getting the brain working":

> One of the techniques [Mrs. Lynford] uses to liven [the children] up and get them on task is 'brain gym'. There are several different types of brain gym, each designed to exercise the brain. One is pat your head, rub your tummy; another involves putting your left hand on your right ear and your right hand on your nose, and then swapping hands repeatedly; for the third, everyone puts both hands together, fingers spread out, and as the teacher calls out numbers from one to five, each child has to prise apart the corresponding fingers. Thumbs are one, through to pinkies which are five. It is this latter exercise she does today. Sometimes, she invites a child up to the front to decide which brain gym to do and to act as a leader – for example, calling out the numbers for the finger-number exercise.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 4 June 2002)

> The teacher then does some brain gym with the class, taking the lead while the children copy what she is doing. She wrings her hands, wiggles her arms and shoulders, and does the one hand on nose/one hand on ear/swapping hands routine.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003)

Perhaps the most esoteric imitation technique I witnessed is described in the following excerpt from my field notes:

> At the end of the day, the class join together with another Primary 4 class to watch some more of the Viking video. With twice the number of children in the classroom, the teachers are faced with considerable crowd control difficulties. The

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second teacher has an ingenious method for getting everyone's attention. She speaks very softly, and puts together her fingers one by one – index of the right hand with index of the left, and so on – whilst looking at the children. The children all have to do the same, but the teacher insists that they look not at their hands but into her eyes. Within a few moments, all fifty plus kids are silent, almost spookily so, putting together their fingers with their eyes fixed upon the teacher. She keeps repeating, in a very low voice, "Look at me, not at your hands...let's see who can put their fingers together...keep looking at my face..." The effect seems akin to some kind of group hypnosis.
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

What fascinated me most about these imitation games was their relationship to mind and body. The teachers' aims seemed to be primarily mental: to focus the children's conscious attention, or in the case of brain gym, to train their brains to operate in a way conducive to mathematical thinking. Yet the techniques they used to achieve these aims were directed at the body: the repetition of gestures, putting hands up, moving fingers, and so on. Once again, classroom practice betrayed a familiar assumption. Physically docile, trained, obedient bodies were seen as the necessary foundation of the rational mental attitude required for learning.

5.4 Producing Individuals

As I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, individuality is one of the cardinal traits of docile bodies. It is also a theme which underpinned a number of the school practices which I witnessed in my research. In what follows, I will divide these practices into two categories: practices which individualise by physically separating children from one another, and practices which individualise by targeting individual children within groups. Both kinds of practice individualise in a third way, by teaching that people should be thought of, and should think of themselves, as individuals.

However, before examining the relevant empirical material, I want to elaborate briefly upon the notion of disciplinary individuality. Etymologically, the word 'individual' is descended from the medieval Latin *individualis*, which is formed on the Latin *individuus*, meaning indivisible or inseparable. One can see how this relates to the modern liberal understanding of the individual as the basic, indivisible unit of society. According to this understanding, the individual is a separate, self-contained entity. We might describe this as cellular individuality. However, there is a second modern connotation of individuality, conveyed by such words as distinctiveness, particularity and uniqueness. I might say that my family is made up of five individuals, by which I mean five separate people; but I could add that we are all very

individual, by which I mean that each of us has a specific personality quite different to that of the others.

According to Foucault, discipline deals with both these kinds of individuality, but in different ways. As I suggested in my discussion of docile bodies, it is one of the key aims of disciplinary power to produce cellular individuality: "Instead of bending all its subjects into a single uniform mass, it separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient units...Discipline 'makes' individuals" (DP, p.170) The techniques which produce this cellularity are based upon the distribution of bodies in space – enclosing them, partitioning them, allotting them to a series of ranked places, and so forth.

With respect to individuality as uniqueness, disciplinary power operates in a quite different manner. In the first place, it seeks to produce knowledge about the particular features of each individual with which it is concerned. To this end, it employs procedures of detailed description, judgement, classification and comparison. Foucault argues that whereas in antiquity, such techniques were reserved for the powerful few, as a means of heroising them for posterity, discipline transformed the description of individuals into a means of objectifying and subjecting the masses. In disciplinary institutions, examinations are used to transform human beings into 'cases': people whose behaviour has been measured, classified and then written down in detailed records. Discipline solidifies these measurements into a calculated personal identity, which is then attached to the person in question as a truth not about what he has done, but about who he is. In this way, the individual becomes the subject of their identity.

Individual subjects are thus also the objects of knowledge. This knowledge of subjects can be used in a variety of ways. First, it can be applied to the management of individuals in attempts to increase efficiency. In schools, for example, ability grouping is commonly justified as a means of maximising the pace of learning. Examinations or tests are used to determine the ability of each individual, and this knowledge is used to assign them to an ability group. Secondly, this knowledge can be collated and used to produce knowledge of populations, again with the result that those populations become manageable and thus governable. With accurate knowledge of a population, education can be targeted towards sectors which have few skills, healthcare targeted towards sectors where disease is prevalent, and so on. Third, and perhaps most importantly, these two kinds of knowledge can be used in combination to prescribe corrective techniques. Foucault calls these processes 'normalisation'. The knowledge of a population is used to formulate a norm; the knowledge of each individual is used to measure the

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deviation of that individual from that norm; and corrective measures can then be targeted accordingly so as to homogenise the population, or at least bring every member within the restricted range defined by usefulness. Thus where knowledge of the unique features of individuals reveals differences which work against the aim of docile bodies, discipline seeks not merely to know but also to reduce this uniqueness.

I will now return to my empirical material to discuss some of the techniques of individualisation which I observed in school.

5.4.1 Separation

The most explicit forms of cellular individualisation tactics used by the teachers involved the physical separation the children's bodies from one another. Often, these tactics were used in response to children deliberately touching one another in some way, as Miss Johnson's remarks in the following extract demonstrate:

> "Luke and Billy, could you sit properly and keep your hands to yourself? I can see some unhappy looking faces in the class, they want to get on with their work."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 29 January 2003)

As this example suggests, the teachers rarely intervened physically. Usually, they took a 'hands-off' approach, instructing the children to separate themselves and overseeing this separation to make sure that it was maintained. Thus separation was an oddly non-physical form of physical coercion. As such, it depended upon the complicity of the children in their own subjection.

In the following incident, the children crowded around Miss Johnson as she demonstrated techniques for an art lesson. They used this proximity as an opportunity to engage with one another physically, but this kind of behaviour was incompatible with the cellular individuality required of docile bodies:

> The children all crowd around one table to peer at the work of art as its face is filled in with a smudged mixture of yellow, pink, white and brown chalk. The teacher soon separates Steven and David, who are more intent on playing with each other than paying attention to the demonstration. "Any more of that kind of behaviour and it'll be separate classrooms," she warns. "Girls, please separate yourselves," she says to Nicole and Jessica who, in the crush, have taken the opportunity to sit on each other's knees. "Don't be so silly."
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 3 October 2002)

Miss Johnson's final remark here can be interpreted as an attempt to classify the children's behaviour as irrational, thereby justifying her intervention. It would appear that in school, physical separateness was seen as an important element of rational conduct.

As the children progressed through their fourth year, I noticed how they had begun to apply the rules of physical separation to themselves without the teacher's explicit instruction:

> The children seem increasingly able, at least under the teacher's gaze, to keep themselves to themselves, behaving as discrete individuals. They no longer need to be told to sit with their legs crossed, apart from one another, to put up their hands when they want to speak, and not to touch, hit or grab one another – all these things they now do automatically. Today, I notice that they even seem, of their own accord, to have separated into three distinct lines [when sitting] on the carpet.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 21 January 2003)

This instance represents a mid-point in the continuum of obedience. The rules of separation were no longer external to the children, since they had learned them and knew how to conform to them, and when they were expected to do so. However, most of the children still required the presence of an external authority if they were to abide by these rules. Furthermore, these rules of separation were not applied uniformly throughout space and time. For example, the children generally disregarded such rules in the playground.

The teacher's threat of "separate classrooms" in the art-lesson incident described above hints at a more severe kind of separation, one which used spatial distance to discipline bodies. I saw several different techniques of spatial separation, each tailored to a particular practical requirement. For the purposes of this analysis, I have divided these techniques into two sub-categories: distribution and isolation.

5.4.2 Distribution

Techniques of distribution were regularly used to set up the optimum conditions for teaching a lesson. In the following example, after a quick session of 'brain gym' (see 5.3.6, above), Miss Johnson asked the children to distribute themselves across the carpet before she explained their maths task:

> [S]he says, "Find a space to sit in away from people you're likely to chatter to, cross your legs and fold your arms." She then goes through the lesson.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003)

Here, one sees how spatial separation could be used as a means of focusing attention, and also how closely related such tactics were to the imposition of rules for proper comportment. Once again, cellular individuality, obedience, and physical restraint coincided; they were seen as complementary features. In combination, they formed the bodily foundation of the mental rationality demanded by a maths lesson.

In physical education lessons, a different kind of space was needed. In the initial explanation phase, quietness and concentration were sometimes demanded, but for the substantial part of gym sessions these qualities were not seen as especially important. Rather, a more basic physical separation was required to prevent injuries and to ensure the most economic use of the space available. On one occasion, the gym was in use for the school play, so the class was obliged to use the much smaller dance and drama base for their P.E. lesson. Their P.E. teacher, Mrs. Gould, responded to this in the following way:

> Mrs. Gould set out some cones for the main event. This involved a rather ingenious and efficient use of the space in which the children were distributed between three activities, two of which – sprinting, and low-level hurdles using hockey sticks laid flat – went on inside a ring of cones and markers, outside of which the third group jogged around continuously as long-distance running practice. Even so, there was only space for half the class to safely participate at any time, so each of the three groups was split into two. One half watched while the others ran, and then they swapped places. Then the groups swapped around until everyone had taken a turn at each of the activities.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 22 May 2002)

Here it is possible to identify a number of tactics being deployed to distribute the children's unruly bodies throughout the rather small space. These techniques – the division into teams, the division of teams into groups, the queuing and turn-taking of the groups at the sprint and hurdles, and the continuous activity of the joggers – maximised the efficiency of the space, keeping as many children active for as much of the time as possible, whilst maintaining as much order as possible.

Later in the year, a group of teacher training students from a local college took the class for short tennis lessons in the gym. They too used distribution techniques with the children:

> I note once again the different ways of distributing children in space: in teams, at arm's length from each other (by asking them to stand in a line and then spread their arms), in pairs. The children constantly shift about and bunch together, while the students try to keep them spaced apart.

Back to the gym hall. The students are using another distributive technique which they call a 'tennis circuit'. They have set up six stations situated around the gym, each one designed to develop a particular skill – sidestepping, throwing, hand-eye co-ordination, balance, and so on. The class is divided into six groups of two or three children, and each group spends two minutes at each station before moving clockwise around the circuit. Soon, foam balls are rolling all over the place and children are bouncing about happily.
(PhD field notes, Thursday 5 December 2002)

The tennis circuit resembled a factory production line. The final product – in this case, tennis playing skill – was broken down into a series of discrete component parts: "The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed." (DP, p.152) A set of technologies, each designed to produce one of these component parts, was then distributed in series throughout a larger space. This mechanism was extremely efficient. With the production process subdivided in this way, a much more rigorous supervision was possible. Separated from one another, the minute details of each gesture of each child could be observed and corrected to produce a relative uniformity of tennis playing skill amongst the children. This system also ensured the continuous activity of all, so that none of the precious lesson time was wasted in idleness.

A quite different kind of distribution was used for the purpose of testing. Tests are designed to assess each individual child with reference to a set of external standards, norms derived from the knowledge of school populations. As such, they are designed to produce knowledge of the uniqueness of each individual. I spoke briefly to Miss Johnson about this:

I say that it's interesting to see the way that testing splits children apart and concentrates on the individual, which is in apparent contrast to the teamwork ethic so beloved of middle management. She corroborates this by stressing the need for her to ensure they don't copy off one another, "so I know how they're doing individually."
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 March 2003)

This required a rigorous form of spatial separation in which each child had to be alone: unable to speak to friends, copy other people's work, or refer to educational aids, textbooks or their own classwork:

> Most of the children are being tested in their maths, so they all busy about to create exam conditions: all bottles, trays and workbooks are removed from the tables, the teacher checks that everyone has a sharp pencil, some serviceable coloured pencils and a ruler, tables are separated, children spaced out, and hardback books placed between pairs of children sitting opposite one another to prevent anyone from seeing another child's work.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 March 2003)

Testing can thus be seen as a practice in which the two kinds of individuality discussed at the start of this chapter come together. The distribution of the children aimed to isolate the children from one another in space, forcing them into a state of cellular individuality. At the same time, they were being isolated as unique individuals through the scores ascribed to each of them by the testing procedure. And as the teacher's comments imply, the cellular form of individual separation was seen as a necessary precondition for the production of knowledge of individuals.

5.4.3 Isolation

Tests aimed to isolate each child from every other child in the class, and as such are best classified as a distributive technique. The kind of isolation I want to discuss here was different, involving the separation of a small number of children, usually just one child, from the rest of the class. However, like distribution, isolation was primarily directed towards producing the cellular variety of individuality. Again, it should be noted that isolation was a strangely non-physical form of physical coercion. The teachers rarely, if ever, used any physical force to isolate the children, relying instead upon verbal instructions which the children were expected to obey.

Whereas distribution techniques were used by teachers as part of planned lessons, isolation tended to be a more spontaneous response to problems which arose in the classroom. Most often, it was used by the teachers to combat disruptive behaviour:

> Jason was swinging on his chair as the instructions were being given, laughing and shouting out answers instead of putting his hand up, to the amusement of his table-mates, Kate and Nattalie. Presently, Mrs. Lynford told him to bring his chair and sit in front of her, which he did, but once her eyes were off him, he flashed a cheeky grin back to Kate and Nattalie.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 22 May 2002)

The teachers were resourceful in their use of space for isolation. Rather than having a single place in the class as a permanent site for these measures, they used a number of different sites,

depending upon how the classroom was configured at any given time. For example, in Mrs. Lynford's classroom, in addition to the main tables around which the children sat in groups, there was a separate round table which she used to hear groups of children read each day. When not in use for reading, this table was often used as a place for isolation:

> After break, it was time for patterns and sequences (language work). As Mrs. Lynford explained what to do on the white board, Luke kept calling out and making noises, disrupting the lesson flow. After several interruptions, she moved him onto the reading table by himself.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 22 May 2002)

> David and Kate are making faces at each other, so Mrs. Lynford moves David to the reading table.
> (PhD field notes, Monday 27 May 2002)

When this table was in use, two single tables, positioned at the front of the room at either side of the whiteboard, were used for isolation:

> The children begin their patterns and sequences work, and a large number are heard to read by Mrs. Lynford at the reading table. She keeps asking Luke to be quiet – he is sitting at his table, at the other end of the room – and eventually moves him to a single table to be on his own.
> (PhD field work, Monday 27 May 2002)

And when the class was sitting on the carpet, the children's ordinary tables could be used for isolation:

> We all sit on the carpet to hear more poems read out. As the teacher said, they are restless – Kate and Helen squabble over their seating positions, Shonagh is pulling at her trousers, David, Bobby and Luke all get moved back to their tables.
> (PhD field work, Monday 27 May 2002)

In Miss Johnson's classroom, two single tables were provided for children to work in isolation, one at the front, by the blackboard, and another at the side of the room, designated 'the writing table'. One feature of the writing table was its proximity to the green table, which some children used to counteract their forced isolation:

> Luke makes several disruptive noises, so the teacher gently but firmly suggests he should move to the writing table. However, once the lesson has begun, he turns around and starts disturbing the children on the green table.
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 3 October 2002)

As the lesson wears on, the teacher separates the children at the blue table, who keep talking despite repeated warnings from the teacher, still installed with her two readers in the corner. From there, she tells Jason to move to the solitary table by the blackboard, and Bobby to move to the writing table. "Alison," she says, "just be thankful you're not being moved as well." Within moments, Jason starts turning around to continue his conversation with the greens, but he is spotted immediately by the teacher. "Jason," she calls to him, "you're not there so you can turn around and talk."
(PhD field work, Tuesday 5th November 2002)

Once instructed to move to the writing table, a child was expected to remain there for the rest of the lesson. However, there was no way that the teachers could physically coerce the children to remain isolated. Instead, sanctions were used if they did not:

The teacher tells Tommy to move to the writing table as he isn't getting on with his work. He goes back to sit in his seat. When the teacher notices, she is furious, and gives him "a warning for ignoring an instruction."
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 19 March 2003)

Miss Johnson's anger makes sense if we bear in mind that she depended heavily upon the children's complicity in the disciplinary regime of the classroom. In this context, Tommy's refusal to comply, though minimally disruptive in terms of its immediate effects, was in principle a serious threat to the classroom order, and, by extension, to the effectiveness of schooling.

However, the writing table was sometimes used for other kinds of isolation. Occasionally, a child was invited to move there as a way of escaping the distraction at their own table:

"O.K., who's doing the talking over there?"
"Bobby and Jessica and Steven," pipes up Billy. "Is that right?" the teacher replies. Then Jessica speaks up: "Well ah'm tryin' to do ma work but Bobby keeps doing this [makes a gesture] at me."
"Would you prefer to sit at the writing table?"
"Ah-ha."
"Well off you go then."
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 March 2003)

At other times, the table was used for children who needed individual supervision with their work:

When she's finished going through their work, the teacher comes straight over to where I'm sitting at the writing table. She asks if I could spend the first lesson with Steven, helping him write a scary story. She says I should scribe for him and let him concentrate on coming up with the ideas. This seems very sensible as he's a slow writer, and this can sometimes stunt his otherwise active imagination. Steven is sitting at his table, but the teacher says, "We can clear the writing table if you like and bring him out from the others."
"If you think that would help, yeah," I say. "Yes, I think that'd be best," she replies.
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

Very occasionally, the teachers used a more severe form of isolation, sending a child who was being persistently disruptive out of the classroom:

At the end of the day, the teacher reads some more of the Hodgeheg, but this time they are restless, as Mrs. Lynford had said. The story keeps being interrupted by various minor disturbances, and first Bobby and then Luke get moved back to their tables. Then Luke lets out a wild noise, and the teacher's patience snaps. She sends him to another class with a reading book from the library, saying that she is disappointed and hasn't had to do this all year.
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 29 May 2002)

I never witnessed Miss Johnson using this technique. In conversation with me, she said that she preferred to take away golden time instead of using 'network slips'[21].

These isolation tactics performed a number of functions. First, they were a simple, practical way in which the teacher could disrupt unwanted behaviour. For example, if two children were talking instead of listening to her instructions, moving one of the children alleviated the immediate problem.

Isolation also had several cellular individualising effects, which I want to examine quite closely. The practice appears to be based upon the assumption that unacceptable behaviour is fundamentally social, and can therefore be stopped by diminishing a child's opportunities for social contact. In this, one can perceive the outline of a model pupil: one who can sit quietly and listen without interacting with others (chatting, playing, touching, etc.). In other words, the school demands that children be docile, cellular, separate individuals, and if they are not capable of this, then corrective interventions are made. If they cannot sit next to other children without talking to them, then they are isolated so that, deprived of the opportunity to chatter, they will

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[21] A network slip is a piece of paper which may be issued to a child whose behaviour is preventing a teacher from teaching. On the slip of paper, the teacher writes down a brief description of the child's misdemeanours, and then the child is sent to another teacher.

become accustomed to keeping their own company. As Foucault notes, "Disciplinary punishment is, in the main, isomorphic with obligation itself; it is not so much vengeance of an outraged law as its repetition, its reduplicated insistence." (DP, p.180) Where children break the law of cellular individuality, isolation is used to insist all the more forcefully upon that individuality.

Thus we come across something of a contradiction. Isolation assumed that unacceptable behaviour was fundamentally social; but at the same time, isolation also assumed that the source of the problem was to be found in the individual, rather than in a group of people, or a specific form of behaviour, or a certain social context. From the school's perspective, the problem was caused by a particular child, so the solution was to remove that child from the situation, and then train that child to behave differently. The more deviant the child, the more intense must be that child's individualisation.

Yet here the efficiency of isolation becomes clear. For in the very act of isolating, this training and correcting was already being carried out in various ways. Most obviously, in its insistence upon treating children as cellular individuals, isolation served to impress upon the children the idea that they *were* cellular individuals. Further, isolation made visible the space between individuals. In the classroom, isolation never took the form of solitary confinement. An isolated child was able to see clearly the distance which separated him from his peers. Thus he was made acutely aware of his cellular individuality; but he was also made aware of his uniqueness, the latter made visible as a stigmatising distance.

In this, one can identify a rather strange combination of cellular individuality and individuality as uniqueness. As we have seen, one of the norms to which the school aspired was that of cellular individuality. The child who was incapable of maintaining this cellular individuality was therefore marked out as different, a 'special case', a deviation from the norm which the school sought to correct. Thus the child who was not a fully cellular individual was nevertheless looked upon as a highly unique individual, a peculiar aberration who was not quite like everyone else. Because this particular uniqueness stood opposed to the aim of docility, the school sought to reduce the child's difference by inculcating in him a stronger sense of cellularity. Thus we find that the technique of isolation sought to reduce the child's unique individuality by increasing his cellular individuality.

Yet there is a further confusing factor. Rather than seeking to reduce the child's uniqueness by assimilating him into the group, the technique of isolation imposed this uniqueness upon the child all the more forcefully by setting her apart. The truth of the child's

difference was mapped out in space, made visible to all as distance. It therefore appeared that the school sought to reduce the child's uniqueness precisely by marking her out as unique, and thereby turning her uniqueness into a humiliating stigma.

Isolation thus addressed the two kinds of individuality I have identified quite differently. With respect to cellular individuality: isolation identified a lack of this, and used space to increase it, by imposing upon the child an intensified sense of separation. With respect to the uniqueness which consisted in the child's lack of cellularity: isolation sought to reduce this individuality, but did so by mapping it out visibly in space. Rather than denying this individuality, isolation publicly exposed its shameful truth. This leads to the paradox that the more the child was able to be a cellular individual, and the less unique the child was as a result, the less need there was to isolate him as an individual, and the more he was allowed to participate as a member of the group.

Isolation also encourages contemplation. Foucault describes the positive justifications offered for the practice of solitary work in prisons: "isolation provides a 'terrible shock' which, while protecting the prisoner from bad influences, enables him to go into himself and rediscover in the depths of his conscience the voice of good" (DP, p.122). Likewise, the social reformer Ducpetiaux, writing about the Mettray penal colony, remarked upon the moral effectiveness of confining a child to his cell, the most common punishment in that institution (ibid., p.294). On several occasions, Miss Johnson echoed this discourse, urging children who had been disruptive to take their behaviour as an object of moral reflection:

> "I think some people in this class need to think very carefully about their behaviour," the teacher says. At which point Bobby makes a loud noise and is promptly told to go and sit in his seat.
> (PhD field work, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

> David is playing the class clown, and doesn't pay attention to the teacher's verbal rebukes, so she gives him a warning card. This doesn't stop him messing about. "D'y' think it's funny sitting with that?" Miss Johnson asks him. "That's not to be played with, that's to be thought about."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003)

Isolation can thus be seen to contribute to the formation of a child's conscience. As discussed earlier, this kind of internalised system of rules is one of the primary features of the model docile body. More generally, in encouraging moral reflection, isolation invited children to take

themselves, as individuals, as objects of self-knowledge. This is a theme which I will explore more thoroughly in chapter seven.

In summary, I want to suggest that what I have classified as 'distribution' and 'isolation' might best be seen as stages on a continuum of individualising practices which operate by arranging children within the space of the school. Here one might point to a very approximate correlation between deviance and distance. Children must be individuals, and if they do not behave as such, then distance is used as a corrective. Thus when children bunch together, the teacher spreads them out; when their interactions disrupt a lesson, the teacher sends them away from their friends, to a table on their own; if they cause more serious trouble, the teacher may send them out of the classroom; and should they continue to be a problem, the school management may consider their suspension or expulsion. In each case, the child is taken as an object of knowledge, her behaviour measured against the norm of a model docile individual. The further the child departs from this norm, the more she is in need of correction, and hence the greater the physical distance which must separate her from others in her school if she is to be effectively individualised.

5.4.4 Targeting individuals

Isolation was a spatial practice in which individuals were singled out for particular treatment. I saw a range of other techniques which targeted individuals verbally, without isolating them from their peers in physical space. So rather than addressing the whole class, the teacher directed disciplinary remarks at certain children who were not behaving as she would have liked. In other words, these remarks were used to correct the deviance of particular individuals, reducing their unique individuality and bringing them closer to norms of appropriate conduct.

Often, these remarks were directed at the children's bodies:

> The teacher calls out, "Bobby, take your hand out of your trousers and finish your maths!"
> (PhD field notes, Monday 27 May 2002)

On other occasions, individuals were rebuked for the way in which they were misusing classroom objects – pens, pencils, their workbooks, and so on:

> [Mrs. Lynford] repeatedly tells them to put their pencils down. Bobby just can't seem to do it. "Bobby," she says, "put your hands under the table so you're not

tempted." But as soon as her gaze moves elsewhere, his hands are back out and he has taken a coloured pencil from the tray.
(PhD field notes, Tuesday 4 June 2002)

Certain individuals developed a 'track record' of misbehaviour, and were therefore watched closely by the teacher, leading to a series of interventions over time. For example, Billy was repeatedly singled out by Miss Johnson for her inappropriate use of classroom objects, including the stickers which I had given her (see chapter four):

> [Miss Johnson] tells Billy to take the sticker I've given her out of her eye. "That could damage your eye and I don't think Mike would want that." I shake my head."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

> [Miss Johnson asks] "Billy, is that what you should be doing with your water bottle?"
> "No."
> "Get on with your work."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

> Billy, clearly fed up with the lesson, tosses her finished work in the teacher's direction. She is having none of this: "I want you to pick that up, come round here and give it to me properly. I'm not someone you throw things at, Billy."
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 21 January 2003)

> The children all have to do talks, small presentations to the rest of the class about how they made their Viking shields. Several of the class are giving their talks today, and the children all assemble on the carpet for this. Billy has her water bottle and is playing with it. The teacher asks her, "Billy, when did I say you could get your water bottle?"
> "But Steven's got his out."
> "Well, I'm sorry, I didn't see that, but I think I told you to put yours away. So are you going to copy Steven, or are you going listen to your teacher?" Billy replies in a sheepish mumble, "L'sn to mmm hmmm."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003)

Thus it appeared that while procedures such as testing were used to produce formal, written, mainly quantitative case histories of the uniqueness of individuals, the teachers also developed their own intimate qualitative knowledge of the individuals in their care. This more informal knowledge was used by the teachers to direct certain kinds of normalising attention towards particular individuals, as demonstrated by the examples above. In conversation with me, Miss Johnson regularly discussed her thoughts on the 'progress' of certain individuals, particularly those who she felt needed high levels of disciplinary supervision. For example, on one occasion,

she spoke about David, saying that "He knows I'm watching him at the moment, and he keeps looking over at me to see how he's doing." (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002).

As well as their bodies and their objects, the teachers targeted individuals' voices as a way of achieving quiet in the classroom:

> Back in the classroom, the teacher gives them two minutes to get changed and sit down on the carpet. "David, have you got time to chat?" she asks, rhetorically. "I think we've had enough from you already..."
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 5 December 2002)

> When Steven and Luke break off into a chat of their own, she makes a particular show of interrupting this to reincorporate them into the discussion.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 9 October 2002)

As my study progressed, I began to see that Miss Johnson often targeted individuals remotely. When she was engaged in some activity with a small group of children, such as hearing readers, there was a greater possibility for the rest of the class to drift away from their work and into playing, chatting and so on. To address this situation, Miss Johnson had developed an impressive ability to multi-task. She seemed able to teach a small group whilst keeping an eye on what the rest of the class were doing, and directing remarks to individuals who she could see or hear behaving inappropriately. As with the verbal rebukes described above, this technique was often repeatedly targeted at children with a case history of waywardness, such as Billy and Bobby:

> I notice how Miss Johnson is able to shoot disciplinary comments across the room from her position in the centre of gather round. "Billy, why are you standing up?" she asks rhetorically (Billy is some distance away at one of the tables).
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

> From across the room, the teacher asks, "Bobby, is there a problem? Can you sit down in your seat please, pull your chair in and get on with your work."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 March 2003)

Sometimes, this remote targeting of individuals was used in conjunction with other individualisation techniques, particularly those of spatial distribution and isolation. Again, repeat offenders such as Billy and Bobby were often subjected to these combined measures:

> From her position with the reading group, the teacher shoots remarks across the room as usual, to Billy and Bobby, for example, who are squabbling. "I'm having to keep an eye on you while I'm trying to hear readers," she complains. "We'll have

Billy at the front table, Bobby at the writing table, and both of you on a warning now."
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

These techniques of targeting individuals worked in several different ways. Most simply, they directed discipline to where it is most required. When a small number of children are responsible for disrupting a lesson, it is more efficient to scold just those children, rather than wasting time and energy trying to gain the attention of the whole group. But targeting individuals could also be used as a way of gaining the attention of a group more effectively, as in the following example:

> The teacher tries to inject some energy into the class, and is remarkably successful. She snaps her fingers and pinpoints individuals, "Come on, Jason, Golden Falcon, wake up!"
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 4 June 2002)

Here, the children were reminded that the teacher's gaze penetrates the group, that she knew each of them personally, as unique individuals, and was watching them individually, and that they could not therefore use the group setting as cover for illicit activities or lapses of concentration. The teacher needed only to target one or two individuals, and this was enough to show every other child that, by extension, she was capable of such detailed observation of them as well.

In other words, targeting individuals also worked by making an example of a few children before a larger group. We might call this tactic 'exemplification'. Sometimes, this was very explicit:

> As the teacher starts the next lesson, she laments about how some of the children have dumped their work into the finished work tray. "When you've spent all that time doing it, I want to see your work placed in the tray neatly, not just thrown in. Let's see who the culprits are..." The class then start oooing and aaahing as the names are read out:
> Miss Johnson: "Hannah..."
> Class: "Oooh, Hannah, oooooh!" and so on. "That's not like you Hannah," mocks Steven.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5th November 2002)

As with the techniques of isolation described above, the effectiveness of exemplification depended upon the organisation of a space in which a deviant child's unique individuality could be circulated as public knowledge. In the case of isolation, this knowledge was visual, made

manifest by the distance separating the isolated child from the rest of the class. However, where the uniqueness in question was not judged to warrant isolation, but was nonetheless seen as an impediment to docility, the teacher often chose to communicate it discursively:

> The teacher draws attention to Jason's lack of focus on the task at hand. "Jason," she says in a voice loud enough to be heard by everyone, "I've just been looking around the room and everyone else in your reading group seems to have finished their work. Why might that be, d'y' think?" she asks, rhetorically. "Come on, Jennifer, James Bond, you're not here to talk. James Bond, I can hear you over here."
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5th November 2002)

> The children process inside, minus Bobby, who joins the class a few moments later, after a good talking to from the teacher. Unlike earlier, he looks very deflated, and is wearing his gym shorts and pumps. "Everyone learn from Bobby's mistake, and don't go jumping in puddles," the teacher says to the class. "You'll get soaking feet and you'll just have to stay in. At least no-one else got wet. It looks like the rest of you had more sense."
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 21 January 2003)

Foucault observes that "In discipline, punishment is only one element of a double system: gratification-punishment. And it is this system that operates in the process of training and correction." (DP, p.180) While deviant individuals were often exemplified as a deterrent to the rest of the class, at other times, certain individuals were targeted as examples of good behaviour:

> Miss Johnson asks the class to get ready for the lesson, and looks around the room, making an example out of those who are sitting quietly with their arms folded looking towards the front. "James Bond's ready...Jennifer's ready..." and so on.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

> The lesson proper starts, and the teacher goes through their work. Discussing handwriting, she singles out Tommy and Billy for particular praise, saying that their work was vastly improved last time. "Take time," she advises, "use a really sharp pencil, be really careful."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 March 2003)

This practice contrasts strikingly with the individualisation techniques I have described thus far. Here, the children singled out as unique individuals were unique precisely in their conformity to the expected norms of behaviour. Let us examine this a little more closely. The aim of the exercise of exemplification here seemed to be not only to reinforce this behaviour in the children concerned, but also to promote it as a model for everyone else. However, if everyone else were

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to have followed the example set, then there would have been uniformity, and the exemplified children would no longer have been unique. Thus it appears that even when children were exemplified for displaying the 'right kind' of uniqueness, the aim was ultimately to decrease this uniqueness, not by correcting those singled out as exemplary, but by urging the rest of the class to emulate them.

As my analysis has begun to suggest, targeting individuals involved two main components: observation; and, in response to this, correction. The teacher constantly watched the class, her gaze penetrating the group to perceive each unique individual pupil. When she observed deviant behaviour, she often responded with a corrective verbal rebuke, usually made in front of the whole class to discourage others from behaving in this way. And when she observed compliant behaviour, she praised this publicly so as to encourage this kind of behaviour in the other children and thereby correct their deviance.

An observation which corrects; an observation which, in the very act of observing, performs a supervising, training function; in Foucaultian terms, we might define this as 'surveillance'. In the next section, I will discuss practices of surveillance in much more detail. Before doing so, I will offer a few concluding remarks about individualisation.

In the various techniques of distribution, isolation and targeting individuals which I have described, a peculiar double process was at work. In the first place, these practices betrayed the assumption that humans are fundamentally individual beings. In school, the individual, as both cellular and unique, was seen as the natural, obvious, basic unit of analysis. Where groups were addressed, they were treated as collections of individuals. And where comments were directed towards smaller units – Bobby's hand in his trousers, for instance – they were again addressed to the individual assumed to control those smaller parts.

Yet this assumption was continually challenged by evidence to the contrary. In school, the children did not display a straightforward natural tendency to behave as separate, cellular beings. They touched each other, sat on each other's knees, entangled themselves in fights; they chatted with each other; and they often seemed unable to control certain parts of their body. In response, the school used techniques such as those described above so as to turn the children into cellular individuals, a process which attempted to homogenise, eroding the unique individuality of the children's diverse forms of comportment.

There appears to be a contradiction here. The school takes the cellular individual as both its initial ground and its final aim, its raw material and yet also its product. In this context, individualisation can be seen as a series of attempts to turn children into what they are presumed

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already to be. And the less they conform to this model picture of what they already are, the more intense are the efforts to transform them.

I would suggest that, in practice, rather than standing in contradiction, the presumption of individuality and the aspiration to it actually rely upon each other. Individualisation strategies derive their vigour and zeal from the assumption that children are, at root, individuals, both cellular and unique, and must therefore be treated as such. Without this conviction on the part of the teachers, procedures such as testing would be undermined. At the same time, these individualising strategies, used over and over again in the course of every school day, have the effect of naturalising the idea that children are fundamentally individual. The more these techniques are practised, the more their underlying premise comes to be taken for granted. Individualisation thereby works to sustain the conditions of its own vitality[22].

5.5 Docile bodies: summary

I began this chapter with an overview of Foucault's history of punishment, through which I introduced the concept of disciplinary power. This form of power is characterised by the aim of making bodies more useful by increasing their obedience. This potent combination of utility and obedience is expressed in the idea of docile bodies: human subjects who operate as individuals; who can be subjected to the rules of others, who can subject others to such rules, and who can also internalise rules to which they then subject themselves; and who are physically restrained. I have argued that docility is integral to school practices because the more docile the children, the more efficiently they can be managed within the school system. In particular, I have suggested that a degree of docility appears to be necessary if a single teacher is to communicate knowledge and skills effectively to twenty or thirty children.

Throughout this chapter, by describing a range of techniques used to produce docility, I have begun to explore the geography of power in the school: a geography of quiet and noisy spaces, of bodies distributed throughout and isolated within space, of a social space which is

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[22] This analysis owes much to Judith Butler's (1990) treatment of gender. She sees the idea of binary gender as a regulative ideal which becomes naturalised through repetition: I am told that I am a man over and over again, I am brought up to behave like a man, and by behaving like a man every day, I sustain the fiction that I really *am* a man. In Nietzschean terms, "there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind the deed, its effect and what becomes of it; 'the doer' is invented as an afterthought, - the doing is everything." (1994, p.28) For Nietzsche, as for Butler, this mistake is pernicious because it is enshrined in language, in the grammatical structure of subject and predicate. In language, there must be a prior subject which performs an action; and, with a nod to Butler, one might add that this subject must always have a gender.

organised so as to be simultaneously individualising and normalising. However. I stressed that docility must be understood as the aim of a disciplinary programme of power, not as the inevitable result of these disciplinary practices. The examples presented in this chapter underline this point. The techniques of power which the teacher used to produce docility in her pupils only ever achieved temporary success. Their effectiveness depended upon the complicity of the children in their own subjection, and as such this effectiveness was always limited by the children's resistant wilfulness. The very fact that, for example, the teacher repeatedly tried to persuade the children to be quiet, sometimes deploying several different quietening techniques in the space of a single lesson, is testament to the children's disinclination to remain quiet for long. Foucault's military metaphor works well here. The techniques of power I have described throughout this chapter resemble tactics in an ongoing battle for docility – a battle which has no prospect of an end.

Towards the end of this chapter, I noted how certain disciplinary techniques involved the use of observation to perform a corrective, normalising function. Such techniques may be categorised, following Foucault, as surveillance. The next chapter will examine these techniques in greater depth.

6

Surveillance

Surveillance is a central feature of what Foucault describes as discipline. In fact. 'discipline' is Foucault's suggestion for the best English translation of what he meant by the French verb 'surveiller' as it appears in the French title of his book, *Surveiller et Punir*[23]. 'Surveiller' therefore connotes a whole range of disciplinary practices, including observation, examination, supervision, training, correction, individualisation, and so on. Here, I will use the word 'surveillance' to indicate something a little more specific. This is best described not merely as watching or looking, but rather as one person watching *over*, or overseeing, others. The English phrase 'looking over' (as in "my boss is always looking over my shoulder" or "the mechanic gave my car a good looking over") also captures the two principal features of surveillance: its observational nature, and its practical effectiveness. Foucault writes about "hierarchical observation" (DP, p.170-177) but, on its own, 'observation' carries connotations of objective detachment which are misleading. On the contrary, surveillance is a kind of observation which, in the very act of observing, attempts to exercise power over those who are observed, thereby influencing their actions. In Foucault's words, "The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power" (ibid., p.170-171). And again, "It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being always able to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection." (ibid., p.187).

I will begin this chapter by reviewing in detail Foucault's analysis of surveillance, particularly his infamous discussion of the model of the Panopticon. I will then return to my empirical material to explore some instances of surveillance in the classroom using this carefully elaborated theoretical framework.

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[23] See Translator's Note in DP.

6.1 The Panopticon

To illustrate his understanding of how surveillance functions in a disciplinary society, Foucault uses the model of the Panopticon. His account of this model is perhaps the most well known part of his entire oeuvre, but as such it has often been taken out of context, particularly by social scientists. The totalitarian conceptions of power which dominate within much of the Foucaultian empirical research reviewed in chapter two are based upon a narrow and inattentive reading of the chapter on panopticism in *Discipline and Punish*. It therefore seems prudent to examine Foucault's account in depth, clarifying its more subtle features before attempting to ascertain what assistance, if any, it can offer to my empirical study.

The word Panopticon literally means 'all-seeing', and was used by Jeremy Bentham, a utilitarian philosopher and social reformer writing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as the name for an architectural design which he developed. The basic structure is simple. In plan form it is circular, a ring of cells, separated from each other by side walls but with windows on their outside and inside. One person is allocated to each cell, and these people are made visible by the light coming in from the outside window of their cell. At the centre of the circle is a watch-tower, with windows on all sides. A single supervisor in this tower is able to see each person through the inside window of their cells. The ingenious twist is that the tower can be seen out of, but not into. Venetian blinds, screens, or one way mirror glass can be used to achieve this effect. This means that the people in the cells cannot discern when they are being watched and when they are not. Bentham's intention was that, as a result, the inmates would begin to behave as though they were being watched all of the time. His aim was that they would eventually learn to watch over themselves, ultimately removing the need for any kind of external supervising presence whatsoever. As I have already remarked in chapter five, this process can be thought of as contributing to the formation of an individual's conscience.

Several geographers have raised important questions about the place of the Panopticon in Foucault's work. Both Felix Driver (1985; 1993; 1994) and Chris Philo (1989) have argued persuasively that recourse to the Panopticon is no substitute for detailed empirical explorations of how disciplinary principles have been applied in specific social contexts. Along similar lines, Stuart Elden (2001 and 2003) has argued that the subtler details of the various spatial analyses presented in *Discipline and Punish* and elsewhere are lost if, as Elden puts it, one sees Foucault through Bentham's eyes, reducing all of his descriptions of power to variations on the panoptic

theme[24]. Indeed, Foucault himself was highly resistant to such simplistic interpretations (see for example EP; CP). Elden's alternative is to look upon the Panopticon as the culmination of disciplinary power, rather than its most basic form. I noted in chapter five that, according to Foucault's account, the modern prison was born when the disciplinary techniques which had been developed within monasteries, the military, schools and hospitals were applied to the problem of criminal justice. Likewise, a whole series of architectural forms pre-date the Panopticon. Bentham apparently borrowed the idea from his brother, who had been inspired by a visit to the Paris Military Academy, which was designed to ensure the complete visibility of its pupils (EP). Markus (1993), meanwhile, provides a more detailed account of the evolution of the design, from Pope Clement XI's *Silentium* women's prison, built 1734-5 in Rome, to the Maison de Force at Ghent, designed in 1772, through the ideas of reformer John Howard and prison architect William Blackburn, and Cockburn and Steuart's (unsuccessful) 1782 plans for the Edinburgh Bridewell. The Panopticon must therefore be understood as the most perfect and complete codification of the principles of the disciplinary political anatomy, principles of which Bentham was certainly not the originator. A more efficient economy of punishment; coercion by means of observation rather than physical violence; the use of training and correction to produce docile, useful, bodies; the separation of individuals; the examination of individuals to produce knowledge of 'cases' – all of these principles are combined in the Panopticon.

Thus it becomes clear that, as with the notion of docile bodies, Foucault treats the Panopticon as a programme of power rather than an architectural system (see IP; see also Gordon, 1980). Though Bentham drew up architectural plans, imagining the Panopticon as a real building which could be constructed to serve various purposes[25], Foucault thinks its importance lies rather in the general principles underlying its architecture: "it is the diagram of a mechanism

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[24] Both Driver (1994) and Elden (2001) puzzle over why the relatively short account of the Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish* should have come to dominate Anglo-American readings of Foucault. Elden suggests that the illustrations may be responsible. In the French edition of the book, thirty plates depict a range of disciplinary institutions, including hospitals, schools and the army. In the English translation, however, these are reduced to ten plates, of which four depict panoptic prisons and a further one shows Bentham's plan. My own suggestion is less ingenious. In translation at least, it seems to me that as a piece of prose, the chapter on panopticism is one of the most captivating parts of Foucault's oeuvre. It is characterised by an incisive and powerful rhetoric which, at first sight, invites totalistic readings.

[25] Bentham proposed that the Panopticon could be used for the management of criminals, paupers, children and the insane. He tried unsuccessfully to realise his design as a prison in Britain. Eventually, the British government built a polygonal variation of his design on one of his chosen sites at Millbank between 1813 and 1825, but it was a total failure (Markus, 1993). Markus notes that few true Panopticons were ever built, though Robert Adam's successful 1791 plan for the Edinburgh Bridewell, heavily influenced by Bentham, came close to realising the panoptic design.

of power reduced to its ideal form" (DP, p.205). And again, "the Panopticon was a utopia, a kind of pure form elaborated at the end of the 18th century, intended to supply the most convenient formula for the constant, immediate and total exercising of power" (CP, p.257). The Panopticon must therefore be understood as model of how, in the most perfect case, power is exercised by surveillance. Its principles can be applied in any number of specific situations, built into both architectural designs and forms of social organisation. Such structures may adhere more or less closely to the panoptic schema and, in operation, they may be more or less effective in realising the aims of that schema; for example, Foucault notes that "the whole history of the prison – its reality – consists precisely in its never having come near this model." (CP, p.257) As both Philo (1989) and Elden (2001 and 2003) argue, the Panopticon itself is therefore less interesting than the more general programme of *panopticism*. Similarly, Driver argues that "Foucault's account of panopticism is thus to be read as a model of a disciplinary programme, not as a description of actual disciplinary institutions." (1994, p.120) The panopticon "tells us little about the specific functioning of the institutions which Foucault argues were all more than simply disciplinary forms." (Driver, 1985, p.433; see also Driver, 1993).

To take an example from the history of education, let us consider the monitorial or 'mutual improvement' schools, set up in the UK during the early nineteenth century by Joseph Lancaster's British and Foreign Schools Society and Andrew Bell's National Society (see chapter five). In their programmatic form – 'on paper', so to speak – these schools were based upon the panoptic principle of hierarchical surveillance as a means of maximising the efficiency of power. However, architecturally, these schools bore little similarity to the Panopticon with its rings of cells and galleries. Furthermore, in practice, the monitorial system failed to realise the Panoptic principle of total surveillance. Lancaster and Bell's writings paint an idealised picture of their schools as apparatuses of total control, but surviving inspection accounts suggest that they were often severely dysfunctional, characterised more by noise and chaos than by orderly discipline (Sturt, 1967). Similarly, in the case of prisons inspired by Bentham's design, Markus (1993) notes that though many were claimed to be Panopticons, most fell far short of realising the aims of the programme, even at the level of the architecture: "Inmates could see or hear each other, or they could see their keepers, or there were periods when they escaped surveillance." (p.123) Modifying the arguments of Gordon (1980), we might distinguish three levels of disciplinary apparatus: programmes, such as panopticism; technologies, such as the monitorial schools; and the practices of those living within such technologies.

It might be objected that Foucault in fact provides a more empirically grounded account of disciplinary surveillance in his description of the penal colony at Mettray. If this were the case, then it might make more sense to compare my empirical materials with Mettray, rather than with the programme of panopticism. It is certainly true that Mettray was a real institution, a technology of power, whereas the Panopticon was a programme, a set of general principles encoded into an architectural blueprint. Yet, as I argued in chapter five, Foucault uses Mettray in much the same way as he uses the Panopticon: as a model which illustrates the features of a disciplinary programme in their most perfect form. The Mettray model therefore shares the central principles of the Panopticon, although there are some important differences between the two systems. Where these differences become pertinent, it will certainly be instructive to compare my observations of surveillance in the classroom with Foucault's accounts of both the Mettray model and the Panopticon – so long as both accounts are understood as representations of programmes, not empirical portraits of specific institutions.

The programmatic nature of the Panopticon has methodological implications for Foucaultian empirical work such as my own. To draw a series of parallels between modern institutions and Bentham's design, thus demonstrating the overwhelming dominance of disciplinary power in contemporary society, would be to use Foucault in a simplistic and uncreative manner. As he was well aware, "the procedures of power resorted to in modern societies are far more numerous and diverse and rich. It would be false to say that the principle of visibility has dominated the whole technology of power since the 19th century." (EP, p.227) Small scale empirical studies must recognise this, and accordingly pay attention to the specifics of their particular context. In this respect, my position resembles that of Driver (1985), who stresses that "The Panopticon was a particular mechanism, an abstract figure, and the discipline on which it was based would appear in different guises in different contexts. It is a matter, then, of detailed research to ascertain how the disciplines and the wider process of 'normalisation' emerge and evolve, for what purposes and in whose interest." (p.435) Returning to the nomenclature of programmes-technologies-practices, I would argue that it is the task of empirical research such as my own to examine the relationships between these three levels of power, exploring their points of convergence and divergence, rather than simply insisting upon their identity.

In order to carry out such an analysis, it will be necessary to examine the principal features of the panoptic programme before shifting my discussion to the level of disciplinary practices in school.

Foucault insists that since the Panopticon is a programme, it "must be detached from any specific use" (DP, p.205). As I have already noted, its potential applications are endless: Foucault mentions prisons, factories, hospitals, asylums and schools, but this list could be expanded. This makes the Panopticon extremely versatile, but there is another more important point at stake here. The variety of the Panopticon's applications stands in contrast to the similarity of its effects. Whether one uses it to cure patients, teach children or reform criminals, the Panopticon will tend to produce docile individuals: "The Panopticon is a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may put it to, produces homogenous effects of power." (ibid., p.202) Crucially, this also implies that the Panopticon's effects cannot be straightforwardly attributed to the conscious intentions of those who purport to govern it.

If the Panopticon has no specific use, then neither does it have specific users. It establishes positions – surveyor and surveyed – but almost anyone can occupy these positions. One needs no skill besides the power of sight to operate the machine[26]. In the Panopticon, one's field of possible actions is structured not by one's innate capacities but rather by one's position in the hierarchical network: "it's an individual's place, and not his nature, that is the determining factor" (EP, p.235). And this place is not fixed – those who are surveyed may in time find themselves promoted to the position of the surveyor.

More than this, surveillance actually pervades all levels of the hierarchy. The surveyor may be surveyed by others higher up the chain of command, who in turn are answerable to yet others. In the case of Mettray, Foucault places great emphasis upon the presence of a school within the colony in which administrators, monitors and foremen were trained by being "subjected, as pupils, to the discipline that, later, as instructors, they would themselves impose." (ibid., p.295) In this model case, everyone both submits to the power of their superiors and exercises the same power over their inferiors. Thus each person, regardless of their position, becomes caught up both in being surveyed and in surveying: "This is perhaps the most diabolical aspect of the idea...this is a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise the power as well as those who are subjected to it." (EP, p.233-234) Surveillance is not concentrated in the hands of the few. Rather, it is distributed throughout the entire social network. Even those at the

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[26] In fact, it is possible to imagine an alternative architecture, built on the same basic principles, in which visibility would be replaced by, say, audibility, so that surveillance could be conducted by listening instead of looking. In fact, as Markus (1993) points out, Bentham's original design for the Panopticon included one way listening tubes to augment the visual surveillance. I expand on the idea of surveying sound later in this chapter.

bottom of the hierarchy, with no-one beneath them to survey, are encouraged to survey themselves.

The inculcation of self-surveillance is perhaps the most important feature of the Panopticon. Self-surveillance is encouraged simply by preventing the inhabitants from knowing whether they are being watched or not. Bentham's principle was that power should be visible, so that the inmate is always aware of a watching presence, but unverifiable, so that "the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he always may be so." (DP, p.201) One is reminded of the 'telescreens' of the Thought Police in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in the presence of which "You had to live – did live, from habit that became instinct – in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinised." (Orwell, 1989, p.5) Likewise, the imagined in-mates of the model Panopticon soon begin to watch over themselves, psychically replicating the gaze of the watchtower. The Panopticon thus produces the effect of continuous surveillance without requiring the actual exercise of that surveillance. This is why it is such an efficient mechanism. Ultimately, in the perfect case, self-surveillance should become so effective that the supervising presence is made redundant: "the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary" (DP, p.201)

An example will illustrate the point. Imagine a system of speed cameras placed along a motorway. The cameras will trigger when they detect a car driving at a speed above the legal limit. These cameras are highly visible, so motorists know that they are being watched. Each camera's field of view extends for one hundred meters, yet the cameras are placed at intervals of one kilometre. This means that motorists may drive over the speed limit for ninety percent of their journey, simply slowing down every kilometre to appease the cameras. In other words, in this system, ten percent surveillance coverage of a driver's journey can only guarantee obedience for that ten percent of the journey. This is not much like a model panoptic system, since the surveillance achieves only discontinuous effects.

On the other hand, consider an alternative system in which the cameras are placed every hundred metres, thus ensuring that every motorist can always be seen by a camera. Now, to keep running costs to a minimum, only ten per cent of these cameras contain film, so only these ten per cent will be able to produce a speeding conviction. However, the motorists have no way of knowing which cameras contain film and which are empty. They are therefore obliged to drive at or below the speed limit at all times if they are to avoid conviction. They learn to watch and limit their speed at all times, internalising the surveying gaze of the speed cameras. This system

matches the panoptic model much more closely, since it uses concealment to inculcate self-surveillance, producing the effects of continuous surveillance from what is in fact a rather limited vigilance. At least in theory, this vigilance could be reduced to five per cent, or to one percent, and ultimately it could be removed altogether, and yet, provided the motorists still believed that they might be seen, the system would continue to function.

It is worth noting that in Foucault's account, Mettray conforms to neither of these scenarios. There, the effects of continuous surveillance were guaranteed by the maintenance of a continuous gaze. The monitors and foremen "had to live in close proximity to the inmates...they practically never left their side, observing them day and night; they constituted among them a network of permanent observation." (ibid., p.295) This feature betrays a certain lack of faith in the power of discipline to inculcate the self-surveillance of delinquents. Thus Mettray was perhaps not quite the exemplary disciplinary institution which Foucault claims it to have been.

Returning to the Panopticon, in summary, I have shown that:

- It is a programme for total surveillance rather than a specific institution.
- It can be put to a variety of uses.
- It produces homogenous effects, which cannot be attributed directly to the intentions of those in charge of its operation.
- It establishes positions of surveyor and surveyed, which anyone may occupy.
- It ensures that surveillance operates at all levels of the hierarchy, so that everyone is caught up both in surveying and in being surveyed.
- It uses concealment, coupled with a small number of instances of surveillance, to inculcate an attitude of continuous self-surveillance.

Bearing all these features in mind, I will now examine some instances of surveillance in school. Following Driver's call for detailed research into the specifics of particular panoptic practices (see above), my aim is to illuminate the similarities and differences between the programme outlined thus far, and the day-to-day operation of surveillance in a primary classroom.

6.2 Surveillance in school

In the perfect case, visual surveillance functions purely by looking and seeing. This relies upon two things. First, the people being surveyed must be constantly aware of the gaze to which they are exposed. In the Panopticon, this is ensured by the architecture. Second, the people must

understand how their supervisors expect them to behave; before people can submit to the rules of conduct which surveillance is attempting to enforce, they must know the content of these rules. Interestingly, Foucault does not discuss how this initial process of learning takes place in the Panopticon.

In school, these two conditions were not always fulfilled, particularly outside of gather round, when the children were seated at their tables. In the hustle and bustle of the classroom, the children often became absorbed in their work, or in playing or chatting to friends, so that they temporarily forgot that their teacher was watching. Both Mrs. Lynford and Miss Johnson therefore spent a good deal of time and energy reminding the children of their presence. In addition, they regularly emphasised *how* they wanted to see the children behaving. These two practices were often combined, as in the following example:

> "I'm just looking at the class to see who's working quietly and who's not working quietly," says the teacher, from her position with a reading group on the carpet.
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002)

Unlike in the Panopticon, where surveillance is silent, classroom surveillance was often backed up by such instructions:

> The last lesson is maths, but the children's concentration has waned by this point. As the teacher goes through their work, Bobby whoops for no apparent reason. She shoots him a stern look: "I want to see you sitting with your pencil down and your arms folded."
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 5 December 2002)

However, by Primary 4, most of the children had been told how to behave so many times that they were well aware of what was expected of them. This meant that the teacher did not always need to verbalise the rules of proper conduct:

> A little later, I notice David stand up and do an little dance, right in the middle of the lesson. He sees the teacher watching him, and turns to her, smiles and dances again, rather optimistically. She shakes her head and he stops and sits down.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 March 2003)

Sometimes, surveillance operated without any instructions, by looking alone:

> As the teacher explained what they were to do, I was struck once again by her use of looking – the glance, the stare – as a delicate but effective means of discipline.

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She can quell disruptive behaviour simply by fixing her eyes upon a child for a few moments.
(PhD field notes, Monday 27 May 2002)

However, this is still far from the panoptic scenario. The fact of the teacher's presence alone was evidently not sufficient to convince the disruptive children that they *might* be seen; instead, the teacher had to remind them that she *could* see them. It is worth noting that in the example above, surveillance was enabled by a particular form of spatial organisation. The children were seated on the carpet, in 'gather round' formation, with Mrs. Lynford sitting on a chair directly in front of and above them. This allowed her to make eye contact with each child, thereby reminding them that she was watching them closely.

Let us consider a more detailed example of surveillance by looking alone:

> At the end of playtime, when the bell goes, the children move towards the entrance and form the most straggly, incoherent and noisy of lines. Several times, I notice children drift off back into the playground area. David has Golden Falcon's super bay blade [a glorified spinning-top toy] (it's big, and has cool flashing lights), and is spinning it on the muddy grass. Then the teacher arrives and stands on the step watching the class. She says nothing, but simply looks at them. Within moments, the entire class has fallen quiet and formed into a much more orderly line, with everyone standing still on the flagstones, keeping away from the grass...I'm astonished at how she can have such influence over them with so subtle an exertion of power.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

One can see in this the beginning of the transition to self-obedience. Miss Johnson no longer needed to spell out how she expected the children to behave. They knew the rules, and she knew that they knew them. Therefore, she merely had to look at them, thereby letting them know that they were being watched, and they applied these rules to themselves. Once again, however, the very fact that she had to be present before the childrn behaved 'properly' suggests that, unlike in the Panopticon, surveillance in school does not always achieve continuous effects.

6.2.1 Discontinuous surveillance

Emphasising the totality of surveillance in the Panopticon, Foucault wrote that "in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen." (DP, p.202) In school, however, there were no venetian blinds, one-way windows or other such crafty technologies. This meant that surveillance was difficult to conceal, since the children could look around to see whether the teacher was watching them or not. In the

following example, the gym teacher had separated all the children, distributing them across the gym hall:

> the children all dance about on the spot. James Bond spirals around doing an extremely novel kind of freestyle break/tap dance, which quickly turns into him falling onto the floor. Then when the teachers' backs are turned, he runs over to Tom Cruise, then back to his position, then, seeing the teachers still looking the other way, fancies his chances and does it again, all the while looking to see if he's being watched. He's clearly experimenting to see what he can get away with, and is lucky enough to escape unseen on this occasion.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

This practice of 'looking to see who's watching' was also common in the classroom. For example, in a conversation with Miss Johnson about my work, we spoke a little about David. She said, "He knows I'm watching him at the moment, and he keeps looking over at me to see how he's doing." (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002). Later, however, it occurred to me that David might have other more mischievous reasons for looking over at the teacher; I wondered how he would behave if he were to look over at her and see that she had *not* seen him. The children were certainly adept at identifying lapses in the teacher's surveillance, and at monitoring these lapses in a kind of reverse-surveillance:

> Miss Longford [another teacher] comes into the classroom to get something. The children chorus a good morning, much to Miss Longford's enjoyment...and then the teacher goes with her into the store cupboard to find what she wants. Immediately, the children start talking to each other and moving about, *always glancing over to make sure the teacher can't see them.*
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003, emphasis added.)

This would suggest that, in contrast to the Panopticon, the teacher's gaze was discontinuous, often restricted within the classroom space. When observing the class, I regularly noticed incidents which escaped the teacher's attention:

> I observe a small drama which goes unnoticed by the teacher. Someone has snatched Alison's Pritt Stick and she storms across the room to retrieve it, without much immediate success. I see that she is getting really angry and upset, but the teacher doesn't notice as she's busy helping people stick their pictures together.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 29 January 2003)

> I see David put his hand in his trousers and make a rude bulge at the front to Hannah as she walks towards him across the room. She frowns and walks past him.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5th November 2002)

This discontinuity is one of the major differences between the programmes described by Foucault and the reality of surveillance in school. It seemed that there were always opportunities for evading the teacher's surveillance, disruptions in her gaze which the children had learned how to exploit. Returning to the speed camera example I used above, the teacher's surveillance was more like the first scenario than the second. And like drivers who accelerate over the speed limit when they are out of view of the speed cameras, some of the children regularly infringed the rules when they knew that they were not being watched:

> Bobby enters the room, returning from the toilet, and Jason makes a series of "you're an idiot" faces at him. He's able to avoid the teacher's gaze because he's facing the door, with the back of his head to the front of the classroom, where the teacher is standing.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 March 2003)

The classroom tables provided another means of avoiding the teacher's gaze, acting as screens beneath which illicit activities could be carried out:

> There is a lot of movement and noise during this session, with people fetching, swapping and sharpening pencils. Jason crawls about under the tables, scuttling across the classroom floor just out of the teacher's sight...
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 24 September 2002)

Similarly, games which would have attracted the teacher's attention, had they been played in the open, were adapted by the children for use in the concealed realm below the tables:

> While the teacher explains what to do, I watch Alison and Spike engage in a 'leg fight'. Alison instigates this, and then checks Spike's shoes for mud before commencing. It seems to be like an arm wrestle, but with legs and feet instead of arms and hands.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 24 September 2002)

Similarly, for children seeking to evade the surveillance of the school staff, the toilets were one of the few private spaces in the school. Consider the following incident:

> After lunch, there came the obligatory bunch of playground tales, along with a complaint from a playground supervisor about boys going in and out to the toilets when they should have been outside. "The door should be closed, but what with people going in and out, they can get in," said the supervisor. "But they shouldn't need a door to stop them going into the toilets at lunchtime," Mrs Lynford replied.

> Both of them agreed that they had no idea why people would want to be in the toilets rather than outside. "What a horrible place to play on a beautiful sunny day," Mrs Lynford said. "It's disgusting," added the playground monitor.
> (PhD field notes, Monday 17 June 2002)

There are several points of note here. First, so as to discourage the children from playing in the toilets, the staff represented this practice first as irrational and then as dirty and shameful. What neither of them admitted is that the children concerned might have had good reasons for going into the toilets. They might have been looking for a novel hiding place in a game of hide and seek, or they might have wanted to indulge in activities which would have been prohibited had they been seen by the playground supervisors. One could interpret the playground supervisor's actions as a tactical response to the children's evasion of her gaze. They had moved into one of the few spaces within the school to which she did not have easy access for surveillance. Rather than trying to penetrate this space, she appealed to the children's teacher to enforce the prohibition on coming inside at lunch times. In addition, the teacher's remark about the door is another instance of the school's emphasis upon self-surveillance. In the absence of physical barriers, the children were expected to regulate themselves according to the school rules.

Returning to the discontinuity of surveillance in the classroom, the children also occasionally found ways of communicating with each other which were sufficiently subtle to go unseen by the teacher:

> As Nicole returns from taking the register, she tugs lightly at Jennifer's hair to get her attention. The teacher doesn't see this – a form of communication which evades surveillance.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 4 June 2002)

This example illustrates how the children worked creatively within the limits of the classroom regime. Nicole was given the task of taking the register, but she managed to use the return trip as a means of interacting, albeit briefly, with one of her friends. Of course, my own research, though not a form of surveillance as I defined it at the beginning of this chapter, nevertheless relied heavily upon visual observation. There is therefore little doubt that, given the array of evasive tactics which I witnessed, many more such exchanges took place which were sufficiently well-hidden to escape my attention.

Like researchers, teachers are single people moving around often chaotic spaces; they do not have eyes in the back of their heads, and therefore cannot see everything. Even without distractions from other adults, tables being used as screens, and so on, they may miss a good deal

of what is happening in their classrooms. This was especially the case in lessons which involved art and craft-type activities, as opposed to desk-based numeracy and literacy sessions:

> In the afternoon, we do art, making long boats. I hear the teacher say, "Primary 4, do not use this as an excuse to wander round the classroom like last week." Later, she says, "It's good to have a fun afternoon, but there's such a thing as taking it too far. It's not an excuse for a carry on." However, this is exactly how several of the children use the lesson. The increased movement and noise tolerated in art act as a kind of 'smokescreen' for deviance. The teacher's sporadic absorption with different groups of children around the room mean that she drops out of her usual surveillance role, being unable to see the whole class at any one time.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003)

The children were clearly aware of this side-effect of staff working with small groups. In such moments of relative freedom from the teacher's gaze, their responses were varied:

> The children who are not [in the small groups working] with either Miss Johnson or Mrs. Oliver [the classroom assistant] sit at their tables. Some of them work in peace on their own, having few people around to distract them. Others, seeing that they are relatively free from surveillance since the staff are absorbed with small groups, use this as an opportunity to play – for example, Steven brandishes a Pritt Stick stuck onto the end of a pen, and looks around with a grin to see if anyone is watching, and to find someone to show this to who will be amused. It strikes me that the difference here is between those who have internalised the disciplinary gaze sufficiently to supervise themselves, and those who have not, and will therefore not remain on task without external supervision.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5th November 2002)

Once again, it is clear that the teacher's surveillance, as a discontinuous process, could not guarantee the docility of bodies. Unlike in the Panopticon, docility was a matter of contention in the classroom, something which was struggled for and against. The total effectiveness of surveillance was not secured in advance by the institutional structure; rather, surveillance must be seen as a strategy deployed regularly in an ongoing struggle.

Without the architecture of the Panopticon to ensure the unassailable domination of her gaze, the teacher had to find other ways of maximising the effectiveness of her limited surveillance. Miss Johnson explained one of her tactics to me:

> We...have a conversation about copying and catching, and she says that she has caught some of them out when marking their work, particularly if children seem to be making the same odd mistakes as one another. She says she thinks it's good to catch one or two out at the start of the year, as this lets them know that they're being watched.

Marking work is one area of classroom practice in which the teacher did see everything, since she had to mark everyone's work. She did not have the resources to rigorously check every piece of work against every other piece to ensure the children hadn't copied, but she thought that if she could catch a few children, this might be enough to discourage the whole class from copying in future. This is an example of Bentham's principle of a visible but unverifiable gaze. The children knew that a particular piece of work *might* be being checked for copying, but had no way of determining whether it really would be or not.

Some of the techniques described in chapter five which target individuals also tend to achieve the effects of continuous surveillance from a small number of interventions. In particular, I saw this when the teacher targeted individuals remotely:

> There are two children reading with Miss Johnson. As the noise level in the room starts to rise now that there are more children around tables, Miss Johnson shoots occasional remarks from her seat in the corner to individuals who she can see talking. She also shushes them several times. This is an interesting tactic – remote surveillance of the class from a distance, with the teacher dividing her attention between a small group and the class as a whole; the phrase 'keeping an eye on them' seems fitting.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5th November 2002)

Two factors were crucial here. First, by dividing her attention between the reading group and the other children at their tables, the teacher created an illusion of omnipresence for herself. This was all the more important since, as I have explained above, the children often exploited the opportunities for chatting and playing afforded by the teacher's absorption with others. By disciplining the rest of the class whilst simultaneously hearing readers, the teacher demonstrated that her surveillance could be more pervasive than some of the children seemed to think. Second, this illusion of omnipresence was bolstered by the distance over which the teacher was able to survey. By shooting remarks across the full length of the classroom, she attempted to create the impression that her surveillance permeated the whole of the space. Her implication seemed to be: no matter where you are, near or far, I can see you.

6.2.2 The surveillance of sound

In the Panopticon, surveillance is carried out by sight. The inmates are placed in "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (DP, p.201).

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However, as I have emphasised, in Foucault's work the Panopticon must be understood as a programmatic model of how disciplinary power functions, which is therefore not limited to the specific architecture envisaged by Bentham. Thus despite the ocularcentrism of the original blueprint, there is no reason to suppose that disciplinary surveillance must be limited to the realm of the visual. Surveillance technologies might be adapted to use different kinds of sense data and even different electromagnetic spectra while still displaying many of the features of the Panopticon as outlined above. For example, the typical acoustics of a church, which tend to amplify sounds, might be said to induce quietness in the congregation. The X-ray scanners used in airport baggage checks are another form of non-visual surveillance. though since they are not hidden from travellers, they are perhaps closer to the surveillance technology built into Mettray than to the discontinuous, concealed system at the heart of the Panopticon. In the most extreme case, one can imagine a series of superimposed technologies forming a multi-layered total surveillance environment. At the same time, real surveillance technologies are unlikely ever to achieve such complete coverage. Instead, such technologies are usually discontinuous, leaving blind spots which may be exploited by those under surveillance[27].

In the classroom, while surveillance usually relied upon sight in some capacity, it often also involved hearing. I have already emphasised the predominance of the struggle to create a quiet space in the classroom (see chapter five), and surveillance was commonly used as a tactic in this struggle. Re-examining an instance, cited earlier, of surveillance coupled with instruction, the close connection between sight and sound becomes apparent:

> "I'm just looking at the class to see who's working quietly and who's not working quietly," says the teacher, from her position with a reading group on the carpet.
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002)

Similarly, on another occasion, the teacher said, "I would like to *see* complete silence" (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003, emphasis added). This idea of 'looking to see who is being noisy' seems to suggest a kind of surveillance which involves both looking and listening. Sometimes, the listening predominated. At the same time, the teacher's frequent verbal

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[27] Even X-ray machines have their limitations. I was recently surprised and a little alarmed when, arriving at my hotel room after a flight, I opened my hand luggage to find my razor, complete with a blade. Having forgotten that I had packed it, I had unwittingly smuggled it into the cabin of a Ryanair plane, despite having had my bag scanned by the staff at Edinburgh airport. Luckily for all concerned, I am not a terrorist.

reminders to the children that she could see and hear them also relied upon the children's hearing:

> "Come on, Jennifer, James Bond, you're not here to talk. James Bond, I can hear you over here."
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5 November 2002)

Sometimes, the teacher targeted her comments at groups:

> "The green and red groups can take three points each – all the noise is coming from the yellow and blue groups."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

At other times, sonic surveillance was used to identify recalcitrant individuals, towards whom disciplinary rebukes could then be targeted:

> Billy lets out a squawk and is reprimanded by the teacher. "Billy! That's the kind of noise I associate with a zoo, not a classroom."
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 21 January 2003)

In these instances, rather than being able to see that they might always be seen, as in Bentham's Panopticon, the children were able to hear that they might always be heard. In fact, the surveillance of sound in the classroom may be seen to conform more closely to the panoptic model than purely visual surveillance. While the children could usually turn around to see whether or not they were being watched, they had greater difficulty ascertaining whether they were being heard. Whereas eyes are highly directional sensory technologies, ears are much less restricted in their coverage of space. One can usually determine by looking at a person whether one is within their field of vision; it is much more difficult to ascertain by sight whether one is within their field of hearing. The surveillance of sound is therefore more easily concealed. One never knows when the teacher may be listening:

> The children commence their language work. Mrs. Oliver and the teacher take reading groups into the corners. Again, the teacher shushes and shoots remarks to individuals from the maths corner: "David, I can hear your voice over here. Matthew, Bobby…"
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002)

In chapter five, I described this kind of remote surveillance as Miss Johnson 'keeping an eye' on the rest of the class. However, I want to refine this analysis by suggesting that she was in fact

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keeping both eyes on the group immediately in front of her, and both ears on the group *and* on the rest of the class. This is how she managed to maintain a convincing illusion of omnipresence.

However, if the classroom was not always a space of transparent, continuous visibility, neither was it one of complete audibility. Like her gaze, the teacher's aural surveillance was often rendered discontinuous by factors beyond her immediate control. Sometimes, she simply failed to hear illicit verbal exchanges:

> I...notice friction developing between David and Bobby. David gets out of his seat and goes over to Bobby and says something which sounds like, "If you touch ma wee brother, I'll kill yer. Y'ken?" Then he returns to his seat, having escaped the attention of Miss Johnson.
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 5 December 2002)

As emphasised earlier, some of the children did not hesitate to exploit such lapses in surveillance, using them as opportunities for conversation, play and other unsanctioned forms of behaviour:

> The children work quietly, and the teacher moves around the room assisting individuals. Then she goes over to speak to Mrs. Oliver, which the children take as an opportunity to chat a little more.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 March 2003)

During lesson time, when the children were supposed to restrict their conversation only to the task at hand, I nevertheless often overheard more informal discussions:

> I hear Kim say, "I'm gonnae get it cos my brother's got a DVD player. You got a Playstation One?" to Spike. I overhear Alison at another table talking about who Kim fancies, and James Bond talking about Spiderman again.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5th November 2002)

As with visual surveillance, sonic surveillance was often more discontinuous in lessons which permitted more fluid, autonomous uses of space by the children. Returning to the example of the art lesson discussed above:

> The increased movement and noise tolerated in art act as a kind of 'smokescreen' for deviance...The high ambient noise level means [that Miss Johnson] is unable to pinpoint individuals who are causing a disturbance, as she does when she is hearing readers. For example, while the teacher is helping with cutting and stapling at the blue table, behind her back Steven and Kate lie on their chairs with their heads dangling off, giggling away.

The children were also aware that noise, as well as providing cover for recalcitrance, could be a form of recalcitrance in itself, disrupting classroom activities. In chapter five, I noted how a few children regularly surveyed their peers' noisiness, and made interventions to persuade them to be quiet. Yet despite the centrality of quietness to the moral code of the classroom, and the resulting stigma attached to noisiness, a few of the children took pride in their noisiness:

> Bobby wanders over to me and says, "Write that ah'm bein' noisy Mike," so I oblige. He does a little dance.
> "Thank you Mike."
> "Thank *you*," I laugh.
> "Mike, that's what I was born for, bein' noisy."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003)

In the following excerpt, I witnessed Bobby's noisiness in action:

> [in gather round] transgressions attract the attention and intervention of the teacher: for example, Bobby makes a loud "hee-har-hee-har!" noise and is asked to move closer in, away from the library.
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 5 December 2002)

Such blatant acts of defiance were sure to be noticed, and would almost always incite some kind of disciplinary response from the teacher. However, I also observed more subtle forms of noise-making which were sufficiently ambivalent to escape prosecution, as in the following example:

> A little way into the lesson, I notice the children at the red table doing relay coughing – Kim coughs, then Steven coughs, then Kate, and then Kim again.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

The children usually communicate by speaking to each other, but if what they want to say has no bearing on their work, and the teacher overhears, she will rebuke them. At the start of the Autumn term, I observed an alternative tactic being used by one of the children:

> I see Helen trying to communicate something to Nicole, who is waiting for the teacher to look at her work. She shouts at first, then realises this is perhaps imprudent and begins furiously making signs [with her hands].
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 24 September 2002)

I did not see much more of this sort of thing, perhaps because these tactics evaded my own powers of observation, as well as those of the teacher. However, towards the end of my fieldwork, in the spring term of the children's primary four year, I began to notice regular instances of children communicating in ways which evaded the teacher's surveillance of sound. Mostly, these were verbal:

> The children seem to be getting increasingly adept at interacting without making sufficient noise to attract the teacher's attention. For example, I see Helen turning around and chatting to Billy and the others at the blue table. Meanwhile, Kim and James Bond discuss their work.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003)

The children appeared to have learned that, since loud noises attracted the teacher's attention, they had to speak quietly if they were to escape detection:

> I notice the children at the green table talking and giggling to each other, but they do so very quietly, so the teacher doesn't notice. They are becoming increasingly adept at this kind of flying beneath the teacher's radar.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 March 2003)

Even Bobby, who often got himself into trouble by being noisy in the most obvious way, was, on occasion, capable of much more subtle forms of resistance:

> I notice that Bobby is using his position at the writing table to turn around and chat to Jason, who is sitting just behind him at the green table. What interests me is how quietly they speak. I only notice because I see them – I am unable to hear their voices even though I'm only a couple of metres away. They've obviously realised that keeping quiet helps one get away with infringing the classroom rules.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

In this instance, the teacher eventually saw Bobby turning around in his seat and rebuked him. While he had managed to evade the surveillance of sound, he was caught by the teacher's gaze. A more effective tactic was to chat quietly while carrying out a necessary classroom task, thereby evading both visual and aural forms of surveillance:

> I see Yo, Steven and Kate sharpening pencils around the bin together. They chat to each other informally, without arguing or creating enough fuss to attract attention from the teacher. Another example of how the children use the interstices of classroom life to their advantage.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003)

I think that in these evasions, one sees the children carefully monitoring their own activities, principally the level of their voices, in a way which suggests a capacity for self-surveillance. This is interesting, since it does not represent a mere internalisation of external rules, as was the aim of the panoptic programme. The examples above suggest that classroom rule "do not talk unless your conversation pertains directly to the task at hand" has not been unproblematically assimilated into the children's consciences. Instead, the children seem to have devised different rules to which they were holding themselves: I must speak only when the teacher can't hear me; I must speak quietly in whispers so that the teacher can't hear me; if I laugh, I must do so without making noise; I must chat to my friends only when I am visibly on-task; and so on. This suggests that disciplinary power may have unexpected consequences. By encouraging children to survey themselves, panoptic surveillance actually provides them with a means of resistance to and evasion of that surveillance.

6.2.3 Distributed surveillance

At first sight, surveillance might be interpreted as a straightforward process of domination and subordination: surveillance as a tool used by a powerful ruling minority, in this case teachers, to oppress the powerless majority, in this case schoolchildren. However, from a Foucaultian perspective, this analysis is inadequate. As explained above, in the Panopticon, the surveillance of the in-mates by the supervisors in the watchtower is only the most obvious relation of power. On closer inspection, one sees that the supervisors are themselves under different kinds of surveillance from their superiors. In the same way, teachers are subject to the various gazes of senior management staff, parents and school inspectors, for example. And at the bottom of the hierarchy, children often took it upon themselves to survey each other.

However, this kind of distributed surveillance is quite at odds with the panoptic model. In the Panopticon, the cells ensure that there is no contact between the inmates. Prison reformers of Bentham's time generally agreed that if criminals associated with each other, their vices would spread, and their reform would be impossible (Markus, 1993). The principle of individual segregation, implemented through solitary confinement, was therefore of fundamental importance in Bentham's plan. In a modern classroom, however, such absolute segregation is not possible. As I noted in chapter five, even when the teachers wanted to isolate a child, this was usually done within the classroom. Moreover, I argued that such tactics were all the more effective for their imposition of a clearly visible distance between the deviant child and the group. In extreme cases where the teacher wanted to isolate a child completely, they sometimes

used network slips to send them to a different classroom, but this was rare. This meant that ordinarily, everyone worked together in a single physical space, enabling the children to survey one another. This is a novel mutation of the disciplinary model. Even in the monitorial schools, where the older, more capable pupils were enlisted as monitors to survey the others, distributed surveillance still depended upon the schoolmaster's imposition of this hierarchical relationship. Likewise, in Mettray, though the monitors and foremen were distributed throughout the inmates, forming a network of omnipresent supervision, an official hierarchy still obtained between those who were to survey and those who were to be surveyed. In the classroom, however, I observed how children spontaneously took upon themselves the role of surveyor, without any explicit endorsement from the teachers.

Let us now examine some instances of this distributed surveillance. Occasionally, I witnessed the primary four children surveying younger children, as in the following example:

> Several of the children start looking out of the window rather anxiously. It appears that the primary ones and twos are in the primary four playground at the front. Several of them are clambering over the large rock piles which the primary fours play on. Helen says, "They shouldn't be in there cos they'll slip. It's dangerous. There's ice on those rocks."
> "If we're not allowed in their playground, they shouldn't be allowed in our playground," says Kim, and there is a general sense of agreement with this. The children tell their teacher and then go back to work, but a few moments later Helen returns. "Are the P1's gone?" she asks me. I say yes, and she says, "Yay!"
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003)

Here, Helen implicitly relied upon the hierarchy created by the school between the children of different year groups. This hierarchy legitimised her paternalistic concern for the welfare of the younger pupils.

However, most of the instances of distributed surveillance which I witnessed involved primary four children overseeing each other, and as such did not rely upon a formal hierarchy. Sometimes, this practice was directed at personal habits:

> House points have been counted up, and the winning house is announced just before we leave the dance base. Those in that house are given choc-ices, which leaves the others rather crestfallen. By the time we get back to class, Golden Falcon has got ice-cream and chocolate smeared all round his mouth. Some of the others are disgusted by this. "Euuugh, Golden Falcon, wipe your mouth!" At this, he takes his sleeve and drags it right across his lips, transferring the mess onto his clothes. "Euuuegh!" say the other children.
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 27 June 2002)

This example demonstrates how, as with the teachers' use of surveillance, the children's observations of one another were often backed up by corrective instructions, informed by dominant norms of behaviour. The children appeared to have accepted the validity of these norms, and were making attempts to enforce and thereby reproduce them.

Food and eating were a common objects of the children's surveillance of one another at lunchtimes:

> Kate dips her cheese into her Ribena, to the vocal disgust of her classmates. "Euugh!" they all chorus. At one time, I'd have said nothing about this, but now I say, "If she wants to do it, then why shouldn't she?"
> "Because it'll taste desgusten," replies Alison.
> "But it's only her who has to eat it," I say, "so why does it matter?"
> "Because…" Alison thinks for a moment, "well, if somethin's desgusten then it's desgusten, isn't it?" I smile at her unassailable logic.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 29 January 2003)

During lesson time, meanwhile, the children tended to reproduce the kinds of surveillance to which they had been subjected by school staff. Again, the practice of watching-over was usually accompanied by verbal instructions. In the following example, taken from my record of a gym lesson, the surveying children took a moral stance:

> Bobby laughs loudly at Jennifer when she drops the ball, and the rest of his team look disapproving and say he shouldn't have done that.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 June 2002)

Here, Bobby's peers conscientiously upheld the egalitarian values which had been impressed upon them by their superiors. Yet I also observed surveillance being used in a much more draconian manner, completely at odds with the school's ethos of care and support. Here is another example from a gym lesson:

> Several of the children take disciplinary roles upon themselves, telling off their peers quite harshly for making mistakes. "Alison, PAY ATTENTION!" yells Billy during one game. David, too, keeps nagging his team mates to pay attention and move faster. A lot of them shout instructions at each other in a frenzy, like the people outside the rooms on that TV show, 'The Crystal Maze'. "Grab it, get the ball, UNDER! OVER! Run to the FRONT!"
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002)

Ironically, it seemed that the children who often surveyed their peers in these situation were those such as Billy and David who, because of their tendency to behave in ways which the school deemed unacceptable, were also most used to being intensely surveyed by the teacher. To take another example, I observed David take exception to Bobby for copying, which was an infringement of the classroom rules. The child from whom he was copying was unconcerned, but David decided to intervene:

> Bobby, who is now sitting at the solitary table by the board, keeps nipping across to the red table to copy from Golden Falcon. Golden Falcon doesn't seem too bothered about this, but David is less willing to let it go. "If he does that again, I'm telling," he says to me. "I think you need a big...box, to put Bobby in. Like, a cage."
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 3 October 2002)

This antagonism over copying between Bobby and David flared up again a few months later. On this occasion, a third party, James Bond, took it upon himself to watch over Bobby and report what he had seen to David:

> [Bobby] wanders off...towards the blue table, and stands just behind David, who doesn't notice. James Bond sees Bobby and warns David, who immediately turns around, and asks, irately, "Were you copying me?"
> "Yeah, he was," chips in James Bond.
> "Nah," protests Bobby, "aave finished mah work."
> "Then why're you wandering around the room?" David retorts.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

James Bond's surveillance and reporting spontaneously produced a little three-tier hierarchy with an almost judicial quality: David was cast as the prosecutor, James Bond as the witness and Bobby, at the bottom, as the guilty party. This structure can be seen as an approximate reproduction of the more common three-tier surveillance system operating in the following incident:

> I notice David messing around with the finished work trays. Shonagh is getting annoyed with this, so she comes over and reports this to me. I look over at David, but do nothing. Eventually, Shonagh goes and tells the teacher, who comes over and gives David a sound talking to.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 March 2003)

Here, David had slipped onto the wrong side of the law. Shonagh acted as witness, first to me and then to Miss Johnson, implicitly calling upon us to exercise disciplinary power over David

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by prosecuting him. Yet Shonagh's behaviour was not merely that of a docile individual acting as a disciplinary relay. Shonagh tended to be conscientious, usually completing her classwork to the required standard, and thereby making progress in her learning. From her perspective, David was behaving in a way which threatened the order of her learning space. and she therefore looked for a way to coerce him into following the classroom rules. She was a very small girl, and David was a rather boisterous boy almost twice her size; he merely laughed at her when she told him to stop. She therefore had to be more resourceful in her tactics, drawing upon the superior power which adults, most of all her teacher, were able to exercise from their position in the classroom hierarchy. Shonagh can thus be seen as an active participant in the disciplinary regime of the classroom, an agent who was capable of using this structure for her own ends.

There is another analytic point to be made here. Taken together, David's surveillance of Bobby and Shonagh's surveillance of David demonstrate both a key feature of the Panopticon, and a key point of departure from Bentham's model. To quote from my definition above, the Panopticon establishes positions of surveyor and surveyed, which anyone can occupy, thus ensuring that everyone is caught up both in surveying and in being surveyed. In my observations, one sees that just as David was often surveyed by both the teacher and by his peers, at other times he reproduced this surveillance by taking upon himself the role of the surveyor. The important difference is, as I argued above, that in the programme of the Panopticon, as in that of the monitorial schools, the promotion of an inmate or pupil from the position of surveyed to surveyor must be officially sanctioned. In the classroom, however, movement between these positions was much more *ad hoc*, the result of spontaneous individual self-assertion rather than formal recruitment.

Of all the children, Yo was perhaps the most keen self-appointed surveyor. At times, he seemed to see himself as the teacher's assistant in discipline, often enforcing or reinforcing her instructions:

> Billy starts making noises, and is told to be quiet, first by Miss Johnson, and then
> by Yo when she continues.
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 5 December 2002)

The other children were aware of Yo's inclination to watch over his peers. However, I never witnessed them reproach him for this, which I found interesting. I had expected at least a few of the children to shun him as a 'tell-tale' or a 'teacher's pet', but this did not seem to happen.

Quite the contrary: on one occasion, I saw some of his table-mates actively encouraging his inclination for surveillance by sending him on a remote mission:

> Jason asks to borrow something from the red table. They consent with some reluctance. "Make sure James Bond doesn't use it, he has to ask first," says Alison. Kate says to Yo, "Go and watch him [i.e. Jason]," and Yo walks across to Jason's seat to keep an eye on him.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 29 January 2003)

Sometimes, like the teacher, Yo made repeat interventions with the same individual. For example, my field notes trace his surveillance of William Wallace over the course of a single day:

> [A]s soon as I sit down, William Wallace challenges me to an arm wrestle. I accept without thinking, but Yo scolds William Wallace (but not me), saying rather irately, "Is that supposed to be doing your work, William Wallace?"
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

Later that afternoon, the antagonism between the two children continued as Yo took the moral high ground again:

> The teacher gives out some plastic cubes in preparation for work on quarters. She asks them to leave the cubes alone for now, but in spite of this many of the kids start playing with them. The teacher repeats her request, but still children play with the cubes. William Wallace has made a tower out of his, but Yo, sitting next to him, tells him to stop playing with them. William Wallace's defence is ingenious: "I'm not playing with them," he protests, contrary to the facts apparently at hand.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

Later in the same lesson, Yo intervened for a third time:

> William Wallace starts to act out the Twin Towers using the plastic cubes and a makeshift plane made out of two pencils. I laugh, but Yo is annoyed once again. "You're not getting on with your work, William Wallace," he says, irritably.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

Towards the end of the same day, however, Yo found himself in a very different position. Four boys had been fighting at lunch time, so in the afternoon the teacher had called in Mrs. Snell, one of the senior staff, to discipline the boys however she saw fit. After taking them to one side and questioning them, she discovered that the fight had centred upon Nicole. It seemed that one

of them had been grabbing hold of her, and another had intervened violently to help her. Mrs. Snell therefore called Nicole out to speak to her:

> [W]hen Mrs. Snell called to Nicole, she hesitated for a moment at her table, and Yo hissed at her, "Just GO!" Mrs. Snell took exception to this. "Excuse me, who was that – you, saying just go…" Yo swivelled round to face her, looking embarrassed. "Is this any of your business?" He shook his head. "Well then," she replied, putting him right in his place. Here, the emphasis on privacy, doing one's own work oneself, minding one's own business, had come head-to-head with the practice of surveillance of one another, also encouraged in the children by the teachers.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

It seemed to me that Yo's interventions had threatened Mrs. Snell's authority as the principal surveyor and adjudicator. While Yo had successfully placed himself in the position of surveyor several times that day, with Mrs. Snell, this tactic paradoxically marked him out as a target for her surveillance. On another occasion, I witnessed Miss Johnson using a similar kind of tactic to limit the children's disciplinary interventions:

> Some of the children start telling each other to shush, and soon everyone is shushing everyone else. This distributed group surveillance can begin to threaten the teacher's position at the top of the classroom surveillance hierarchy. She tells them to stop, saying, "The only person should be doing that is me."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

Later the same day, the teacher made another intervention, surveying the surveyors so as to police their activities:

> when tidying the tables to get table points, the children often nag each other to get a move on and do their share. Sometimes, the nagging can turn into a shouting match between the children, and this happens today at the blue table. The teacher chides the children for this, saying that the best tables are the ones who "just do it", not the ones who shout "come on, come on, come on" at each other.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

Once again, all of these examples demonstrate how easily interchangeable were the positions of surveyor and surveyed within the classroom. The last instance is particularly interesting. As well as telling the children not to shout at each other, Miss Johnson also promoted an alternative form of behaviour: tidying up quickly without shouting at each other to do so. Her ideal was that the children should not require external coercion either from their peers or from anyone else, herself

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included. Instead, their own consciences ought to tell them what to do. In the terms of my analysis, she was encouraging self-surveillance.

6.2.4 The researcher as a disciplinary subject

In my discussion of my research methods (see chapter four), I narrated my own experience of being subjected to the disciplinary gaze which pervaded the classroom. Here, I want to explore that process in more detail through a series of empirical examples from my field notes.

As I related in chapter four, I developed a quite particular classroom role during my MSc fieldwork and in the first phase of my PhD fieldwork, when the class were in their primary three year, with Mrs. Lynford. Amongst other things, this role involved lots of communication with the children, which, more often than not, was initiated by them, and therefore tended to be focussed upon topics which they found interesting: things they had done at the weekend, films they had seen, jokes they had heard, and the like. As a rule, I was always ready to listen to the children speak about such things, and tended to respond in kind, asking them questions about their stories, telling them stories of my own, sometimes debating their opinions and interpretations, and so forth. For the most part, these informal exchanges merely blended into the general hubbub of chatter which characterises a lively infant classroom, creating no significant problems. Though they were often unrelated to the children's learning tasks, the teachers did not seem overly concerned that I was causing a distraction.

At the same time, I had begun my fieldwork with the express intention of maintaining a critical distance from disciplinary practices. From an ethical standpoint, the idea of coercing my participants into certain forms of behaviour seemed extremely dubious. I also suspected that taking a disciplinary role upon myself would undermine the children's trust in me, which could be damaging to my research. I therefore resolved to try to avoid overseeing the children's behaviour, preferring to leave such interventions to staff, unless there seemed to be some immediate danger to a child's physical safety.

Occasionally, however, I suspected that I was deflecting the children's attention away from their work in a way which could make a significant difference to their performance. On such occasions, I took measures to regulate my interactions with them accordingly. For example, on one occasion, while the children were doing language work, I sat down at one of their tables and began completing my own homework for my Italian class (I was learning the language at the time). I thought that having my own work would enable me to participate more fully in the lesson, but instead my work became a distraction for the children:

Of course, they all wanted to talk about Italian. Shonagh said she knew the Spanish for "I love you". Matthew kept trying to start a conversation with Helen and Lucy instead of doing his work. They wanted to know what the Italian for "start" was, so they could tell Matthew to get on task...As they began working, Helen kept turning to me and asking, "what's the Italian for..." questions. After fielding a dozen or so, I tapped her worksheet and said, "Look, never mind about my Italian, you need to get on with this," to which she replied, irately, "You're not my teacher!"..."I know," I said, "I just don't want to get you into trouble by distracting you from what you're meant to be doing."
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 22 May 2002)

As my response to Helen suggests, my conscious rationale for regulating my interactions with the children in this way was ethical: I did not want my research to be detrimental to the children's learning, nor did I want my presence to cause trouble for the children. Therefore, though these regulations involved my participation in the kind of overseeing surveillance practices which I have been analysing throughout this chapter – telling Helen to do her work, for example – I was able to convince myself that I was working to my own ethical standards rather than the school's disciplinary agenda. Furthermore, as Helen's reaction demonstrated, the children were not afraid to resist or criticise my attempts to regulate their behaviour. I had worked hard to distance myself from a teacher role, calling into question the hierarchy between myself and the children. Comments such as Helen's reflected this, and allayed any fears that I might be becoming a disciplinary authority.

Sometimes, my role as a classroom helper (see chapter four) drew me into forms of surveillance and control, as in the following instance with Luke:

Luke makes several disruptive noises, so the teacher gently but firmly suggests he should move to the writing table. However, once the lesson has begun, he turns around and starts disturbing the children on the green table. Suspecting that this situation won't improve, I walk over to Luke to sit with him while he works, as I've done several times before in the past. After helping him through a few sentences, I walk off and leave him to it, only to see him turn round again and knock down the books the children have stood up as screens between them. The greens are getting annoyed with this, so I return and sit with Luke for the remainder of the lesson.
(PhD field notes, Thursday 3 October, 2002)

Again, my primary motivation in this instance was ethical. I guessed from experience that, if nothing was done, Luke would have spent the whole lesson annoying people, thereby incurring punishment from the teacher for having done no work. However, it seemed that my presence helped him to focus on his work. I therefore felt that, being available to sit with him, I ought to

do so, if only to help him stay out of trouble. In short, I felt that my overseeing of his work was justifiable as a practice of care for my participants.

However, as my fieldwork progressed, I found myself drawn into more overtly disciplinary forms of surveillance. When I first met Miss Johnson she expressed a desire that I should help her uphold the classroom rules. Moreover, in primary four, the pace of work had quickened, and greater emphasis was placed upon being 'on-task' at all times. In this climate, I was much more aware of myself as a distraction. For example, on my first day in Miss Johnson's class, I explained to her the sticker system I used for consent (see chapter four) before distributing the stickers:

> I'm explaining the system but also asking for her permission to use it. She says yes, provided it doesn't cause too much disruption. I say, "No, no, no," quite honestly, but then become very conscious of what disruption is caused by the stickers as I hand them out, and for the first time the practice appears really intrusive. I'm especially aware of how some of the children use the stickers as an object of struggle, as something to work with, manipulate, as a cause to rally around, and thus overall as a distraction from their work.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 24 September 2002)

With this heightened awareness of the distraction created by the stickers, I began to survey both my own conduct and that of the children much more intensely with respect to the stickers:

> Later in the day, as more and more children come over to me to say that they've lost their sticker, or it fell off, or they want another one, I begin to worry that the teacher will see all of this and will just say, "Sorry, no more stickers." So to put a stop to some of the more persistent pesterings, I say, "Look, your teacher said I could give out stickers only if it didn't cause any distraction. If you keep making a fuss, she may well say that I can't give out stickers any more." This seems to be effective, at least temporarily, and I realise I've just mobilised the authority of the teacher not only to preserve the sticker system, but also to give myself an easy life.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 24 September 2002)

However, my self-surveillance often lapsed as I interacted with the children. Despite the more regulated regime of primary four, many of them still initiated conversations with me which were not related to their work, and I had difficulty preventing myself from responding in kind. On one such occasion, I found myself subjected to Miss Johnson's surveillance:

> David calls me over to help him. I offer my assistance, but soon he starts chatting to me about a radio programme he's been listening to in the mornings on which a Scottish presenter makes prank phone calls. He does what I take to be an excellent

impression: "Halloo, have ya got any fash? Ah wis wonderin' if ya had any fash cos it's too dear aroond here..." I laugh, and tell him about some mates of mine who phoned up a flag company pretending to be an old man who wanted a flag with a squirrel on it for his lady-friend. I do the squeaky old voice they used, and he finds this amusing, but then I realise that the teacher, who is sitting just behind us, is overhearing our conversation. So I quickly change gear and start helping David with his work again.
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

In this example, Miss Johnson used both visual and aural surveillance in combination. From the corner of my eye, I could see that I was being watched, and therefore understood that I was being heard. In response, I modified my behaviour in accordance with what I knew she was expecting. Sure enough, at the end of that day, Miss Johnson followed up her surveillance by asking me, in the nicest possible way, to take greater care not to distract David from his work:

[S]he asks if I can take care with David, as he is easily distracted from his work and likes to chat, especially to adults. She asks if I can try to direct him towards his work whenever possible.
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

I agreed to her request, and apologised profusely for having made a nuisance of myself. I was genuinely sorry about this; I felt an ethical obligation towards Miss Johnson as well as to the children, and I did not want to add further difficulties to her already stressful position as a probationary teacher. More selfishly, I wanted to continue my study, and her goodwill was crucial if I was to retain access to the class. I therefore felt that I had no alternative but to intensify my surveillance of myself so as to comply with her requirements. I thus began to regulate my contact with the children much more rigorously, often by creating a distance between myself and the children. Instead of sitting at their tables when they asked me to, I would decline their invitations and take up a position on the periphery of the classroom, often in the library corner where I was partly hidden from the children. I would come to their tables only to help them with their work. My role thus started to become that of an observer rather than a participant:

I sit in the library corner and move out into the classroom only when children ask me for help. It occurs to me that, in part, my attempts to keep out of the interactive space of the classroom are my way of minimising my disruptive effects in the face of the stronger work ethic and the decreasing permissibility of play.
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February 2003)

There is an obvious parallel to be drawn here between my self-imposed isolation and the isolation tactics used by teachers and children which I described in chapter five.

In the Panopticon, the surveyed subject is encouraged to survey himself, but he is also encouraged to survey those beneath him in the established hierarchy. In school, there was a tacit expectation that any adult would, where necessary, discipline children who were misbehaving. Sometimes, this expectation became explicit. During lessons, Miss Johnson occasionally invoked me as a disciplinary presence. For example, one morning, half the class had left to go swimming. The difference in the classroom dynamic was marked, with much less noise and, consequently, much less need for the teacher to make disciplinary interventions. As I was noting this down, the teacher spoke to me across the children's heads:

> "It's like a different class. Isn't it Mike?" she calls across to me. I nod. "That's what I've just been writing down."
> "Mmm, imagine what Mike's writing down, brilliant," she says, her implication being that their behaviour will make the class look good in my evaluation.
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002)

On another occasion, the classroom assistant was absent due to illness, and some of the children suggested that to Miss Johnson that she should use me as a substitute. However, she had other plans:

> "Mike's not here to hear reading groups and do my photocopying..." Miss Johnson begins.
> "Yes he is!" chirps Kate.
> "...he's here," Miss Johnson continues, "to see how well you're working and how quiet you can be."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

I think that Miss Johnson knew that my study was not an evaluation of the children's performance against a set of narrow behavioural criteria. Certainly, I had attempted to explain this to her several times, and my relationship to the children was not suggestive of such a study. I was therefore both impressed and a little perturbed by her resourcefulness in casting me as a disciplinary surveyor.

My experience closely resembles that of Lareau (1996), whose own field notes record her ambivalence about discipline:

> "When I started volunteering, I wanted to disrupt the [classroom] activities as little as possible and so I made a concerted effort to stay away from the

teacher/disciplinarian role. I am discovering, however, that in the world of children the adult/child split means I am often forced into the teacher/disciplinarian role." (p.208)

In my experience, this adult/child split was not enforced only by the teachers. The children, accustomed to using adults as disciplinary resources in their struggles with other children, also attempted to cast me in the role of a supervisor on several occasions. Right from the beginning of my fieldwork, Billy was particularly keen to use me in this way:

> The teacher says she needs to leave the classroom for a minute, and immediately Billy pipes up, "Mike's in charge! Mike's going to be in charge from now on."
> (PhD field notes, Monday 27 May 2002)

> At lunch time, Billy came to complain that some girls from another class were being nasty to her. "Well, if you don't get on, you need to keep away from them," I said, rather lamely. She clearly wasn't satisfied. "And if they keep on bothering you, you must tell a playground supervisor."
> "But you *are* a playground supervisor," she whined.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

Often, children asked me for permission to go to the toilet, and I always refused the authority to regulate their spatial movements in this way, referring them instead to their teacher. For example:

> Steven asked me if he could go to the toilet, and I told him, as I always do when they ask, that it's not up to me, and that he must ask his teacher. "But you're a teacher," he replied.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

Like Lareau (1996), I eventually started to yield to some of these demands. To my dismay, I found myself spontaneously indulging in coercive practices of surveillance which, rather than serving my research aims, were serving the school rules:

> Back in the classroom, the children sit on the carpet again...I see William Wallace fiddling with his bay blade [a glorified spinning top toy]. "Shouldn't you put that in your tray?" I ask him, cautiously.
> "Shhh!" he replies, hiding it from view.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

As my fieldwork progressed, I began to lose patience with some of the children's habits, and occasionally resorted to disciplinary-type measures to deal with them:

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[T]he same few boys are always badgering me for two stickers, and I'm getting sick of saying no. As I assist Nicole with a tricky maths problem, David and Steven stand at either side of me and whine, "Please Mike, please, I've lost mine, I need another one, pleease..."

"Look, I'm trying to help Nicole," I snap. "I'm not giving you any more stickers, so both of you can just sit down and get on with your work. David, forget the stickers, DO YOUR WORK." This seems to be effective.

(PhD field notes, Thursday 5 December 2002)

More often, however, my use of surveillance was both lacklustre and ineffectual:

Towards the end of the session [in the computer lab], while the teacher's back is turned, I notice David chasing another child round and round the post in the centre of the room, laughing. Again, I feel compelled to be seen to do something about this, even though I don't really care. Or perhaps the trouble is that I've somehow stopped not caring...anyway, I try to intervene. "Whoa, whoa, David, you can't just run round the computer lab. David! Either sit down and work at the computers, or go back to the classroom..." It is completely ineffectual, of course, as they aren't used to taking orders from me. The teacher hears the commotion and turns on them. She speaks very sharply to them, and they stop immediately. I feel embarrassed, caught between two stools, compelled to exert control but unable to do so.

(PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

My field notes from the same day record a growing sense of unease with my role in school. I felt that somehow, I had become part of the mechanism which I wanted to critique, and that feeling was acutely uncomfortable:

The thing I'm finding hardest is maintaining my distance from disciplinary or controlling kinds of intervention. I feel that I can no longer get away with just turning a blind eye when the kids are misbehaving. The unspoken expectation that an adult will intervene has begun to weigh upon me, and I have failed to resist it completely. The school is sucking me in!

(PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

Elaborating upon this position, my field notes record that:

My tendency to comply with the structural expectations placed upon me manifests itself in numerous small ways. For example, as I enter the classroom and go to sit in the library corner, William Wallace asks me to sit next to him and pats the carpet with his hand. But with the teacher so close, I simply can't do this – I'd be distracting him...I shake my head at William Wallace, put my finger on my lip, and point to the front, so as to say, "never mind me, pay attention to your teacher."...It just seems like I'm spending more and more of my time making rather lame

attempts to oversee, direct and pass judgement on the children's activities in a bid to consolidate my position with the teacher.
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

William Wallace was one of the children who regularly struck up spontaneous conversations with me which were unrelated to his work. For instance, when I was distributing the stickers, he would often speak to me about fishing, telling me about the size of the fish which he and his dad had caught, and even offering to make me a fly on one occasion. He often invited me to come to sit at his table, and I would usually decline, knowing that I would become a distraction for him:

> William Wallace says, "Will you come and sit next to me?" He means right now, not at lunchtime.
> "Not just now," I reply, "I've got to give out these [stickers]."
> "But when you've finished?" he pleads.
> "No."
> "Aww, why not?"
> "Because if I sit here, you'll start telling me about the fish your dad caught." I tap him on the head gently with my pencil, and smile.
> "But he did!"
> "Yeah, I know, but you're supposed to be doing this" – I tap his book with my pencil – "and if I sit here, I'll distract you. I don't want to get you into trouble."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 12 February 2003)

However, I liked William Wallace, and I liked talking to him. I found it difficult to resist his attempts to draw me into conversation:

> I give in to William Wallace's repeated requests and go to sit next to him. This conveniently gets me out of sitting next to David, who I'm trying to avoid because of the teacher's request for me to ensure that I don't distract him. The class have been moved around, and he's now sitting on the green table, right next to the writing table, which is one of my usual places to sit and observe. But William Wallace is over the other side of the room, so I'm safe there. Except I'm not – as soon as I sit down, William Wallace challenges me to an arm wrestle. I accept without thinking, but Yo scolds William Wallace (but not me), saying rather irately, "Is that supposed to be doing your work, William Wallace?" I feel very embarrassed and immediately concur with Yo that yes, William Wallace should get on with his work. But instead, he asks me a series of questions: where I live, what team I support, what I like if I don't like football. I answer each of these in turn, but keep gently directing William Wallace back to his work.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

This instance brings our attention back to Yo, whose enthusiasm for surveying his peers was discussed in my account of distributed surveillance (see 6.2.3, above). My reaction to Yo's

surveillance of William Wallace demonstrates the complexity of relations of subjection in the classroom. Initially, I had no qualms about joining William Wallace in an arm wrestle. However, Yo's intervention, though directed at William Wallace and not at me, had the effect of reactivating my surveillance of myself: I remembered that I ought not to indulge in behaviour which would distract William Wallace. And this reactivation also induced me to survey William Wallace, telling him to get on with his work. Thus Yo's attempt to subject William Wallace inadvertently recruited me both into that subjection, and into my own self-subjection.

On another occasion, Yo was sitting next to James Bond, who therefore became the target of his interventions:

> James Bond asks if I like [the fictional character] James Bond and says he has a James Bond comic he wants to show me. "I'm gonna get it right now."
> "No James Bond," chips in the ever vigilant Yo. "But ah've finished ma work," James Bond retorts. "We're doing magic squares," replies Yo. I speak up at this point, saying, "Not now James Bond. Show me while I'm eating lunch."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 March 2003)

Again, had Yo not made these remarks, I probably would not have done anything to discourage James Bond from bringing out his comic. Yet as a supposedly 'responsible adult' sitting next to an eight year-old who was enforcing the classroom rules, I was in an awkward position, and felt obliged to concur with Yo by deferring James Bond's invitation.

In these examples, Yo's surveillance was directed at his peers; any expectation that I would intervene was implicit. However, on another occasion, as the class were lining up at the end of break time, Yo explicitly tried to persuade me to take up a disciplinary role to support his peer-surveillance activities:

> Today, Bobby and David are at each other's throats again. The ever-vigilant Yo calls me in to help. "Mike, Mike, problem, problem!" he shouts, pointing at the pair of them fighting. "Mike, did you not see that?" He seems exasperated at my lack of action. Feeling compelled to do something, even though the squabble doesn't seem to have got out of hand, I try ineffectually to separate them, telling them to keep away from each other.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

In this situation, I knew what was expected of me, but initially I tried to refrain from intervening. I thought that I might be able to get away with turning a blind eye, since the teacher was still on her way to collect the class. However, Yo took upon himself the absent teacher's disciplinary role, and this time he did not exempt me from his surveillance. Under Yo's gaze, I felt very

uncomfortable. He was eight years old, and acting 'responsibly', while I, the adult on the scene, was doing nothing. What would the teachers think if they could see the situation? What would happen if Yo reported to Miss Johnson that I had failed to defend the school rules, even though he had implored me to do so? In the end, I chose the cowardly but strategic solution of intervening in the most superficial way possible. In these little dramas of discipline, I learned to play the part of the 'responsible adult', though without conviction or feeling. Afterwards, I would wince inwardly at the thought of how contrived my performance must have seemed.

However, unlike in the Panopticon, the surveillance to which I was subjected was discontinuous. Just as the children found ways of evading the teacher's gaze and exploiting lapses in the teacher's attention (see above), I too resisted whenever I had the opportunity. Consider the following exchange:

As the children work through their ordinary maths work, I sit at the round table, getting up to offer assistance if hands are raised. David waves me over to his table, so I go over to see what he's stuck with. "Mike, can you sit at our table?" he asks. "No," I say, aware that I need to steer clear of him to stay in favour with the teacher. "I'll come if you need help, but if not then you should work on your own. That's why I'm sitting over there [I gesture towards the round table], to let all yous get on with your work. I don't want to distract you."
"Nah, we don't need help cos it's all up there," says David, grinning. James Bond smiles too, and points to a large multiplication square up on the wall nearby. They have realised that they can use this to do all of their multiplication sums without having to know their tables off by heart. James Bond says, "Look, up there where it says multiplication."
"Yeah," grins David, "I used it yesterday and look" – he flips back a page in his worksheet – "I got all of them right!"
"Can I write that down?" I say, smiling, aware that this is sensitive information.
"Yeah."
"Yeah, as long as the teacher doesn't see," adds James Bond. "No, I won't tell her," I say, tapping my nose. "Mum's the word – I'll keep it secret."
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

It seems to me that this captures perfectly the ambivalence of my position in the classroom. First, as a self-surveying docile body, I tried to regulate myself by telling the children that I would not sit with them unless there was a formally acceptable reason. However, my self-regulation was clearly not so effective as to close down completely the space for informal conversations with the children. My behaviour contradicted my discourse: I continued to talk to David and James Bond, despite having told them that I did not want to do so. Moreover, in this conversation, I discovered that the children had found an ingenious short-cut through their classwork which thus

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far had been undetected by Miss Johnson, despite her surveillance of the class. Had she known about this, she might have punished David and James Bond in some way, if only by rebuking them. She might also have taken down the multiplication chart thereby forcing them to learn their times tables. Had I been acting as an obedient disciplinary agent, I would have wasted no time in telling Miss Johnson about the children's tactics. However, as a researcher, I had an over-riding obligation to maintain my participants' confidentiality in circumstances such as this. I found myself feeling pleased to have a clear ethical reason to keep David and James Bond's secret, not because I thought their cheating was a good idea, but because by keeping their secret, I was able to resist the disciplinary obligations placed upon me by the school. My research ethics thus inadvertently presented me with an opportunity to refuse the surveillance role with which I was so uncomfortable.

The children also found inventive ways of subverting my surveillance for their own ends. As I noted above, the children did not see me as a figure of authority and therefore tended to resist my attempts to tell them what to do. On one occasion, however, I found myself caught up in a rather more complicated game of space, bodies and power. One child, Rory Cory, did not care for being outside in the playground. He would often linger in the classroom after he had finished his lunch, chatting to me as I finished my own food. One day, I had some essays to mark in preparation for a tutorial, and I had brought these into school so that I might work on them during lunchtime. As I finished eating and prepared to start marking, Rory Cory continued to chat to me. By this time, Miss Johnson had left the room. Had she been there, she would have insisted that he go outside, according to the school rules. Since she was absent, however, the onus was upon me to be the surveyor, overseeing his movements to ensure that he went outside with everyone else:

> I remember that Rory Cory is, like all the children, supposed to go outside to play at lunch time when he's finished eating. I don't want to be found in the classroom talking to him for fear of us both getting into trouble, so I urge him to go out. "You know, your teacher says you all have to go out."
> "But I don't want to. You're staying in..."
> "Yeah, to mark this essay. Look, if it was up to me, you could stay in, but it isn't. School rules say you have to go out." At this point, Billy comes in, looking forlorn. "No-one will play with me," she says morosely. "Surely not?" I say. "Is Hannah not out there?"
> "I can't find her."
> "Maybe she's round in the other playground," Rory Cory suggests, and I nod. "I don't want to go to the other playground," replies Billy. "Look," I say. "I'm afraid both of you have to go out. Come on, outside..." But they are having none of this

from me. They look at each other, smile, and then hide under the tables. I realise that I'm now in a very awkward position. As an adult, I'd be expected to do something about this, as it's against school rules. If someone sees this, it is bound to reflect badly on me, and upon the children. But as a researcher, and as me. I'm neither inclined towards nor adept at telling people what to do or coercing them into doing things they don't want to do. At this point, Shonagh comes into the classroom from outside. "Why are they hiding under the tables?" she asks, and I explain. She leans close to me and whispers, "I know what to do – if you go outside, they'll follow you." I agree – reluctantly, because of the essays. "O.K.," I say, grabbing my coat, "I'm off outside now, bye." Within moments they are outside with me, urging me to play tig, to which I consent for a while, rapidly exhausting myself chasing after Tom Cruise. Stopping to catch my breath, I say to Rory Cory, "I can't believe this. I've been coerced to come out by you. I've got an essay to mark, but I can't stay in there or you won't come out." He laughs, and says, "Yeah, and if you try to go back in, I'll just follow you in again." I am simultaneously amused and surprised by such cunning tactics.

(PhD field notes, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

Thus as well as resisting my attempts to control them through surveillance, Rory Cory and Billy also used my disciplinary inclinations to their own advantage, effectively forcing me out into the playground. One might interpret their behaviour as an attempt to force me into accepting a pupil role. Throughout my research, I tried to 'sit on the fence' between being a pupil and being a member of staff. I wanted the advantages of both roles: the freedom from formal disciplinary responsibility afforded by the pupil role, but also the spatial privileges of a staff role – using the staff toilets and the staff room, having the freedom to stay inside at lunchtime if I wished, and so on. But as Rory Cory's comments to me made clear, this was not fair. If he had to go out, I ought to go out too. He therefore refused to play by the rules as long as I continued to flout them. Likewise, Miss Johnson's efforts to use me as an assistant disciplinary surveyor could be interpreted as attempts to push me towards a staff role. This would make sense of, for example, her repeated invitations to me to come to the staff room at break and lunchtimes. The result was a complicated series of struggles which were negotiated and renegotiated on a daily basis. It may have been impossible for any of us to escape these struggles, but this should not be taken to mean that their outcomes were determined by a panoptic structure of total power. Rather, their existence is testament to the dynamic, unpredictable and modifiable nature of relations of surveillance in the classroom.

6.3 Surveillance: summary

In one of his many interviews, Foucault elaborates upon the analytical function of the model of the Panopticon in his work, insisting that "one must analyse the constellation of resistances to the Panopticon in terms of tactics and strategies and bear in mind that each offensive on one level serves to support a counter-offensive on another level." (EP, p.239) In this chapter, I have attempted to apply this form of analysis to some of the practices of surveillance deployed by teachers, children and myself within a primary school classroom.

I began by arguing that the Panopticon is best understood as a programme for the exercise of power through surveillance, rather than a specific institution. I then examined a range of empirical observations of surveillance practices in the school. Against the homogenous effects of the Panopticon, these observations documented a wide range of responses to surveillance. I noted how the movement between the positions of surveyor and surveyed, which in the Panopticon is formally sanctioned, was by contrast spontaneous and largely unregulated in the school. Where the Panopticon ensures that everyone is at all times caught up both in surveying and in being surveyed, my observations have demonstrated that power was much more differentiated in the classroom. Some children were intensely surveyed, others were more liable to become surveyors, while a few regularly moved between both positions. There were also a number of children who on the whole seemed neither to be the targets of surveillance nor to be especially interested in surveying their peers. Finally, in contrast to the continuous effects of the model Panopticon, the various forms of surveillance in the classroom were effective only temporarily as I observed them. I have thereby demonstrated that the Panopticon is in fact a poor approximation of surveillance practices at the level of their application in a school.

Through my analysis of these practices, I have further explored the geography of power in Westgate school. Unlike the Panopticon, the space I have described was not a matter of walls, cells and one-way glass. Rather, it was produced and reproduced by the people – teachers, classroom assistants, children, researchers, whoever – who used that space, through their dealings with one another. The surveillance techniques used in the classroom, including the associated forms of co-option, resistance and evasion, were an important part of this process. They gave rise to a particular kind of social space: one in which lines of sight were important, both for overseeing and for seeing whether one is being overseen; in which noise and hearing were also crucial; in which tables became surfaces for concealment; and so on.

In the next chapter, I will explore an alternative perspective on power in the classroom, centred not on disciplinary power, but on what Foucault calls the techniques of the self.

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Techniques of the self

In chapter two, I suggested that empirical applications of Foucault's ideas to the analysis of educational institutions have been limited by a narrow focus on *Discipline and Punish*, to the exclusion of Foucault's later work on techniques of the self. In chapter three, I argued that this later work is crucial to a more sophisticated appreciation of Foucault's understanding of power. In this chapter, I will begin by making a more detailed exegesis of Foucault's writing on the self, thereby shifting the focus of the theoretical framework with which I have been working thus far. I will then explore some of the insights which this new perspective can bring to my empirical material. By refocusing upon the space of the self, I hope to shed light upon an important and hitherto neglected dimension of the geography of power in a school.

7.1 The aesthetics and ethics of the self

The theme of the self is central in Foucault's later work. His last two books, *The Use of Pleasure* (UP) and *The Care of the Self* (CS) (volumes two and three of his *History of Sexuality*), along with a number of lectures and interviews from around about 1980, concern practices which he calls variously 'techniques of the self', 'technologies of the self' and 'arts of existence'. These are techniques "which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality." (TS, p.17) Foucault thinks of these techniques as the practices through which one pursues an 'aesthetics of existence' (AE1, AE2). Here, he echoes Nietzsche's suggestion that a person's life might be thought of as an aesthetic project, no less than a painting or a piece of poetry or music[28]. "Couldn't everyone's life become a work of art?" Foucault asks. "Why should the lamp or the house be an art object, but not our life?" (GE, p.350)

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[28] In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche (2001) writes: "To 'give style' to one's character – a great and rare art! It is practised by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses that their nature has to offer and fit them into an artistic plan until each appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a great mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of first nature removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it." (p.163-164) Later in the same text, he argues that philosophers could learn a great deal from artists, so as to become "the poets of our lives" (p.170).

With this aim in view, one would seek ways of styling one's own life so as to make it beautiful. These are the techniques of the self, "those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria" (UP, p.10-11).

It is important to note that Foucault distinguishes between a general form of power over the self – the arts or techniques of existence, connoted in Greek thought by the term *techne tou biou* – and a more particular attitude which specifies an ethical content, a principle to which those arts should be directed – this is the care of the self, *epimeleia heauteau*: "This 'cultivation of the self' can be briefly characterised by the fact that in this case the art of existence – the *techne tou biou* in its different forms – is dominated by the principle that says one must 'take care of oneself'." (CS, p.43) In his last book, Foucault's particular interest is in the way the Greek *technai*, the techniques of self, were orientated around this specific ethical imperative of caring for oneself.

7.1.1 An ethics, or the analysis of an ethics?

In interpreting Foucault's thinking about techniques of self, it is crucial to make a distinction between his historical analysis of these practices, and the ethics which he seems to be offering his readers. This distinction is all the more important because Foucault was rather ambivalent on this point. His last two books present historical analyses of practices of self in Greek, Roman and Christian sexual ethics, and as such are historical rather than ethical treatises. In other words, Foucault cannot be assumed to think that the Greek model of caring for oneself described in these books is a good way to live, just as he cannot be assumed to think that the disciplinary techniques of power described in *Discipline and Punish* are good ways to treat deviants. Yet in the latter book Foucault's suspicion of and contempt for the technology of discipline is unmistakable, whereas volumes two and three of *The History of Sexuality* seem to be more sympathetic towards their subject. A number of commentators have therefore taken these books to be implicitly offering an ethics based on the ideal of caring for oneself (for example, McNay, 1992; Lloyd, 1997; Nehamas, 1998). I will discuss precisely what this ethics might entail shortly, but first I want to consider what Foucault has to say about whether his work presents an ethics, or is merely an analysis, a critical analysis even, of an ethics. His interviewers regularly pursued this line of enquiry, but Foucault's answers call for subtlety in interpretation. On the one hand, he seems to think that *The History of Sexuality* does offer an ethics:

"If you mean by ethics a code which would tell us how to act, then of course *The History of Sexuality* is not an ethics. But if by ethics you mean the relationship you have to yourself when you act, then I would say that it intends to be an ethics, or at least to show what could be an ethics of sexual behaviour." (MS, p.15)

It seems that in the ancient ideas of care of the self, of styling one's life in accordance with an aesthetics of existence, Foucault found something which he thought might serve as the basis for a contemporary ethics:

"From Antiquity to Christianity, we pass from a morality that was essentially the search for a personal ethics to a morality as obedience to a set of rules. And if I was interested in Antiquity it was because, for a whole series of reasons, the idea of morality as obedience to a code of rules is now disappearing, has already disappeared. And to this absence of morality corresponds, must correspond, the search for an aesthetics of existence." (Foucault, AE1, p.49)

Yet when questioned further about this, Foucault seems to shy away from any suggestion of a return to Greek morality. In the last interview he ever gave, he says that he finds nothing exemplary or admirable about the Greeks, describing the whole of antiquity as "a profound error" (RM, p.244). Elsewhere, he insists that "I am not looking for an alternative [ethics]; you can't find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people." (GE, p.343) And again, he states that "there is no exemplary value in a period which is not our period...it is not anything to get back to." (ibid., p.347) Throughout his work, Foucault's critique of the present uses history to show that a naively Romantic return to some supposed past utopia is not possible: "History protects us from historicism – from a historicism that calls on the past to resolve the questions of the present." (SKP, p.250).

Furthermore, Foucault rejects outright the suggestion that his work offers a fully worked-out ethics:

"there really is a call for prophetism. I think we have to get rid of that. People have to build their own ethics, taking as their point of departure the historical analysis, sociological analysis and so on, one can provide for them. I don't think people who try to decipher the truth should have to provide ethical principles or practical advice at the same moment, in the same book and the same analysis. All this prescriptive network has to be elaborated and transformed by people themselves." (MS, p.16)

Elsewhere, he stresses that:

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"The role of an intellectual is not to tell others what they have to do. By what right would he do so? And remember all the prophesies, promises, injunctions, and programs that intellectuals have managed to formulate over the last two centuries and whose effects we can now see." (CT1, p.265)

So is Foucault offering an ethics or not? This question needs to be answered if his work on the self is to be understood. It also has serious implications for the critical literature on Foucault, some of which emphasises the inadequacies of the ideas of aesthetics of existence (O'Farrell, 1989) and care of the self (McNay, 1992) as the basis for an ethics. If, in writing about such practices, Foucault is not offering an ethics but rather describing the ethics of the late Greeks and early Christians, an ethics of which he is in fact highly critical, then Foucault's critics have misunderstood his project.

I think that the quotes above actually clarify Foucault's position very well. He makes it clear that *The History of Sexuality* is primarily an analysis of ancient ethics, an ethics of which he is critical. There can be no question of a straightforward return to such an ethics. At the same time, *The History of Sexuality* does suggest possibilities for formulating new kinds of ethics suited to our present, with its particular problems. It does so in two ways.

First, in showing how morality is historically produced rather than universally given by some ahistorical metaphysical source – God or gods, biology, human nature, a legal system founded upon universal principles of reason, and so on – Foucault's analysis implies that it may be possible for people to invent new kinds of morality.

Second, Foucault thinks that we live in a time when "most of us no longer believe that ethics is founded in religion, nor do we want a legal system to intervene in our moral, personal, private life. Recent liberation movements suffer from the fact that they cannot find any principle on which to base the elaboration of a new ethics." (GE, p.343) In other words, in contemporary Western society, the idea of a divinely sanctioned, universal morality is no longer tenable, because "God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!" (Nietzsche, 2001, p.120) The consequences of this for our morality are serious indeed, as Nietzsche perceived. If overcoming our dependence upon the idea of God is not to lead to a completely amoral nihilism, then we need to find a new form of ethics, one which, unlike the offerings of the Enlightenment, does not merely reproduce the problems of universalist, ahistorical, theistic moralities[29].

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[29] See MacIntyre, 1985, for a detailed diagnosis of the failure of the Enlightenment to provide a convincing rational (and hence universal) basis for morality. MacIntyre argues that this dimension of the

According to Foucault's interpretation, Greek ethics is one example of just such an ethics. He argues that the Greeks were not much concerned with religious problems such as life after death and the nature of God. The idea of a universal moral code to which everyone would submit was not predominant in Greek society. Nor were Greek ethics upheld by the kind of legal and institutional frameworks which Foucault's earlier work calls into question. Despite all of this, the Greek elite had a very strong sense of ethics, of proper conduct, of obligations to each other, and they spent a lot of time reflecting upon ethical matters. For example, the overriding concern in most of Plato's Socratic dialogues is, in one way or another, to elaborate upon what a good life might be (see Nehamas, 1998). Thus while the specific content of Greek ethics – a society ruled by a political elite, which used slaves, subordinated women, reduced sex to penetration, and so on – is not something to which we could countenance a return, nevertheless the *form* of their ethics might serve if not as an example, then at least as an inspiration. They show that a strong ethics is perfectly possible without any commitment to the problematic universalism characteristic of theistic, humanistic and utilitarian moralities.

In summary, I want to argue that in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault raises the possibility of a form of ethics which is neither universal nor divinely sanctioned, an ethics not based upon reason, nor upon some prior conception of a stable, sovereign human subject, nor upon some deep truth about the subject divined by the human sciences. At the same time, this possibility can be no more than a point of departure for those who want to formulate such an ethics. As always, Foucault's aim is to show how we might think differently, not to prescribe what our different thoughts should look like.

7.1.2 A change in direction?

Many commentators have remarked on the apparent strangeness of this turn towards the self in Foucault's late thinking. Where his early works portrayed human beings as subjected, produced by the exercise upon them of a power beyond their control, Foucault's later writing focuses instead on how human beings exercise power over themselves.

The crux of this problem is Foucault's conception of the human subject as a fiction, something produced rather than pre-given (see my discussion in chapter three). In his early work, Foucault repeatedly calls into question the existence of any essential human nature. In *The*

Enlightenment project failed because moral debate is, by nature, rationally interminable. Universalism is therefore an utterly inappropriate aim for moral reflection.

Order of Things, he concludes that "Man is an invention of recent date. And perhaps one nearing its end." (OT, p.422) His argument here is that 'Man', in the Enlightenment sense of the term – Man as a rational, sovereign, free agent – does not represent the abiding truth of human nature, but is rather an idea which has risen to prominence over the course of recent history. If as western humans we understand ourselves as subjects – individuals, with the capacity for rational thought and the acquisition of knowledge, and the ability to act freely in accordance with this reason and knowledge – this is due not to our inherent nature, but to the way in which our culture has, through education and upbringing, moulded our understanding in this way. Since history and culture are clearly beyond the control of individuals, the liberal-humanist idea that we are the free agents of our own lives starts to appear decidedly far fetched. As Foucault famously remarks in *Discipline and Punish*, "The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself." (DP, p.30)

Little wonder, then, that Foucault's readers should express surprise at finding, in his later work, what appears to be "the quite different image of free subjects" (CT1, p.264)[30]. The rejection of the autonomous human subject which underpins all of his early work seems to leave Foucault without any ontological ground for self-transformation. If we are produced as subjects by our history, and have no control over this – if, to use Mark Philp's (1985) phrase, "For Foucault, we are poor things, and rarely our own" (p.78) – how can we hope to care for ourselves, to transform ourselves in anything more than a superficial way? How are "intentional and voluntary actions" possible? Has Foucault succumbed, in the end, to the allure of the Enlightenment myth of the free subject, or is there something more subtle at work here? In short, how is the Foucault of *Discipline and Punish*, with its emphasis upon subjection, to be reconciled with Foucault the philosopher of self-care?

Some have found the schism between Foucault's early critique of the subject and his later fascination with practices of self to be so great as to undermine the coherence of his work (e.g. Merquior, 1991) . However, this position seems to depend upon (i) a reading of works such as *The Birth of the Clinic, Madness and Civilization* and, primarily, *Discipline and Punish* as an account of the total and inescapable domination inherent in social structures, and (ii) a reading of

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[30] This remark was made by Francois Ewald, not Foucault. Ewald, interviewing Foucault about his latter work, asked him to clarify this apparent shift between his earlier and later works. Typically, Foucault's reply was evasive, centring on his conception of the relations between knowledge and power rather than his conception of the subject.

his later work as assuming that the freedom of individuals to work upon themselves is somehow guaranteed.

Upon closer inspection, however, Foucault appears to be well aware of the limits both of disciplinary power and of self transformation. Both my discussion of Foucault's conceptions of power, knowledge and the subject in the chapter three, and my discussion of panopticism in chapter six, suggest that (i) is untenable. As for (ii), this is also unsustainable. It is important to remember that for Foucault, freedom, like all forms of power, is something which must be exercised in specific circumstances. The agency by which a person might transform herself is therefore conditional upon the circumstances in which that person finds herself. It is not something she possesses as an innate human capacity. Liberty for Foucault is not a utopian state which can be fully achieved, but an ongoing practice, always subject to the constraints and limitations imposed upon us by history, culture and society (SKP; PF). Thus there is no easy recourse to a fundamentally free subject in his later work.

With these initial objections resolved, there are several ways in which Foucault's earlier and later work can be brought into a fruitful dialogue. For example, Lois McNay (1992) argues that the trajectory from *Discipline and Punish* through the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* is best understood as an attempt to balance structure and agency. As we have seen, Foucault's work on discipline tends to locate power outside of and prior to the subject, in processes which produce the individual. As I discussed in chapter three, some commentators have found it hard to see how, from this perspective subjects might influence this structure upon which they depend for their very existence. A number of feminists, including McNay, have criticised the failure of this analysis to acknowledge the active role played by human beings in shaping the conditions of their own lives. Hartsock (1990), for example, has argued that Foucault's theory of power is coloured by his own sense of helplessness in the face of forces he could not control. As such, she concluded that it is too pessimistic to be of use to women seeking liberation[31]. Alcoff (1990) has expressed similar doubts about the possibility of reconciling Foucault's description of individuals as always already subjected with the feminist conception of women as active agents.

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[31] Unfortunately, as I noted in chapter three, Hartsock's critique is undermined by some rather elementary misunderstandings of Foucault's project. For example, Hartsock retains the juridical understanding of power as something absolute which can be possessed, whereas we have seen that for Foucault power was something spontaneous and relational, which could only ever be exercised.

Throughout this thesis, however, I have tried to undermine such totalistic readings of *Discipline and Punish* by situating it in the wider context of Foucault's work on the relationships between power, knowledge and the subject. Foucault himself makes it clear that his later work on the self is intended to address an imbalance in his previous books: "Perhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination and power," he concedes in one of his lectures. "I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of self." (TS, p.17) Accordingly, McNay (1992) sees this work on technologies of the self as addressing the absence of agency in Foucault's earlier thinking. She argues that for Foucault, "freedom lies on our capacity to discover the historical links between certain modes of self-understanding and modes of domination, and to resist the ways in which we have already been classified and identified by dominant discourses." (p.43) Her use of Foucault's writing about the self as a way to resist being classified as a docile body is therefore entirely appropriate.

If the agency of Foucault's later work forms a counterpoint to the predominance of social structures in his earlier thought, then the same could be said for the dynamic of universality versus particularity. Foucault's early work could be interpreted as an attempt to formulate a grand theory of society based on power. The rhetoric of *Discipline and Punish*, for instance, might seem to invite this reading. It seems to me that many of the feminist doubts about his theory of disciplinary power stem not from an outright rejection of this idea, but rather from a wish to stress its particularity. The danger which these feminists perceive is that, through a selective misreading of *Discipline and Punish*, a provocative, insightful, but ultimately partial perspective on modern society might be elevated to the status of a theoretical panacea, thereby eclipsing other ways of understanding human subjects.

Yet beneath all of Foucault's work lies a deep suspicion of such universal claims to knowledge. If the style of his books is often aloof and detached, in interviews he stresses the partiality of his perspectives, and emphasises the importance of analysing society at a local scale: "I wouldn't want what I may have said or written to be seen as laying any claims to totality...What I say ought to be taken as 'propositions', 'game openings', where those who may be interested are invited to join in; they are not meant as dogmatic assertions that have to be taken or left en bloc." (IP, p.275) Even in *Discipline and Punish*, despite making sweeping claims, Foucault writes about power in terms of a micro-physics, a distributed network to be analysed from the bottom up rather than the top down (DP, p.26-27). In this context, *The History of Sexuality* can be seen as an attempt to mark out the limits of disciplinary power more clearly

by describing alternative perspectives on the subject, with the first volume (WK) emphasising the modern subject's resistant tendencies, and the second and third volumes (UP. CS) describing the techniques of the self. Jana Sawicki (1991) argues that one of Foucault's aims was to "focus our attention on how traditional emancipatory theories and strategies have been blind to their own dominating tendencies." (p.97) The idea of disciplinary power could be seen as just such a theory, intended to emancipate, but containing, like all theories, the possibility of domination if left unchecked. In this case, Foucault's later work can be used, as it has been by Sawicki, McNay and others, as a way of qualifying his earlier thinking. Such tactics are much more in line with Foucault's approach than are attempts to produce a coherent, systematic theory from his various writings.

My own interpretation builds on these attempts to draw together Foucault's work on the techniques of domination and the techniques of the self. I want to suggest, via an examination of Nietzche, that self-creation is an essential part of Foucault's genealogical project.

7.1.3 Self-creation in Nietzsche and Foucault

Foucault's method of genealogy was appropriated from Nietzsche (see in particular NGH). Genealogy in the Nietzschean sense can be understood as historical work which undermines the claims of universality and ahistoricality made for certain values and ideas. For example, one might make the claim that killing a person is morally wrong, and that this is a moral truth which applies everywhere and at all times. A genealogical critique would call this status into question. It would describe the history of this supposed moral truth, tracing its descent through a series of contingent transformations, and most probably describing past societies in which killing people was accorded a very different status. The result would be that the statement 'killing people is wrong' could no longer be seen as a universal and ahistorical truth, but would rather appear as a particular value judgement. As such, it would become open to a series of questions: who decided that killing people is wrong? Why? How did they manage to convince everyone else to accept this unquestioningly? If this moral value was created by humans, does that mean that we could create new morals ourselves? If so, is the idea that killing is wrong still appropriate as a moral value, or should we seek to destroy it and create something new in its place?

In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche (2001) outlines his critique of morality and sets the stage for the genealogical analysis which was to follow in his later work:

> "*Why* do you take this and specifically this to be right? 'Because my conscience tells me so; conscience never speaks immorally, since it determines what is to count as moral!' But why do you *listen* to the words of your conscience? And what gives you the right to consider such a judgement as true and infallible?...Your judgement, 'that is right' has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences, and what you have failed to experience; you have to ask, '*how* did it emerge there?' and then also '*what* is impelling me to listen to it?'" (p.187)

Where Nietzsche's concern is to trace the historical emergence of Christian morality and uncover the psychological causes of its widespread acceptance, Foucault's objects are more specific: insanity, illness, crime, sexuality, and so on. His methodology, however, is thoroughly Nietzschean. In what he terms "the history of the present" (DP, p.31) and "the historical ontology of ourselves" (WE, p126), Foucault's objective is to show that what we moderns take for granted as self-evident truths about insanity, punishment, sexuality, and so on are actually value judgements, with particular histories. Like Nietzsche, his question is not 'are these judgements correct?' but 'how did these judgements emerge?', and 'why were these judgements accepted as the truth?'

Later in the same passage, Nietzsche sets out another response to the problem of morality:

> "Let us therefore *limit* ourselves to the purification of our opinions and value judgements and to the *creation of tables of what is good that are new and all our own*...We...want to *become who we are* – human beings who are unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves!" (Nietzsche, 2001, p.189)

Thus the connection between genealogical analysis and self-creation becomes clear. Both share a common purpose: the critique of morals, or what Foucault calls 'morality as code' – a set of values codified into a system of rules which are supposed to be applicable everywhere and at all times.

Genealogy is the method of this critique. By showing how what we accept as universal values are, on the contrary, historically contingent, having been transformed radically over the course of time, genealogy paves the way for a comprehensive rejection not only of a specific moral code, such as that institutionalised by the various Christian churches, but also of the very idea of a universal moral code[32].

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[32] See for example Foot, 2001; Leiter, 2001.

The ethical counterpart of the genealogical critique is self-creation. If universal morals are no longer tenable, then those individuals who have realised this must either find a way of living entirely without values – and it is very hard to imagine what that might be – or, as Nietzsche argued, formulate a new set of values by which to live. The method required for this is self-creation. Since it is not merely a particular set of values which have been rejected but the viability of any universal value system, the new values these individuals employ will necessarily be addressed only to themselves, or at most to small groups of like-minded people, and will be open to change over time and space. In short, they will be values, not morals.

Where Nietzsche's genealogy undermines the prospect of a universal morality by showing how *"ideals are fabricated* on this earth" (Nietzsche, 1994, p.29), Foucault's work, as we have seen, undermines the prospect of a universal human subject by showing how *subjects* are fabricated. For him, this fabrication is an operation which involves three interlinked forms of power-knowledge: that exercised through discourse, as in the written 'case studies' produced by educational psychologists, for example; a power-knowledge external to the subject, such as the disciplinary power exercised in prisons, schools and other social institutions; and power-knowledge internal to the subject, exercised in the technologies of self. With respect to these technologies of the self, Foucault's debt to Nietzsche is clear when he says that "From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art." (GE, p.351)

As Foucault's work progressed, he became increasingly interested in the connections between disciplinary technologies and the technologies of the self. In chapter three, I briefly discussed his use of the term "governmentality" to conceptualise the point of connection between these two kinds of technologies. Government is here to be understood in a broad sense to include "governing children, or governing family, or governing souls" (ST, p.182). As Foucault understands it, government depends for its effectiveness upon the complicity of those who are governed. In other words, one cannot govern those who refuse utterly to be governed. Effective government therefore depends precisely upon *not* governing in those areas of life in which people assert their independence, but restricting government to those areas in which people are willing to submit to being governed.

Conceived as such, government is not merely coercive, but rather involves a more delicate and complicated relationship between the will of the governors and the will of the governed:

"it is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which impose coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself...We should not understand the exercise of power as pure violence or strict coercion. Power consists in complex relations: these relations involve a set of rational techniques, and the efficiency of those techniques is due to a subtle integration of coercion-technologies and self-technologies." (ibid.)

Thus Foucault refined his understanding of disciplinary institutions, coming to view them as apparatuses of government. In these spaces, the techniques of the self "are frequently linked to the techniques for the direction of others. For example, if we take educational institutions, we realise that one is managing others and teaching them to manage themselves." (GE, p.370) In the empirical material presented below, I will explore the connection between the management of others and the cultivation of their ability to manage themselves. First, however, I want to explore the implications of this conjunction of disciplinary technologies and self-technologies for Foucault's understanding of the subject.

7.1.4 From the paradox of the subject to the divided self

Foucault's recognition of the connection between external disciplinary power and internal power over the self brings us to the central paradox of the subject in his thought. On the one hand, the governed and governable subject is not a pre-given entity. Rather, it is formed through subjection to the external disciplinary power of the governor. Yet on the other hand, as I discussed in chapter three, this subject *to* power is also a subject *of* power, able to exercise power over her or himself. In other words, the external disciplinary gaze is internalised by the subject as self-surveillance, to produce a self-governing subject. But if the subject does not predate this subjection, what is this 'subject' that internalises the gaze? How does it originate? To put it another way: in order to exercise agency over oneself, one must first be a subject; but one only becomes a subject when one exercises agency over oneself.

Matters are complicated further when this agency is turned against an external power. For example, as we have seen, children who are subjected to the disciplinary regime of a school may resist their subjection. Yet it would seem that they are only able to resist because they are subjects capable of autonomous exercises of agency. In other words, they have already been formed as subjects by the very process of subjection which they wish to resist. If this seems overly pessimistic, we might reverse the paradox. Disciplinary technology, aiming at an ever greater efficiency, attempts to produce subjects who are capable of self-surveillance, thus

rendering the exercise of external power unnecessary. Yet subjects capable of self-surveillance are, as such, capable of resistance. As Magill points out, "discipline can create as well as destroy freedoms. The question that Foucault's work poses for the philosophy of freedom is not 'is freedom possible?', but 'how are modern individuals, imbued with and sustained by systems of discipline and surveillance, to be free?'" (Magill, 1997, p.75) This is the question with which Foucault concerned himself in his later work on the technologies of the self.

Judith Butler's (1997) discussion is helpful here. She argues that though the agency of the subject does indeed presuppose the subject's subordination, this agency exceeds the subordinating power which enabled it: "Power considered as a condition of the subject is necessarily not the same as power considered as what the subject is said to wield. The power that initiates the subject fails to remain continuous with the power that is the subject's agency." (p.12) That the subject cannot be understood independently of its paradoxical subjection does not mean that it is trapped by the power which forms it. But neither can the subject ever completely escape that power: "the subject exceeds precisely that to which it is bound. In this sense, the subject cannot quell the ambivalence by which it is constituted." (ibid., p.17-18) For Butler, this ambivalence lies at the heart of the subject. It cannot be resolved. The existence of the active subject depends absolutely upon subjection. Therefore a resolution of this paradox, even if this were possible, would preclude the very possibility of subjectivity.

As Butler shows, this paradox has a long history in continental thought. An early formulation is that of Hegel's 'unhappy consciousness', the divided self which arises when the slave internalises his relationship to the master. In this process, acording to Hegel, an unchanging, immortal, rational master-self (mind) is set up over and against the temporary, mortal, irrational slave-self (body). The master-self loathes the slave-self all the more so because the former secretly knows how much he depends upon the materiality of the latter: as sustenance, as a set of tools for interacting with the world and thereby creating things, as the very form of existence. The more the master-self tries to refute his dependence upon the physical, the more the physical reasserts itself as real, indispensable and inescapable. There is a clear echo of Plato here: the body is the prison of the soul; and so, as Hegel says, the soul is profoundly unhappy, knowing as it does that this is a prison from which there can be no escape except death.

In Nietzsche, this figure of the self divided against itself is reworked again in the idea of 'bad conscience'. In its most basic form, 'bad conscience' is the consciousness of one's own guilt, the feeling that one ought to punish oneself for one's sins. This creates a split in the subject

– the self is divided against itself, split into a conscience (the soul) which is set over and against its sinful, lusting, animal counterpart (the body). In his *Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche argues that this division of the self arose from "what I call the *internalization* of man" (1994, 61). This is the process by which aggression, forbidden from being expressed outwardly in an increasingly civilised society, finds another way to discharge itself: it turns inwards and begins to be vented by people upon themselves. "Under conditions of peace," wrote Nietzsche, "the warlike man attacks himself." (1990, p.92). Freud's essay *Civilization and its Discontents* can be seen as an attempt to work out in more detail the psychic consequences of this idea.

For Hegel, the divided self is a fundamentally unhappy condition which must eventually be transcended. Nietzsche, however, rejects any teleological view of history. He is ambivalent towards bad conscience, seeing it as at once an expression of extreme nihilism, of man's disgust at himself, and at the same time a founding moment for man. As the "true womb of ideal and imaginative events" (1994, p.64), it raises a great hope and promise of things to come.

Crucially, the division of the self makes ascetic practices possible. Asceticism for Nietzsche is to be understood as the practice of denying something to oneself and thus suffering voluntarily. Modern examples might be dieting, celibacy, or abstention from alcohol or tobacco. In the hands of Christianity, Nietzsche thinks that ascetic practices are a kind of consoling medication, a way of making the unavoidable and pointless suffering of life seem voluntarily chosen and meaningful, so as to keep weak people from suicidal despair at the paucity of their miserable lot. Yet ascetic practices can also be turned to more fruitful purposes. The 'scientific' impulse to strip away comforting lies to uncover the truth about life – a truth which might be ugly, gruesome and extremely distressing to behold – is for Nietzsche an advanced expression of asceticism, and one which drives his genealogical project. And since, as Nietzsche points out, every act of destruction must also be an act of creation (1994, p.70; 2001, p.70), ascetic practices are also the means of self-creation. In repeatedly denying things to oneself, one shapes oneself "through long practice and daily work at it" (Nietzsche, 2001, p.164). This brings us back to Foucault's interest in ascetics, though his definition of the word is much broader, "giving the word 'ascetical' a very general meaning, that is not say, not in the sense of abnegation but that of an exercise of self upon self by which one tries to work out, to transform oneself and attain a certain mode of being." (PF, p.2)

7.1.5 Dissolving the liberal individual

From a Foucaultian perspective, the value of these conceptions of the divided self lies in their potential to undermine the liberal understanding of the individual as the basic indivisible unit of society. As Ransom points out, liberalism rests upon the idea that "individuals possess themselves in an unproblematic and unreflective manner and are the irreducible units of political analysis." (1997, p.157) Asserting the pre-given unity and autonomy of individuals in this way has effects which Foucault finds deeply problematic. As another commentator notes, "It is the unity of the individual, the subject, that Foucault considers the most suspicious of the truths which we hold self-evident." (Simons, 1995, p.7) Why?

First, this truth ignores the role of extra-individual social structures in producing autonomous individuals. Since the individual is pre-given in liberal thought, social institutions – schools, hospitals, asylums, etc. – are understood either as developing the latent talents of the individual, or else oppressing the individual, limiting her freedom in some way or other. Thus their function as apparatuses of production is concealed, and so it is impossible to provide an effective critical analysis of them. Ransom argues that for Foucault, "Only when we comprehend the forces that make us up as individuals will we be able to respond to the overflow of activities aimed at governing the individual." (Ransom, 1997, p.157)

Second, the role of intra-individual processes in producing autonomous individuals is ignored. The way that people exercise power over themselves, producing themselves as free individuals, does not feature in a liberal account of the subject. Neither does liberalism take into account involuntary internal processes such as conscience formation, which for Nietzsche are the founding moments of the modern subject, whose existence depends upon the capacity to make laws for himself. Furthermore, liberalism equates the subject with a single unified and univocal consciousness, who, being free, is able to will the intentions of his conscious mind. Where what a person wants to do differs radically from what they *do* do, liberalism has little to offer by way of an explanation.

We might go further and add that, as a result of these two failings, liberalism fails to understand the connections between social and psychic structures. For Nietzsche as for Freud, processes such as conscience formation are as social as they are psychic. Civilised society, which might first be thought to exist outside the subject, comes to be seen as that which penetrates the subject, forcing him to internalise his aggression to produce a conscience. Similarly, it is only through an accumulation of beings with internal consciences that civilised society as such comes into existence.

Finally, liberalism fails to capture the nature of the subject as always in the process of being made and remade. It is a doctrine of stable human being, whereas Foucault's vision is one of humans as always transforming, growing, *becoming*. Against the view of a world in which freedom is secured in advance, Foucault insists that liberty is a practice which cannot be guaranteed by anything in social structures or the supposedly fundamental nature of the individual. The ethical consequence is that if we want to be free, we must be sure to practice freedom, rather than sitting around assuming that the work of freedom has already been done. Living in a liberal democracy, it is easy to become complacent about freedom, assuming that our laws ensure things like freedom of speech. Foucault warns us against such complacency. No doubt our laws structure the field of possible actions such that, for example, they enable us to say what we like without fear of sustaining serious physical damage (and if such damage were to be sustained, our laws, in theory at least, provide for the possibility of compensation of some sort). But enabling free speech is hardly the same thing as speaking freely. The latter is something which must actively be *done*.

7.1.6 The Care of the Self

I want to suggest that we can understand Foucault's conception of care of the self as standing in direct contradiction to each of these features of liberal individualism. Accordingly, the care of the self is: (i) intra-individual; (ii) extra-individual; (iii) simultaneously intra-and extra-individual; and (iv) an ongoing practice.

The care of the self as intra-individual. In the first instance, care of the self is the concern one has for oneself. Taking oneself into care involves reflecting upon oneself, and upon the different parts one's divided self, the different 'selves' within the individual. It requires one to mediate between these parts, to synthesise them into some more or less coherent whole. This process may involve internal dialogues between one's different selves. It will require internal relations of power – one's reckless and careless impulses must be subordinated, held in check by one's conscience. The Greeks, Foucault contends, imagined an internal battle of self against self: "The adversaries the individual had to combat were not just within him or close by; they were part of him." (UP, p.67); and again, "the adversary that was to be fought, however far removed it might be by nature from any conception of the soul, reason, or virtue, did not represent a different, ontologically alien power...to struggle against the desires and the pleasures was to cross swords

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with oneself." (ibid., p.68) Virtue for the Greeks consisted in self-control, self-governance, self-domination – 'heautocracy'.

The care of the self as extra-individual. The care of the self, perhaps somewhat counter-intuitively, is also a social practice. Foucault is quite clear on this point. The Greek understanding of the self was a social-relational one. Social status was a central feature of the self. Who and what one was could only be defined by one's position in relation to others – whether one was a slave, a master, a ruler, and so on. Therefore the relationships one had with others, with one's wife, children, slaves, mentors, subjects, colleagues and friends, were of central importance to one's self. Care of the self required the careful management of these relationships.

Furthermore, the techniques which the Greeks used were never devised in isolation. They were rather "a number of rules, styles, inventions to be found in the cultural environment." (AE1, p.51) Neither were all of these techniques practised in isolation. While exercises such as meditation and reflection were introspective, other practices of care of the self involved interaction with others. One would ask a friend for advice, engaging in discussion on some matter of personal importance. This was how Socrates had used the dialogue, and the form persisted throughout later antiquity. Men would also exchange correspondence, soliciting or giving advice to one another. Care of self was in some instances institutionalised – Epictetus taught his Stoic disciples in a school-like setting, for example. In the private sphere, the interactive nature of care of the self was no less prominent. Aristocratic families, especially in Rome, often appointed men of wisdom as private counsellors to advise the family members on spiritual, moral and philosophical matters, to act as personal mentors and confidants. And besides all this, existing relations of kinship, friendship and obligation were utilised. A man would ask a friend or relative to act as his personal counsellor, and in such circumstances, the latter was obliged by custom to accept this duty. These relationships were often seen as mutually beneficial – the giving of advice, by reactivating that advice for the giver, was an integral part of the care of oneself. In short, "Around the care of the self, there developed an entire activity of speaking and writing in which the work of oneself on oneself and communication with others were linked together." (CS, p.51)

It is therefore surprising to find otherwise sympathetic commentators such as Lois McNay (1992) lamenting that "Foucault's notion of an aesthetics of existence...privileges an undialectical and disengaged theory of the self" (p.157). McNay argues that

"in his presentation of the ancient notion of the stylization of the self as a model for contemporary ethics, Foucault filters out a more communal and interactional notion of the self held by the Greeks...Foucault cannot produce a satisfactory answer to the dilemmas he himself poses because his theory of the self prioritises an isolated individuality, rather than demonstrating how the construction of the self is inextricably bound up in various processes of social interaction." (ibid., p.165)

There are two obvious objections to this. First, as discussed earlier, it is a mistake to look upon Foucault's historical analysis of Greek practices – practices of which he was critical – as a fully worked-out ethics which he is offering as a basis for action. For example. McNay presents as ethically suspicious Foucault's assertion that "One must not have the care for others precede the care for self." (PF, p.7) However, looking at the original context of this quote. it is clearly intended as a historical interpretation of Greek ethics, not as an ethical imperative to be applied in contemporary life:

> "I don't think one can say that the Greek who cares for himself should first of all care for others. This theme will not come into play, it seems to me, until later. One must not have the care for others precede the care for self." (ibid.)

If, as I have argued above, *The History of Sexuality* is best seen not as an ethics but as a historical analysis which supplies points of departure for those looking to formulate their own ethics in a particular context, then there is no reason for those people to accept the authority of the Greeks' priorities. They can easily be creatively reinterpreted to produce a contemporary ethics based upon care of the other, if that is what is required.

Second, Foucault supplies all the material we might require for such a re-interpretation precisely because he *does not* filter out the Greeks' inter-subjective understanding of the self. There are whole sections in *The Care of The Self* dedicated to showing how caring for the self, far from being individualistic, actually strengthened the bonds of kinship and friendship which made up the social fabric of the Hellenistic world. For example, Foucault insists that "the doctrines that were most attached to austerity of conduct...were also those which insisted the most on the need to fulfil one's obligations to mankind, to one's fellow citizens, and to one's family, and which were quickest to denounce an attitude of laxity and self-satisfaction in practices of social withdrawal." (CS, p.42) I find it hard to see how this could be construed as "prioritiz[ing] an isolated individuality" (McNay, 1992, p.165) Again, McNay criticizes Foucault's depiction of "an active self acting on an objectified world and interacting with other

subjects who are defined as objects or narcissistic extensions of the primary subject" (ibid., p.171). She denounces his supposedly "inadequate treatment of the category of the 'other', which is understood as a passive vector against which practices of the self are played out." (ibid.) Yet Foucault clearly states, for example, that for the Greeks, "in order to really care for self, one must listen to the teachings of a master. One needs a guide, a counsellor, a friend – someone who will tell you the truth." (PF, p.7)[33] While the Greeks' objectification and pacification of slaves and women is clearly intolerable in contemporary western society – and Foucault himself agrees that the Greeks' "dissymmetry, exclusion of the other, an obsession with penetration...All of that is quite disgusting!" (GE, p.346) – I find it hard to accept McNay's contention that Foucault renders the other in Greek thought as always a passive object.

The care of the self as simultaneously intra- and extra-individual. In the care of the self, these elements are mutually dependent rather than mutually exclusive. McNay is indeed correct to say that, in Foucault's account, the care of the self is the main priority, and care for others is valued primarily inasmuch as it is a means of caring for oneself. But there are also instances where caring for oneself is seen as a means of caring for others. A good example is the Greek conception of a good ruler. A recurring theme in Greek political thought is that for a city to be well governed, its rulers must be virtuous. This virtue consists in the ability to control oneself, to govern oneself – 'heautocracy'. Only if one could rule successfully over one's internal desires would one be able to rule successfully over others. Thus for a ruler, care of self was prioritised precisely because it was required for the care of others.

The care of the self as an ongoing practice. According to Foucault, the Greeks understood the self as something constantly in need of being reflected upon, worked upon and refined. There was no correct age at which to start or stop caring for the self – it was never too early or too late: "'Spend your whole life learning how to live' was an aphorism – Seneca [a Stoic philosopher] cites it – which asked people to transform their existence into a kind of permanent exercise. And while it is good to begin early, it is important never to let up." (CS, p.48-49) One sees this in the Greeks' emphasis upon daily practices, exercises and regimen. The central idea of regimen seems to have been that a person must regulate his own health as part of everyday life. One's

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[33] This quote is taken from the very same page of the same interview as the passage quoted by McNay on the precedence of the care for self over care for others (see above). It is hard to avoid the conclusion that

health was a matter for constant attention: "there is almost no moment of the night or the day when we have no need of medicine." (Athenaeus, cited in CS, p.100). Yet physicians were to be consulted only in exceptional circumstances; the mundane matters of diet, sleep and exercise were to be overseen continually by oneself.

7.2 Techniques of the self in school

In my fieldwork, I witnessed a variety of techniques through which the children established relationships to themselves. However, these techniques rarely involved just one child relating to him or herself. Usually, they involved the negotiation of relations with other children, the teacher, or me. Sometimes these relations were deliberately closed down, while in other instances, they were intensified. A few examples will illustrate this.

One of the most visually striking practices I witnessed in the classroom was the use of textbooks as screens. In certain lessons, an A4-sized text book was given to each child, and the children would stand these upright on their desks to produce a V-shaped barrier behind which they could work without intrusion from others. In this practice, the children tried to break down their relations with each other, enacting a liberal-individual version of the self, in which each child concerned him or herself only with his or her own work. This is quite unlike the more communal notion of self-care discussed by Foucault:

> The grouped tables layout is, as I understand it, intended to encourage communication and interaction between the children, but by using their books as screens [the children] effect a sectioning off of their own private spaces. Jennifer confirms my suspicion that this is a technique to prevent people from seeing their work and copying, a form of policing one's own workspace. Every single child in the class seems to be doing this, and I half wonder whether they've been instructed to work in this way or whether it was their idea. I'm guessing it's the latter. Interestingly, they keep the books erected even when there's no need, as the person sitting adjacent has gone to gather round, to read to the teacher.
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 3 October 2002)

At the end of that day, I asked Miss Johnson whether this technique was the children's, or whether she had suggested it to them. She confirmed my suspicion that it was their idea. She seemed quite happy with this practice, which I found intriguing, since it appeared to undermine the grouped tables layout of the classroom. However, on other occasions, Miss Johnson encouraged a similar kind of private, highly individualised relationship to the self. Despite the

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she has been overly selective, either in her reading or in her choice of quotes.

rhetoric of teamwork employed in certain activities[34], and the school ethos of helping others, there was a strong individualistic dimension to the classroom work ethic, particularly in core numeracy activities:

> [The children] do quite a heavy session of Mental Maths, with a game of buzz[35] and then some tests in which the teacher reads out questions and the children have to write down an answer quickly. "Make sure your answers are covered up, don't let anyone see them," the teacher warns. "Remember, even if you do see someone else's work, you don't know that they've got it right. So best just to concentrate on your own work."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

Sometimes, the teacher used disciplinary techniques to enforce this private relationship to self, as illustrated by another example from a Mental Maths exercise:

> During one of the tests, [Miss Johnson] overhears Matthew telling Tommy one of the answers. "Matthew!" she says sharply, "Is that going to help, telling Tommy the answer?" He seems abashed, so the teacher softens her tone. "I heard that. Is it going to help?"
> "No," Matthew admits.
> "No," Miss Johnson echoes. "I don't want anyone giving anyone else the answer." At the end of the test, she says, "Stand up if you got ten out of ten. Tommy, do you think you deserve five house points?" He shakes his head solemnly. "Why not?"
> "Cos Matthew told me an answer."
> "Yes, so sit down today, but we'll be watching very carefully and hopefully tomorrow you can get ten out of ten all by your self."
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 21 January 2003)

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[34] For example, in one lesson, the children were paired up to make three dimensional geometric shapes, and were explicitly instructed to work with one another. On this occasion, "the emphasis upon individuality, on doing one's own work, is replaced by a co-operative ethic. "You're doing it together, as a team, it's good practice for your teamwork skills," the teacher says. "I'm seeing too many people ahead of their partner."" (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 February, 2003) The system of awarding table points for good work also relied upon a rhetoric of group rather than individual achievement.

[35] Buzz was a game sometimes played in sessions of mental maths. It proceeded as follows. The class began the game seated. The child who won the last game of buzz was asked by the teacher to stand up, and this child moved to stand next to the person in the adjacent seat. The teacher then asked a question based on times tables, such as "What is three times six?" or "Three times what number is eighteen?" If the person standing answered correctly first, then they moved to stand by the next person along the table, and the process repeated. If the person sitting down answered correctly first, he or she then stood up, while the first child, having been beaten, returned to his or her seat. If a child managed to beat all of the people on his or her own table, then he or she moved on to the next table. This continued all the way around the class until everyone had played. The child who was standing at this point was deemed the winner, and would begin the next game. I am aware that 'buzz' is understood differently in other schools. I use the term in this study only to refer to the particular game I have described, which Miss Johnson and the children referred to as 'buzz' during my fieldwork.

Such exchanges demonstrate the close connection between disciplinary techniques and techniques of self. One can imagine a continuum between the more coercive forms of individualisation discussed in chapter five, and more autonomous processes of self-government. Much of what I observed in the classroom fell somewhere between these two poles. The following excerpt from my field notes illustrates this well:

> The rest of the children line up by the door to go to the gym for short tennis. Jason and David are standing together, chatting and laughing, and the teacher says, "David and Jason, would you like to stand somewhere in the line that you think would be good for you?" David skips to the back of the line, and she says, "Well done, David."
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002)

Here, the teacher instigated a process of individualisation. Yet rather than directly enforcing this process, she invited the children themselves to perform the required spatial separation. The moral dimension of the Miss Johnson's request is worth exploring further. The very fact that she intervened in this situation suggests that she did not credit Jason and David with the conscience to censor their own behaviour according to the school rules. However, paradoxically, her intervention presumed that both boys did have the conscience to know what "would be good" for them – in other words, what, according to the school's moral criteria, they ought to do. Miss Johnson did not need to tell them where they ought to stand. Instead, she trusted that their conscience would tell them this, and her trust was well-founded. It would appear, then, that the children were at an intermediate stage of conscience-development. On the one hand, their consciences were not sufficiently developed to enable them to autonomously regulate their own behaviour without any external supervision. On the other hand, they required only a small amount of external encouragement to begin this kind of regulation. In other words, they knew the content of the school rules very well, but were either less able or less inclined to apply these rules to themselves. We might say that, from the teacher's perspective, moral willpower was lacking, but not moral knowledge. This is a point to which I will return below.

At other times, the teacher used similar techniques to encourage the children to develop a conscience about their classwork. For the purposes of analysis, this relationship to the self as a diligent learner can be distinguished from the relationship to self as a docile body. In practice, however, the two were often closely related:

I observe the teacher's tactics of gentle persuasion with Billy. She sits on Billy's desk, and looks down at Billy. "Let's have a look at your pencil," she says. "Now, can you do neat writing with this?" She holds up a blunt little stub, and Billy shakes her head sullenly. "Can you sit up properly when you're speaking to me?" Billy straightens her back and looks up at Miss Johnson. When a better pencil has been found, the teacher stands beside Billy, leaning over her. Carefully," she advises, "Take your time, don't rush." A little later she comes back to see how Billy has done, and praises her improved efforts.
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 March 2003)

In this exchange, it is possible to identify several tactics. First, Miss Johnson positioned herself in close proximity to Billy, above rather than alongside her. This immediately produced a space of close, intense supervision, reinforcing the hierarchical master-pupil power relation. Miss Johnson then used rhetorical questions which seemed designed to persuade or remind Billy that *she herself* knew how she ought to be working, without needing to be told by her teacher. The question about the pencil was designed to persuade Billy to equip herself with learning materials which would enable her to work in a more precise, careful way. The question "can you sit up properly?" aimed to coax her into adopting a more work-like physical posture. In Foucaultian terms, Billy was being encouraged to treat her own body as a piece of learning technology. After advising her to work slowly and carefully, Miss Johnson then left Billy alone, thereby encouraging her to take upon herself the responsibility for overseeing her own work practice. Evidently sensing that she still needed external encouragement, Miss Johnson returned later to assess Billy's independent progress, using words of encouragement to affirm her autonomous learning.

In the examples given above, the teacher initiated the exchanges, providing an external activation of the children's relationships to themselves. However, sometimes, the children were more autonomous, initiating similar kinds of exchanges without any external prompting. On these occasions, power was reversed, with the child in question utilising an available adult as a resource for developing her relationship to self. I experienced this myself many times, when the children asked me for help with their work:

> I notice as I help the children that while some of them really do need direct assistance, others use me as a different kind of resource. Children such as Rory Cory and Helen like to use me to check their work to see if everything is right so far. Others like me to work through sums with them, even though it turns out that they know the answers to all the different steps required without my help. I become a source of reassurance, confidence that one is on the right track, and an aid to concentration.

Thus in line with Foucault's thinking, work upon the self in the classroom was rarely an isolated activity, more often involving others, including myself. In the battle with oneself, one looks around for allies. Those children who were struggling to make the transition from relying upon external surveillance to being bound by a relationship of self to often drew upon me as a kind of reinforcement. This struggle was particularly evident in Tommy's behaviour as I observed it over the course of one particular day. The following exchange took place in a maths lesson after morning playtime:

> Tommy looks across at me, as though he's about to ask for help, but then says cheerily, "It's O.K. – I'm going to do it myself." I nod and smile.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

However, a little later in the lesson, Tommy felt unable to sustain his independence:

> Tommy calls me over to help him, evidently having been unable to resolve the problem himself this time. I work through the sum with him.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

With very little assistance from me, Tommy was able to begin working on his own again:

> Tommy turns to me and says, "Go on, shoo," meaning that he's finished with me now and can do the rest by himself.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

The day wore on. We ate lunch, and then went into the computer lab for an I.C.T. (information and communication technologies) lesson. After this, the children returned to the classroom. By this stage, Tommy's capacity for overseeing himself had waned:

> Back in the classroom, the children finish of any of the day's work they haven't got through, and do their maths corrections. Tommy has completely lost his inclination to oversee his own work, and wants me to more or less stand over him, working through each of his sums. He keeps complaining that he's got *so* many to do. "I'll *never* get through all these!" he moans. I say, "Never mind the rest of them, just concentrate on one at a time and you'll be through them in no time." With me breaking each one down into a series of questions – "56 X 4 – well, what's four times six? O.K., so you carry the two...now, four times five?" and so on – he manages to get through about ten before it is time for Environmental Studies.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

In this example, my relationship to Tommy was not so much an instance of disciplinary power as a circumstantial relationship between master and pupil, similar to that attributed by Foucault to the Greeks. This was "a relationship between two wills, which does not imply a complete or definitive obedience...one places oneself under the direction of a master for a certain period of one's life so as to be able one day to behave autonomously and no longer have need of advice." (ST, p.185) In such a relationship, "direction tends towards the autonomy of the directed." (ibid.) Though there was a clear hierarchy between me, as the older, more educated 'expert', and Tommy, as the younger, less experienced 'novice', our relationship was temporary, consensual and also reversible, as Tommy demonstrated when he told me to "shoo" for example. However, it should be remembered that all of this took place within a highly structured disciplinary institution. It is impossible to say whether Tommy was trying to cultivate his autonomy in a broad sense, or whether he was simply trying to find the easiest way of getting his work done so that he would not have any to take home. The latter must be seen as an impoverished form of independence, since its overall aim would have been to enable Tommy to comply with the norms laid down by the school. As such, it would have contributed to his docility rather than enabling him to exercise his willpower in a more unique and creative way.

Despite these contextual constraints, when called upon to help children in learning activities, I often found myself explicitly encouraging them to become autonomous. For example, the children often asked me to tell them the answers to their work. While this would have enabled them to bypass some of the more tedious parts of the curriculum and perhaps move on to more creative activities, it would also have meant that they were reliant upon others to solve simple arithmetic and language problems. Instinctively, rather than out of explicitly thought-out philosophical concerns, this felt wrong to me:

> One of the things I find myself explaining to the children as I help them is that I can't tell them the answers; that I can help them, but that they have to learn, and that they won't do if I just tell them the answer. When they ask, "Why can't you just do it for me?" I reply, "Because I know how to do it – but you don't, which is why you have to do it. I don't need to." Today, Matthew asks for my help, and I start talking him through his exercise, but Billy butts in, "You're not allowed to help him, Mike."
> "No, I can help him if he needs help. I can't tell him the answers, but I can help him," I reply. I am amused to overhear this echoed a little later by Rory Cory, who Shonagh has asked for assistance. "I can't tell you the answers," he says, "I can only help you."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

Rory Cory's reiteration of my advice suggests that the children, in their relations with one another, also took part in the intensification of each other's relationships to themselves.

As well as asking me for help with their work, the children sometimes tried to use me as an adjudicator in disputes. When I felt no pressure from the surveying gaze of the teachers, I tried to distance myself from this kind of authority:

> I sit at the writing table, waiting for requests for help. Spike comes over to me to complain that "Billy's got ma pencil and she won't give it back. But she's got her own, but she won't pick it up."
> "Well," I say, reluctant to intervene directly, "you need to get her to give it back and use your own." He seems satisfied with this, and goes off to deal with the situation on his own.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 21 January 2003)

Once again, I instinctively felt that the children ought to try to govern their own affairs autonomously, rather than relying upon the authority of others.

7.2.1 Knowledge of the self

I have already discussed how Miss Johnson often treated the children as though they knew how they ought to behave. She insisted that the children had the ability to scrutinise themselves, assessing their behaviour with reference to a set of moral standards. Here, I want to examine this dimension of relations to self in a little more detail.

Self-knowledge is one of the key themes of Foucault's later work. He traces it back to the Platonic Socrates, who laid great stress upon the principle *gnothi seauton*, commonly translated as 'know yourself', which was inscribed over the entrance to the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Yet Foucault insists that for the Greeks, particularly the Stoics and the Epicureans, this principle of self-knowledge was subordinate to the goal of caring for the self (TS). One was encouraged to take oneself as an object of knowledge, to reflect upon one's actions and thus to tell the truth about oneself. However, the aim of such exercises was more administrative than judicial. Mistakes were not reviewed so as to make oneself accountable and therefore punishable as a sinful being. Instead, recalling one's mistakes was a way of reminding oneself of how one ought to have behaved, and thus how one ought to behave in future (ST). It was a means of improving one's ability to take care of one's conduct, one's relations with others, and thus of oneself.

According to Foucault, Christianity borrowed the Delphic principle but placed it in the service of different aims. Where the Greeks' conception of the good life was fundamentally

social, the early Christians pursued the more private project of saving one's soul from damnation. Uncovering the truth about oneself thus became a means of purifying oneself of evil. In this process, the object of self-knowledge was no longer one's actions, but rather "a much more tenacious material...the nearly imperceptible movements of thoughts, the permanent mobility of the soul." (ST, p.215) Foucault cites John Cassian, who urged Christian monks to examine their thoughts as a moneychanger assays coins. Like coins, thoughts may appear on the surface to be pure, yet in fact be of dubious origin. Painstaking scrutiny is required to determine whether such thoughts are rooted in good or evil. Accordingly, the Christian looks upon the self as "an obscure text demanding permanent interpretation through ever more sophisticated practices of attentiveness, concern, decipherment and verbalization." (Bernauer, 1994, p.52)

This work is carried out through the private examination of the conscience, and through confession to one's spiritual master. The latter was particularly important for Cassian, who argued that verbalisation was a way of testing one's thoughts. If a thought resisted being dragged "from the dark cavern of conscience into the light of explicit discourse" (ST, p.223), then one could be sure that it was of evil origin. Brought out into the open for all to see, however, the evilness of the thought would be immediately apparent. Thus exposed, the thought could be renounced by the confessor so as to purify himself. For Foucault, this is perhaps the most fascinating feature of Christian subjectivity. The Christian excavation of the deep truth about oneself is not an attempt to establish one's true identity, nor is it intended to enable one to master oneself and one's desires, as the Stoics tried to do. Instead, for the Christian, the truth of oneself is necessary for the transformation of the self through self-renunciation, a "baptismal turning from the old self who one was to a newly found otherness" (Bernauer, 1994, p.53). One establishes the truth of oneself so as to renounce oneself through an act of self-sacrifice, martyring one's old, sinning self for the sake of one's faith. This attitude is summed up by the latin phrase *ego non sum ego*: I am not who I am (ST, p.211) Thus in the early Christian experience of the self, truth and sacrifice are closely connected: "we have to sacrifice the self in order to discover the truth about ourselves, and we have to discover the truth about ourselves in order to sacrifice ourselves." (ibid., p.226)

In the classroom, I witnessed a number of instances in which the children were urged to tell the truth about themselves. This truth-telling had a variety of functions. It was usually concerned with actions rather than with thoughts, and as such was closer to the Greek self-examination described by Foucault. Yet there was also a strong moral-judicial dimension to truth-telling in school. Where injustices had occurred, the children were encouraged to confess

their misdemeanours, so that culpability could be ascertained and fair punishments meted out accordingly:

> [A]fter lunch time Kate comes in crying and wailing, with everyone else looking rather sorrowful. [Miss Johnson] interviews both Kate and David individually about what happened. I hear her ask David, "Did you hit her? *Did you hit her*? I don't want a lie." Both of their confessions refer to several other children, and Miss Johnson soon realises that she'll have to address the whole class. "Right," she says. "everyone onto the carpet. Now, what kind of games have I told you not to play in the playground?" Someone puts up their hand and answers, "chasing games."
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5th November 2002)

Miss Johnson's actions seemed to suggest that ascertaining the truth of what had happened was extremely important to her. Instead of simply comforting Kate, she disrupted the start of the lesson to produce a space in which this truth might emerge. Two different kinds of truth were elicited from the children. First, Miss Johnson demanded that Kate and David tell the truth about what had happened in the playground at lunchtime. This was a specific truth about what had happened, and as such was sought through a semi-private confessional relation. Miss Johnson then changed tactic, producing a public space in which the whole class was brought together before her, forming a miniature court of justice. Here, she appealed to the whole class for a more general truth about appropriate playground behaviour. In Christian terms, the first was the truth of the children's sins, while the second was the truth of the school's moral code.

Miss Johnson then elicited a third truth, asking who was involved in the incident. This was not so much a Christian exercise as a judicial procedure to determine who the culprits were. Yet as part of this procedure, she reiterated the truth of the school's moral code:

> [Miss Johnson] takes the names of everyone who was involved by asking them to own up. "Remember the classroom rules – we will always be honest. Now, put your hand up if you were involved in playing this game." About seven children put their hands up. The teacher takes their names and gives them punishment exercises to take home.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 5 November 2002)

Here, knowledge of the school's moral code, as it pertained to honesty, was invoked precisely as a way of eliciting knowledge of the behaviour of individuals. The school's moral code appeared to be a truth which demanded truth.

It is worth noting that, despite the emphasis placed upon being honest, truth-telling did not ameliorate the punishment in this instance. Unlike in the Christian model, confessing the truth of

one's crimes was not sufficient to redeem oneself. Rather, as in a liberal judicial system, this truth was used as the basis for deciding who to punish and how. A similar process is evident in the following example:

> [S]ome of the boys had been swearing at the girls who wanted to join the [football] game. Apparently, the girls had been shouting at them. "Is that any reason to swear?" the teacher asks, rhetorically. Then she thanks the children involved for confessing their sins: "When you tell the truth, we can get to the bottom of things quickly, so thank-you David and Alison for telling the truth." David and Bobby then have to go to one of the senior staff for further confession.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 26 March 2003)

Again, there is an intriguing contradiction here. On the one hand, the children were sincerely thanked for telling the truth about what happened. Yet on the other hand, David did not appear to have mitigated his sentence by telling the truth. He suffered the same fate as Bobby, who did not offer the truth to the teacher.

Bobby was often resistant to the teacher's demands for confession. In the following example, the teacher once again disrupted the start of the lesson to produce a juridical-confessional space in which the truth might emerge. This time, the confession was to be made in public, before the whole class:

> I notice David and Bobby arguing again, and see David shove Bobby. Just as I'm about to intervene to prevent someone from getting hurt, the teacher arrives. She immediately sees that there's been a fracas, and tells everyone to come and sit on the carpet. She then asks first Bobby and then David to tell the truth about what happened. Several people, including Tom Cruise, Jessica and David, say that Bobby said the 'f' word, but he denies it. The teacher is keen to extract a confession: "I don't want to hear what other people have got to say. I want Bobby to tell me the truth. Bobby, have a think..."
> "I never said the 'f' word."
> "Not even by mistake, not meaning to?"
> "No!"
> "But Bobby, I know David loses his temper, but there's usually a reason. And I've never heard Tom Cruise tell a lie."
> "Or Jessica," adds David. The teacher sighs. "I think I might have to get mum in at the end of the day to get the truth out of you if you won't admit it now. You need to have a wee think about that."
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 5 December 2002)

There is another interesting contradiction in Miss Johnson's treatment of the truth here. Initially, she said that she was not interested in what anyone other than Bobby had to say. Thus Bobby

initially appears to have been cast as the repository of truth. Yet later, Miss Johnson insisted that Bobby was not telling the truth, because what he said was at odds with the version of events agreed upon by Tom Cruise, Jessica, David and the others. In this instance, the truth was determined by consensus within the class, and Miss Johnson wanted Bobby to look inside himself and discover this same truth. Thus the purpose of the interrogation was not to discover the truth of the matter, since this had been decided upon in advance. Rather, Miss Johnson's enquiries were designed to elicit this truth from Bobby. In other words, the content of the truth was not at stake. Instead, the onus was upon the act of telling the truth. This is reminiscent of Foucault's discussion of John Cassian, for whom "there is a specific virtue of verification in [the] act of verbalization." (ST, p.222)

This emphasis upon verbalising an already-certain truth also appeared in self-knowledge practices designed to reinforce the children's work ethic. The injunction to tell the truth often seemed designed to encourage the children to renounce their frivolous, playful, noisy selves and thereby transform themselves into diligent, obedient pupils. For example, on my very first day in Miss Johnson's class, I observed her inviting the children to assess their own performance in their classwork. As in the example with Bobby above, this self-knowledge was rarely allowed to emerge completely independently. More usually, Miss Johnson made explicit her own judgement of what the children had done, and then appealed to them for their own judgement, with the unspoken expectation that they would agree with her:

> Back in class, the teacher breaks the sad news that art will have to be cancelled, since most of the class haven't worked to anywhere near what she sees as their capacity, and most people still have language work to finish. She also cancels the planned maths session because of their lack of concentration, a move which elicits riotous cheers. At first, she can't suppress a smile at this, but then as they continue to be rowdy she gets rather irate at their celebration of what she considers to be shameful underachievement. "How hard do *you* think you've worked today?" she asks. "Not very hard, too much talking," come the mumbled replies from various quarters.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 24 September 2002)

Later the same day, Miss Johnson again appealed to the children's knowledge of themselves and of the demands of the curriculum:

> "Four C, I asked you to be quiet 3 minutes ago. We have so much work to do, and you know that, but you're wasting precious time talking."
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 24 September 2002)

Here, Miss Johnson seemed convinced that the children knew the truth of what was expected of them. Her implication seemed to be that the children ought to work upon themselves so as to make the truth of their actions correspond more closely to the school's standards.

Sometimes, Miss Johnson's judgements were less explicit. She often maintained that the children themselves knew when they had worked and when they had not, without her having to tell them. She also seemed convinced that the children knew what was conducive to hard work and what was not. For example, at the end of one day, she addressed the class, saying:

> "Today, we've had a really good day, haven't we. It's been the best day we've had for a long time. Why do you think that is?" Answers come from various quarters: "Because we've been quiet", "because the swimming people were away", "Because there was no trouble in the playground", "Because we got most of our work done."
> (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002)

Yet perhaps more remarkably, Miss Johnson also seemed to think that the children knew not just when they had worked hard and when they hadn't, but also that they could work hard if they wanted to. For example, chatting to me in the staffroom, "She talks about how the children know that they can be quiet and work well" (PhD field notes, Thursday 21 November 2002). In class, she reiterated this conviction:

> "Right," [Miss Johnson] says, and this time everyone is listening, "is there anyone who hasn't finished the first section?" Bobby puts up his hand. "Come on Bobby," she urges, "you can get that done in no time. You know that."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 13 November 2002)

> The teacher and Mrs Oliver take reading groups into the corners, and relative calm reigns at the tables. The teacher praises their quietness, saying, "That just shows you can do it. I know you can do it [i.e. work quietly]."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

There is a liberal-judicial form of reasoning at work here. The teacher made the presumption that the children were able to exercise free will over their behaviour, such that they were in full possession of themselves as moral beings. The consequences of this are obvious: the children were seen as responsible for their own behaviour, and could therefore be made accountable for their actions. I will return to this point later.

Despite the teacher's assertions, the children often did not behave according to the school rules. One example from my field notes illustrates this particularly well. The children

were about to leave their classroom, but before they did so, the teacher once again invoked their knowledge of the appropriate form of conduct:

> The teacher asks [the children], "And how do we walk along the corridor?"
> "Very quietly," they all chorus, meekly. "That's right," the teacher replies, "because there could be a class nearby trying to work."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

However, my field notes go on to record that:

> Of course, as soon as the class get into the corridor, they waltz, skip and dance along, laughing and talking, in complete disregard of the rules. Shonagh and Tommy argue over who should be the backstop, Bobby makes a series of bleeping sounds as he holds the door open for everyone, and Luke presses his head against a small window and makes a silly squished face.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

Here, the children showed a remarkable ability to fly in the face of Miss Johnson's repeated assertions about their self-knowledge. My field notes record another occasion, during snack time, as follows:

> When the children are sitting on the carpet munching away, the teacher gives them her usual speech about "you haven't worked as hard as you know you can"...Meanwhile, Kim, who is facing away from the teacher, pulls a massive crisp from the packet of Walkers upon which she's been munching, and shows it to several of her classmates.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 26 March 2003)

Such indifference to the school's rules of proper conduct appears to call into question Miss Johnson's claims about the children's self-knowledge. In what follows, I will examine those claims more systematically.

7.2.2 The politics of truth

Thus far we have seen that Miss Johnson claimed that the children knew, or were able to discover within themselves, several different kinds of knowledge. From a Foucaultian perspective, these forms of knowledge are intriguing, since they do not fit neatly into either the Greek or the Christian models. The truths which were invoked within the children did not pertain solely to successes and failures in the government of their public lives (as for the Greeks), but

neither were they private truths about the origins of the children's thoughts (as for the early Christians).

The first kind of knowledge elicited from the children pertained to the general truth of the school's moral code. We have seen that Miss Johnson made numerous claims about the children's knowledge of school rules such as 'work quietly' and 'always be honest'. These forms of knowledge have a Christian cast, the moral code of the school appearing similar to Church dogmatics. Miss Johnson's rhetoric suggested that the school rules, like God's laws for Christians, were to be found within the pupils' souls.

The second kind of knowledge which Miss Johnson wanted the children to discover within themselves was also general, a set of practical principles for moral action. So Miss Johnson claimed that the children knew not only that they ought to work hard, but also that they knew *how* to work hard. Such principles are also strongly Christian, with personal acts of renunciation closely connected to a secular form of salvation. In this schema, one could be saved from one's worse self, one's vices and weaknesses, by the redeeming power of education. But the onus was upon the individual child to take action: for this redemptive process to be effective, the child had to renounce her worse self. However, the truths which were elicited about how one must achieve this renunciation were truths about how one ought to behave, not about how one ought *not* to behave. For example, the teacher asked the children why they had a particularly good day, and they replied that it was because they had worked hard, had not caused trouble in the playground, had worked quietly, and so on. This is quite unlike the Christian procedure described by Foucault, in which the truth of what one has done wrong is uncovered so as to be renounced. It is a more positive, affirmative mode of self-knowledge, in which the truth of good practice provides the basis for the renunciation of one's sinful self. The Christian image, of an essentially sinful human striving to become pure through God's grace, is replaced by the image of an essentially moral child. There is an echo of Rousseau's humanism in the teacher's insistence that the children themselves already knew how to achieve moral perfection.

The third kind of knowledge which Miss Johnson elicited was much more negative, focusing upon the instances in which the children had failed to perform adequately. Also, where the first two kinds of knowledge concerned truths which were general, applicable to all the children all of the time, this third kind of knowledge referred to the specific truths of the extent to which particular individuals had failed to perform morally. It was only elicited on those occasions where something had 'gone wrong', and the confession practices through which it was elicited were usually directed towards one or two children. Sometimes, the teacher appealed to

the whole class to evaluate their performance as a group, but in such cases her rhetoric encouraged each child to appraise him or herself. As with the Greek Stoics, this kind of truth concerned not the children's thoughts but their actions, principally their mistakes, with the aim of avoiding the repetition of such mistakes in the future. Yet there was a strong Christian-ascetic component to this truth. Here, one finds that image of an essentially sinful being which was absent in the more affirmative knowledge of how to act morally. The children were invited to expose the truth of their sinful selves – their laziness and noisiness, their lack of concentration and willful disregard of the teacher's instructions – and then urged to renounce these habits so as to transform themselves into better students.

The fourth kind of knowledge concerned the children's free moral agency. The teacher insisted that the children knew that they *were* able to meet the school's standards *if* they applied themselves to the task of governing themselves. This knowledge was both individual, in the sense that each child was thought to possess his own will, and universal, since this free agency was attributed to all of the children. It was not concerned with the children's actions, nor with their thoughts, but with a capacity which they were thought to possess. Looking back to my discussion of Foucault's conception of power (see chapter three), we can see that Miss Johnson's understanding of the children's agency was close to the liberal-juridical model of power rejected by Foucault. Willpower was understood on an economic basis, as a commodity which was possessed by each individual child and could be freely accrued or squandered, used or abused. As I noted above, this truth has the consequence that the children were seen as being responsible for their actions, and therefore accountable for them. It is hard to over-estimate the importance of this truth within the school. Without it, the school's internal justice system would have been inoperable, since there would have been no grounds for punishment. Neither would there have been any possibility of rewarding children for good behaviour. The truth of the children's free moral agency was also crucial to the model of docile bodies as self-governing individuals. Furthermore, this truth is central to the neo-liberal economic and social world for which the children were being prepared. It is difficult to see how the school could exist in its present form without this truth.

In summary, then, it appears that Miss Johnson claimed that the children, through self-knowledge, had access to four different kinds of truth:

1. The truth of the school's moral code – standards of behaviour, hard work, etc.

2. The truth of how to act morally – by talking less to one's friends, sitting up straight, reporting problems to adults, avoiding trouble in the playground, not playing chasing games, etc.

3. The truth of their own moral performance – whether, and to what extent, their own behaviour had met the school's standards. Had they uttered a swear word? Had they played a chasing game? Had they worked hard enough?

4. The truth of their free moral agency – the knowledge that they were able to meet the school's standards if they applied themselves to the task of governing themselves.

There is something perplexingly paradoxical about these forms of self-knowledge when placed in the context of a disciplinary institution. If the children really did know all of these truths, then surely they would behave as self-governing, rational, moral individuals. In this case, the need for disciplinary techniques would be much diminished. Returning to the excerpt from my field notes, above, one might legitimately ask: why would children who knew that they ought to walk down the corridor quietly, and who were able to do so if they wished, instead turn movement through a corridor into a miniature carnival? It seems to me that there are two possible answers to this question.

First, there is a rather conjectural answer[36] which makes sense from the perspective of the school, and specifically from Miss Johnson's point of view. She had to deal with children who (she believed) knew how they ought to act, and were able to act in this way, but nevertheless regularly chose not to act in this way. In other words, she had to deal with children who freely chose 'wrong' actions over 'right' ones. Such children could perhaps be categorised as delinquents. Though they are free agents, their agency is not rational, since a rational person in their position would act in accordance with the appropriate moral standards. Thus from this perspective, the answer to the question of why the children behaved as they did is 'because they are not rational agents'. The school aimed to address this deficiency by developing the rationality of each child's will. Thus at their most sophisticated, the school's disciplinary technologies aimed to foster within each child a relationship to herself which would enable her to govern herself rationally. The children knew how they ought to behave, and they knew that they could behave like this on occasion, but they lacked the consistency of willpower which

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[36] Unfortunately, because I formulated this analysis only after finishing my fieldwork, I was unable to check this interpretation with Miss Johnson.

would have enabled them to do so all of the time. Through a mixture of supervision and encouragement, administered through the techniques I have been describing, the school attempted to help the children develop a more consistently rational willpower.

However, since from this perspective, the children lacked willpower but not knowledge, this answer does not address the issue of self-knowledge. In other words, there is no reason, from this perspective, to remind the children continually about what they already know. For example, if the children really knew how hard they had worked, why did Miss Johnson feel the need to repeatedly verbalise her own judgements about this? Such practices make more sense if they are seen as instances of rhetorical persuasion. Thus my interpretation is that Miss Johnson's assertions of the children's self-knowledge were in fact designed to produce the very phenomenon which they purported to declare. Her repeated insistence that the children knew the four kinds of truth detailed above was a way of convincing the children of these truths, a way of producing particular forms of self-knowledge within the pupils. I do not mean to suggest that there was anything wilfully deceitful about Miss Johnson's practice. She appeared to be convinced that the children really did possess the kinds of self-knowledge described above. My argument that this conviction was based upon faith rather than upon empirical evidence. Thus its effect was not to identify a pre-existing set of knowledges, but to bring these knowledges into being.

The recursive relationship between self-knowledge and power in the classroom should now be apparent. The teacher exercised power to produce self-knowledge in the children through the rituals of confession and rhetorical persuasion. This knowledge was in turn required to facilitate her exercise of power – in judging and meting out punishments, in persuading the children to work harder, and in persuading them to obey the school rules. It is important to bear in mind that this kind of power was not a force of total constraint or domination. The effectiveness of the children's self-knowledge as a form of power depended wholly upon the complicity of the children. Miss Johnson repeatedly tried to persuade the children to accept her judgement as expressing the truth about themselves but, where they refused to do so, her power was frustrated.

In summary, the self-knowledge which the teacher invoked within the children had a complex, hybrid character. It contained elements of Greek Stoic practice, Christian ascetics, Enlightenment humanism, and liberal economic and judicial theory. According to my interpretation, and in contradiction to the teacher's rhetoric, this knowledge was not something which simply pre-existed, lying hidden within the children and waiting to be uncovered. Instead,

her invocations worked to produce this knowledge within the children, so as to fashion them into subjects who would come to view themselves as rational, moral, free-willing, self-governing, truthful individuals. However, it was supposed that in the perfect case, they would demonstrate these capacities by acting in accordance with the school rules, working efficiently and quietly, telling the teachers the truths which they wanted to hear, and so on. In other words, the forms of self-knowledge encouraged by the school were, for the most part, designed to facilitate the production of docile bodies. The kinds of freedom, morality, rationality, and truth which were cultivated by the classroom practices described above were highly circumscribed. 'Freedom' was usually the freedom to follow the school rules without supervision; morality was the broadly Christian-humanist morality encoded in the school rules; 'rationality' was the late capitalist liberal-democratic rationality embodied by the school; and truth had to be a truth which the teachers would find plausible. It is therefore my contention that in the classroom, the liberating, enlightening potential of self-knowledge was often curtailed by the narrow constraints of discipline.

However, I want to end this section with a counter-example. In the earlier part of my fieldwork, when the class were in primary three, I witnessed an instance in which Mrs. Lynford attempted to extract a confession of the truth from Rory Cory, one of the quieter children, who was inexplicably upset about something:

> [A]t the end of playtime, as we all file inside, [Rory Cory] bursts into tears. The teacher takes him to one side in the cloakroom as the rest of us go to the classroom. When she returns, she says we're going to do 'circle time'...The concept is simple: everyone sits in a circle on the carpet...and the teacher hands out a large pine cone. The rules are: whoever has the pine cone may talk, and everyone else has to listen and keep quiet until they get the pine cone; the person with the pine cone may say whatever they wish; when reporting events involving other people, no names must be mentioned; when the cone-holder has said what they wanted to say, they pass the pine cone to the person next to them, so that it moves around the circle; anyone who doesn't want to say anything can say "pass" and hand on the cone...[Mrs. Lynford] says she wants them to talk about what they did at playtime. Most of the children say they had a nice playtime because they played such-and-such game with suchabody. Kate and Kim bring up a squabble they had and this is discussed, and the teacher asks them what they ought to do if someone is doing something they don't like. "Tell them to stop," comes the answer.
> "And what if they don't stop?" asks Mrs. Lynford.
> "Go and tell a playground supervisor."
> However, the incident Mrs. Lynford is fishing for doesn't get mentioned, as Rory Cory says 'pass' when it is his turn. "Are you sure there isn't something you want to talk about?" she asks him, and he shakes his head.
> (PhD field notes, Tuesday 18 June 2002)

It seems to me that in this instance, the teacher's invocations of the children's self-knowledge had a quite different character to the instances discussed above. First, one of the rules of circle time as Mrs. Lynford used it was that no names were to be mentioned. Several of the children inadvertently broke this rule, but this does not diminish its importance. If the teacher did not want to know names, then there was no question of ascertaining culpability. The knowledge elicited by this technique was evidently not designed to facilitate the punishment of the children. Second, the truths which the children told had not been determined in advance by the teacher. Though my notes record that Mrs. Lynford was "fishing" for something with Rory Cory, she had not made up her mind what that something was. This circle time seems to have been motivated by a genuinely enquiring spirit. Third, though the teacher asked the children to repeat the truth of how to behave morally, and though this truth ultimately prescribed a disciplinary solution to playground problems, the aim of this exercise was not itself disciplinary. It is important to note that the teacher's question was not "what do you do if you see someone breaking the school rules?" but "what do you do if someone is doing something you don't like?" It would appear that the aim here was to enable the children to take action if someone was infringing upon their wellbeing. Thus the knowledge of how to act was used not to enforce a rigid moral code, but to enable the children to care for themselves. Similarly, Mrs. Lynford wanted to extract knowledge from Rory Cory in the circle time so as to take care of him, or help him take care of himself. She was concerned about what had happened to him, and wanted to know about this not so that she could discipline him or anyone else, but so that she could better judge how his distress might have been ameliorated. Furthermore, she stopped short of coercing him to speak. The caring ethic of her practice was incompatible with the quiet violence of extracting a confession. Instead, the teacher maintained basic respect for Rory Cory's decision to remain silent, regardless of her own judgement of what would help him. It is worth noting that Rory Cory was upset; he had not behaved disruptively. This might explain the teacher's decision to use a practice of care rather than of discipline.

The ethic of care in the classroom was not restricted to practices of self-knowledge. In what follows, I will examine a variety of other techniques of care of the self as I observed them in school.

7.2.3 Care of the self and care of others

As the example above implies, relations to self were not always directed towards the disciplinary aims of obedience, diligence and docility. As with the Greeks, they also played a role in maintaining physical health:

> Jason tells Miss Johnson that he feels unwell, so she feels his forehead and suggests that he get a paper towel, wet it, and use it as a cold compress. He does so, and Nattalie does the same for her eye.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 15 January 2003)

As in all of the examples I have discussed thus far, such techniques were not used purely autonomously, but rather involved direction from a master, in this case the teacher. However, this direction attempted to facilitate the autonomy of the directed child. The teachers often encouraged the children to take their health into their own hands. For example, the weather in early spring 2003 was unusually warm, so Miss Johnson urged the children to monitor their own fluid intake:

> The teacher tells the children to make sure they fill their water bottles, as the last time we had warm weather, lots of people complained about headaches. She says, "It's because you're not drinking enough. So make sure you drink plenty of water today."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 26 March 2003)

Such exchanges were driven by an agenda of pastoral care quite different to both the ethic of quietness and docility and the ethic of hard work which dominated life in the classroom.

On one occasion, I was able to observe a transition from a disciplinary technique to a technique of care. This was in the early phase of my fieldwork, in Mrs. Lynford's class. Nicole and Jennifer, who at the time were very close friends, had fallen out for some reason, and both of them were very upset about this:

> Nicole and Jennifer's argument, having smouldered all morning, erupts noisily, and both of them try to tell the teacher their side of the story all at once. They are both distressed and crying. Mrs. Lynford, having heard the tale already, doesn't want her lesson disturbed again, and tells them both to sit down and stop arguing. "Nicole, I don't want to hear it, we've been through this once already," she says, firmly, but Nicole just raises her voice and carries on. This intensifies the struggle, and increases the teacher's determination not to back down. "Nicole, sit down, SIT DOWN! I don't want to *hear it*. Excuse me, what did I just tell you? What did I just tell you? SIT DOWN!" All the while Nicole is trying to get her side of the story across, her voice rising as she becomes more and more desperate. Eventually the teacher's patience gives way completely and she sends Nicole out into the atrium:

"Nicole, OUT of this classroom." Nicole bursts into tears and stomps out, where she stands facing the wall, head in hands, sobbing. The rest of the class are silent.
(PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 June 2002)

Here, the teacher was clearly operating in a disciplinary mode, drawing upon the hierarchical teacher-pupil relationship, sanctioned by the school, which made Nicole subordinate to her. So as to maintain order within the classroom, she attempted to coerce Nicole into docility, telling her repeatedly to sit down and be quiet. Nicole resisted, however, frustrating Mrs. Lynford further. In response, she resorted to a stronger spatial sanction, removing Nicole from the classroom altogether so as to eliminate her disruptive influence. However, having done this, Mrs. Lynford then appeared to change her mind about the best way to deal with the situation. My field notes continue:

> Mrs. Lynford, seeing that the situation will need some sorting out after all, tells the class to get on with their work and then goes out to Nicole. She lays a hand on her shoulder, speaks to her for a few moments, then calls out Jennifer to give her account. Then she brings both of them over to sit by the reading table facing each other, and draws up her own chair between them. I think her intention is to facilitate a discussion between them, much as a couple counsellor might do, but while she is seeing to another matter in the class they begin to speak to each other of their own accord. "Are you having a chat about it?" she asks them, and they nod. "I think you've both got yourselves all worked up over it, haven't you?" As they chat quietly, their tears drying, she returns to helping the class with their work. She looks at me as she walks past my seat, raising her eyebrows. "I think somebody needs a holiday." I nod in agreement.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 5 June 2002)

Here, Mrs. Lynford abandoned her disciplinary approach to the problem in favour of a more caring set of techniques. These involved a confessional relation, in which both children were asked to reveal their perspectives on the truth of what had happened. Then there was a facilitative process, in which Mrs. Lynford isolated the children from the rest of the class, not in order to discipline them, but to create a space in which a dialogue between the children might develop, thereby enabling them to resolve the problem between themselves. In the event, they began to do so autonomously, at which point the teacher removed herself from the situation. Having created a space for reconciliation, she was content to leave Nicole and Jennifer to take care of themselves.

Often, however, the line between disciplinary practices and practices of care was not so clear. Consider the following exchange between Billy and Miss Johnson:

> The teacher...tells Billy to take the sticker I've given her out of her eye. "That could damage your eye and I don't think Mike would want that."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

Here, Miss Johnson's over-riding concern appeared to be Billy's wellbeing. Accordingly, she exhorted Billy to take care of herself by taking the sticker out of her eye. But her mode of addressing Billy was disciplinary and hierarchical. Miss Johnson imposed her will upon Billy, rather than attempting to foster Billy's capacity for autonomous care of herself. The following example is similar:

> Back in the classroom, we have the inevitable post-playtime inquisition. It seems that there has been trouble on the football pitch. The teacher says that they must stop playing football against Primary 4a "because there's been a lot of tension, you are too competitive, and if you carry on something bad is going to happen."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 26 March 2003)

Again, the teacher's apparent concern was that "something bad" might happen to the children which would be detrimental to their welfare. She wanted the children to take care of themselves by avoiding highly competitive games. Yet the means by which she encouraged this allowed little room for the children to be autonomous. Instead, she used her authority to forbid them from playing football against Primary 4a. The form of self-government which she encouraged here was strictly limited, to be based upon a rule which she had laid down, rather than upon the children's own perspectives on what might constitute care of themselves.

Sometimes, the impulse to care could lead to other kinds of disciplinary practice. For example, towards the end of one day, I observed the following procedure:

> Back in the classroom, several of the children go for extra P.E., whilst the others finish their work. When the children have gone home, I ask Miss Johnson why certain kids go for extra P.E. She explains that they – i.e. the class teacher and the P.E. teacher – made an assessment of which children were less confident and able in P.E., "those who needed a bit more practice, or if they had poor ball control, things like that, basic skills. And we told their parents what we were doing so that they knew." I say this seems like a good idea because I was always bad at P.E. and everyone just laughed at me so it wasn't much fun.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 9 October 2002)

From a Foucaultian perspective, this is a dubious instance of assessment and normalisation. Those whose bodies did not conform closely to the ideal type were singled out for special

training to bring them closer to the norm. The result would be the reduction of diversity and difference, and the production of more uniform, more docile bodies. Yet my immediate reaction was to wish that I had had access to this kind of extra training when I was at school. I felt that this would have helped me to improve my co-ordination and achieve some success in a field of activity in which my skills were undeveloped. In other words, this practice struck me initially as an instance of the school caring for the children. Only later did I reflect upon my notes and begin to suspect that this practice might have normalising effects. It is therefore difficult to classify extra P.E. lessons as either a disciplinary technique, or as a technique of care.

My discussion in the first half of this chapter stressed that, *contra* some of his critics, Foucault understands the Greek practices of care of the self as fundamentally social. In all of the examples discussed thus far, relations to the self in the classroom have emerged as collective endeavours, forged through relations with others. This is no less true for those classroom practices of self which have care as their primary aim. For example, in the case of the argument between Nicole and Jennifer analysed above, the two children were encouraged to take care of themselves by the teacher. Moreover, the form which this care took was also interpersonal. Through discussing what had happened between them, Nicole and Jennifer sought to repair their friendship, and by doing so took care both of themselves and of each other.

However, in Miss Johnson's classroom, I observed a number of instances in which she urged the children to subject or govern themselves as a means of caring for the other children in the class. Consider the following example:

> Some of the children are talking, and Miss Johnson chides them, saying, "If you can't be quiet for yourselves, at least be quiet for your friends in the class."
> "What if you don't have any?" asks Kate, with genuine curiosity.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 27 November 2002)

Thus where in Foucault's account of the Greeks care of the self preceded care for others, in the classroom the order was sometimes reversed. Each child was encouraged to keep quiet to enable him or herself to work and to learn; but if this aim was not a priority, then the higher principle of keeping quiet for one's friends was invoked as a surer way of over-riding wayward impulses:

> Snack time, and the teacher says that only the groups who can be quiet will have snack before playtime. "It's your whole group, remember. Work as a team. You have to be quiet not just for yourself but for your whole group."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 26 March 2003)

In this instance, Miss Johnson invoked the managerial logic of teamwork as a way of re-casting the obligation to others. It is interesting to see this rhetoric of collectivism being used to reinforce a form of subjectivity which, as I demonstrated in chapter five, is highly individualising. Let us examine some more examples of this technique:

> The noise in the class keeps rising, and the teacher keeps intervening to maintain peace and order. "It's the same people letting their classmates down," she complains.
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 26 March 2003)

> Then [Miss Johnson] notices Luke and Billy squabbling with each other. She addresses them with an argument which I've heard several times now – that they're spoiling things for everyone else. "Luke and Billy, could you sit properly and keep your hands to yourself? I can see some unhappy looking faces in the class, they want to get on with their work."
> (PhD field notes, Wednesday 29 January 2003)

Here, there is a blurring of the boundary between the ethic of care and the ethic of hard work. The children were asked to hold themselves in check, restraining their impulses to talk and fidget as a way of caring for their classmates. Yet what constituted 'care' was determined by the teacher, without appeal to the children, and she implicitly defined it rather narrowly as 'allowing to work efficiently'. Once again, the children's care of themselves had become subservient to a disciplinary programme with the aim of producing docile bodies.

It is tempting to suggest that in these examples Miss Johnson was merely being manipulative, invoking the presumed wishes of a silent majority as a way of silencing a noisy minority. One could argue that by doing so, she disowned her own interests, turning herself into the mouthpiece of the whole class, yet making no attempt to solicit their views. Viewed in this way, her rhetoric is a cunning, if not especially sophisticated, political tactic. However, I am not sure that this cynical interpretation is sustainable. As I noted in chapter five, the teachers at Westgate tended to represent disciplinary practice as an annoyance which they would prefer to do without, but which was unfortunately necessary if they were to teach effectively. I would therefore argue that she was sincere (and perhaps correct) in her belief that the majority of the class wanted quiet conditions in which to learn and thereby transform themselves into educated subjects. I do not think that there was anything disingenuous about her apparent conviction that care of the children meant enabling them to work efficiently. Perhaps this is a question of the perceived purpose of education in a liberal-democratic society. For if one is to see school education as a good, then one must believe that it cares for children in some way, or enables

them to care for themselves – for example, by enabling them to read and write, to enter the labour market, to participate in political debate and so on. Any technique which facilitates this process is therefore acceptable as a means to a 'good' end. This logic would explain why, if we take Miss Johnson at her word, she saw no contradiction between discipline and the care. For her, discipline was a necessary part of caring for the children.

7.3 Techniques of the self: summary

I began this chapter by introducing the idea of techniques of the self which is central to Foucault's later work. I argued that his account of the Greeks cannot be read as an ethics, but must rather be understood as part of the more general project of an historical ontology of the present. I suggested, via Nietzsche, that genealogy is the critical enterprise required for that project, while self-creation is its necessary ethical counterpart. Genealogy clears a space for the subject which self-creation must fill. I noted that Foucault's comments about governmentality in various interviews and lectures given towards the end of his life warn us away from thinking that external, disciplinary powers of subjection are opposed to and exclusive of the agency of subjects to transform themselves. Instead, an understanding of modern humans as governed beings draws attention to the ways in which these two kinds of power depend upon each other for their effectiveness.

In the second half of this chapter, I presented empirical examples of techniques of the self as they were deployed in the classroom, drawing particular attention to their relational form. I argued that these practices in fact undermine the distinction between techniques of discipline and techniques of self, since they depend upon the interaction of power exercised over the subject from without, and power exercised by the subject over him or herself from within. I suggested that it might be more helpful to imagine a continuum of practices, ranging from those which were primarily coercive to those which left more room for autonomous action. In Foucault's terminology, these poles mark out the space of government in the classroom.

I then focussed upon those techniques of the self which aimed to produce self-knowledge within the children. I argued that these forms of self-knowledge were used as a means of strengthening the connections between disciplinary power and the children's power over themselves. Encouraging the children to find disciplinary truths within themselves was a way of persuading them to take ownership of disciplinary power.

However, I then introduced the power to care as an alternative partner of self-knowledge. I contrasted the disciplinary ethic of docility and hard work with the ethic of care,

before presenting some examples of classroom practice in which the distinction between these two value systems was unclear. I argued that these techniques used practices of care to achieve disciplinary ends, thereby largely subordinating the creative potential of the former to the more narrow constraints of the latter.

In the next and final chapter of my thesis, I will attempt to summarise and synthesise the substantive analysis I have made so far. I will then look at what this analysis can contribute to the literature reviewed in chapter two.

8
Synthesis and conclusion

It is my aim in this final section to draw together the arguments which I have made throughout my substantive chapters in an attempt to make a more coherent statement of my findings. I will begin by briefly summing up what I have shown in each of the substantive chapters, looking as I do so at how these analyses might be related to one another. I will then look at how my findings relate to the literature reviewed in chapter two. Finally, I will return to the critical-ontological questions which I posed in chapter one to see how my work might answer them.

8.1 Summary of substantive chapters

In chapter five, I introduced the concept of disciplinary power. I characterised it as a form of power which attempts to increase the usefulness of human subjects by making them docile. I argued that this docility must be understood as an aim of disciplinary programmes. Through a series of empirical examples, I then illustrated some of the techniques, used mainly by the teachers upon the children, which had docility as their aim. My analysis showed how these techniques never achieved complete success, realising the aim of docility only imperfectly and temporarily. I focussed in particular upon a number of practices whose aim was to produce docility by cultivating the cellular individuality of the children, whilst simultaneously eroding their uniqueness as individuals. In many of these practices, the exercise of power was achieved through explicitly spatial tactics which separated, distributed and sometimes isolated the children's bodies. From my description of these tactics, a detailed picture of the geography of subjectifying power in the school began to emerge.

In chapter six, I examined the subset of disciplinary classroom techniques which relied upon surveillance. I outlined the key features of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, as described by Foucault, as a means of conceptualising surveillance. However, I stressed that, like the concept of docile bodies, the Panopticon must be understood as programmatic model of how power can be exercised through surveillance, not as an empirical description of some real institution. I then presented empirical examples of surveillance from my fieldwork. Contrasting these classroom practices with the panoptic model, I demonstrated that, though they displayed a number of panoptic features, these practices were much more complex and heterogeneous than the forms of

power admitted by Bentham's simple design. In particular, unlike in the Panopticon, surveillance in the classroom was never total, but was rather discontinuous, achieving only limited effects. Again, my analysis of these techniques contributed further detail to my portrait of the geography of power and subject-formation in a school.

In chapter seven, I shifted my focus away from disciplinary power to examine what Foucault calls techniques of the self. Disciplinary techniques begin with a power external to the subject – the power of a teacher exercised over a child, for example – and this power then attempts to persuade the subject to exercise power over him or herself. Techniques of the self, by contrast, begin with the power internal to a subject – the power of a child to direct his or her own behaviour – which may then enlist the power of others to assist in the intensification of this internal relationship to self. However, the empirical examples which I presented in this chapter undermined the idea that these two kinds of techniques were always easily distinguishable in practice. My analysis suggested that, following Foucault's conception of power as government, it might be more useful to recognise that all the techniques of power I witnessed in the classroom depended upon the integration of power external to the subject and power internal to the subject. This underlined the fact that, in this context, the pertinent question is not 'does this technique involve power over the subject, or is it driven by the subject's own agency?' Instead, my geography of subject-formation in the school represents an attempt to describe the precise forms, aims and effects of various configurations of external and internal power.

This insight also clarifies the purpose of chapters five and six. Looked at in this way, my account of disciplinary techniques is not so much an analysis of external, subjecting power in the classroom, but rather an account of how such external forms of power attempted, with varying degrees of success, to co-opt the internal power of subjects so as to produce disciplinary effects. Similarly, returning to chapter seven, many of the techniques which I discussed there were not purely techniques of the self, since they involved the external power of the teacher trying to intensify the relationship of individual children to themselves, again in the service of disciplinary aims. For example, most of the techniques of self-knowledge which I described involved a will to know external to the subject, that of the teacher, attempting to persuade the children to create knowledge of themselves, all with the aim of facilitating various forms of discipline. However, I contrasted such practices with techniques driven by an agenda of care rather than of discipline. Again, these techniques usually began with the teacher's power over the children being used to persuade the children to exercise power over themselves. Yet the different aims of the power to care resulted in some key differences in how this power was implemented. Once again, however,

further empirical examples suggested that in some cases, this distinction between discipline and care was in fact less clear than it first appeared. For example, Miss Johnson sometimes used a rhetoric of care in her attempts to coax the children into docility. It appeared that, for her, discipline was a form of care.

It would therefore be churlish to suggest that the teachers with whom I worked used disciplinary techniques with any kind of malicious intent. Nevertheless, I am inclined to wonder what classroom practice would look like if the equation of discipline and care were to be called into question, and a rift thereby created between these two forms of power. If the former came to be seen as limiting the latter rather than facilitating it, practices of care might be detached from, and even given priority over, disciplinary aims.

What, if anything, does all of this contribute to the literature I reviewed in chapter two? I think that my findings relate to this existing scholarship in two main ways. The first is theoretical, though it has clear empirical implications. The Foucaultian perspective on the subject which I have employed throughout this thesis provides a counterpoint to the humanistic view of the subject that dominates what James and Prout (1997b) have called 'the new social studies of childhood'. As I showed in chapter two, this paradigm has been very influential within the literature on children's geographies, so my Foucaultian critique also applies there. Second, my work makes a more positive contribution, both substantive and theoretical, to empirical research concerned with power and space in educational settings. Where some of that research is dominated by a totalistic reading of Foucault, my research offers a more subtle account which stresses the governmental form of modern power. I will now expand upon each of these contributions in turn.

8.2 Childhood studies: some theoretical problems

Let us return to the tenets of James and Prout's (1997b) paradigm for the new social studies of childhood, as discussed in chapter two. I want to focus upon two of these in particular. The first is the assumption that children are beings in their own right, not merely 'adults-in-the-making' – human beings, not human becomings. The second is the related doctrine that, as human beings, children are competent social actors who are able to shape their own social worlds just as do adults. In other words, children possess agency; they are able to intentionally exercise their willpower so as to modify the behaviour of others, and thereby shape their environment. As we have seen, Foucault raises important questions about such claims to agency. His genealogies show that there is nothing essential about the free, acting subject. Rather, it is a fabrication,

something extremely precarious which has to be created, sustained and re-created through long, hard work, and at great cost. In this thesis, I have explored some of the ways in which practices of schooling contribute to this process of fabrication, of producing subjects. But if subjects – willing, acting, individual, social agents – only come to understand themselves as such, and thus to be as such, through an ongoing process of fabrication, then they are in fact best described as beings who are always in a state of becoming.

Looking at the work of those childhood studies writers who insist that children should be treated as social actors, as beings rather than becomings (for example, see Qvortrup, 1993; James and Prout, 1997b; James et al, 1998), one finds an intriguing tension. On the one hand, childhood is understood as a socially constructed phenomenon, and one which may be viewed as the outcome of social structures. For example, James et al (1998) are well aware that any conception of the child as an agent must take into account the kinds of external powers, including those of discipline, which subject them (see in particular their discussion of Foucault, p.42-44 and p.55-56). At the same time, these authors argue that the various 'new' approaches to childhood which they discuss can be distinguished from traditional models of childhood by their understanding of "the child as being. The child is conceived of as a person, a status, a course of action, a set of needs, right or differences – in sum, a social actor." (ibid., p.207) To take another example, Christenssen and Prout (2002) argue against looking upon children as essentially vulnerable, or as essentially incompetent. But in the same paper, these authors uphold what appears to be the equally essentialist view that children must be seen as competent social actors. However, they then go on to contradict themselves by arguing that research practice "cannot be based in presupposed ideas about children and childhood." (p.484)

On the one hand, then, we have a careful counterbalancing of structure and agency (see for example James et al, p.200-202). On the other hand, we have the recourse to an essentialist conception of children as in possession of a fundamental form of agency. I think that this rather strange contradiction can be understood if it is examined in the context of its intellectual history. Care is required here, as there is a danger that, in sketching this history, significant differences between the various theoretical approaches within childhood studies – which is, after all, a diverse inter-disciplinary field – might be overlooked in the pursuit of a coherent narrative. I will therefore restrict myself to a consideration of the approach of Alison James, Chris Jenks and Alan Prout as outlined in their seminal text *Theorizing Childhood* (1998), since it is this approach which has dominated the work within children's geographies with which I am centrally concerned. On the one hand, James, Jenks and Prout's 'new social studies of childhood' spring

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from modern sociology, and as such they draw upon social-theoretical work, such as that of Foucault and of Giddens, which attempts in various ways to mediate between a conception of humans as structurally determined and a conception of humans as free agents (see chapter two). However, on the other hand, their approach springs equally from a desire to criticise and move beyond the broadly Piagetian developmental understandings of childhood which have informed childhood research in both psychology and sociology (see for example James et al, 1998, p.17-19 and p.22-24). This 'traditional' research has treated children as incomplete beings in the process of development and, perhaps most importantly, has often used this ideology to justify the systematic marginalisation of children within academic discourse. It is this marginalisation that the childhood studies writers find so objectionable. The widespread and apparently contradictory insistence within this literature upon children as social actors is therefore best seen as a political strategy. The logic appears to be roughly as follows: if the view that children are not-fully-human-beings but are rather 'human becomings' has been at the root of social researchers' dismissal of children as worth consulting, taking seriously, treating ethically, etc., then insisting that children are fundamentally and inalienably competent human beings might force researchers to radically change their ways. It would appear that on this score, James, Jenks, Prout, Qvortrup and their 'new social studies of childhood' have been highly successful, precipitating a major paradigm change in the study of children.

Thus it appears that the childhood studies writers I am discussing here have held onto a philosophically questionable prejudice about children – that they are beings not becomings – on account of its apparent strategic usefulness. In doing so, they have made the mistake of assuming a direct correspondence between a programme, developmentalism, and a set of practices, those of treating children as passive objects of research. But there is nothing to suggest that understanding children as beings who are always becoming *necessarily* leads to their denigration. We merely know that in a certain set of quite specific historical circumstances, the ideology of developmentalism and the objectification and marginalisation of children have gone hand in hand. The question we must ask is therefore: what features of developmental research have enabled the conception of children as human becomings to justify treating them as inferiors? The answer lies in the word 'inferior'. Properly articulated, the problem which the writers that James, Jenks, Prout and others who share their approach really have with developmental research is not that it considers children as human becomings, but that it considers children, as human becomings, to be inferior to adults.

The problem thus hinges as much on the developmentalists' conception of adulthood as on their conception of childhood. Let us look at James et al's (1998) characterisation of the developmental view of adulthood. They say that, in contrast to that of the child, adult cognition is portrayed in developmental discourse as 'operative intelligence':

> "operative intelligence – that of the adult – displays action, informed, cognitive manipulation of objects and the transformation of those objects by a reflecting subject. Such action exemplifies logical process and the thinking individual's freedom from the constraint of immediate experience. What operative intelligence shows, then, is competence achieved and deserved. What it provides, analytically and culturally, are some grounds to establish difference between adults and children." (p.18)

The inferiority of the child as conceived by developmentalism therefore depends upon the conception of the adult as a logical, rational, sovereign subject. But this is precisely the conception of subjectivity which Foucault's work calls into question. Here, we might usefully recall his assertion that "The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself." (DP, p.30) The use of the word 'man' here is in no way accidental. Rational man depends for his continued existence as such upon the understanding of himself as the sovereign ruler of himself, in contrast to those beings such as women, children, animals and so on, who he thinks not to be in possession of their own wills. In the guise of childhood studies scholars, we see this rational man trying a novel tactic to undermine his own privileged status: he portrays children as essentially the same as him, as self-possessed beings. Foucault's tactic is quite the opposite. He seeks to dethrone this mythical man, to confront him with the uncomfortable truth of his own subjectivity, demanding of him the humility to accept that he is his own other; that like all humans, children included, his ability to rule himself, though sometimes remarkable, is nevertheless always limited and conditional.

Thus in the light of my Foucaultian account of subject-formation, the childhood studies writers' emphasis on the sovereignty of children within their own lives begins to look like a wrong-headed solution to the problems of structure-versus-agency and becoming-versus-being. As Nick Lee (2001) argues, considering children as self-possessed beings merely extends to them the seductive fantasies of liberal humanism of which, as adults, many of us regularly fall foul. Perhaps a more fruitful tactic would be to divest adults of these fantasies, breaching the adult/child divide not by showing that children are like adults, but by showing that adults are, in

certain key ways, like children: beings who are always becoming, developing, transforming; whose intentions have no special privilege in the world of social action; and whose agency is always indebted to the forms of disciplinary subjection which have moulded them into autonomous individuals. Alderson (1995) complains that "Young children are assumed to be 'incompetents', incapable of 'cognitive complexity', and having unstable, transient values, no real concept of 'the good', of death, of their future, or their likely future values; what they decide today, they may regret tomorrow." (p.77) I am interested to see what would happen if, as adults, we were honest enough to admit that this is a reasonable description of the state in which many of us often find *ourselves*: as becoming beings, whose very existence entails that we know not what we are, and less still what we may be tomorrow.

At the very least, I think that the childhood studies scholars whose work I have been discussing need to address the challenges which Foucault's genealogies, and, more generally, recent work on post-humanism (see for example Haraway, 1991; Hayles, 1999; Badmington, 2003), raise for the insistence, widespread within the current childhood studies paradigm, upon the child as a subject whose agency is fundamental. As my own research demonstrates, this kind of theoretical engagement has important consequences for the substance of childhood studies. It might also affect the methods advocated within the paradigm, which are broadly phenomenological, and therefore based once again upon the view of the subject as sovereign which Foucault's work calls into question (on Foucault's relationship to phenomenology, see IH and RTT). Human geography as a discipline is an ideal location from which to make such a critique, since the breadth of its interests brings together childhood (see chapter two), sustained engagement with Foucault (e.g. Driver, 1985, 1993 and 1994; Philo, 1989 and 1992a; Elden, 2001 and 2003), and, most recently, engagement with the burgeoning cultural studies literature on post-humanism (see for example Castree et al, 2004). In the existing childhood studies literature, by contrast, in the few places where Foucault is discussed, there appears to be no discussion of the significant tensions between his conception of the human subject and that of James and Prout's new paradigm (see for example James et al, 1998; McNamee, 2000; Robinson and Kellett, 2004). Post-humanist ideas, meanwhile, appear to be largely absent in childhood studies, though Lee's work (2001) is an exception here.

8.3 The geography of schooling: some substantive contributions

This thesis also makes a more positive contribution to the small literature on power in schools, most of which has hitherto been published in the field of education research. Despite human

geography's greediness in borrowing from other disciplines, and also despite the obviously geographical nature of much of this literature, it appears that geographers are largely unaware of its existence. This, too, is something which my work, located as it is at the intersection of geography and education research, has the potential to address.

Within this literature, the study to which my own research is closest is that of Shilling and Cousins (1990). This is a little ironic, since they rely upon Giddens, and make no mention of Foucault. Nevertheless, their focus, like mine, is upon the everyday practices in which space and power come together to produce schooled subjects. Similarly, they understand power as an ambivalent force which constrains at the same time as it enables, and which is continually negotiated by both pupils and teachers through a series of tactical techniques. Some of these techniques are formal and routine, while others are more spontaneously improvised. All of them both presuppose and produce a particular school geography, a particular physical, social and moral space.

As I have noted throughout this thesis, my work is rather more critical, albeit in a constructive manner, of most of the existing Foucaultian empirical studies of power in educational settings. If childhood studies researchers have laid too much stress upon the sovereignty of children, then some Foucaultian educational researchers are equally guilty of overemphasising the structural power of educational institutions over their charges. Those such as Welland (2001) focus upon the spatial techniques by which power is exercised *over* rather than *by* students, leaving the ambivalence and mobility of this power largely undiscussed. Bushnell (2003) and Perryman (2002, 2003) present perhaps the bleakest accounts, depicting the school as a totalitarian Panopticon against which resistance is more or less futile. The tone of their writing is, on the whole, one of impotence in the face of structural power. Following my own unsettling co-option by disciplinary power in the classroom (see chapters four and six), I sympathise immensely with these researchers. Viewed from within, schools often do seem like panoptic machines, especially when, despite the best of intentions, one has become thoroughly entangled in the web of disciplinary power oneself. It is perhaps no coincidence that both Bushnell and Perryman both have first-hand experience of teaching, the latter having worked under OfSTED Special Measures which must, at times, have felt like a Benthamite nightmare come true.

However, resisting the temptations of this dystopian vision of schooling, I have drawn attention to the complex, distributed and differentiated character of power in a primary classroom. In this, I follow Allan's (1996, 1997, 1999) work on inclusive education, and also the

work of those in geography such as Felix Driver (1985; 1993; 1994), Chris Philo (1989) and Stuart Elden (2001 and 2003) who have attempted to situate the Panopticon within the wider context of Foucault's oeuvre. I have argued that it must be seen as an extreme and idealised model of spatial power which, upon close inspection, provides a very poor approximation of the numerous ongoing struggles which make up so much of classroom life. I have shown that Foucault's later conceptions of power, specifically of power as governmentality and power as the means by which subjects transform themselves, provide a much richer set of analytical tools for research on the geography of power in educational settings. In the discipline of education research, these ideas have been discussed theoretically by those such as Marshall (1996; 1998; 2002), Peters (2003b) and Deacon (2002), but this rather misses the point, since, as Allan (1996) notes, Foucault developed them as tools for empirical work. Once again, my thesis begins to address this problem by pressing these concepts into use in detailed, ethnographic work.

8.4 Conclusion

In the introduction to this thesis, I expressed the hope that my research might make a modest contribution to the project of a critical ontology of ourselves. Let us return to the critical-ontological questions which I raised there: what forms of power are involved in the process of producing schooled subjects? What else do these forms of power require for their operation, in terms of knowledge and ethics, for example? What kind of limits do these forms of power, knowledge, ethics, and so on place upon schooled subjects? Are these limits necessary, or could they be transgressed? All in all, are the forms of power, knowledge, ethics, and so on which constitute us as modern schooled subjects really indispensable for our existence? Might our freedom be increased by disposing with them? I am now in a position to advance some tentative answers to these questions, and also to suggest how future critical-ontological research on schooling might take these answers further. I will consider these questions in turn.

What forms of power are involved in the process of producing schooled subjects? In this thesis, I have depicted a wide range of techniques of power: disciplinary techniques such as those used to achieve quiet and focus attention, distribution techniques, isolation, the targeting of individuals and a whole series of surveillance techniques; and also techniques of the self, including those promoted in the service of disciplinary aims, and those used as forms of care. However, I have stressed that all of these various forms of power comprised components which were both internal and external to the subject. In other words, regardless of their specific details,

each of these techniques depended upon the integration of power exercised over subjects by one another, and power exercised by subjects over themselves.

What else do these forms of power require for their operation, in terms of knowledge and ethics, for example? Let us take ethics first. If we understand ethics as the set of values to which a subject attempts to make her conduct conform, then ethical practice is a form of self-subjection, carried out through techniques of the self. As I have already explained, one of the most fascinating features of power as it was exercised in the classroom by one subject over another is that it always depended ultimately upon the willingness of subjects to *subject themselves*. Without the prospect of recourse to mechanisms of physical constraint, external power could only be effective with the complicity of internal power. For this reason, I believe that the existing empirical studies of practices of power in educational institutions which I reviewed in chapter two leave out a crucial part of the picture. As I have remarked above, it would be interesting to see what would happen if future empirical work in this vein were to treat the school as an apparatus of government rather than of coercion.

As for knowledge, I have drawn attention to the role of 'case' knowledge in techniques of discipline. I have also discussed in more depth the role of self-knowledge as a form of power which may serve the aims of both discipline and care. Nevertheless, the concepts of self-knowledge, truth telling and the various associated techniques only presented themselves to me towards the end of my fieldwork. These matters would no doubt repay further investigation, particularly if one were to take into account the formal processes of knowledge production and circulation which take place in schools. It would also be interesting to analyse school managerial processes such as target-setting and self-evaluation from the perspective of power-knowledge.

What kind of limits do these forms of power, knowledge, ethics, and so on place upon schooled subjects? For all the children's tactics of evasion and resistance, the disciplinary agenda which dominates in the classroom clearly places a whole series of limits upon their behaviour. More conjecturally, we might suppose that this in turn places limits upon the children's understandings of themselves as subjects. However, these limits may be enabling as well as constraining. For example, the techniques I described in chapter five train the children to think of themselves as cellular individuals, and as such limit the potential for more diverse, relational, co-operative understandings of themselves as social beings. Yet a strong sense of individuality might equally confer upon each child a sense of independence and self-possession which, in a liberal democratic society, could also be advantageous in all sorts of ways.

Thus we find ourselves caught up in the last three questions, which are in fact three different formulations of the same problem. Are the limits imposed by power in the classroom necessary, or could they be transgressed? Are the forms of power, knowledge, ethics, and so on which constitute us as modern schooled subjects really indispensable for our existence? Might our freedom be increased by disposing with them? In the first place, my research has shown that these limits regularly *were* transgressed by the children. Yet in my experience, in the case of disciplinary power at least, these transgressions were never sufficiently widespread nor sufficiently sustained to transform the limits which discipline attempted to impose. On the contrary, the children's resistances to disciplinary power often provoked that power to find alternative ways of imposing these limits.

I think that we must take this continued reactivation of disciplinary limits seriously. As I have argued throughout this thesis, it cannot simply be written off as demonstrating that the teachers with whom I worked were malicious, power-hungry people who enjoyed curtailing children's freedoms. In my considered opinion, these teachers were people who wanted above all to teach, and they found disciplinary techniques to be absolutely necessary for achieving that purpose, given the constraints of the school system within which they were working. So my answer is that *if* we want children to be educated, and *if* we want them to be educated within the present system of schooling, with its various organisational features – compulsory attendance, division into classes, standardised curriculum, attainment targets, league tables, high pupil to teacher ratio, and so on – then the limits imposed by disciplinary power do indeed appear to be necessary. I should add that I do not mean to suggest that the precise forms of discipline which I have described in this thesis could not be modified. No doubt the system could function with more discipline, or less discipline, or different techniques of discipline. But I find it hard to imagine how the need for discipline could be removed altogether without major structural and organisational changes in the form by which educational services are delivered. This conclusion seems inevitable unless we are willing – as I am not – to indict teachers en masse of systematic, wilful and excessive cruelty.

The questions which this raises are then: do we want to educate our children? And if so, do we agree that the current school system, for all its faults, is the best available means of providing this education? If not, how might that system be changed or replaced so as to resolve its current problems? These are questions to which the analysis I have presented here can give no definitive answers.

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