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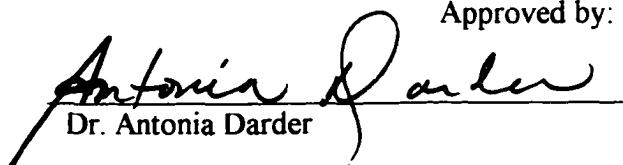




**THE INTERNALIZATION OF ALIENATION AND DESIRE:  
BEYOND THE BUREAUCRATIC GAZE**  
**BY**  
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A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Claremont Graduate University in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Graduate Faculty of Education

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2003

Approved by:  
  
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We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this dissertation and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**Abstract of the Dissertation**

**The Internalization of Alienation and Desire:**

**Beyond the Bureaucratic Gaze**

**By**

**Dana Cathryn Reece Baylard**

**Claremont Graduate University: 2003**

As an educator in the California Community College system, I spend the majority of my time trying to pull students from the raging waters of what can only be called “the system.” These disenfranchised students – always poor and almost always of color – have inspired me to examine why they are often smothered by bureaucratic ineptitude that seems somehow designed to keep them poor and disenfranchised. The purpose of this work is therefore to examine why and how “equal opportunity” is complicated by who we are and what we bring with us into the higher educational system.

Inequalities have been formed via the development of American culture. In fact, the development of bureaucratic power, augmented particularly by the industrial revolution, has generated distinct representations of power that are sanctioned and reinforced through mainstream American socially-condoned parenting styles, the American educational system, and the American corporate workplace. These representations of power are further reinforced and validated by the Law as well as by mainstream media. The gaze of power, or what can be called the bureaucratic gaze, has permeated the American educational system specifically and American society in general to such an extent that this gaze has been literally internalized, generating a

form of self-suppression and alienation that erodes students' potential for creativity and individual thought.

The American public system of education, along with the aforementioned manifestations of "the system," has hence become a bureaucratic labyrinth of its own, fostering and enhancing the alienation and consumerism endorsed by American mainstream culture at large. The American public education system thus literally teaches subordination and differentiation of "the other," or all that does not represent mainstream culture. Nevertheless, opportunities exist to create a less alienating culture, and to deconstruct the fabric of desire based on endless acquisition, both within the classroom and beyond. Promotion of the participation and inclusion of children in society, deconstruction of the subject/object dichotomy, reclamation of the power of thought, and deconstruction of the Western concept of "time" are strategies whereby a more productive interrelatedness may be established, thus creating the possibility of genuine equal opportunity for all.

**To Paul, Spencer, and Addison**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUREAUCRATIC POWER.....</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
A) The Development of Social Structures of Power	
B) Birth of the Power of the State	
C) The Birth of the Law	
D) The Body as Locus of Power	
E) The Body as Other	
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b>THE GAZE AS MANIFESTATION OF POWER:</b>	
<b>THE ENCULTURATION OF SELF-REGULATION.....</b>	<b>Page 30</b>
B) The Omnipotent Gaze: the Eye of Power	
C) The Convoluted Gaze: the Evil Eye	
D) The Birth of Bureaucracy	
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
<b>EARLY LESSONS IN ALIENATION:</b>	
<b>CHILD-REARING .....</b>	<b>Page 51</b>
A) The Designation of Time	
a) The designation of sleeping time	
b) The designation of eating time	
B) The Designation of Space	
a) The designation of sleep space	
b) The designation of awake space	
C) The Results of American Time and Space Designations	
D) Developmental Competition	
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
<b>THE SOLIDIFICATION OF ALIENATION AND DESIRE:</b>	
<b>THE AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>Page 67</b>
A) The Establishment of Power through Surveillance	
B) The Establishment of Designated Thought	
C) Education as Self-Regulation: the Body	
D) Education as Self-Regulation: the Mind	
E) The Vehicles of Thought: Time, Space, and the Examination System	
a) Time	
b) Space	
c) Examinations	
F) The Final Lesson: Get a Job!	
G) Work as Self-Domination: The Body and Mind Objectified	

<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b> <b>REINFORCEMENT OF ALIENATION AND DESIRE:</b> <b>THE AMERICAN CINEMA.....</b>	<b>Page 105</b>
A) The Cinematic Gaze: Woman as Other B) The Annihilating Gaze: The Cinematic Evil Eye C) The Wonderful World of Disney: The Cinematic Education of Children D) The Cinematic Color Line: Racism in American Film	
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b> <b>THE ENTRENCHMENT OF ALIENATION AND DESIRE:</b> <b>THE INTERNALIZATION OF POWERLESSNESS.....</b>	<b>Page 125</b>
A) Effects of Time and Space Designations in American Child-Rearing B) The Relationship Between Neglect and Desire C) The Relationship Between Desire and Power D) Effects of Time and Space Designations in the American Public Education System E) Bureaucracy as Purveyor of Desire and Alienation F) The Continuum of Interrelatedness: The Potentiality of Self a) Children as participants in society b) Deconstruction of the subject/object dichotomy c) Reclamation of the power of thought d) Deconstruction of time	
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>Page 154</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

As an educator in the California Community College system, I spend the majority of my time trying to pull students from the raging waters of what can only be called “the system.” So many hands reach up – the hands of strong, bright, capable students – that it is literally impossible to help them all. I write letters to the court system, to Child Protective Services, to the so-called welfare agencies, to the public schools my students’ children are required to attend, to the seemingly endless array of bureaucratic institutions that for all intents and purposes rule and govern their lives. Often, my efforts are futile. I think of the young Chicano father of five who enrolled full-time in the college wherein I teach, and without benefit of a high school education began nevertheless to secure excellent grades, and then was forced to resign from school because attending was in violation of his parole. He was required to return to Los Angeles County – an hour away from his wife, children, and new school – to the gang-ridden community where he was pulled back into gang life in order to maintain his existence. His request for transfer had been denied. His college status was ignored.

I think of the poor, single, white mother – a former honors student at the college – whose vengeful former husband reported her to Child Protective Services, enveloping her and her children in a web of social worker visitations, reports, and desperate fear before her exoneration. Because she lives in low-income housing – the only place she can afford to live – she underwent excessive scrutiny as a parent. During the time of her “evaluation” she was forced to wait for social workers who did not arrive at her home at appointed times or cancelled at the last minute, after she had

secured time off from work and school to wait for them. Her 4.0 grade point average was destroyed; her previously secured transfer to university was compromised. Now, she struggles to make up for a failed class and for lost time that can never be restored. Sometimes, she tells me, she thinks that she was not meant to succeed.

I think of the bright, single Chicana mother of two who lives in an impoverished area, where her children attend public school. Her teenage daughter was found in possession of a “knife” – a flimsy two inch blade contained within a manicure kit – and is currently facing permanent expulsion. In a futile attempt to save her child from a continuation school inferior even to the low-ranking high school in her district, she applied for the right to home-school her daughter but was told that she would be put on a lengthy waiting list. As it turned out, many parents were, and still are, desperate to remove their children from that school but have been mired in bureaucratic process. Numerous children – including her daughter – are literally forced to remain there, while their helpless parents, many of whom do not speak English fluently, fill out complex, meaningless forms and wait. My student’s daughter sits at home, but cannot be schooled there, while her “case” is pending. Countless occurrences such as these play themselves out semester after semester in my community college office with a depressingly overwhelming frequency. I write letters, I make phone calls, and I watch what should be simple issues become convoluted, confusing, and entrenching.

So many hands reach up – the hands of strong, bright, capable students who are working so hard to turn their lives around, that I felt compelled to investigate who, or what, was throwing them into the raging waters that enveloped their lives. These

disenfranchised students – always poor and almost always of color – have inspired and motivated me to examine why it is that in spite of incredible astuteness and determination, these students are often smothered by bureaucratic ineptitude that seems somehow designed to keep them poor and disenfranchised, and to teach their children by example that their own parents – who generally balance menial jobs with college attendance while trying to fight ultimately pointless battles for equal opportunity – are alienated and powerless. It is this alienation and powerlessness that has driven me to examine bureaucratic power as an entity, as well as its concrete manifestations within the public educational system.

At this writing, the California budget, purportedly in crisis, faces millions of dollars' worth of cuts. California community college students face a fee increase in excess of 100% while the California prison system faces comparably infinitesimal cuts. Clearly, the California prison system is ready to welcome the poor and disenfranchised, while the California community college system is not. Specifically, what has driven me to pursue this work is the simple realization that in spite of a life's work to counter inequality and offer marginalized people a shot at a college education, and in spite of government verbiage claiming otherwise, I have found that *equal opportunity is a myth*. But more than that, it has obtained the status of legend, held in front of the faces of the disenfranchised who are alienated from each other and from society, and even from themselves, while they are simultaneously proffered ample “evidence” that they do not succeed because of personal failings. As the aforementioned young Chicano father of five told me when he came to drop my class and say goodbye, “I guess the streets is where I’m

supposed to be.” The myriad evidence compelling this study has indicated that *he is right*. But more importantly, because he is right, something is terribly wrong with our society, and the first step to figuring out what it is must begin with mapping the territory of the violent waters that drown the potential of the disenfranchised.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **TIME, SPACE, AND MODERN SOCIETY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUREAUCRATIC POWER**

Zen master Pochang is reputed to have defined Zen Buddhism as the ability to “eat when you are hungry, sleep when you are tired.” As with many definitions of Zen, this adage seems deceptively simple. And there is a way in which, on the surface, it is. However, how many of us who live in modern Western society eat when we are hungry and sleep when we are tired? Instead, we tend to eat at scheduled times and in designated places or even deny ourselves the time to eat at all. Likewise, we sleep at scheduled times and in designated places, we refrain from sleeping in order to accomplish other tasks, and some of us are so consumed by stressful thoughts and impending obligations that when we finally lie down to sleep, we cannot readily manage to drift off without the assistance of sleep-inducing drugs or several hours of mind-numbing television.

We do not tend to eat when we are hungry nor sleep when we are tired, neither do we tend to address what our bodies, minds, and spirits may often need the most, whether it be time to enjoy a needed meal, a long overdue restful sleep, or even a trip to the restroom. Instead, we subdue these needs, categorizing them as unnecessary or noncritical desires. In fact, our ability to ignore a growling stomach or an exhausted body is considered to be a positive sign of self-control. We tend to enjoy the perception that we control our bodies; they do not control us. We wait until it is what we consider to be the proper time and the proper place to eat, sleep, or engage in just about any other activity according to both internal and external criteria.

We subdue the needs of our bodies, and even of our minds and spirits, in the interest of designated time and space, deciding, for example, that we will not eat when it is not mealtime, nor when we are in an important meeting, nor while we are trying to complete a pressing project. Nor will we necessarily sleep during the day, nor while we are at work, nor when we have things to do that we (or someone) consider more important. In fact, eating when we are hungry and sleeping when we are tired is about as easy as defining Zen Buddhism: simple yet somehow impossible.

Sigmund Freud (1961) would assure us that this simple yet impossible ability to meet our internal needs lies in our necessary integration into modern civilization, an integration that causes us to experience unhappiness more readily than illusive happiness. We cannot eat when we are hungry nor eat when we are tired because of other people: the impositions and perceptions of our boss, our children, our parents, our colleagues, even our neighbors. And while we will naturally prioritize internal needs within our own lives – deciding, for example, that we would prefer to work on a project until dawn instead of sleeping – the deciding factor is most often an external one. Even the project that keeps us up all night because we love it ultimately will be reviewed and accepted or rejected by others, whose validation of our work might gain a young professor her longed-for tenure, an author his much-needed advance, or a corporate employee her desired rank advancement. Freud (1961) would reduce our subjugation by external influences to the unequal relationships that modern civilization inevitably entail: we seek

approval (he defines it as love) and eschew punishment in order to avoid pain and gain pleasure. If we were to ask him why we subjugate our own needs, he would tell us that we must do so in order to be able to exist in society and to get what we want out of it.

Freud, in fact, is considered to be one of the first experts to outline for us the rationale of our behavior and, by extension, our willingness to allow our time and space to be regulated in the interest of purportedly loftier goals. He explains ourselves to us, allowing us a glimpse into why we behave as we do, and we readily accept that he does so, even if we disagree with his work and laud the work of another, more current, expert. The irony within our acceptance of the knowledge imparted by Freud, or of any expert, is that his expertise is yet another externalization – we may listen to his words instead of examining ourselves or our circumstances more closely. We may, in lieu of practicing inner reflection, relinquish our understanding or control of our internal needs and desires to someone who has more formal education, training, or experience, or who has gained social acceptance. Instead of thinking about sleeping, eating, or almost any given activity or societal interaction, we can turn to an expert, buy a book or a product, and think, instead, about something else.

The implications of this practice for educators is that we have been conditioned through our own education to focus on the importance of expertise; we work within a system that lauds time spent teaching – whether effectively or marginally – by offering tenure and respecting seniority, as if the longer someone

teaches, the better she becomes. Most of us know that the opposite is often true. Unfortunately, expertise within academia is based largely on criteria that relate less to excellence than to time and space, and in our classrooms, we perpetuate these values – often, in fact, we are mandated to do so – by rewarding attendance over creativity, or by rewarding the following of directions over the development of original thought or creativity. Within the public education system, neither teachers nor students are encouraged to move beyond externally imposed criteria defined by a series of experts, many of whom have never taught a class. Ivan Illich (2000) reinforces this point by stating that “school is the advertising agency which makes [one] believe that [she or he] need[s] society as it is” (p. 113). Moreover, neither teachers nor their students are allowed to engage in something as simple as eating when they are hungry and sleeping when they are tired. Nor do we expect that they would be.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL STRUCTURES OF POWER**

There was inevitably a time, however long ago it may have been, when we ate when we were hungry and slept when we were tired, with an immediacy broken only by danger or lack of food. But even in these cases, we assuredly sought protection in the face of danger and scarce food, without relying on experts to define danger or hunger for us in the way that Freud defines our behavioral parameters. Instead, we focused on the simple logic of present need. When, therefore, did the immediacy of responding to a situational present according to our own sense of need become replaced by a willingness to concede choice to

expert opinion? Was this a gradual process, a shift in civilization en masse, a trend? Jared Diamond (1999) links this shift with the production of food, albeit indirectly, through his examination of the encounters between myriad civilizations over the course of the last 13,000 years.

Diamond (1999) informs us that immediacy was key initially, for “[w]hile some nomadic hunter-gatherers may occasionally bag more food than they consume in a few days, such a bonanza is of little use to them because they cannot protect it” (pg. 89). Consequently, nomadic life fosters a degree of living in the immediacy of the present, at least in relation to food consumption, that few in modern Western society would emulate. Diamond (1999) argues that our ancestors most likely lived primarily in bands, “until improved technology for extracting food allowed some hunter-gatherers to settle in permanent dwellings in some resource-rich areas” (pg. 270). Indispensably, nomadic hunter-gatherers had a fluid relationship with both space and time. When resources became scarce, they moved. When darkness fell, hence reducing their potential effectiveness as hunters and gatherers, they slept. Space and time did not exist in the ways that we know them today. Pragmatically, there was no time, other than *now*; no space, other than *here*. Food production initiated a change that allowed time and space to exist in new ways, introducing a conceptualized future in the form of *food for later*, as well as designated societal roles, which carry with them an inevitable, new designation of space and time. If food is produced, it must have a time for

collection and a space in which to be kept, and, significantly, the production of food provides humans with the necessity of new roles and relationships. Diamond (1999) explains:

Besides sustaining scribes and inventors, food production also enabled farmers to support politicians. Mobile bands of hunter-gatherers are relatively egalitarian, and their political sphere is confined to the band's own territory and to shifting alliances with neighboring bands. With the rise of dense, sedentary, food-producing populations came the rise of chiefs, kings, and bureaucrats. Such bureaucracies were essential not only to governing large and populous domains but also to maintaining standing armies, sending out fleets of exploration, and organizing wars of conquest. (pg. 30)

Food production can hence be seen as among the first "professions," differentiating organizational structure beyond the heretofore culturally recognized realms of nomadic societies. This cultural shift initiated a proliferation of specializations as well as designated societal roles.

Specializations, consequently, are an outgrowth of the development of stationary, populous societies; in essence, the development of such societies led to the development of bureaucracies, and the development of bureaucracies led to a burgeoning compartmentalization of both time and space. These compartmentalizations of time and space were multifaceted, however, generating a designation of social class commensurate with the designation of social roles:

Hunter-gatherer societies tend to be rather egalitarian, to lack full-time bureaucrats and hereditary chiefs, and to have small-scale political organization at the level of the band or tribe. That's because all able-bodied hunter-gatherers are obligated to devote much of their time to acquiring food. In contrast, once food can be stockpiled, a political elite can gain control of food produced by others, assert the right of taxation,

escape the need to feed itself, and engage full-time in political activities. (Diamond, 1999, pgs. 89-90)

In other words, the development of stationary societies allows for nonegalitarian roles within social networks, augmenting a plethora of specializations and social designations which further designate not only *how* time and space are managed, but who, specifically, has the right to manage them. In essence, once the small, mobile closely-knit tribe develops into the larger, stationary, nonegalitarian chiefdom, this social unit must inevitably face what Diamond (1999) defines as:

the dilemma fundamental to all centrally governed, nonegalitarian societies. At best, they do good by providing expensive services impossible to contract for on an individual basis. At worst, they function unabashedly as kleptocracies, transferring net wealth from commoners to upper classes. (Diamond, 1999, pg. 276)

Intrinsically, “the size of the regional population is the strongest single predictor of societal complexity . . . a simpler society actually becomes more complex as the regional population increases” (Diamond, 1999, pg. 284). As larger social networks develop, they become increasingly complex, allowing for a greater variety of roles, as well as increasing the potential survival and longevity of the membership.

## BIRTH OF THE POWER OF THE STATE

The shift from egalitarianism to nonegalitarianism carries with it the inevitability of widely differing roles, and equality hence gives way to a structurization of power. Without imposed specializations, power is more arbitrarily dispersed and displayed, based upon strength, speed, or cunning.

Imposed specializations or knowledges, in contrast, superimpose power relationships, and these power relationships have a direct bearing on the ways in which time and space are codified. Michel Foucault (1980), arguably one of the most influential thinkers of the Twentieth Century, has much to contribute to our understanding of the ways in which power is structured. This former chair of “history of systems of thought” at the College de France informs us that “the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power . . . It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power (1980, pg. 52). Of course, for power and knowledge to have a field of operation, a social network must be present. The social network, or what Diamond (1999) would call the “centralization of power” is the instrument upon which the music of power is played, for:

Centralization of power inevitably opens the door – for those who hold the power, are privy to information, make the decisions, and redistribute the goods – to exploit the resulting opportunities to reward themselves and their relatives. To anyone familiar with any modern grouping of people, that’s obvious. As early societies developed, those acquiring centralized power gradually established themselves as an elite, perhaps originating as one of several formerly equal-ranked village clans that became “more equal” than others. (pg. 288)

Basically, as the human population continues to proliferate, a commensurate need for efficient management of time and space arises, exemplified through the regulation of such specifics as behavior and economics. In other words, how decisions are made and how conflicts are avoided determine, in part,

the perceived necessity for bureaucratic management of interactions between individuals within the given group; furthermore, the exchange of goods as well as their distribution generates an exigency to determine how these economic issues will be addressed (Diamond, 1999). Specifically, the management of both social and private space as well as the management of how social and private time is spent generates a series of interconnected and interdependent power relations between individuals: power relations that are inevitably unequal. In fact, in the interest of the efficient management of time and space, a sub-series of bureaucratic entities have been created, sustained, and reinforced in a variety of ways, all of which are ostensibly designed to afford myriad positive results, the most basic of which is to reduce the possibility of conflict between individuals who must share an increasingly congested space. Diamond (1999) informs us that:

The difficult issue of conflict resolution between strangers becomes increasingly acute in large groups. A fact further diffusing potential problems of conflict resolution in tribes is that almost everyone is related to everyone else, either by blood or marriage or both. Those ties of relationships binding all tribal members make police, laws, and other conflict-resolving institutions of larger societies unnecessary, since any two villages getting into an argument will share many kin, who apply pressure on them to keep it from becoming violent. (p. 271)

As populations become less nomadic, in large measure due to food production, and hence gain density, power inequalities foster “sovereignty and disciplinary mechanisms [which] are two absolutely integral constituents of the general mechanism of power in our society” (Foucault, 1980, p. 108).

While Foucault (1980) refers to sovereignty in its most literal sense, a broader interpretation would encompass any domination of one person or group over another. Diamond (1999) informs us that this sovereignty is the inevitable outgrowth of amalgamations, which “never occur by a process of unthreatened little societies freely deciding to merge, in order to promote the happiness of their citizens . . . . Amalgamation occurs instead in either of two ways: by merger under the threat of external force, or by actual conquest” (p. 289). Diamond (1999) further details that “food production, and competition and diffusion between societies led . . . via chains of causation that differed in detail but that all involved large dense populations and sedentary living, to the proximate agents of conquest [which includes] . . . centralized political organization” (p. 292).

It is this “centralized political organization” that includes “sovereignty and disciplinary mechanisms” (Foucault, 1980) and, by extension, constructs relationships of power through the vehicles of social and political parameters that define acceptable behaviors. In other words, sovereignty entails unequal relationships, “disciplinary mechanisms” enforce them, and power defines them.

Sovereignty, in its most general sense, refers to the rule of peoples by someone or something that has been deemed capable of exercising power over them. Diamond (1999) postulates that both tribes and bands avoid nonegalitarianism, at least to an extent, whereas chiefdoms must have a chief “to exercise a monopoly on the right to use force. In contrast to a tribe’s big-man, a chief held a recognized office, filled by hereditary right” (p. 273). Chiefdoms

could thus be said to represent the initiation of sovereignty, which finds its extension in the embodiment of the king (Diamond, 1999; Foucault, 1980), which Diamond (1999) identifies as representative of early statehood (p. 280). According to Foucault (1980), “the King’s body . . . [was] a political reality. Its physical presence was necessary for the functioning of the monarchy” (p. 55). In advanced statehood, however, the development of which coincides with the industrial revolution, Foucault (1980) recognizes a shift:

It’s the body of society which becomes the new principle in the nineteenth century. It is this social body which needs to be protected . . . In place of the rituals that served to restore the corporal integrity of the monarch, remedies and therapeutic devices are employed such as . . . the monitoring of delinquents . . . the great fantasy is the idea of a social body constituted by the universality of wills. Now the phenomenon of the social body is the effect not of a consensus but of the materiality of power operation on the very bodies of individuals. (p. 55)

Foucault might argue by extension that amalgamation works first externally – on those beyond the group – and then internally – on those *within* the group: the “body of society” is thus not representative of the power acted out upon it.

Nevertheless, to state that we are mere victims of centuries of concentric amalgamations, senselessly following rules until neither time nor space have any individual meaning because we do not control how they are defined and used in our lives is to construct an overly simplified argument that reduces us to creatures capable of less than we are indeed capable. If power were merely manifest through the production of disciplinary action, then power would never draw us, intrigue us, seduce us.

If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (Foucault, 1980, p. 119)

Unequal roles create opportunities to exercise power, and power is in part defined by the management of time and space. The control of time and space exemplifies the perception of power.

This management of time and space has generated our inability to "eat when we are hungry and sleep when we are tired" because it effectively serves to teach us not to recognize our basic needs or desires, but instead to exercise domination over the body. As Foucault (1980) asserts, "Mastery and awareness of one's own body can be acquired only through the effect of an investment of power in the body" (p. 56). Our bodies must do what we tell them to do, as we must at times do what we are told to do by others in order to function within modern Western society. This postponement of gratification does not empower the individual with genuine control, however. Instead, the body is objectified, turned, in essence, into a commodity. In Foucault's (1980) words:

Responding precisely to the revolt of the body, we find a new mode of investment which presents itself no longer in the form of control by repression but that of control by stimulation. 'Get undressed – but be slim, good-looking, tanned!' For each move by one adversary, there is an answering one by the other. (p. 57)

Bodily self-domination and control are effectively externalized. In other words, through a series of power relationships that inevitably result from “centralized political organization,” we have learned that relationships are based in part on the ability to give and follow directions effectively, to do the right thing at the right time, to subjugate the individual body within the larger social body, and to hence displace desire, and even need. What complicates this picture, however, is that the definition of “right” is arbitrary and inconsistent, often based on mere social proof. This pattern of behavior is well documented, and one of Stanley Milgram’s experiments at Yale is one of many such studies that validates this willingness to follow the dictates of perceived authority without thought. Subjects of this experiment were told to inflict pain upon others via an electric jolt, and as Harold Kushner (2001) informs us:

Though the subjects had no reason to hurt the man in the chair, and though it had been emphasized to them that they could stop at any time, hardly anyone did. The subjects continued to apply what they believed to be painful torture [in some cases the “patient” literally begged for mercy] to a total stranger because someone in authority told them to. (p. 47)

Kushner (2001) reveals that in addition to the “just following orders” component of human behavior, there may be something more involved. He echoes Foucault when he postulates that

. . . perhaps Milgram’s subjects went along with the experiment because there is a part of us that enjoys exercising power over others. . . . I can believe this is especially tempting for people who . . . may be insecure about their importance . . . and give in to the urge to demonstrate their ability to make a difference. One man imprisoned for brutally beating up his victim was quoted as saying, “I didn’t care if I killed the guy or not. I just wanted to be his God for a little while.”(p. 48)

Ostensibly, one side effect of living in more populous societies, regardless of how power is distributed and time and space are managed, and in fact possibly because of these factors, is the need to be recognized. When roles are unequal, who determines which roles are more significant than others? More importantly, how is this determined?

### **THE BIRTH OF THE LAW**

Thus far, we have examined early development of bureaucratic power, in terms of the development of non-nomadic societies allowing for new designations of time and space. We have seen how food production has necessarily contributed to nonegalitarianism, which, in turn, has led to, as Diamond (1999) defines it, the “centralization of power.” The stage has therefore been set for the inevitable manifestation of organized, centralized power: the Law. For once these designations of time and space are deemed necessary and beneficial, there must be a methodology whereby these designations are upheld. The Law is the embodiment of centralized power, for as Diamond (1999) informs us, “the difficult issue of conflict resolution between strangers becomes increasingly acute in larger groups” (p. 271). The need for an organized system of conflict resolution reflects an increased need for order. Freud (1961) asserts that:

Order is a kind of compulsion to repeat which, when a regulation has been laid down once and for all, decides when, where and how a thing shall be done, so that in every similar circumstance one is spared hesitation and indecision. The benefits of order are incontestable. It enables [people] to use space and time to the best advantage . . . (p. 40)

When time and space are orchestrated in the interest of order, the Law comes into play, for how else are time and space to be orchestrated except by the Law? The Law provides that bodies are organized within time and space. It provides its subjects with directives for where they may be, where they may not be, when they may do certain things, and when they may not, in addition to providing basic tenets of what can and cannot be done. As anyone who works in the field of education knows, the Law has permeated the world of teaching. Edward Hall (1989) explains that:

First, much of the law as it is administered in the United States has been so decontexted in interpretations that it has been transformed from a positive guiding force into something more akin to gambling than a system of justice . . . the larger culture in which the law functions, as well as crucial decisions reinforced by the weight of custom, have created a low-context edifice in which it is extraordinarily difficult to guarantee that the proceedings can be linked to real life. Second, all men are not equal under the law. (p. 106)

The extent to which law and “real life” have diverged is readily exemplified in the realm of educational public policy. According to the Legal Information Institute of Cornell Law School (2003):

One government function is education, which is administered through the public school system by the department of education. The states, therefore, have primary responsibility for the maintenance and operation of public schools. The Federal Government also has an interest in education. The National Institute of Education was created to improve education in the United States.

California Education Code in particular provides that California is one of the most highly mandated of all educational systems. Yet within California, millions of students, most often students of color and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, never complete their secondary educations (Darder, 2002) in spite of extensive legislation

purportedly aimed at assuring that they do. Giroux (1988) discusses the affects of academic legislation when he suggests that:

much of the deskilling that has characterized teacher work in the 1980s has . . . a great deal to do with the increased centralization of public school systems and the loss of teachers' control over the conditions of their work. In part this has happened through the imposition of "accountability models" of teaching and evaluation. Teachers have also lost power through the standardization of school curricula, including the adoption by many school systems of prepackaged, so-called teacher proof curricula. (p. 45)

The law within the educational system removes the humanity of the teacher from the classroom (Giroux, 1988) and removes the humanity (in the form of knowledge about their own lives and worlds) of the students from themselves and each other (Darder, 1991; Darder, 2002; Illich, 2000). In this way, the educational system becomes disempowering to all those who labor within it, and accountability models, exemplified most poignantly by the current "No Child Left Behind" legislation (2001) inevitably ensure that "learning is reduced to the memorization of narrowly defined facts and isolated pieces of information that can easily be measured and evaluated" (Giroux, 1988, p. 180). Giroux's statement confirms Hall's (1989) allegation that "the law is so designed as to operate apart from the rest of life" (p. 107).

Specifically, the Law is a manifestation of power and control over the body. Foucault (1995) states that it is actually the classical age that "discovered the body as object and target of power" (p. 136). Klaus Theweleit (1987), in determining the historical conception of Law, postulates that the Law "has been used to recreate susceptibility to repression ever since people first began ruling other people. Every regime

has employed this method of inscribing itself upon the bodies of its subjects and on the bodies of the rulers themselves" (p. 414).

### **THE BODY AS LOCUS OF POWER**

According to Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (1988), the body can be defined as the "site of power, that is, the locus of domination through which docility is accomplished and subjectivity constituted" (p. x). Kim Chernin (1981) agrees, asserting that "the struggle to dominate the body is endemic to this culture, and may well characterize patriarchal culture altogether. . . . It is the body that has made us vulnerable. . . . This vulnerability of our body places us within the sphere of another's power" (p. 56-60). Foucault (1995) concurs, asserting that "the individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies. . . ." (p. 74). Objectification and subordination of the body obviously coincide with the concept of legality versus illegality. The Law is that which forces the body to conform to external objectives; it represents a significant component of what compels people to refrain from eating when they are hungry and sleeping when they are tired.

The Law forces the body to conform. Diamond (1999) has clarified the distinctions between egalitarianism and nonegalitarianism, as well as the necessity for conflict resolution and distribution of goods based on nonegalitarianism. What remains to be seen is to what extent the Law demands conformation, for in a nonegalitarian society, the Law cannot readily be egalitarian, as it was conceived in order to address nonegalitarianism. According to Foucault (1995), the Law "was made for the few and it was brought to bear upon others . . . in principle it applies

to all citizens, but it is addressed principally to the most numerous and least enlightened classes” (p. 276). Foucault (1995) also sees this “economy of illegalities” as being “restructured with the development of capitalist society” (p. 87). While discussing the specific merits or pitfalls of capitalism is beyond the scope of this work (much has already been written on this topic) it is impossible not to analogize capitalism with inequality. And while capitalism is not without benefits, it is derived from our development into ranked societies, as the chiefdom has transformed into the larger state, generating the inevitable kleptocracy (Diamond, 1999). Once power is in the hands of the few, the few are in the hands of power. Karl Marx (1948) informs us that “in proportion as . . . capital is developed, in the same proportion is the . . . modern working class developed – a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital” (p. 87).

This scenario contrasts sharply with that of the tribe, for:

Like bands, tribes lack a bureaucracy, police force, and taxes. Their economy is based on reciprocal exchanges between individuals or families, rather than on a redistribution of tribute paid to some central authority. Economic specialization is slight: full-time crafts specialists are lacking, and every able-bodied adult (including the big-man) participates in growing, gathering, or hunting. . . . Since tribes thus lack economic specialists, they also lack slaves, because there are no specialized menial jobs for a slave to perform. (Diamond, 1999, p. 272)

Menial jobs to perform, social rules to obey, and an “economy of illegalities” all give rise to the need for the Law, capitalized in order to signify Law as a relatively universal construct as opposed to any given rule or set of consequences. The Law

serves to manage time and space in a unique way: it defines where and when people can be and how they can and cannot spend their time. The Law can simultaneously frighten and protect, threaten and assure, and as such, is a manifestation of power. According to Foucault (1980),

Law cannot help but be armed, and its arm *par excellence*, is death; to those who transgress it, it replies, at least as a last resort, with the absolute menace. The Law always refers to the sword. But a power whose task is to take charge of life needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms . . . Such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise, and heirarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendor. (p. 144)

At its most extreme, the Law holds the power of death, but as Foucault explains, its primary purpose is contained within its myriad degrees within modern society, integrating itself fully into all aspects of social and private life. In this sense, the Law becomes a bureaucratic entity that envelops all other bureaucratic entities, existing simultaneously within and beyond them. Foucault (1980) elaborates on this concept by clarifying that he does

. . . not mean to say that the law fades into the background or that the institutions of justice tend to disappear, but rather that the law operates . . . as a norm, and that the judicial institution is increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses (medical, administrative, and so on) whose functions are for the most part regulatory. A normalizing society is the historical outcome of a technology of power centered on life. (p. 144)

Diamond (1999) confirms the inevitability of such a development and declares:

A large society that continues to leave conflict resolution to all of its members is guaranteed to blow up. That factor alone would explain why societies of thousands can exist only if they develop centralized authority to monopolize force and resolve conflicts. (p. 286)

Recall, however, that the Law ultimately is “addressed principally to the most numerous and least enlightened classes” (Foucault, 1995, p. 276), and that “centralization of power inevitably opens the door . . . to exploit . . . resulting opportunities” (Diamond, 1999, p. 288). The inescapable inequality of the enactment of the Law requires a series of codifications that are relatively easy to define and enact.

Specifically, the Law must register deviation from the established norm, and in order to accomplish this task, the deviation must be legally definable. To accomplish this end, the Law manages bodies, ostensibly protecting us from ourselves and from others, and, by extension, shielding us from the pitfalls of immediate gratification as defined by socially unacceptable desires. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1989) claim:

The law tells us: You will not marry your mother, and you will not kill your father. And we docile subjects say to ourselves: so *that*’s what I wanted! Will it ever be suspected that the law discredits – and has an interest in discrediting and disgracing – the person it presumes to be guilty, the person the law wants to be guilty and wants to be made to feel guilty? (p. 114)

What the Law requires is the subordination of the human body. The body is made to conform because the Law defines *where* the body can and cannot be, what it can and cannot do; as such, the body in its space is the materialization of Law. Because the Law defines *when* and under what circumstances the body can occupy a certain space, when it can and cannot give rise to its desires or needs, the body in

time is also the manifestation of Law. The regulation of the body *is* the management of time and space.

### **THE BODY AS OTHER**

Objectification and subordination of the body obviously coincide with the concept of legality versus illegality. It is the Law that forces the body to conform, whether Law is internally or externally imposed. For example, if we do not eat when we are hungry and sleep when we are tired, it is because we are exercising the power of subordination over our own bodies – we are forcing them to conform to a perceived higher law, one that subordinates the physical needs to mental objectives. While the subordination of the physical to the mental is in many respects a positive trait indicative of higher reasoning, it nevertheless alters the concepts of time and space, removing the body from the present and creating an externalized objectivity represented by the exercise of power. Power requires an object: the body. In order for power to be exercised upon the body, the body must be objectified; it must become an object responsive to Law. In order for objectification to take place, there must be subjectivity; something, or someone, must generate the body's conformation.

Power is thus delineated along the lines of subjectivity and objectivity. To be the subject is to have power, not because of individual traits and characteristics, but, rather, due to an individual's accommodation of (or assimilation within) the power system. Power is therefore not an individual possession; instead, power reflects an individual's ability to control, negotiate, or alter the relations and structures of power. According to

Foucault (1995), “power is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised . . . power is essentially that which represses. Power represses nature, the instincts, a class, individuals” (p. 89-90). Additionally, there can be neither subjectivity nor objectivity without a localized site of application.

Given this localization of power, how, then, are subjectivity and objectivity defined? The body, as the site upon which power relations are delineated, is demarcated as subject when it represents the dominant power. In American society, this constitutes the adult white male, Protestant, upper-middle class, heterosexual. *Otherness* becomes all which power is not – nonwhite, non-male, non-Protestant, non-middle or upper class, non-heterosexual – all are designations of Otherness. According to Antonia Darder (2002),

Inherent in the mainstream popular gaze is the class-based and racialized view of “difference.” When mainstream references to “man” or “woman” are made, the reference is always to a “white man” or “white woman” who are further ascribed with a “natural” set of acceptable, and often superior, traits. On the other hand, those who are considered “the other” are distinguished by the use of specific class-based or racialized categories. Obvious examples of this aspect of racialization are found in mainstream newspapers where reporters must identify people who are not “white” by using some sort of ethnic label (*black* mothers, *Korean* parents, *Hispanic* children, *Filipino* workers, etc.). A very similar dynamic is at work concerning class assumptions. Categories that immediately suggest class difference generally include “high risk children,” “latch-key kids,” “illegal aliens,” or “underclass populations.” The racialized and class-bound images perpetuated by such language, and the values that inform its use, give students some very clear messages about their particular place in the socially constructed hierarchy of American life. (p. 19)

Kathleen Weiler (1988) concurs:

white privilege is so much a defined part of U.S. society that whites are not even conscious of their relationship of power and privilege. In U.S. society, white is the norm; people of color are defined as deviating from that norm and therefore their race becomes an issue. This is precisely what is meant by institutional racism. (p. 76-77)

Weiler (1988) defines this as an issue not only of "race," but of gender as well: "Men have no need to define themselves by their gender; a man, for example, does not identify himself as a male administrator, because that is the norm. But since all women are in some way oppressed by sexism, they are conscious of their identity as women in a way that men rarely are as men" (p. 127).

For anyone doubting that men and women easily fall within the designations of subject and object within American society, Nancy Friday's (1973) study of sexual fantasies (*My Secret Garden*) reveals a pattern within the fantasies of women and men: women fantasize about themselves as objects and men fantasize about women as objects, even objects of exchange. Jessica Benjamin (1988) alleges that:

Men idealize women as objects, whereas women idealize men as subjects . . . The woman, in all past conventions, is never overwhelmed by the object/man. Behind this object/woman, that men find so overwhelmingly desirable, is also a subject/woman that they can't recognize . . . (p. 327)

Winifred Woodhull (1988) links this phenomenon to the oppressive nature of the law in cases of rape, echoing Foucault's assertion that the Law is designed to subjugate those without power:

Women are forced to call for more general repression in order to secure for themselves a modicum of safety in public space . . . Thus women's appeals to the state for protection, while necessary, nonetheless force them to rely on men for their safety. . . . This very coherence of the bourgeoisie state depends upon an illusory legal equality masking not only economic inequality and class domination but also the general social and sexual subordination of women. Furthermore, because it reserves for itself the capacity to define its channels of access, the state effectively reproduces its exclusive power in every request, however critical, made of it. (p. 173)

One of the primary methods through which the Other is objectified is within the realm of visual exchange. This objectification is consummated by the gaze that is cast on the body as the realm of power where subjectification and objectification take place. In the case of Woman, for example, capitalized here because it is a representation having nothing to do with individual women, the image of objectivity is created by and through the power dynamic that occurs when a woman is gazed upon; women are merged in the thought pattern of men to become the ultimate object. According to Klaus Theweleit (1987), “The spectrum of stars and cover girls omits almost nothing; in the end, the same desirous gaze is trained on flesh-and-blood women as was trained on the image. Above all, they are desired through the *look*. The body must not become a body; it is forced to remain an unattainable representation” (p. 370). The ideal image of woman has nothing to do with a self. Image is a construct, a false reflection of superimposed idealization. As other, Woman is defined as needing those in power in order to constitute her place in society, and the gaze often represents the inception of her objectification; the judgmental gaze registers *difference*.

Previous illustrations presented by Darder (2002) and Weiler (1988) have indicated that the other is defined along visual lines of representation affecting not only sexual differentiation but also racialized differentiations. “White,” for example, is differentiated from “non-white” by sight. Whether or not these visual definitions are accurate is irrelevant, for the assimilated other – the non-white person who looks white, for example – is rewarded for her conformation to mainstream, culturally accepted Western values. As Darder corroborates,

Hegemony . . . is systematically carried out through the moral and intellectual leadership of a dominant society over subordinate groups. This form of societal control is achieved not through physically coercive means nor arbitrary rules or regulations, but rather through winning the consent of the subordinated to the authority of the dominant class. . . . Through hegemonic control, the dominant culture is able to exert domination over women, people of color, and members of the working class. (p. 87)

Furthermore, one of the best means of “exerting domination” is by marginalizing the other through discrediting her values and knowledge (Darder, 1991). For this marginalization to occur, the other must ideally look – through physical attributes or behaviors – different from what mainstream culture identifies as “normal.” Diane deAnda (1984) identifies the obvious method of differentiation, essentially defining the other by “the degree of dissimilarity in physical appearance from the majority culture, such as skin color, facial features, and so forth” (cited in Darder, 1991, p. 51). In order to explore the extent to which the other is entrenched in American cultural ideals, the power of the gaze to differentiate, to judge, and to condemn the other must be investigated.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE GAZE AS MANIFESTATION OF POWER: THE ENCULTURATION OF SELF-REGULATION**

In societies based on hierarchic structures of power, demarcated boundaries always exist. Power, of primary import within any political system based on competition, designates each individual's place and respective role. In Western patriarchal society, it is the gaze that structures power and thus objectifies the other (which represents all outside the realm of power) through the enactment of the Law. The Law, which manifests itself through "God," the sovereign, and the state, acquires omnipotence through the gaze. The other, as object of the all-seeing gaze, ideally internalizes the gaze through self-subordination as regulated by the Law. Because social conditions do not allow for mutual gaze, the gaze is inherently dualistic. Fear of the other, or the unknown, perpetuates the dualistic gaze; this fear is most indomitably manifest via the Law.

The law is the patriarchal manifestation of bodily control and, ultimately, domination. Yet for the law to maintain effectiveness, it must be able to reach its objects invariably. In a society that is based on definition and subsequent subordination, it is essential that the body sustain exploitability, ideally by means of its owner instead of by external imposition of the Law. Internalization of the Law is accomplished by the visibility of the body – because the body can be seen, it can be objectified; because the inevitability that it can be seen avails itself to the objectified, the objectified body internalizes the field of visibility, effectively seeing itself as it is seen. According to Foucault (1995),

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (p. 203)

In other words, only the possibility of the Law's manifestation through surveillance need be present for the objectified body – or really any member of a society, within certain parameters – to internalize its own subjection.

This dualistic gaze, as constitutive of subjectivity and objectivity, holds the power to construct the Other as object because of its functional locus within a highly regulated bureaucratic system. For Michel Foucault (1963), the gaze is not “faithful to truth, nor subject to it, without asserting, at the same time, a supreme mastery: the gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates” (p. 39). E. Ann Kaplan (1983) echoes this concept in relation to women; when discussing the patriarchal gaze, she asserts that “men do not simply look; their gaze carries with it the power of action and of possession that is lacking in the female gaze. Women receive and return a gaze, but cannot act on it” (p. 311). Additionally, she explains that “the gaze is not necessarily male (literally), but to own and activate the gaze . . . is to be in the masculine position” (p. 319). I would add that it is not masculine by definition; rather, it is defined by power which in Western society is synonymous with patriarchy, which is “deeply committed to clearly demarcated sex differences, called masculine and feminine, that revolve on, first, a complex gaze-apparatus; and, second, dominance-submission patterns” (Kaplan, 1983, p. 319).

Kaplan's argument needs to be taken one step further: subject/object relationships are subject to a “gaze-apparatus” that is itself shaped by dominance-submission patterns.

In more precise terms, the gaze itself is dualistically structured as depersonalizing: through the gaze a subject displays control and hence power; through the gaze, an object is divested of its potential for subject status. Foucault (1995) identifies this gaze as falling into an “uninterrupted play of calculated gazes” which allows a disciplinary “operation of a relational power [to] sustain itself by its own mechanism . . . It is a power that seems all the less ‘corporal’ in that it is more subtly ‘physical’” (p. 177). Surveillance does not inflict physical harm, yet it does involve the realm of the physical; its ferocity is thus more subtle and far-reaching. Bartky (1988 ), in light of Foucault, states that “what is announced in the comportment of superiors is confidence and ease, especially ease of access to the Other” (p. 74). The essential tenet of visual subordination is that the human object comes to accept the rule of its body and learns to mimic its own objectification, thus making itself, as Foucault (1995) stated, the double recipient of domination.

The extent to which the objectifying gaze has permeated the educational system and impacted the potential success of countless students cannot be ignored. Students undergo surveillance in the name of safety or academic excellence. For example, according to Crews and Tipton (2002),

Despite . . . prevention efforts, public outcry following highly publicized incidents like the Columbine High School shooting have driven many knee-jerk responses to the complex problem of school violence. These mostly involve increased physical security of the schools themselves. Over the past several years many schools have become modern day “fortresses” equipped with surveillance cameras, security guards or police officers, mandatory identification badges, metal detectors, and locked perimeter doors during school hours.

Columbine High School, however, did have surveillance cameras, and in spite of this fact, school administration was unable to avert the tragedy that occurred there. In

fact, surveillance cameras in schools can do little to avert crises; the United States Department of Justice (Green, 1999) in a report entitled "The Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Techniques in U. S. Schools," provides the following:

Each year, a great number of camera systems are bought in the United States with the objective of assigning a security person to constantly monitor the scenes . . . [so] that some sort of response may then be dispatched immediately and an undesirable incident prevented or stopped . . . This is quite often an unrealistic approach to security, particularly in school applications.

Security cameras, along with many other prison-like security measures, do not tend to avert tragedy in American schools (Crews and Tipton, 2002) any more than they do in American prisons. Instead, they actually serve to impede student creativity and enhance fear (Crews and Tipton, 2002). What security cameras *do* generate within the public school system is objectification. A school under surveillance generates the possibility that the bodies of students – like the bodies of prisoners – can be seen at virtually any time. As such, the bodies of students are defined by a seemingly omnipotent gaze: one that sees them wherever they are, whatever they are doing.

### **THE OMNIPOTENT GAZE: THE EYE OF POWER**

Any location that is defined by the dualistic tenets of the Law presents opportunity for visual subjection. The eye that judges (and by extension condemns) is most powerful, however, when it permeates the object from the position of omnipotence. Omnipotence of the depersonalizing gaze is in effect when either the gaze has been internalized, as in the aforementioned examples, or when the gaze is somehow given the qualities of omnipotence from a supposed external, nonrestrictive province. As such, the

depersonalizing and objectifying gaze reveals itself through the law as enacted upon the body. Foucault (1995) argues that:

The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly. A central point would be both the source of light illuminating everything, and a locus of convergence for everything that must be known: a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned. (p. 173)

God, the sovereign, and the state have all been systematically presented as maintaining a judgmental gaze as manifested by the law in order to create a self-ruling, and by extension, a self-suppressing, populace. These methods of suppression have been maintained, to use Theweleit's (1987) phrase, "ever since people began ruling other people" (p. 414). Religion, in particular, has been used to suppress a potentially unruly populace since the advent of the chiefdom (Diamond, 1999). In defining the methodologies whereby kleptocracies have gained and maintained power, Diamond (1999) explains that it is essential that they:

. . . construct an ideology or religion justifying kleptocracy. Bands and tribes already had supernatural beliefs, just as do modern established religions. But the supernatural beliefs of bands and tribes did not serve to justify central authority, justify transfer of wealth, or maintain peace between unrelated individuals. When supernatural beliefs gained those functions and became institutionalized, they were thereby transformed into what we term a religion. (p. 278)

Walter Wink (1992), Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary, New York, concurs, informing us that:

An empire is, by its very nature, a system in a permanent crisis of legitimization. It is not a natural system, but an artificial amalgam held together by force. That is why propaganda is so essential to it. People must be made to believe that they benefit from a system that is in fact harmful to them, that no other system is feasible, that God has placed the divine imprimatur on this system and no other. (p. 93)

The internalized gaze so permeates our culture – and has done so particularly well since the seventeenth century – that its presence has come to reflect our perception of the norm of existence. Its impetus lies in the apprehension that if good citizens of Western society do not perceive themselves as perpetually monitored, then they may reject suppression. In the name of religiosity, countless cultures have been, and, sadly, are still being, annihilated; but within a social structure based on economically oriented power structures, religiosity allows the objectified body to remain a facet of society, albeit as a commodity. “God” is thus constituted as a retributive judge; by extension, the Law is constituted as the will of God. Wink (1992) states:

With the conversion of Constantine . . . the empire assumed from the church the role of God’s providential agent in history. Once Christianity became the religion of the empire, notes J. Denny Weaver [(1990) in “Atonement for the Non-Constantine Church”], its success was linked to the success of the empire, and *preservation of the empire became the decisive criterion for ethical behavior.* The Cristus Victor theology fell out of favor . . . because it was subversive to the church’s role as state religion. The church no longer saw the demonic as lodged in the empire, but in the empire’s enemies. . . . society was assumed to be Christian, so the idea that the work of Christ entails the radical critique of society was largely abandoned. (p. 150)

“God” thus becomes less a deity than an agent of the law, an omnipotent manifestation of bureaucratic power, made all the more powerful because it is internalized. Foucault (1995) mentions that “the entire parapenal institution, which is created in order not to be a prison, culminates in the cell, on the walls of which are written in block letters: ‘God sees you’” (p. 294).

God is here presented as echo and reinforcer of the Law, thus encouraging the prisoner to behave and to reflect on whatever transgression has been enacted. Theweleit’s

(1987) discussion of a condemning deity seems to reflect Foucault's: "The 'all-seeing' god lives inside your own skin, in your peripheral areas . . . he is the one who converts pleasure into anxiety. The punitive god-figure owes his effectiveness to the fear that [bodily] dissolution may occur . . . (p. 413). Theweleit's argument extends Foucault's in terms of the *function* of this god. The notion of an all-seeing deity that invades the body (and by extension the soul) allows for obsessive self-monitoring. "God" becomes the ultimate materialization of the Law. The principle behind this concept is that submission to the Law is inevitable. "What generalizes the power to punish, then, is not the universal consciousness of the law in each juridical subject; it is the regular extension, the infinitely minute web of panoptic techniques" (Foucault, 1995, p. 224). Because bodies are visible and objectifiable, punishment can never be escaped.

Sovereignty and the state, as reflections of the Law, also are in possession of the depersonalizing, objectifying gaze. Foucault (1995) elaborates on this conception by aligning the law-breaker with the physical body of the sovereign:

By breaking the law, the offender has touched the very person of the prince; and it is the prince – or at least those to whom he has designated his force – who seizes upon the body of the condemned man and displays it marked, beaten, broken . . . The public execution did not reestablish justice; it reactivated power. (p. 49)

Like an indignant god, the sovereign, whether represented as a chief, a monarch, or a statehood, manifests power through the ability to harm the body of whoever dares transgress the law. The perception of hell as perpetual punishment is reenacted on the body through scars that never heal. The public execution takes this concept one step further by tearing death from the privacy of the death bed or the dungeon and thrusting it

before the eyes of the sovereign's subjects. The sovereign theoretically becomes a god.

As Foucault (1995) explains,

The solemn appearance of the sovereign brought with it something of the consecration . . . Discipline, however, had its own type of ceremony . . . subjects were presented as "objects" to the observation of a power that was manifested only by its gaze. They did not receive directly the image of the sovereign power, they only felt its effects – in replica, as it were – on their bodies, which had become precisely legible and docile. (p. 188)

One problem with sovereignty, when represented by an individual, as can be deduced from Foucault's insight, is that the omnipotence of the sovereign is subject to those whom it rules. Unlike the objectifying "god," the individual sovereign cannot be everywhere at once and, as history reveals, the popularity of the sovereign depends on a multiplicity of factors. Furthermore, sovereigns can be killed; they have, in spite of their efforts to present otherwise, definable bodies that can be equally subject to subordination.

The loss of power experienced by a given monarchy could easily be directly related to the ruler's definable limits as encompassed by physicality. A uniformly, culturally accepted god is not limited thus and has therefore maintained usage as a tool of suppression as manifest through an omnipotent gaze for centuries. The state is able to maintain a power that surpasses that of the monarch, precisely because its power is easier to preserve and more difficult to define. Because the state allows an entire class of individuals to sustain a potentially equal, privileged existence, it is substantially more difficult to cut off its head. Furthermore, the state is able to monopolize religiosity as well, in order to perpetuate itself, reinforce its power, and use its populace for its own ends. Diamond (1999) concurs:

Besides justifying the transfer of wealth to kleptocrats, institutionalized religion . . . helps solve the problem of how unrelated individuals are to live together without killing each other . . . [and] it gives people a motive, other than genetic self-interest, for sacrificing their lives on behalf of others. At the cost of a few society members who die in battle as soldiers, the whole society becomes much more effective at conquering other societies or resisting attacks. (p. 278)

Of course it goes without saying that institutionalized religion serves as a reinforcer to restrain attacks upon the system from within as well.

When W. Freimuller defines the mission of a perfect government in *Die Schreckenstage in Leipzig*, he reveals quite a bit about the state as oppressive possessor of the gaze. He informs us that the state:

. . . must restlessly probe the spirit and body of the people; it must listen to the nation's heartbeat. The moment its penetrating eyes perceive muddy obscurity . . . it must raise its arm with ruthless, burning zeal, never resting until the vile has been swept away, the filth expunged . . . (cited in Theweleit, 1987, p. 398)

Although these are the sentiments of a Nazi, they seem to reflect equally the goals of all bureaucracies based on structures of power. From revision of the punitive system, which occurred in the eighteenth century (Foucault, 1995, p. 89) to the modern American government's current fascination with fighting terrorism, the role of the state has been to objectify and subjugate. The "penetrating eye" of the state continually observes its citizens, thereby assuring its sustained power.

Foucault (1995) discusses the shift of the methodology of punishment that reflects the rising power of the "penetrating eye" to permeate the "muddy obscurity" of the citizen who dares to assert the right to question the rules:

There are two images . . . of discipline. At one extreme, the discipline blockade, the enclosed institution . . . At the other extreme, with panopticism, is the discipline mechanism: a functional mechanism that must improve the exercise of

power by making it . . . more effective, a design of subtle coercion for a society to come. The movement from one project to the other, from a schema of exceptional discipline to one of generalized surveillance, rests on a historical transformation: the gradual extension of the mechanisms of discipline throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their spread throughout the whole social body, the formation of what might be called in general the disciplinary society. (p. 209)

Foucault is here discussing the judgmental gaze of the state as manifest in Bentham's *Panopticon*, a prison that constitutes the prisoner as object of a constant gaze, at least in theory, because the prisoner cannot see those who see him (p. 209). He elaborates that the "inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon . . . The inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment" (p. 201). The dualism inherent in an objectifying gaze such as this is inevitable, for:

. . . the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment . . . how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him. (p. 199)

This dualism mirrors Freimuller's dualistic conception of government as untainted and its subjects as existing in a "mire of muddy obscurity." The categorization as mad, dangerous, abnormal, and dirty presents the citizen as needing to be cleansed, "normalized," according to the standards of the state as exhibited by the Law. Unsurprisingly, it is the other, in all its aforementioned manifestations, that is in need of "normalization," defined most simply as representative of mainstream culture. Darder (2002) maintains, for example, that:

The history of the U. S. health, education, and welfare system is filled with heart-wrenching examples of the dominant society's class-based, ethnocentric responses to cultural differences and working-class sensibilities – responses that,

subsequently, led to the imposition of practices of conformity on families from subordinate populations – practices that often reinforced the loss of cultural identity through subtle and not-so-subtle forms of assimilation. (p. 5)

What begins to emerge here is the dualistic component essential to a politics that fosters division and classification (or survival of the fittest, as Darwin and his followers stated so well). One must either dominate or be dominated; one is either good or evil; one must either be absorbed, or absorb, incorporating the other. The body thus becomes nothing more than a commodity, the means by which power is evidenced. “It is logical and probable that under capitalism all human relations will be characterized by power, dominance, possessiveness, manipulation: the extension into relationships of the property principle” (Wood, 1985, p. 199).

### **THE CONVOLUTED GAZE: THE EVIL EYE**

The dualistic gaze subjectifies only after it categorizes. However, a dualistically constituted gaze cannot but be subject to the same laws of dualism. If the gaze is capable of representing the state and serving as an all-seeing commissioner of the Law, then its opposite must exist, serving as a negative counterpoint, an inverse of all that is socially acceptable, legal, and moral. This contrary gaze indeed exists in the form of the “evil eye.” The “evil eye” is that which not only counters the patriarchal gaze; it seeks to destroy the Law. According to Michael Argyle and Mark Cook (1976), the “evil eye” is a myth that has been believed “at least since the seventh century BC” (p. 30). Argyle and Cook (1976) also mention its presence in the Bible (p. 30). The evil eye is first mentioned in Proverbs (Prov. 23:6; Prov. 28:22) and is associated with selfishness and hedonism.

The evil eye in this case could be defined as power that runs counter to dominant structures of power, yet it is not all-seeing in spite of its annihilating aptitude. Argyle and Cook (1976) state:

The belief [in the evil eye] was connected with the idea that vision was due to rays emanating from the eye, together with the belief that most deaths and accidents are caused by witches . . . If a person possessed the evil eye, it was believed that he placed a curse on anyone he looked at. It was more often ascribed to women than men . . . It was believed that people were either born with it, or had acquired it as a result of making a pact with the devil. (p. 30)

Increasingly apparent is the restructuring of the gaze that takes place when it is not controlled by the bureaucratic state. The bureaucratic gaze defines and enacts the Law and as such has gained social acceptability. Yet when the gaze is perceived as belonging to the other – that which is marginalized or non-representative of the power structure – its power is perceived as a threat to the power structure. What the bureaucratic power structure thus presents to its subjects is that its gaze signifies protection in the form of the Law; it signifies goodness, for in spite of the fact that this gaze exploits, its capacity to do so reflects its *right* to exploit. The gaze that counters it – and because of the dualistic nature of paradigms of power, there *must* be a gaze that counters it – is affiliated with the other and signifies danger, destruction, evil. As we will see, the notion of the gaze as destructive when controlled by the other runs throughout the history of the gaze as an endowment of power.

Argyle and Cook (1976) present a telling synopsis of the evil eye when they attempt to comprehend its mythical power: "We conclude that the special meaning given to gaze when there is belief in the evil eye is the result of a cultural elaboration of ideas –

based on the combination of . . . a belief in witchcraft, and the discomfort experienced in mutual gaze" (p. 31). The last proposal is the most revealing, for mutual gaze is not a construct of dualism. Wherever there is hierarchy of power, mutual gaze cannot be recognized. Like the concept of woman as subject (socially-condoned fear of an annihilating form of witchcraft itself reveals the fear of woman as subject), the concept of a gaze that does not objectify but merely presents the opportunity for equal reciprocation cannot establish itself in a bureaucratic, patriarchal society based on unequal relationships. Mutual gaze runs counter to dualism because it allows for the possibility that subjugation is unnecessary.

In a culture that reveres bodily destruction as an expression of often-suppressed anger, the most frightful manifestation of power becomes the body that is not vulnerable (or is vulnerable only in a less accessible way). Horror movies, for example, generally present some dark force that could potentially destroy the *hero*'s (and by extension the *viewer*'s) body. Vampires, monsters, space aliens, ghosts – all maintain a degree of power through their physical inaccessibility. Yet as it may have already become clear, their power is generally constructed as being in direct opposition to another force – a force of "good" designed to combat, and hopefully destroy, the "evil" of the abnormal or unusual. This concept of good versus evil is a fundamental component of a power-structured society, as it allows domination and cultural alienation to be justified. Let us not forget that the "city upon the hill" that former U.S. President Ronald Reagan was so fond of commemorating could not have been founded without the destruction of the "evil" Indian.

The land had to be fought for and won; the indigenous peoples had to be destroyed – all this so that “good” could prevail.

The monster, the Native American, the land – anything that is not a facet of the power-holding class becomes something that must be conquered. Robin Wood (1985) makes the following claim:

Closely linked to the concept of repression – indeed, truly inseparable from it – is another concept necessary to an understanding of ideology . . . the concept of “the Other”: that which bourgeois ideology cannot recognize or accept but must deal with in one of two ways: either by rejecting and if possible annihilating it, or by rendering it safe and assimilating it, converting it as far as possible into a replica of itself. (p. 198-199)

In other words, the bourgeoisie cannot coexist with the other; the other can never be assumed to have rights or the ability to exist without the influence – read domination – of the mainstream culture. Indigenous peoples, for example, had two options: be “converted” and “civilized” or, remain “savage” and be destroyed. By categorizing indigenous peoples as other, the colonists who annihilated them were able to justify the virtual genocide of Native Americans. Of course, the same thing happened when the Africans, perceived as “primitive,” were exploited, and when Chicanos lost their land and rights in the face of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Within the public educational system, as within most modern bureaucracies, these values are maintained and reinforced through various forms of legally sanctioned racism, for:

. . . although federal laws and policies supposedly outlawing discrimination based on “race” have been in place for over fifty years, . . . interventions have been in African American and Latino communities, grounded in dominant-class perceptions of the parents in these communities as dirty, immature, neglectful,

aggressive, or feeble-minded – all deemed legitimate reasons for intervening. What is even more disconcerting is the manner in which these racialized perceptions continue to be reflected in the policies and practices of education, health, and welfare agencies across the country. (Darder, 2002, p. 6)

The other, whether defined as “dirty” or “evil,” must acquiesce to mainstream society, “the filth [hence] expunged” (Freimuller, cited in Theweleit, 1987, p. 398). How can an individual defined as other avoid learning to internalize these values and assumptions? Inevitably, this internalization is often an unconscious process – a subtle erosion of personal worth that eats away at a person’s dignity, eroding her potential as it erodes her sense of self.

Under the dictatorship of the bureaucratic gaze, the other is codified. In the case of women, for example, they are taught to internalize the patriarchal gaze. As the gaze belongs to the power-wielding patriarch, as champion of mainstream society, women are expected to become their own suppressors in order to constitute their “proper” places in Western society. Consequently, women should ideally “see” themselves through the eyes of those who define their social position. This is indeed the case:

In contemporary patriarchal culture, a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most women: they stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgment. Woman lives [in] her body as seen by another, by an anonymous, patriarchal Other. (Bartky, 1988, p. 72)

Sandra Lee Bartky (1988) goes on to recount that “femininity as spectacle is something in which virtually every woman is required to participate” (p. 72).

Research on visual interaction bears out the concept that women are “required to participate” in “femininity as spectacle.” According to D. R. Rutter (1984), who cites research conducted by Kendon and Cook (1969),

It was found that people looked more at female than male partners, and this was true for men and for women. That same year, interestingly enough, Argyle and Williams (1969) were to report the corresponding finding, that women *feel* more observed than men. (p. 9)

During another study, in which the relationship between gaze and distance was being measured, a female confederate was used as “subject” of the gaze, yet ironically “the most important influence on how she was rated overall was her physical appearance” (Rutter, 1984, p. 38). Furthermore, John Molloy (1977; 1996) confirms this phenomenon. Rutter (1984) also found that “subjects engaged in more frequent periods of eye-contact when they were listening to the man than when they were listening to the woman, and this was especially so for female subjects (p. 11-12). In other words, the gaze is primarily focused on women as objects and on men as subjects. Obviously, the gaze that is focused on the male subjects is powerless: it lacks the power to objectify. Another study presents women as so accustomed to objectification that they barely react to it:

Buchanan, Goldman, and Juhnke (1977) reported a series of observations in lifts. As they entered, subjects were compelled to violate the personal space of confederates already there. In general, men were reluctant to stand close to someone who stared at them; but whether the confederate looked or looked away had relatively little effect on women. (cited in Rutter, 1984, p. 46)

Being stared at surely must have affected the women. Yet men, as subjects, *react* and move away (Rutter, 1984). Women, in contrast, stand humiliated under the gaze. Women are not taught to resist objectification. According to Bartky (1988), “feminine faces, as well as bodies, are trained to the expression of deference. Under male scrutiny, women will avert their eyes or cast them downward; the female gaze is trained to abandon its claim to the sovereign status of seer” (p. 67). As almost any marginalized group within

American society knows, unconsciously if not consciously, the gaze must be handled with care. A female, especially a female of color, is often considered to be “asking for it” if she looks directly at an unknown male or group of males for more than a few seconds. A male of color, especially if he is of large stature, will often be careful not to look directly at whites, as his look is often perceived as some sort of threat to males; and many males of color have had the experience of watching a white female clutch her handbag more tightly and walk a bit faster when she is the object of his momentary gaze. Working-class people, the homeless, the handicapped, openly gay and lesbian peoples are all subject to looks of hostility or an avoidance that seems to indicate that they are not even present, or possibly, not even human. When any of these marginalized groups are involved in the court system, they are disproportionately found to be guilty (Darder, 2002). Additionally, current legislation reveals the extent to which the Law invades their lives and subjugates them, in essence, treating them as second class citizens:

Such class-bound, racialized perceptions of “difference” were clearly at work in the drafting of the 1996 Welfare Law that virtually eliminated the economic safety net for millions of children. These perceptions also drive the unrelenting emphasis that public schools have placed on bilingual transition programs for language minority students, despite the wealth of data (including government studies) that document its detrimental impact on academic achievement. (Darder, 2002, p. 6)

Basically, a concentric set of checks and balances serves to keep the other in her place, ostensibly to protect mainstream society from her “evil eye” – the fear of which represents mainstream culture’s inability to accept the individuality of anyone deemed as “different.”

## THE BIRTH OF BUREAUCRACY

The bureaucratic, objectifying gaze is manifest in more far-reaching ways than its “evil” counterpart. Unlike the evil eye, which has only limited power and supposedly seeks only to destroy, the bureaucratic, objectifying gaze so permeates our culture – and has done so for centuries – that we have all come to internalize it, seeing ourselves with the critical eye of subjectivity, comparing our bodies to the media-enhanced version of perfection instead of thinking about our lives in a critical, constructive, questioning way.

As Diamond (1999) confirms, kleocracies have developed the skill of “mak[ing] the masses happy by redistributing much of the tribute received, in popular ways” (p. 277). In American society, we naively believe in our superiority, freedom, and happiness because we have the best roads, the best goods, and unlimited television to tell us which goods to strive to obtain. In actuality, our lives are run by bureaucracies we created but no longer control; we are structured by a power we no longer define – namely, the bureaucracy itself. Within American society specifically, these power designations play themselves out in a myriad of social units, including the family unit, as distinctly evidenced in American child-rearing techniques; the American public school system; and the American corporate workplace. Moreover, two specific reinforcers of the heretofore mentioned series of interconnected and interdependent power relations are the Law, inclusive of institutional public policy, which reinforces the maintenance of the existent power structures; and the media, which subjectifies and objectifies bodies along what are considered to be the lines of acceptability. Both of these reinforcers present not only external guidelines for how one should act and look, but they also encourage the internalization of these guidelines. In

essence, they serve as teachers, validating a series of lessons that are learned within the primary sub-series of bureaucratic entities that have been created to manage shared space. This management of space and its resultant external, as well as internalized, surveillance of the body generates a concurrent regulation of time, which, along with the management of space, delineates a systematization of power.

Fundamentally, the way we raise and educate our children prepares them not only for schools and eventually work, but also for well-defined roles within the American power structure. The circumscribed parameters of these social units are incessantly and emphatically reinforced through the legal system and the media. Furthermore, this complex web of interrelated and interdependent systems effectuates two distinct outcomes: 1) the systems become bureaucracies, which reinforce and perpetuate themselves and are “self-serving, amoral, and live forever . . . . Changing them is almost impossible, because they function according to their own rules and bow to no man” (Hall, 1989, p. 218-219); and 2) American citizens are trained to become creatures of habit and limitation who “are powerless (or feel powerless) to change things” (Hall, 1989, p. 218-219).

The self-preserving and self-perpetuating nature of the bureaucratic entity has been observed by innumerable critics of social systems, including C. Northcote Parkinson (1957), who developed Parkinson’s Law (1957) and Laurence F. Peter and Raymond Hull (1969), developers of the Peter Principle (1969). The aforementioned authors explore some of the reasons why bureaucracies are self-perpetuating, but also the sad, seemingly ironic outcome that their productivity seems to have an inverse relationship with their size

and funding. Essentially, the bigger these bureaucracies are, the fewer people they actually help, the more cumbersome and less manageable they become, as well as the more stagnant and obsolete. Parkinson (1970) attributed this phenomenon, in part, to “the stagnation of political theory during an age of technological advance” (p. 16) in *The Law of Delay*, ironically written over thirty years ago. How much more so do we live in an age of technological advance today? Wink (1992) addresses the constricting nature of the bureaucracy as well: “Human misery is caused by institutions, but these institutions are maintained by human beings. We are made evil by our institutions, yes; but our institutions are also made evil by us” (p. 75). Sociologist Peter Blau (1992) reiterates the supposed inability to alter the bureaucratic entity: “Once firmly organized,” he informs us, “an organization tends to assume an identity of its own which makes it independent of the people who have founded it or of those who constitute its membership” (cited in Wink, p. 81).

Because of the inevitably entrenching nature of the web of bureaucracies that have been the outgrowth of the development of Western society, American society can vacillate along defined parameters, but it cannot change dramatically. As a consequence of attempting to regulate and optimize our perception of space and time, we have created a bureaucratic labyrinth of power that ironically has developed its own power, a power that we cannot readily affect. As Wink (1992) explains,

Socialization is not the problem; rather, the problem is that into which one is socialized. Some elements of socialization are universal, shared by all societies and persons: concepts of space, time, number, measurement, causality, classification. Likewise, people are not merely passive recipients of tradition. . . . but [their] freedom is exercised within a highly circumscribed space, and as long as the

delusional assumptions remain unconscious, they are seldom effectively transcended. (p. 96)

Interestingly, Wink (1992) sees the development of the bureaucratic entity – deemed the Domination System – as a violent, aggressive manifestation of evil itself:

The Domination System . . . named in the New Testament chiefly by the terms “world,” “aeon,” and “flesh” has woven around itself the magical ideological armor of the myth of redemptive violence, by which it shelters, for the very few, fantastic privileges denied the many. Yet the exploited many are nevertheless beguiled into supporting the system that oppresses them, even to the point of voluntarily offering up their own lives. They have been “taken captive through that type of philosophy and rationalistic sophistry which has its origins in human tradition . . . and not in Christ” (Col. 2:8). (p. 63)

Sadly, the enculturation of subordination begins from the moment a child enters the world, for the child-rearing techniques of the Western world subordinate babies to delineated time and space parameters, almost immediately teaching them before they can even speak that they cannot eat when they are hungry, nor sleep when they are tired. As such, they are prepared for an educational system that similarly mandates their time and space parameters, alienating them from themselves, from each other, and from the true potential of humanity. Their first, and arguably most tragic alienation, however, begins with their parents or primary caretakers.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CHILD-REARING: EARLY LESSONS IN ALIENATION**

American child-rearing practices rely upon distinct time and space boundaries that teach children about society, the family, and their roles within these cultural systems. Specifically, the timing by which babies' sleep and feeding cycles are attended to, as well as the timing by which their cries are responded to, impart early lessons to children regarding the relationship between time and their physical and mental needs. Additionally, where and how babies are placed reiterate the relationship between and among individuals within American society. The amount of physical contact versus the amount of time spent in devices such as cribs, playpens, highchairs, and car seats is distinctly cultural and has an inevitable impact upon its subjects. The dynamics of time and space in relation to the raising of children are additionally influenced by the distinctly American focus on fostering independence through the attainment of developmental milestones.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the ways time is used in child-rearing; then, to address the usage of space in the context of the raising of American children; next, to discuss the concept of developmental milestones and their importance within American society; subsequently, to provide a series of observations between adults and children in order to review their interactions in light of the aforementioned issues; finally, the ramifications of these time, space, and developmental objectives will be discussed, with specific references to the relationships between desire, lack, and power. The way time and space are designated, along with the culturally superimposed developmental competition

between children, creates an alienation of typically raised American children. The result of this alienation, enacted in part through time and space designations which allow children insufficient contact with parents, is a perpetuation of desire for contact and closeness, translated into the socially acceptable permutation of desire: desire for possessions.

In essence, child-rearing practices within American society represent American social values. These social values are often validated and hence justified through the medical practice of pediatrics. American parents are subject to a distinct array of rules regarding the proper raising of children, as are many other societies' parents. Yet in America these rules are presented as scientifically based. In other words, American parents generally believe that widely used child-rearing practices are grounded in scientific fact and are *consequently* the most effective. However, American child-rearing practices are more cultural than scientific. According to Meredith F. Small (1998), Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University,

The parental practices we follow in the West are merely cultural constructions that have little to do with what is 'natural' for babies. Our cultural rules are, in fact, designed to mold a certain kind of citizen. . . . Feeding, sleeping patterns, and how a baby spends the day quickly become a lesson in expectations. . . . In America, social independence is favored, and so babies are regulated and encouraged toward independence. (p. xvi-xvii)

Ironically, the development of these cultural practices has represented, over the course of the past eighty years, a distinct shift away from what *is* "natural" for babies. During the early 1940's, childbirth moved from home to hospital, where birth could be observed, monitored, and assisted; the purported objective was the safety of mother and child (Sears and Sears, 1993). This shift from home to hospital birth initiated a mechanization of

childbirth which was soon augmented by the mechanization of child-rearing. Increasingly, parents were told what to do by doctors, psychologists, and bureaucratic entities designed to assist them, making the jobs of childbearing and child-rearing less subject to what was defined as medical error. An outgrowth of these changes augmented a social reverberation against “spoiling” the child, or, allowing the child to express her desires or needs at “inappropriate” times or in “inappropriate” places. Over the course of the last eighty years, parents have been instructed to make sure that children learn that parents have “needs” too (Eisenberg, 1989) and to make sure that children learn “who’s boss.” According to pediatric specialists Sears and Sears (1993):

The spoiling theory began in the 1920s when experts invaded the realm of child rearing. They scoffed at parental intuition and advocated restraint and detachment. They felt that holding a baby a lot, feeding on cue, and responding to cries would create a clingy, dependent child. There was no scientific basis for this spoiling theory, just unwarranted fears and opinions. (p. 10)

This transfer of accountability for safe and proper birthing and child-rearing – from parents and family to experts – caused a cultural movement away from family wisdom and knowledge, and away from what mothers often empirically knew to be right for their babies. For example, after a hospital birth, mothers often feel alienated, violated, and depressed (Kitzinger, 1994). What might have seemed natural to these American mothers, and what might have worked for generations within their own families, was called into question by the mere existence of hospital births and child-rearing experts. Birth and child-rearing became processes which were externally monitored and increasingly had less and less to do with natural, biological processes and more to do with science, the new and powerful social influence within American society. Both mother and child are hence

designated as Other and their bodies define their objectification through the realm of the gaze. What matters is what is done and seen, not what is felt. This creates a sense of powerlessness and helplessness that permeates the relationship between them.

### **THE DESIGNATION OF TIME**

One of the major shifts reflective of these developing sciences and their impact upon children can be seen in relation to time. Within early American society, time was an abstract concept established in relation to light and dark. When it was light, people performed tasks designed to provide for themselves and their families; when it was dark, they slept. Babies were nursed whenever they made signs of wanting to nurse or eat; adults ate at times when they could all be together, generally before working, after working, and before bed. The timetable, however, has become a highly regulated, well-established component of Western child-rearing practices.

People of the Western world, particularly Americans, tend to think of time as something fixed in nature, something around us and from which we cannot escape, an ever-present part of the environment, just like the air we breathe. (Hall, 1990b, p. 6)

### **THE DESIGNATION OF SLEEPING TIME**

The timing of the feeding and sleeping of infants is thus particularly subject to regulation, in some cases, from the moment a child is born. For example, “sleep is . . . a major concern of American parents. How long and how hard babies sleep is used to determine developmental maturity by both parents and pediatricians. And babies are judged as ‘good’ when they sleep through the night” (Small, 1998, p. 106). Yet ironically, “[t]he notion of a zestful awake phase during the day followed by a smooth unbroken

sleep time in the night is probably more of a cultural fantasy than a biological imperative, it doesn't really fit with how humans, or other animals, manage the twenty-four-hour day" (Small, 1998, p. 120; see also Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 294). One of the major foci of child-rearing texts, in fact, is the goal of getting babies to sleep through the night (e.g., Eisenberg et. al., 1989, p. 175; Spock, 1992, p. 260-261; Iovine, 1997, p. 125-138), in spite of the fact that even adults do not naturally sleep through the night (Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 294). The most currently popular method of obtaining this goal is to allow babies to "cry it out." According to one child-rearing text,

The Teach-the Baby-to-Put-Himself-to-Sleep option is taught in a variety of forms and methods, but they all distill down to one point: You must let the baby cry until he goes to sleep. . . . The baby will call out for you or cry for mercy. . . . you cannot pick the baby up and take him out of his crib without setting the whole lesson back to the beginning. (Iovine, 1997, p. 135)

However, this technique is not based on what the baby needs developmentally, but on

what Western parents are presumed to need: Pediatric suggestions are readily forthcoming "[f]or parents who value their own privacy at night, as well as undisturbed sleep, and who feel that young children also benefit from privacy. . ." (Nathanson, 1994, p. 107).

However, "crying evolved to serve the infant's purposes: to assure protection, adequate feeding, and nurturing for an organism that cannot care for itself. By definition, crying is designed to elicit a response. . ." (Small, 1998, p. 156). According to one child-rearing text, the author, a mother, describes her response to the "cry it out" method: "I can recall . . . sitting on a chair in the hall outside the baby's room while she screamed and begged to be rescued . . . I would cry silently and feel like vomiting, but I would sit in that chair, clutching my baby-care manuals for dear life" (Iovine, 1997, p. 135-6). She also states,

however, that the method “really does work”(Iovine, 1996, p. 135), revealing that the difficulty of going through this process was validated by the advice of the experts.

In actuality, how are babies *biologically* designed to sleep? Babies “have . . . shorter sleep cycles and more arousal periods [than adults, and]. . . twice as much light sleep as adults” (Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 295). Essentially, babies are not designed to sleep through the night because they “are wired with sleep patterns to awaken easily in the early months when their nighttime needs are most intense but their ability to communicate them is most limited” (Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 295). The movement away from responding to the cries of our dependent offspring reflects an attempt to foster independence and to assure adult privacy away from children. In fact, history reveals that until doctors intervened, children and their parents generally slept in the same beds; however, once the medical field touted the superiority of formula (a concoction initially made up of flour and water, or watered down cow’s milk) over breast-feeding, children became ill (Leedlelop, 1999). At this point, the medical profession initiated:

. . . a new trend, blaming children for their own sleep disturbances and blaming parents for giving in to them . . . Parents were told that their children needed to learn independence. . . They should cry it out, the crying was good for them, and sadly, mothers were instructed not to coddle babies when they engaged in such behavior. (Leedlelop, 1999)

Sadly, the expert-endorsed regulation of sleep time initiated a series of misfortunes for babies, in that their biological needs became increasingly separated from dominant cultural priorities. When babies complained by crying, the cycle was only compounded; experts were unwilling to accept their own possible error and instead initiated a downward cycle

of recommendations which served only to separate babies from their own biology all the more.

### THE DESIGNATION OF EATING TIME

Yet another schedule-dominated function is infant feeding. The feeding schedules which were popular in America during the mid 1900's, for example, entailed feeding babies on a schedule which had nothing to do with their natural needs for sustenance (Spock, 1992, p. 98; Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 10). Parents were told not to go to a crying baby until the designated time period had passed, regardless of the baby's cries. Some babies thus regulated "would cry miserably for shorter or longer periods each day, but their mothers and doctors dared not feed them (or even pick them up) off schedule" (Spock, 1992, p. 99). And while currently endorsed feeding schedules may not seem as confining, the practice of feeding infants whenever they express a need for sustenance is called "on demand" in the West and is considered in some cases to foster manipulation in children and is considered spoiling them.

Only half of American babies are breast-fed, and when they are, breast-feeding on average lasts only about five months. Most breast-feeding and bottle-feeding is done on a schedule, usually about every two hours or less, and mothers are encouraged by pediatricians to regulate this schedule. Babies are expected to cry a lot, and parents feel it unnecessary to respond to all crying bouts. Control over the baby is a major issue for most [Western] parents; responses to both crying and feeding are guided by a hope of controlling the baby's behavior and a fear of spoiling or indulging what are seen as the baby's manipulative ways. (Small, 1998, p. 105-106)

However, "left to their own devices, babies will self-regulate and get what they need and no more. This is easily demonstrated in cultures where infants have full-time access to the breast and they, not the mothers, regulate what they eat" (Small, 1998, p. 189-190).

Clearly, American cultural priorities and values have played an increasingly dominant role in how timing is used in infant care.

### **THE DESIGNATION OF SPACE**

The spacial elements of child-rearing, like the elements of time, begin at the moment of birth, whereupon hospital personnel place the infant “in a box where he is left, no matter how he weeps . . . [after which] he does the only act he can, which is to cry on. Eventually, a timeless lifetime later, he falls asleep exhausted” (Liedloff, 1977, p. 60).

While American parents are taught not to “spoil” their babies by responding to them whenever they cry, “[r]esearchers who have studied the effects of parenting styles on behavior in older children have all concluded that the spoiling theory is utter nonsense. A child must go through a stage of healthy dependence in order to become securely independent” (Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 10). Furthermore,

The consistent availability of the mother or an attached caregiver provides confidence and helps the child learn to trust himself, culminating in the child’s developing independence. In essence, the attachment-parented baby learns to trust, and trust fosters independence. (Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 10)

This insight is particularly ironic in light of the fact that the same pediatric wisdom which informs parents not to spoil their babies by responding immediately to their cries purports that a response such as this causes dependency in their children, when in actuality independence cannot be reached without a preceding stage of dependence.

Likewise, according to Dr. Michael Lewis, infant development specialist, “the *single most important* influence on a child’s intellectual development was the

responsiveness of the mother to the cues of her baby" (cited in Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 13). He presented these findings to the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1986, during his keynote speech, which "was in response to the overselling of the superbaby phenomenon that emphasized the use of programs and kits rather than the parents' being playful companions and sensitive nurturers" (Sears and Sears, 1993). In spite of Lewis' findings, American parents are still presented with an array of devices designed to "care" for their babies. In addition to "superbaby" learning tools, to be discussed shortly in greater depth, there are numerous devices designed to hold babies, designating their space as separate from their parents' space.

### THE DESIGNATION OF SLEEP SPACE

After birth, and placement in clear plastic hospital boxes, babies are then usually transported home with their parents, where they are placed in their own cribs, in their own rooms, when asleep or at night. Moreover, when these babies cry, they are not generally retrieved from their cribs. Again, the "crying it out" method is considered to be one of the most effective methods of securing the longed for "sleep through the night" so endorsed in America. The following words are from a highly popular American child rearing text:

To a caring parent, programmed to respond to her baby's every need, "crying it out" may indeed seem cruel and inhumane punishment, especially when his only crime is wanting mommy or daddy in the middle of the night. But it is actually the best way, sleep experts tell us, to respond to a baby's need to learn how to fall asleep on his own. . . . If you can tolerate an hour or more of vigorous crying and screaming, don't go to baby, soothe him, feed him, or talk to him when he wakes up in the middle of the night. Just let him cry until he has exhausted himself – and the possibility, in his mind, that he's going to get anywhere, or anyone, by crying – and has fallen back to sleep. (Eisenberg, 1996, p.261)

First, the authors readily admit that a parent is programmed to respond to a baby's needs, and that the described practice seems cruel. The further supposition is that babies need to learn to fall asleep on their own, and that this purported need is in place at what in many other cultures would be considered an astoundingly early age.

The cultural condoning of "crying it out" is actually in direct contrast to a baby's genuine needs. Again, recall that "crying evolved to serve the infant's purposes: to assure protection, adequate feeding, and nurturing for an organism that cannot care for itself. By definition, crying is designed to elicit a response . . ." (Small, 1998, p. 156). Incidentally, when the "crying it out" method of teaching children to sleep alone through the night is described to mothers in many other cultures, they cannot understand it and find it pointless and remarkably heartless (Small, 1999).

#### **THE DESIGNATION OF AWAKE SPACE**

The experience of spending nights alone, in a crib, is further augmented in American culture by a similar pattern of daytime treatment. During the day, American babies and toddlers are put in a variety of devices, such as strollers, walkers, playpens, bouncers, and highchairs – all creations emblematic of Western society and in many cases unheard of by parents in numerous other cultures.

Physical contact with infants is comparatively minimum [in the West]; mothers rarely carry babies . . . Instead, infants are usually placed upright in hard plastic seats or laid down on their backs . . . Socialization is not a primary concern, and American babies tend to spend most of their time alone, sleeping solitary in a crib or sitting in a playpen or plastic seat. (Small, 1998, p. 105-106)

However, as with scheduled sleeping and feeding routines, the habit of placing babies in devices designed to hold them may not necessarily be best for babies; in fact, American

babies accordingly learn from the beginning of their lives that physical closeness with others is not as great a priority as it is in some cultures. "In many other cultures, parents wear their babies; in our culture, we wheel our babies, then park them somewhere" (Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 262). However, yet again, the practices condoned within American society do not address biological need.

What may happen if the baby does not have the benefit of a strong mother-infant attachment, spending most of his time lying horizontally in a crib, attended to only for feeding and comforting, and then again separated from mother? . . . The infant who is forced to self-regulate before his time spends a lot of energy self-calming, wasting valuable energy he could have used to grow and develop.

[The resulting flussing and disorganized behavior is a withdrawal symptom – a result of the loss of the regulatory effects of the attachment to the mother. Babies should not be left alone to train themselves to be self-soothers, as some parenting advisors suggest. This sort of detached parenting is not supported by common sense, experience, or research. (Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 283-4)]

Furthermore, when the findings of anthropologists are reviewed, these "researchers uniformly agree that *infants in cultures that wear their babies cry less*. In the Western culture we measure our baby's crying in hours per day, whereas in other cultures it may be measured in terms of minutes" (Sears and Sears, 1993, p. 284). Yet these prevalent longer periods of crying are considered normal in America. An infant's experiences of place serve to mold her into a distinctly American adult. Specifically, where and how American babies spend their time is a manifestation of the cultural environment in which they are being raised.

## **THE RESULTS OF AMERICAN TIME & SPACE DESIGNATIONS**

Both pediatricians and parents are subject to the education they receive, the cultural pressures placed upon them, the marketing efforts aimed at them. Ridicule is a

powerful motivator, and there is a great deal of ridicule, not to mention criticism, of pediatricians and parents who deviate from the norm which happens to be currently in vogue. Recall the powerful factors at work during the 1950's and 1960's when breast-feeding went almost entirely out of practice in the United States. Although it is now widely publicized that breastmilk is the ideal food for infants, and although the American Academy of Pediatrics now endorses breast-feeding for *at least* the first year of an infant's life, the ramifications of the introduction of formula as superior to breastmilk, coupled with the Western fetishization of the breast as a sexual and hence private body part, coupled yet again with the American focus on independence, make for an unfortunate combination for babies:

In the 1800's, more than 95 percent of infants in the United States were breast-fed by their mothers and children were not weaned until they were two to four years old. Today, about half the infants born in the United States are breast-fed, and breast-feeding duration is relatively short, about four months for most babies . . . . At least half the new mothers who opt for the bottle over breast-feeding say they are not willing to make the dietary changes necessary to facilitate breast-feeding, such as giving up cigarettes and alcohol . . . . One study showed that most women know that breast-feeding is better for babies, but they see it as less convenient and less modern than working with artificial formulas. Moreover, artificial feeding fits our Western cultural notion of nurturing an infant in a precise and measured way. (Small, 1998, p. 204-205)

The importance of breast-feeding for the infant is overshadowed by factors such as convenience. Well-meaning advice for parents often focuses on the "need" for babies to learn that they are separate beings from their parents and that their parents have their own needs (Nathanson, 1998), concepts which again are distinctly Western. The culmination of these child-rearing practices results in what in many other cultures would be considered an exceedingly low rate of physical contact.

American babies are accordingly denied the closeness and interaction experienced by many other babies in non-Western societies, learning from almost the beginning of their lives that biological needs are to be subordinated and that high levels of physical closeness with others is not forthcoming; consequently, they are well prepared to enter the American public school system, a system which is as reflective of cultural values as are child-rearing techniques, and a system which again subordinates biological need to cultural imperative. In fact, American babies are generally not permitted to be active participants in the determination of how they will be raised, even if their "requests" are based solely on biological need, any more than they will be allowed, once they are pupils in the public school system, to be active participants in the way that they will be educated. Instead, they are taught to "cry it out" as infants and "to be seen and not heard" as children. Children in America, after all, are considered hierarchically "below" adults and are thus considered unable to know what is best for themselves, no matter what their tears or stomachs might say. Yet the contradictory nature of their early cultural lessons cannot but have an impact.

### **DEVELOPMENTAL COMPETITION**

Even before a child's entry into the public school system, however, Western parents are encouraged to perceive their children as in competition with other children; again, a concept that is particularly Western:

During the early months of a baby's life, American parents . . . [are] concerned with developmental stages, and use the child's developing cognitive and motor skills to mark these stages. All parents are expected to know 'norms' for these stages and to measure their infants against the average. By and large, American parents gain information about norms from their pediatricians, usually white

middle-class male doctors – though this is changing – with little advanced training in child development . . . . (Small, 1998, p. 105)

Interestingly, the growth charts uniformly used today by most American pediatricians are based on a single cohort of white bottle-fed babies from Yellow Spring, Ohio, in a study that was undertaken over 40 years ago. In an example of the potential for negative, and in this case racializing, affects of comparisons of this nature, Latino babies born in America, who tend to be smaller than bottle-fed white babies (Small, 1998), are nonetheless charted according to these archaic data. “Using that curve to evaluate Latino babies may cause pediatricians to intervene in unnecessary and inappropriate ways. And how disturbing it must be for Latino parents to be shown that curve and made to feel that their baby is not healthy” (Small, 1998, p. 219). It is therefore not surprising that many babies do not fall within the expected “norms” and are sent home to be fed less or more, creating a vicious cycle of eating issues that may follow children into adulthood.

According to a recent PBS documentary (1998), the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget was asked so often by American parents how development could be sped up, that he came to refer to this as the “American question.” His answer, by the way, was that it should not be. Americans are even more focused on developmental competition than many other Westerners, however, and countless American articles and books are dedicated to telling parents how they can give their own children an edge over other children. All of the suggestions, incidentally, require either a more regulated use of time or space, or, more likely, the purchase of whatever learning devices are in vogue.

The amount of products and services – how-to books, software titles, learning centers, private tutoring programs – is stunning. Since 1991, Sylvan, one of the

first chains of storefront learning centers, has grown from 466 to 700 outlets across the country, with more than 124,000 students registered last year. . . . "The message we get from parents is not so much that they're frustrated with schools, but that they're frustrated with their child's performance," said Ray Huntington, who with his wife, Eileen, founded the first Huntington Learning Center . . . . There is so much educational software that stores cannot come close to stocking it all. . . . The hottest sellers are for children in preschool through third grade, and the target group seems to be getting only younger: the new "Jumpstart Baby" is for babies 9 to 18 months old. (Yardley, 1998)

These mass-produced products and services that are offered to parents reiterate the cultural priority of Americans that their children promptly reach developmental milestones. Furthermore, working-class parents are made to feel inferior due to the media's incessant insistence that "good" parents will purchase the "right" products to assure their children's success. Most working-class parents are already well-aware that their children are at a disadvantage. This sentiment is compounded by the culturally accepted concept that the purchase of expensive, unnecessary goods can make a difference in their children's lives, or can give their children a chance they might otherwise not have. Consequently, a capitalistic notion of money as equal to love or caring is fostered. Naturally, this culturally accepted notion marginalizes people who cannot or will not purchase the latest developmental tools.

As babies grow, they are readily compared with other babies in order to determine their levels of advancement. However, and somewhat ironically, it is not computer software or advanced courses that best secure a child's intellectual development, but the amount of physical contact the developing child has with her caretakers. "Many studies now show that the most powerful enhancers of brain development are the quality of the parent-infant attachment and the response of the caregiving environment to the cues of the

infant" (Sears and Sears, 1993). Essentially, these cumulative findings reveal that American child-rearing practices promoted by the experts foster *the exact opposite* of what they are designed to foster. Money and things, it appears, are not necessary to a child's development: people are, and love is. Interestingly, the American public school system mirrors this trend of fostering the exact opposite of what it is purportedly designed to foster: it creates alienating, racialized, cookie-cutter versions of reality, in most cases cutting off learning potential as well as individuality and creativity.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE SOLIDIFICATION OF ALIENATION AND DESIRE:**

### **THE AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM**

An education is considered to be the right of every American citizen, a representation of American freedom, and the key that will open the door to every citizen's successful future, regardless of ethnic heritage, gender, or economic standing. While education still may not necessarily be equal for all, an education is nevertheless made available, in some form, to virtually every American citizen, from the age of five through graduation from the twelfth grade, usually at age eighteen. In some cases, higher education is also provided, not only to those who have the means to pay for college, but, through scholarships and grants, to those who are not. Undeniably, an education is a powerful tool, one which has been documented to affect self esteem, earning potential, and social status. As such, an education provides academic knowledge, as well as the potential for social and personal enrichment.

However, the American educational system provides much more than an opportunity for the accumulation of culturally-endorsed knowledge: in addition, it serves as an introduction to the ways in which power is structured within American society. As discussed previously, one manifestation of power employs the vehicle of the gaze. The significance of visual observation as well as the ways in which it communicates power is readily expressed through the appointed usages of time and space, as well as the examination system, within American public schools. Somewhat inadvertently, in that schools were not overtly designed for these purposes, the simultaneous operation of time and space designation, reiterated and strengthened

through the examination system, fuse to prepare individuals for designated roles within the American workplace as well as within American culture.

Initially modeled after the English educational system (French, 1964), as the first American colonizers originated from England, the American educational system has undergone numerous changes since its inception during the colonial era. While the educational system is now an organized, highly mandated entity controlled largely by each state's government, and overseen by the federal government, this was not always the case. In fact, "both in England and in other western European lands from which the settlers came, it was the home and the church, not the state, that was primarily responsible for education. Home and family responsibility for education is as old as mankind" (French, 1964, p. 12).

By the twentieth century, education was decreasingly a matter of family and clergy members, and increasingly managed by the American government, albeit primarily at the state level. Immigration, urbanization, and technological advances, especially between 1890 and 1920 (Lazerson, 1987), contributed to the perception that education, like child-rearing, was a matter to be handled by experts. Before the advent of the twentieth century, however, a shift began toward the institutionalization of the educational system. Once colonies were well established, teaching emerged as somewhat of an actual profession, though not necessarily an esteemed one. Secondary teachers were often "literate or semiliterate widow[s] or spinster[s] who taught in their] own home[s], often in the kitchen" (French, 1964, p. 19). These informal arrangements were called dame schools, and their primary purpose was religious instruction "and sometimes simple writing and the

rudiments of arithmetic . . . . The dame school concept was imported from England, where it had long served to introduce children to their letters" (French, 1964, p. 28). Within the dame school, space and time were not highly regulated. In contrast, Latin schools, which had been established during the 1600's in order to educate young men in the Bible, were expressly designed to educate "young men for service in the state and church" (Lazerson, 1987, p. 24).

The legislature in an attempt to thwart Satan enacted that every town of fifty householders must maintain a teacher of reading and writing, and that every town with a hundred householders must provide a Latin grammar school to fit youths for the university. (Lazerson, 1987, p. 24)

Essentially, early education was designed to impede "'ye ould deluder, Satan'" (cited in Lazerson, 1987, p. 24) by educating youngsters (those who could as well as those who could not read the Latin Vulgate Bible) in the scriptures. Of secondary importance to the gleaning of biblical knowledge was an education in basic reading and writing, and occasionally, basic arithmetic.

By the twentieth century, secondary teachers were generally underpaid young women who had little education beyond that of their pupils and who were allowed to teach only until they were married (Lazerson, 1987); or, they were young men who lacked better prospects or were students themselves. Either way, teaching was considered rather a temporary, if not undistinguished, profession. Education was invariably imparted in designated spaces, schools, and for designated amounts of time, though children were often absent so they could work within or for their families, and the state did not readily prevent this. Organizational reforms that took place during the 1920's began to

restructure the educational system somewhat dramatically, however. No longer a casual affair, opted for by some, ignored by many, and with few established requirements and objectives, the educational system became one which emphasized “accountability procedures and IQ and standardized tests to measure abilities and learning, supervise teachers, and keep track of costs” (Lazerson, 1987, p. 81). By the twentieth century, education in America had become a multi-level institution with an established curriculum. The Latin grammar school was replaced by the academy (a school much more like the modern American school, with varied curricular topics ranging from geography to modern languages); select male students could then progress to the high school, and then on to the university, once they had met the entrance requirements, which generally compelled a solid grasp of Latin and, in some cases, a variety of classical subjects (French, 1964, p. 21-33).

In essence, the educational system was becoming bureaucratized, and unfortunately, as we have already seen, “bureaucracy in all cultures has a tremendous potential to be counterproductive” (Hall, 1989, p. 218). According to Margaret Haley, of the Chicago Teachers’ Federation, as early as 1904, “school bureaucracies undermined teachers’ initiative and professionalism by making them ‘automatons’ expected to ‘mechanically and unquestioningly perform their duties’” (cited in Lazerson, 1987, p. 34). While somewhat ironically (but not accidentally) these changes, and many more like them that continued to reformulate the educational system, directly mirrored similar changes which had been taking place within two other emerging institutions – the western prison and work systems (Foucault, 1995) – systems that were beginning to establish themselves within the American political system, as it became increasingly industrialized. As a direct

outgrowth of industrialization and a subsequent perception that bureaucratization was necessary to manage industrialized social systems, the changes relied upon a disciplinary visual subordination of workers, prisoners, and students, as well as of their supervisors, teachers, and colleagues, with the basic objectives of effective management of numerous people and activities. Essentially, industrialization created the perceived need for what Foucault (1995) calls “disciplinary space,” and as Foucault (1995) elaborates,

Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed. One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation . . . . Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organizes an analytical space. (p. 143)

Arguably, the engenderment of disciplinary space had a positive intent. Industrialization was new, fast, and highly orchestrated; in some cases, it held great risk. It threw large groups of people together: in some cases, people who were very unlike and had differing values and objectives. It is only to be expected that the idea of needing to watch all of these potentially conflicting bodies would be a natural outgrowth of the development of industrialized space. The possibility that someone may be watching and may subsequently reward or punish individuals who are observed was designed to generate desired behaviors, save money, and organize an increasingly complex network of organizations.

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF POWER THROUGH SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance and its interrelationship with the usage of time and space all address the designation of the body within its space. Surveillance, or visual observation, does not inflict physical harm, yet it nevertheless dwells specifically within the realm of the physical. Bartky (1988), in light of Foucault, states that “what is announced in the comportment of superiors is confidence and ease of access to the Other” (p. 74). In fact, surveillance requires that the bodies of those who are observed remain in designated places at designated times. Surveillance, as such, becomes a form of subordination, in that it requires submission to its expected designations. Moreover, surveillance represents the paragon of industrialization, in that it

. . . involves very little expense. There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost. (Foucault, 1980, p. 155)

The essential tenet of visual subordination is that the human object comes to accept the rule of its body and learns to mimic its own objectification, thus making itself, as Foucault stated, the “double recipient of domination.” Specifically, the regulation of bodies in relation to time and space, along with the surveillance necessary to assure that time and space designations are upheld, assures that individuals within the American public school system are prepared for distinctly delineated roles in American society. The public school system, in essence, is a microcosm of the workplace: a highly regulated social subsystem

bome of industrialization, in which competition is taught and classifications are exalted, and in which domination and subordination are fostered and developed.

As formerly stated, the public educational experience begins not only the socialization and educational processes of American citizens: it initiates a thorough introduction to existing power structures, and provides for its pupils a clear portrayal of subjectivity and objectivity. As with the elimination of the guild system within the work environment, which became prey to the changing demands of the industrialized work place, the subtle erosion of mutuality began early within the American system of public education; arguably, in fact, it evolved through the bureaucratization of public education.

As Foucault (1995) details,

If economic exploitation separates the force and the product of labour, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination.

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. They were at work in secondary education at a very early date, later in primary schools. . . . (p.138)

Foucault (1995) informs us that "a relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency" (p. 176). Efficiency is an inevitable requirement of industrialization, and is hence considered, in western society at large, as being of primary importance, not only within a subsystem that

is based upon profit, but within a subsystem that prepares children to take their assigned place within the political economy.

According to Deiter Misgeld (1988), quoting Horkheimer and Adorno, “Education in the new societies of mass production and consumption is a perversion of the intentions of the Enlightenment itself. In many instances, it has produced ‘technologically educated masses’ who have ‘an enigmatic readiness to fall under the sway of despotism’” (p. 85). Weiler (1988) concurs, stating that “in the case of advanced capitalist societies, those children whose subcultural knowledge most nearly matches the valued knowledge of the educational system will tend to be the most successful” (p. 10). Even before America could be considered an advanced capitalist society, in 1828, the establishment of the right to vote compelled those in power to find a way to assure that an American education would:

. . . raise up a generation that would not rock the boat of the republic by making the wrong choices. The necessity of a degree of education for all voters was shown by Thomas Cooper in 1829. He said that there were then abroad “notions that tend strongly toward an equal division of property, and the right of the poor to plunder the rich. The mistaken and ignorant people who entertain these fallacies as truths, will learn, when they have the opportunity of learning, that the institutions of political society originated in the protection of property.” There were many similar expressions to the effect that education was a conservative force, essential to the preservation of the then existing social order. (French, 1964, p. 55)

Specifically, the educational system has provided and continues to provide an introduction to the American power system, as well as its requisite values, and to the subjectivity and objectivity of the students and future workers. In essence, “the [educational] curriculum represents much more than a program of study, a classroom text, or a course syllabus. Rather, it represents the *introduction to a particular form of life; it serves in part to*

*prepare students for dominant or subordinate positions in the existing society*" (McLaren, 1989, p. 183). This point is reiterated by Darder (1991), who asserts that:

In the United States, as in all capitalist societies, the most politically powerful are those who control the bulk of society's resources. . . . This economic and institutional control is clearly perpetuated from generation to generation through the process of schooling, which is defined by the dominant society as a source of status. As such, the dominant culture strives systematically to control the structure of schooling and to ensure that its children are clearly placed in secure positions of power to enter controlling roles in American society. (p. 5)

Surveillance, as an outgrowth of industrialization, is a mechanism that, especially upon internalization, teaches those who fall within its realm that power lies behind the gaze, and that the competition that it inevitably fosters harbors the possibility of, if not recognition and advancement, then at least favor. Nevertheless, it simultaneously assures that favor will fall only to those who display the required knowledge, and who reiterate that knowledge in acceptable ways.

### **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DESIGNATED THOUGHT**

A crucial component of the American public educational process is the lesson of how to think, or, arguably, how not to think. The public educational system, in order to foster subordination and domination inherent in class roles and positions existent within American society, must train pupils for the roles they will assume in society. These roles include, in fact are defined by, a need to accept the system's structure as a given, a need to avoid questioning which could foster change except within the confines of the system, and a need to accept that the system is fair and equal. All of these needs are encompassed within critical inquiry, or the skill which allows students to question the status quo and its resultant affects. Critical inquiry, however, is not what the educational system fosters.

Education, like the mass media and ultimately the market, is part of an organized system to subvert the critical powers of insight and imagination. Students (learners), for example, are to be reconciled to a market society by accepting the possible choice between an array of goods as a real choice and by not contrasting it with an altogether different conception of choice or of relations between and the products of their work. (Misgeld, 1988, p. 80)

In other words, pupils are taught to consider the ability to earn money and hence have the “freedom” to chose on which items it shall be spent as true freedom, true choice, when in fact the parameters of this choice are strictly regulated by the system. This concept of choice, of freedom, has perpetually devastating consequences upon each generation of potential leaders, ensuring instead that a pattern of cyclic regression will assure that they will merely be a generation of increasingly passive followers. Specifically,

Unable to find meaningful knowledge ‘out there’ in the world of prepackaged commodities, students resort to random violence or an intellectual purple haze where anything more challenging than the late night news is met with retreat, or despair; and of course, it is the dominant culture that benefits most from this epidemic of conceptual anesthesia. The fewer critical intellectuals around to challenge its ideals, the better. (McLaren, 1989, p. 189)

Sadly, the educational system, designed at least in part to provide opportunity for all, actually strips its recipients of the ability to think critically about their world. Darder (2002) explains the objectifying nature of education when she postulates that:

To be considered a legitimate or valuable educator or student requires the willingness to conform to a standard and protocol rooted in the dominant cultural and class values of the educational system. It is this set of values which also then determines whether a student or teacher will be considered a “good fit” within most institutions. (p. 21)

The educational system teaches children to color inside the lines, never outside, where color might possibly look just fine, where new possibilities might just exist.

## EDUCATION AS SELF-REGULATION: THE BODY

Teaching students to assume their ordained roles within society requires teaching students not to question these roles. This alone, however, is not enough to assure their allegiance to the system. They must go a step further and in fact assume an active role in their domination. Participation in this manner assures not only an understanding of the status quo, but by extension, an acceptance of it. And as this participation cannot generate activity, it must instead generate a kind of passivity – a passivity that is ironically active, in that it involves actively giving up their potentiality as operative subjects and as potential social change agents.

One of the most significant lessons taught in school, consequently, is the lesson of self-objectification. For not only are students taught about the power structure and their roles within it, not only are students not taught to think critically, not to question their world and their roles within it, but they are taught to internalize the primary lesson they do learn: to accept and manage their own assimilation into the power structure. Paulo Freire (1970) recognizes the importance of the subordinate's role in her or his subordination, as displayed in the following passage: "Every act of conquest implies a conqueror and someone or something which is conquered. The conqueror imposes his objectives on the vanquished, and makes of them his possession. He imposes his own contours on the vanquished, who internalize this shape and become ambiguous beings 'housing' another" (p. 119). In other words, domination entails an active process, one which Freire identifies as internalization of the subjectivity of the subject. Misgeld (1988) concurs, stating that "for the instructional objectives movement, learners appear to be only

objects of instruction. They are not constructors of the learning process. . . ." (p. 90).

This objectification of the learner is hardly new. In fact, its history parallels the history of the shift from a guild to a surveillance system, wherein employees began to compete with each other and to be watched by each other, in order to enhance their own potential for promotion.

In preparation for codification into the hierarchical system of profit and exchange, the bodies of students are subjected to the same gaze apparatus as is the worker. Foucault (1980) mentions that "school discipline . . . succeeded in making children's bodies the object of highly complex systems of manipulation" (p.125). The importance of the physicalness of the body in the process of objectification cannot be overstated. Foucault (1980) declares that,

. . . the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but, on the other hand, its constitution as a labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection . . . (p. 25-26)

This passage reveals several critical components found within the educational system.

While the passage occurs in a discussion about prison, and while the reader's eye may be drawn to words like *torture*, no longer permitted in American schools, the body of the pupil is inarguably caught up in a series of highly regulated ceremonies and tasks, all of which require subordination to the tenets of the system, and all of which differentiate and classify students as well as their ability levels. This system of differentiation and

classification results in a self-consciousness: an awareness of the physicalness of the body as object; for “the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body” (Foucault, 1980, p. 26).

The practice of bodily subjugation is enhanced within the current climate via an excessive focus on “security,” even though, as Crews and Tipton (2002) clarify, “crime in America’s schools has been present since the first schools opened their doors in the mid-1600’s.” However, “as a result of ever-evolving technology and information exchange capabilities, these crimes are being made more common knowledge among the general public” (Crews and Tipton, 2002). In other words, media sensationalism has augmented fear – in some cases hysteria – enhancing the perceived importance of the bureaucratic gaze. Recently, for example, after raising the “terrorism alert level on Feb[ruary] 7 [2003] from yellow to high-risk orange” President George W. Bush “said Americans should relax and let the professionals do the worrying about keeping their communities safe from attack” (Loven, 2003). It is unlikely that such an “assurance” would counter the fears of American citizens; however, it is likely that it might generate greater support for war. The fear of bodily attack, and the vulnerability of the body, unsurprisingly tend to cause people to seek protection from something larger than themselves.

Furthermore, when a child gains an awareness of the body as a regulated force, she simultaneously learns that the body must be self-regulated. Children who can “control” themselves are praised. Yet self-objectification is not only transcribed along the body. A coexistent concept of “responsibility” entails not only recognizing the body as a manifestation of limitations, but also recognizing that subjectivity requires an important

mental component as well: self-objectification must involve an internalization of fear and doubt which readily translate into self-blame.

### **EDUCATION AS SELF-REGULATION: THE MIND**

A primary component of self-objectification is self-blame. When those within our society do not succeed, we are inculcated to believe it is an individual, not a social or political, fault. And this lesson begins, for many young members of our society, within the public school system. As McLaren (1989) states,

The dominant culture secures hegemony – the consent of the dominated – by supplying the symbols, representations, and practices of social life in such a way that the basis of social authority and the unequal relations of power and privilege remain hidden. By perpetrating the myth of individual achievement and entrepreneurship in the media, the schools, the church, and the family, for instance, dominant culture ensures that subordinated groups who fail at school or who don't make it into the world of the "rich and famous" will view such failure in terms of personal inadequacy. (p. 174)

This critical component of self-objectification presents itself in mimicry of *responsibility* constructed as self-blame. This component of the expression of the power structure protects and secures the status quo. After all, if we do not learn to think critically, if we learn that we are constituted as other within society, and if we consequently fail to succeed, we have no one to blame, so we are led to believe, but ourselves. In fact, "People with the most dominated, 'semiintransitive' consciousness have a fragmented, localized awareness of their situation and are unable to think dialectically about it. Therefore, they view their condition as caused by their own failure and/or by 'God'" (Frankenstein, p. 184).

Essentially, students within the American public educational system are taught to internalize their oppression by internalizing blame. They are not taught to take responsibility and the necessary subsequent accountability for their roles within society, only for their failure to succeed within an externally defined societal system. It is a given, if they are members of the objectified "class" of other, that they will fail. It is, in fact, expected of them. According to Darder (1991),

When bicultural students perform poorly, it is clearly considered the students' fault. The fact that the opportunities to succeed in the dominant culture are unequally distributed is ignored in the context of a traditional educational discourse. This individualization of responsibility serves effectively to diffuse class and race identity and interclass/race hostility. As such, it effectively provides an acceptable justification for the unequal distribution of resources in American society. (p. 6)

Darder recognizes the presentation of this self-objectification as *responsibility*: a trait considered an attribute in American society. What better way to secure a nation of followers who do not think critically than by providing in place of freedom and opportunity, a weak imitation of it? This sadly ironic manifestation of self-objectification cannot be considered a surprising outcome of classroom interaction, given the customary nature of classroom interaction.

Goodlad (1984), for example, found that not even 1 percent of the instructional time in high schools was devoted to discussion that 'required some kind of open response involving reasoning or perhaps an opinion from students.' As he notes, 'the extraordinary degree of student passivity stands out' (p. 229). (cited in Peterson, p.157)

Furthermore, according to one teacher,

... students have so few rights, they rarely develop responsibility. By fifth grade I get children who are so damaged by society that they are only able to behave if they are given no rights – even going to the pencil sharpener without having to ask

permission is too much for some to handle. This irresponsibility is rooted in the teacher-centered and textbook-driven curriculum which serves to disempower children. Because students are denied rights and kept from decision making throughout their school life. . . School life prevents them from developing the responsibility and self-discipline necessary to be independent thinkers and actors in our society. (Peterson, p. 163-164)

In addition, pseudo-liberal efforts to help students in most cases fail to recognize the impenetrability of the bureaucratic entrenchment of the educational system. Instead, they actually disempower students, heightening their awareness of their own vulnerabilities and their status within American society as second class citizens.

Consequently, assimilative expectations of conformity often veil a virulent discourse of what Freire called “false generosity” (1970), a feigned benevolent concern for the well being of culturally diverse or poor students that works to strip away their sense of identity and social power, often interfering with their very ability to act on their own behalf. The loss of self-determination and academic motivation that can result from difficult experiences with educational institutions constitutes one of [the] major causes for students’ dropping out of high school or withdrawing from universities. (Darder, 2002, p. 22)

The consequences of academic “failure” often enhance a cycle of powerlessness within the families of the disenfranchised, for “this is a social phenomenon that is linked to their further disempowerment, particularly when their failure to ‘become educated’ seriously impedes their full participation in the labor force and community life” (Darder, 2002, p. 22).

### **THE VEHICLES OF THOUGHT: TIME, SPACE, AND THE EXAMINATION SYSTEM**

Several additional components of the public school system directly perpetuate objectification, domination, and student passivity and subordination to prevailing social values and expectations. These factors, in actuality, reveal the extent to which the

American public school system has become entrenched in its own limitations, and more interestingly, the extent to which it has become an almost inalterable system, with issues which no amount of curriculum reform can adjust. They furthermore reveal the various manifestations of the surveillance system, or, more precisely, the exact methodologies whereby the body becomes a field of objectivity, subject to exact limitations and expectations.

The first factor to be discussed is the limitation of the school structure to the timetable, which demands exact activities at precise times. The second is the architecture of the school – not only its design, but the way in which the actual classroom is set up, with desks in rows and a larger desk belonging to the teacher at the front of the classroom. The third is the examination system, which pits students against each other in competition and tests exact knowledge defined beyond the classroom exchange, and which relies on both time and space boundaries. Each of these factors contributes to the ordering of bodies and the subordination of critical thought. And it is through the vehicle of surveillance, or the ability to visually monitor the usage of time, space, and the taking of tests, that subjectivity and objectivity are established.

## TIME

According to Hall (1989), in Western society, “with the exception of birth and death, all important activities are scheduled” (p. 19). In the American public school, classes run for an exact set of minutes, are greeted and terminated with the ring of an alarm-like bell, cover a precise set of curricular activities, and require that no one be late or leave early. Every classroom is generally equipped with a large clock that has a white

face and black hands; many of us may be able to recall watching a similar clock as we begged for the minutes to go by more quickly. Hall (1989) further informs us that,

... everything must be done according to the clock and the calendar. Ear-shattering bells, even in universities, remind you not only of every hour but that there is an administration that runs things. Class periods, of course, bear no known relationship to the time required to deal with a given subject, to say nothing of the particular state of the class at the moment the bell rings . . . The first lesson the student learns is the culturally important point that schedules are sacred and rule everything. (p. 209)

Moreover, the school timetable structures an activity list which rivals that of the military or the prison, systems designed to provide what Foucault (1995) refers to as “an infinitesimal power over the active body” (p. 137). These timetables produce disciplined bodies, and discipline

... produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes the same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an ‘aptitude’, a ‘capacity’, which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. (Foucault, 1975, p. 138)

What this passage reveals is the impact that the school system, far beyond which books are taught or how much ability the teacher has to influence the classroom environment, has upon the bodies of those who are a part of it. It produces docile pupils who are structured in terms of economic utility, in terms of how well they can be organized within the prevailing social and political system. It produces individuals who are disassociated and subordinated.

In terms of individuals in prisons, we tend to think of this docility as a positive measure of how well the individual, previously outside the bounds of acceptability, has

been made to conform, to fit within the framework which has been designated for her. In terms of the military, we tend to think of this as a positive measure of how well the individual functions as a part of a larger whole and is subjected to a higher knowledge, with the ultimate outcome of protecting us all. In terms of the school system, we tend to think of this as a positive measure designed to train and mold pupils to function within society at large, to become “productive citizens” – a term which designates successful subordination to the system. The timetable, the architecture of the schools, and the examination system all contribute to the production of docile bodies, but the precise way in which the timetable addresses the issue has to do specifically with the concept of keeping bodies engaged in structured activities and thus avoid the “wasting” of time (Foucault, 1995).

The ‘seriation’ of successive activities makes possible a whole investment of duration by power: the possibility of a detailed control and a regular intervention (of differentiation, correction, punishment, elimination) in each moment of time; the possibility of characterizing, and therefore of using individuals according to the level in the series that they are moving through; the possibility of accumulating time and activity, of rediscovering them, totalized and usable in a final result, which is the ultimate capacity of an individual . . . Power is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use. (Foucault, 1975, p. 160)

As well, the structuring of time allows the objectifying gaze to maintain its power, for the gaze registers difference and classifies as other. It is a distinctly Western construct, one to which immigrant and indigenous children often have difficulty adjusting, for “[t]he Europeans who inhabited the North American continent imposed their time system on everything, organic and inorganic alike. . . . children are supposed to walk and talk and go to school at certain ages. [In contrast, f]or the Hopi, every living thing has its own

inherent time system . . ." (Hall, 1989, p. 145). In fact, peoples who are marginalized as other within American society often differentiate between mainstream time and their own sense of time. In speaking of the mainstream concept of time, Hall (1990b) confirms that "we are driven by our own way of looking at things to synthesize almost everything. Whenever we have to deal with people whose time systems lack this isolate of synthesisity we experience great difficulty. To us it's almost as if they were missing one of their senses . . ." (p. 144). Clearly, Hall recognizes the imperialist nature of such a thought process, but marginalized peoples often wonder why they feel "out of sync" within mainstream American society. Hall (1990b) presents a telling rendition of this phenomenon in contrasting mainstream time and Hopi time:

For people raised in the European tradition time is something that occurs between two points. *Duration* is the most widely shared implicit assumption concerning the nature of time in the Western world. It seems inconceivable to those of us who have learned to take this one isolate so much for granted that it would be possible to organize life in any other way. Yet . . . the Hopi are separated from us by a tremendous cultural gulf. Time, for example, is not duration but many different things for them. It is not fixed or measurable as we think of it, nor is it quantity. (p. 142-3)

For the Hopi, time does not exist. Events do, seasons do, but time as some sort of commodity does not. In contrast, time is a determination of power in Western society: it classifies and measures, it can be gained, lost, even saved for later.

Within the framework of the timetable, power has the legitimated means of differentiating by structuring and classifying who is on time, who is late, who completes the required work in the allotted time, who does not. It confers the power of the gaze upon the teacher or administrator, who must watch pupils to assure that the timetable is

properly adhered to. It objectifies the pupil, who must adhere to its parameters. Yet it actually establishes a complex net of gazes, in that the timetable requires the same restrictions of parents, who must see that pupils arrive and depart on time, as well as complete home projects within an allotted time (thus permeating the home and private life of each student); it requires the same restrictions of administrators, who must be a visible presence on the school grounds and must appear in offices and hallways; and it restricts teachers to classrooms and topics of discussion, not allowing any activity to carry on for too long, no matter how significant the progress being made, no matter how close to understanding a concept a student might be. “In discussing time in the West, it is important not to forget that, without schedules, industrial society would be unknown” (Hall, 1989, p. 136). Essentially, time assures that no one faction has too much leeway, too much control, too much freedom.

## SPACE

Sadly, it is often difficult to tell the difference between a school and a prison from the outside of the buildings, other than by looking at the fence to see if there is barbed wire atop it. Hall (1989) defines school buildings as “spatially ambiguous” (p. 202), and asks us to “consider the effect on young children of designing thousands of school buildings so that they look the same no matter from which angle one approaches, as well as the consequences of school interiors that offer a minimum of orienting cues” (p. 201). There are few buildings that rival the common public school when it comes to drabness and conformity. Row upon row of identical rooms with small (if any) windows are housed in drab buildings with numbers placed on the outside of the doors so that a student

can tell one room from another. While some colors are known to stimulate the mind or facilitate a feeling of calm, these are seldom the colors of the school room, which is usually painted beige or a dismal light yellow.

The architecture of the public school compounds both the production of complacent bodies and the complex net of restricting, objectifying gazes. Schools are designed according to the architecture of the gaze: “to render visible those who are inside it . . . an architecture that would operate to transform individuals . . . to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them” (Foucault, 1995, p. 172). When Foucault (1995) describes the school modeled in the seventeenth century, he describes the public school system as it still exists, with rooms “distributed along a corridor like a series of small cells”(p. 172-173). Traditionally and most commonly, public schools house rooms that hold sets of desks in rows, an eating room which organizes the bodies of students and allows pupils to be observed, lavatories which allow “the supervisor on duty [to] see the head and legs of the pupils, and also with side walls sufficiently high ‘that those inside cannot see one another’” Foucault (1995); Foucault (1995) further affirms that in fact: “A relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency” (p. 176).

Indispensably, classrooms allow administrators to watch teachers and teachers to watch students, with the ultimate objective of assuring that everyone is doing what everyone is supposed to be doing, at the time that everyone is allotted to perform a

complex, clearly defined set of activities, from learning history to eating and eliminating. Desks are generally set up in the classroom so that teachers can see all students but students must turn to see each other, hence establishing the perception of the need for supervision; the dependence of students on the teacher, as opposed to each other or themselves, for learning; and the associated passivity and subservience inherent in the learning dynamic. The teacher, with the biggest desk, is generally situated directly in front of the students so that she can see them all; sometimes, she has a desk in the back which allows her to see them without being seen. She is subjected to the same objectification, in that she generally has to turn to see if she is being observed by an administrator, and in some cases can be observed unawares by surveillance cameras, increasingly popular in American public schools. Desks are situated far enough apart so that bodies cannot readily come into unobserved contact with each other, and sometimes a system of merit or behavior control determines which seat belongs to which student. Students are generally not permitted to get up and walk about at will, any more than the teacher is allowed to leave the classroom at will, any more than the administrator is allowed to leave the campus or in some cases enter a classroom at will. The rows make it easy for the teacher to reach any student and to walk among them while they are taking exams, a practice which again subjects them to an objectifying gaze.

While the aforementioned organizational components of the school buildings and rooms provide enough reason for students' senses to be dulled, there are yet more spatial restrictions placed upon them, in that they must, seemingly at all costs, be still: something which children were hardly designed to do. In fact, Hall (1989) informs us that:

. . . man evolved as an extremely active species, and his need to constantly exercise his body is ever-present and profound. Sitting regimented at desks according to predetermined, fixed schedules is no way to treat a primate capable of running up to a hundred miles in one day. . . . the way children are treated in schools is sheer madness. Those who can't sit still are stuck with the hyperactive label and treated as anomalies and frequently drugged. (p. 205)

How aptly Hall identified a trend all the more prevalent today, as school children are now readily labeled as ADD or ADHD; moreover, these children are promptly prescribed medication, often at the recommendation of the teacher, with such frequency that journalist John Lang calls them "Generation Rx" (cited in Virtue, 1999). Hall (1989) further tells us that "[s]itting still in confined places is one of the worst punishments that can be inflicted on the human species. Yet this is what we require of students in school" (p. 211). Is it any surprise that students often hate school? Why should they like it any more than a prisoner likes the prison?

That children become unruly under such circumstances should actually be expected. However, by overcrowding children, the challenge is compounded. While not all American public schools are considered to be overcrowded, what determines the appropriate size of a learning community? One might guess that in order to determine the ideal school and learning group size, a series of research studies might be conducted. And indeed they have been (Hall, 1989). However, the results of such studies are not even considered in the determination of class and school size. Instead, we simply pack in as many children as we can legally get away with, and sometimes more, when granted a waiver for "due cause": exactly the same thing that occurs in the prison system. As Hall (1989) asserts, when it comes to schools,

. . . size is valued. Big schools are considered better than little ones. . . The pressure to consolidate is unending regardless of how much time is spent in buses or the conclusive evidence that smaller schools (six hundred or less) produce happier and more productive, socially conscious responsible citizens. (p. 209)

Clearly, the way in which space is designated within the school system can do none other than produce docile, bored individuals who expect so little out of a work place or job, given their experiences in the school, that they can readily toil away their lives at meaningless jobs, as so many American citizens do, according to a plethora of research on job satisfaction.

### EXAMINATIONS

Some form of evaluation occurs at every level of Western society, beginning, as we have already seen, with developmental stages of babies. "How well am I driving?" ask stickers on the back of nearly every service vehicle on the road. "Calls may be monitored for quality assurance purposes," computerized voices assure us when we call virtually any service organization. These evaluations, even the mere potential of evaluation, subject American workers to yet another complex net of gazes, and, in many cases, allow citizens to participate in the construct of the bureaucratic gaze via the opportunity to call a "1-800" number to report what they see. Even students often labor under the gaze of the surveillance camera. We may be watched; we may be heard. These facts allow us to internalize the understanding that we had all better behave. Within the school system, examinations provide administrators and teachers the means to punish students who do not please them and reward those who do; as such, the examination functions as epitome of the bureaucratic gaze. Furthermore, examinations introduce students to the concept

that they are ultimately not comrades but are instead competitors. The examination, in fact,

... combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanisms of discipline, the examination is highly ritualized. In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth. At the heart of the procedures of discipline, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected. The superimposition of power relations and knowledge relations assumes in the examination all its visible brilliance. (Foucault, 1995, p. 184-185)

The examination, while both judging and classifying, objectifies and subjugates. It is a process whereby the power of the system plays itself out upon the bodies of the pupils, forcing them to conform physically (in that exams are, if not timed, at least subject to a limited space and the inability to leave that space until the exam is completed) and mentally (in that a defined, set knowledge is tested which may not accurately reflect a pupil's understanding of the material at hand). The materials at hand, in fact, are assuredly reflective of

... the values, worldview, and belief system of the dominant culture's middle and upper classes, while it neglects and ignores the lived experiences of subordinate cultures. Hence, students of color are silenced and their bicultural experiences negated. . . while they are systematically educated into the discourse of the dominant culture. (Darder, 1991, p. 68)

Hall (1989) concurs:

In the United States, whites are most typically brought up in some version of the northern European tradition. This makes problems for everyone else, because educators, like the missionaries of the past, practice an unconscious form of cultural imperialism which they impose indiscriminately on others. . . We in the West are convinced that we have a corner on reality. . . and that other realities are

simply superstitions or distortions brought about by inferior or less developed systems of thought. This gives us a “right to free them from ignorance and make them like us.” (p. 206)

The examination is the manifestation of power translated into values: the values of which knowledge is deemed essential. It is the acknowledgment of domination which culminates in the product generated by the examinee: whether a written or oral performance. The examination is “the technique by which power, instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification. In this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially, by arranging objects. The examination is, as it were, the ceremony of this objectification” (Foucault, 1995, p. 187). Examinations are essentially a form of reward and punishment, and they remove any requirement that students glean meaning from what they learn.

Teachers often joke about telling a meaningful story in class, only to be asked, “Will this be on the test?” Yet a student question such as this can hardly be considered surprising, for only examinations certify effectiveness. Nothing else means much of anything. As Hall (1989) so aptly informs us, “Somehow, in the United States we have managed to transform one of the most rewarding of all human activities [learning] into a painful, boring, dull, fragmenting, mind-shrinking, soul-shriveling experience” (p. 207). The examination system turns the potential for learning into the need to memorize facts and to communicate them in acceptable forms, under stressful pressure, and in competition with others, with whom one might, instead, collaborate.

Imagine if students in school were rewarded for working well with others, or for contributing a fresh perspective to a standardized curricular viewpoint. How different

would the educational climate be if instead of receiving high grades for copying word for word the contents of one section of an encyclopedia in a “report,” students were rewarded for connecting their experiences or the experiences of their families or communities to their curriculum, thus allowing them to learn that their experiences and lives have meaning, and to learn that our differences are interesting and positive? This is not to say that the American educational system does not offer the occasional opportunity for original thought. Most schools, for example, have an annual science fair, for which students may create an original display. However, this process is often removed from regular curricular activities; students must create the projects on their own time, in competition with each other, and most projects require the time and financial input of parents. Children of working-class or non-academically oriented parents need not apply.

A more subtle yet common form of competition relates to the everyday values expressed and endorsed in the classroom. Darder (2002) mentions that “the hidden culture of the ‘imaginary ideal’ powerfully influences the way teachers think and talk about ‘smart students,’ ‘caring parents,’ or ‘loving homes’” (p. 18). Specifically, for example, children in secondary school sometimes have the opportunity to share personal experiences when such experiences seem “worthy” of class time. In this way, teachers often wish to “connect” with students and engage in a real experience with them. However, because the teachers’ and students’ upbringings and curricular knowledge reinforce the importance of capitalism, having and spending money are often inadvertently highlighted. Students who travel to vacation Meccas or visit expensive theme parks are often reinforced for sharing stories related to their travels. Teachers tend to share their

most “exciting” educational experiences as well. Students who see the latest movies, obtain expensive or rare pets, or engage in expensive sports, such as horseback riding, boating, or skiing, are habitually encouraged to share their experiences with the group. Conversely, is the student who held his dying grandmother’s hand and helped his family through this painful ordeal encouraged to share his story? If he mentions it, his story may be ignored, or he may be sent to the counselor’s office as if something is wrong with him. Is the student who baby-sits her two younger siblings each day encouraged to tell her story? Is the immigrant student whose family lives in her aunt and uncle’s garage encouraged to tell the class how she spends her time? Obviously not.

In school, children learn that life is supposed to be a series of fun, expensive, upper middle-class activities, emphasizing things instead of relationships. These continually reinforced values, coupled with the depersonalizing nature of school in general, effectively prepares students to “work hard” so that they can buy this kind of a lifestyle for themselves and their own families some day.

As a form of legitimization, this view of authority appeals to an established cultural tradition, whose practices and values appear beyond criticism. Authority, in this case, represents an idealized version of the American Dream reminiscent of nineteenth-century dominant culture in which “the tradition” becomes synonymous with hard work, industrial discipline, and cheerful obedience. It is a short leap between this view of the past and the new conservative vision of schools as crucibles in which to forge industrial soldiers fueled by the imperatives of excellence, competition, and down-home character. In effect, for the new conservatives, learning approximates a practice mediated by strong teacher authority and a student willingness to learn the basics, adjust to the imperatives of the social and economic order, and exhibit what Edward A. Wynne calls the traditional moral aims of “promptness, truthfulness, courtesy, and obedience.” (Giroux, 1988, p. 71)

By the time they graduate from high school, students know where they are going. They may not know what jobs they will have, but if they are privileged, they know that the world essentially belongs to them. If they are disenfranchised, they know that the world does not belong to them. Privileged students expect to lead, marginalized students expect to follow, and all students are entrenched in the values of the dominant culture.

The values at the heart of such character formation have been provided by secretary Bennett in his listing of the Reagan administration's most desirable moral characteristics. These include: "thoughtfulness, kindness, honesty, respect for the law, knowing right from wrong, respect for parents and teachers, diligence, self-sacrifice, hard work, fairness, self-discipline and love of country." (Giroux, 1988, p. 43)

In school, children learn the tenets of delayed gratification; they learn to behave. They learn that relentless desire is a normal state of affairs, and that, as one popular bumper sticker proclaims, "the one who dies with the most toys wins." They are therefore primed to enter the workforce, wherein gratification, of course, will be delayed, and wherein they will be reinforced for behaving much as they have behaved in school: if they sit still at their desks all day and behave as they should, they will eventually get to go home.

### **THE FINAL LESSON: GET A JOB!**

The world of American work is not at all unlike the world of American school. Like the world of American school, the American corporate workplace reinforces culturally accepted norms, reinforces the subordination of body and mind, and supports inflexible time and space boundaries. In fact, time and space are as rigidly structured as they were in the school room, with the added caveat that "time" is now "money." Time and space both represent money, and by extension power, in that the world of work is

structured by periods of waiting for and responding to others, much as the world of school is. According to Hall (1989), “organizations, particularly business and government bureaucracies, subordinate man to the organization, and they accomplish this mainly by the way they handle space-time systems” (p. 20). Hall (1990b) furthermore confirms that “people of the Western world, particularly Americans, tend to think of time as something fixed in nature, something around us and from which we cannot escape; an ever-present part of the environment, just like the air we breathe” (p. 6). Hall (1990b) maintains that time therefore becomes a commodity, “handled much like a material; we earn it, spend it, save it, waste it” (p. 7).

As can be expected, time also represents power, as exemplified in the complex, yet unspoken rules of who keeps whom waiting and for how long. In the world of public education, students spend a great deal of time waiting. They are virtually powerless to control what they do with their time. Time is hence an issue of authority. In the world of business, the ability to make someone wait is also a sign of power. A job applicant, for example, would readily wait twenty minutes for an interview – much like a student might wait for the school principal – whether she received an explanation or an apology, or not. An interview committee, however, would be much less likely to wait twenty minutes for an applicant, and in the rare case that they might, would expect profuse apologies and an excellent explanation. (A school administrator, of course, would never be made to wait for a mere student.) The interview committee is representative of power; together, they represent the corporation, something larger than themselves. The applicant is on the outside, representing nothing more than herself. As such, she does not represent a

collective power, a system. The same time parameters would hold true for a meeting between an executive and her subordinate. The subordinate might expect to wait twenty minutes, possibly without explanation or apology; whereas a subordinate would never keep her superior waiting for that long without an explanation and an apology, if she expected to keep her job.

An additional way in which power is displayed is in both how the time is spent in these circumstances, as well as what space is utilized. A prospective employee might be given a small chair in an outer office, perhaps among other hopeful applicants, again, almost as if she were a student waiting to see the school principal. While she waits, she might review her application materials or thumb through a magazine, but one would not expect to see her conducting business of any sort. Her time belongs to the committee. In contrast, the committee is ensconced within a large, private room; their space, as representing the space of the system, is not subject to unexpected invasion or strict time constraints. Generally, if a committee needs more time, or perceives it needs more time, the committee gets it, unless the law intervenes as a higher authority, meaning that a rule or law prohibits more time given to one candidate over another, for example. While representatives of the institution, they are expected to conduct institutional work – interviewing and reviewing candidates. Their time is much less structured than the applicant's. They may decide to take a break, for example, thus keeping the applicant waiting longer still. One would hardly expect the applicant to rise before meeting the committee and announce to the secretary that she intends to grab a quick lunch and will be right back. The same confines of time and space would structure a meeting between an

executive and her subordinate. The executive could be anywhere while the subordinate waits; she might be in her office, off site, or in another space. She has power over her space as representative of the system; as long as she belongs to the system and does its work, she has the power of determining her space to a greater extent than the subordinate. This is not to say that her space is not rigidly structured; it is. She cannot be sunning herself in her back yard, for example, or loudly playing computer games. The subordinate, however, must confine herself to a much smaller space – a waiting space – such as a chair in an outer room that is not likely to be private. Furthermore, she is expected to wait in the same fashion as is the applicant, without leaving or conducting other work, other than quiet paper review, ideally in preparation for the meeting. While the supervisor might make a quick call to a family member in the privacy of her office, for the subordinate to do the same thing in the outer office, even if using her own cellular telephone, would be considered rude. The subordinate might have to wait while the supervisor uses her time in some other fashion; the supervisor would never be expected to do so. Again, this pattern of human interactions is reflective of the power-imbued relationships of the school. If a student finishes an assignment or an examination early, for example, she usually must remain at her desk, doing nothing. Her time is not her own.

### **WORK AS SELF-DOMINATION: THE BODY AND MIND OBJECTIFIED**

Given the extent to which the American corporation has been revered and modeled, one might assume that it is exceptionally effective and productive, that its citizens function uniformly toward the good of the order, and that time and space, if rigidly structured, are inexorably optimized. However, this is not the case, for space is

hardly optimized and time is not often spent efficiently. Instead, the system objectifies and subordinates its workers, in some cases, at the actual expense of immediate additional profit. Workspace, for example, is structured in such a way that employees are objectified and contained, much as they inevitably were as school children. In fact, the school desk, with its tiny surface and organized as part of a neat row, is remarkably like the modern office space. Hall (1990a) conducted a study of American office space in *The Hidden Dimension* in which he found that space was generally limited to such an extent that it impeded the well-being of the worker:

In America, the conventional idea of the space needed by office employees is restricted to the actual space required to do the job. Anything beyond the minimum requirement is usually regarded as "frill." The concept that there may be additional requirements is resisted, at least in part because of the American's mistrust of subjective feelings as a source of data. (p. 52)

What this passage divulges is that the way a worker *feels* in a space is considered irrelevant. The well-being of the worker is secondary to the work to be done, exactly as the well-being of the student is secondary to the academic tasks to be mastered. Interestingly, this usage of space contrasts most sharply with the executive office. In the executive office, space is considered a sign of prestige: the more of it, and the more sparsely decorated, the better. This means there is space to *waste*, and waste, sadly, is a sign of affluence. Space, in the American workplace, is power: to gain space is to gain power. Edward T. Hall (1990b) in *The Silent Language* sees this "need" for space as endemic to Western culture. He argues that "Salesmen and distributors have their own territories which they will defend like any other living organism . . . To have territory is to have one of the essential components of life; to lack one is one of the most precarious

of all conditions" (p. 44). And as anyone who has ever set foot in a modern American school knows, territory is of primary importance there as well. Students all have their assigned spaces, and they are certainly not supposed to be in the "wrong" place at the "wrong" time.

The ways in which space is structured hence serves to objectify the worker, quite like school space is designed to objectify the pupil. She is confined, and generally, she is readily observable. Like the schoolroom, the workplace organizes bodies in rigid fashion, subjecting them in most cases to strict monitoring within limited space. Foucault (1980) discusses the integration of a system of surveillance designed to objectify the working class that penetrated workshops and factories as an outgrowth of the Industrial Revolution. He identifies the main incentive as profit, although perhaps, objectification of the worker's body, and the power that signifies, is at least equally important. Regardless, what the workers lose in this shift from a guild system is their subjectivity; their position shifts from member of a working partnership to commodity. For as Foucault (1980) elucidates,

. . . although the workers preferred a framework of a guild type to this new regime of surveillance, the employers saw that it was indissociable from the system of industrial production, private property and profit . . . Surveillance thus becomes a decisive economic operator both as an internal part of the production machinery and as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power. (p. 175)

The concept of internalized law, as previously outlined, thus readily comes into play. The workers lose the camaraderie essential to guild framework and become instead competitors, exactly as they were at school. They must therefore watch themselves and

each other in order to vie for the position of pseudo-power created by the superimposed hierarchy.

Once the worker becomes a separate entity, competing with others rather than cooperating within a group, then she becomes much less threatening to those in power. “Every man for himself,” “Only the fittest survive,” and “Pay your dues” are the popular catch phrases that indirectly instruct the worker that the factory, the company, and the power wielders must be worshipped because “only the fittest” workers are promoted to positions of pseudo-power. The worker thus learns that other workers are competitors for the grand reward of financial gain. The surveillance system serves to divide and conquer the working class, thus assuring those in power that workers will never unify and rob them of their profits. As Foucault (1980) explicates,

Hierarchized, continuous and functional surveillance may not be one of the great technological ‘inventions’ of the eighteenth century, but its insidious extension owed its importance to the mechanisms of power that it brought with it. By means of such surveillance, disciplinary power became an ‘integrated’ system, linked from the inside to the economy and to the aims of the mechanism in which it was practiced. (p. 176)

Furthermore, bureaucratization holds the apparatus in place; this “integrated system” moves beyond the confines of those who created and ostensibly control it, as bureaucracies have already been shown to do, and thus strengthens itself, beyond the control of the corporation. The “mechanisms of power,” therefore, exceed the corporation. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) conceptualize this process as one linked specifically to capitalism: “The more the capitalist machine deterritorializes . . . the more its ancillary apparatuses, such as government bureaucracies and the forces of law and

order, do their upmost to reterritorialize" (p. 34-35). Essentially, the concept of space is thereby broadened to supercede the corporation; as a "territory," it becomes a mere part of a larger whole, a space within a space. As such, power is clearly seen to be unobtainable by any given individual, for all possible territories are superceded by larger, all encompassing territories, none of which any one person can be said to own or control. Foucault (1980) illustrates this territorialization, epitomized by the gaze, as at work within the corporation, thus rendering power intangible:

... although surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally; this network 'holds' the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another: supervisors, perpetually supervised. The power in the heirarchized surveillance of the disciplines is not possessed as a thing, or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machinery. And, although it is true that its pyramidal organization gives it a 'head', it is the apparatus as a whole that produces 'power' and distributes individuals in this permanent and continuous field. (p. 176-177)

As such, the body is objectified via the gaze: in the world of work, supervision by observation has become a standard, unquestioned right of the corporation and its entities. Like students at work under the glassy gaze of the surveillance camera, workers accept this objectifying gaze. They are already used to it. And as in the classroom, the time of the individual, as well as her space, is not considered her own; the institution is thus perceived as having the right to assure that the employee's time and space parameters are properly adhered to.

Because American citizens are conditioned – from childhood, through school, and into adulthood – to accept internal and external objectification for a purported higher good, the losses that such a lifestyle entails are inevitably rationalized. This rationalization

process justifies and extends the corequisite process of delayed gratification. We work because we *want*, expecting and synonymously accepting that corporate work is often depersonalizing and insulting to one's sense of integrity and ability. Most Americans work because they "have to," much like they attended school because they had to. In fact, they must work in order to buy more things and support a lifestyle that in many countries would be considered to border on kingly in the ever enduring cycle of unfulfilled desire. As such, people will spend their entire working lives toiling away at jobs they despise, for the few moments of pleasure they get during time off. According to Leidloff (1991):

In civilization, a frequent outcome of the operating of the system is constant misery. Too often, long-unfulfilled needs press from within while circumstances press from without for which we have inadequate preparation or maturity. We are living lives for which our evolution did not equip us, and we are also handicapped, in our attempts to cope, by faculties crippled by personal depravation. (p. 137)

When living at Walden Pond, Henry David Thoreau made the observation that "most men lead lives of quiet desperation." Rabbi Harold Kushner (1986) agrees, stating that:

... society applauds this imbalance, honoring us for our financial success, praising us for our self sacrifice . . . Forces in society won't let us become whole people because we are more useful to them when one small part of us is overdeveloped. Like hunting dogs who have been trained to bring back game birds in their mouths without taking a bite out of them, we have become useful to society by denying our own healthy instincts. (p. 25)

By throwing ourselves into the depersonalizing, alienating world of work and becoming a cog in the great corporate machine, we lose ourselves in the identity of mainstream, socially acceptable values. We don't have to think, we don't have to feel, we just have to work – exactly as we once had to do in school.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### REINFORCEMENT OF ALIENATION AND DESIRE: THE AMERICAN CINEMA

Walter Wink (1992), in his highly acclaimed prize-winning text entitled *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*, asserts that “nothing is more rare, or more truly revolutionary, than an accurate description of reality” (p. 89). Instead of lauding reality, or anything even remotely revolutionary, a variety of factors within American society work to reinforce the status quo, alienate marginalized peoples, and enhance self-objectification, thus ensuring that everyone remains in her appointed place. Consequently, American citizens are not taught to think critically or creatively nor to work collectively. Instead, they are estranged from themselves and each other. Alienation inevitably produces a longing for connection, for unconditional acceptance. Because neither of these is readily forthcoming from mainstream society at large, especially for marginalized peoples, desire inevitably remains in their place. Essentially, we *want* because we *lack*. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) clarify this concept exceptionally well:

In point of fact, if desire is the lack of the real object, its very nature as a real entity depends upon an “essence of lack” that produces the fantasized object. . . . this means that the real object that desire lacks is related to an extrinsic natural or social production, whereas desire intrinsically produces an imaginary object that functions as a double of reality, as though there were a “dreamed-of object behind every real object,” or a mental production behind all productions. . . . desire is regarded as what produces the fantasy and produces itself by detaching itself from the object, though at the same time it intensifies the lack by making it absolute: an “incurable insufficiency of being,” an “inability-to-be that is life itself.” (p. 25-26)

Desire, then, has no literal connection to a given object; instead, desire is a function of social production. Under these conditions of social production, Rene Descartes’

theory might be refined to assert: “I desire; therefore, I am.” The social production of desire, as can be expected, is readily generated through the gaze, as the look that objectifies also classifies, effectively categorizing all it sees according to dualistic values such as “good” and “evil.” Furthermore, social conditions such as these do not foster relationships; they foster consumption. What is good must be consumed; what is evil must be destroyed or converted into good. The ultimate consumer good hence becomes the human body, thereby validating Lacan’s (1977) conceptualization that “man’s desire is the desire of the Other” (p. 264). The other is hence articulated as object. Nowhere is this objectification more prevalently reinforced than in the American media, for, as Darder (2002) insists,

Over the course of the twentieth century the media have come to occupy an increasingly central role in the formation of individual and collective identities and in shaping the aesthetics and politics of a generation. In today’s world, it is impossible for teachers to fully grasp the insidious process of racialization, sexism, and other forms of ideological distortions without noting the overwhelming impact of the media on the manner in which students come to make sense of their world. Through its captivating influence and fictitious representations of “difference,” the media function effectively to sustain through commonsense approval the ideology of social and economic domination. (p. 18)

### **THE CINEMATIC GAZE: WOMAN AS OTHER**

One medium through which the objectifying, dualistic gaze is most reinforced is the cinema. Traditional filmic renditions of human interactions tend to constitute the patriarch as sole possessor and manipulator of a power-structuring gaze, portraying people of color, women, children, and the disabled, for example, as incapable of authentic, socially endorsed subjectivity. Women, in particular, are objectified and fetishized within American film to such an extent that their humanity is marginalized. Kaja Silverman

(1988) contends that “it is no coincidence that the history of cinema has coincided with the ever-increasing specularization of woman . . . cinema has contributed massively to what might be called the ‘revisualization’ of sexual difference” (p. 24). Mulvey (1985) concurs:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. . . . [Woman] holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire. (p. 309)

The message that portrayals such as these send to viewers is that women are mere objects.

A message such as this is readily internalized by students, for as Darder (2002) affirms,

From popularized cartoon images to the values of family sitcoms to the “cool” representations of athletes and movie stars, students are barraged daily with conflicting notions of who they should strive to be. (p. 18)

Maureen Turim (1985) specifically considers the consequences of woman as object of the gaze in patriarchal society, incorporating an interpretation of the role of the film medium: “The female body is not only a sex object, but also an object of exchange; its value can be sold (prostitution) or it can be incorporated into another commodity which is then sold (the film)” (p. 374). The other, as we have already seen, is a commodity, an object, with the sole function in patriarchal society of fulfilling the needs or desires of those in power.

The concept of woman as body for the male gaze is hence encoded in traditional film.

According to Kaplan (1983), “screen images of women are sexualized no matter what the women are doing literally, or what kind of plot may be involved” (p. 311). Silverman (1988) concurs, asserting that “the most paradigmatic of all shot/reverse shot formations is that which aligns the female body with the male gaze” (p. 27-28). Tania Modleski (1988)

clarifies the positioning of woman in the shot/reverse shot sequence: "This system [of suture] typically works by presenting the woman as the object of the look of an inferred spectator – the 'absent one' who is made present in the reverse shot, and thus shown to be the possessor of the former image" (p. 50). To show that the male subject remains in control of the gaze, Modleski (1988) discusses Hitchcock's film *Notorious*: "Not only does the film disembody the sexual woman, it also continually impairs her vision (something that Hitchcock films do to women with alarming frequency), thus ensuring that man remains in sole control of the gaze" (p. 61).

The look of the other is dualistically structured under patriarchy; it is either an "acceptable" gaze, a gaze that holds no power, or an unacceptable gaze, one that is evil and designed to destroy the patriarch, as exemplified by the concept of the "evil eye." This structure is perpetually reinforced in the world of film. Silverman (1988) identifies the acceptable gaze of the filmic woman as:

... depicted as partial, flawed, unreliable, and self-entrapping . . . And although her look seldom hits its mark, woman is always on display before the male gaze. Indeed, she manifests so little resistance to that gaze that she often seems no more than an extension of it. (p. 31)

In fact, even when a woman appears to hold the gaze, if she appropriately reiterates her assigned role within society, she will remain outside the realm of subject (by remaining an object of the male gaze); she will be shown by the end of the film to be merely toying with subject-status. Like Marlene Dietrich, who initially shocked and then delighted viewers by wearing a rendition of a male suit, woman's pseudo-power is perceived as "cute." She is

like a child trying on an adult's clothes: clothes that actually only enhance the difference between holder of power and object of power structure.

The immensely successful film of the 1950's, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), starring Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell, is an excellent example of this point. Monroe and Russell flaunt their sexuality as objects of exchange, and what they seek to gain in return are wealthy husbands. The opening scene presents "a dance number which is both invitation and threat as the 'two little girls from Little Rock' maneuver their bodies in a perfectly matched and coordinated assault which begins with them tossing their ermines at the audience/camera" (Turim, 1985, p. 371). As Turim (1985) explains, the value of the ermines as commodity is surpassed by the value of the female body (p. 371). It is through their objectivity that they seek power; by "getting a man" each woman reveals only her ability to merge with patriarch-held power and become incorporated by it. "The film constructs them as 'to-be-looked-at,' and their manipulations end up merely comic, since 'capturing' the men involves their 'being captured'" (Kaplan, 1983 p. 314). For example, the gaze by which Lorelei (Monroe) seems to objectify her "catch" (owner of a diamond mine in South Africa) is merely a parody of power.

When Piggy is first introduced to Lorelei, there is a shot of him, taken as her subjective vision, which has a diamond superimposed where his head should be. To Lorelei, Piggy has only one signification, wealth, which she intends to exploit, "to mine." If golddigging is justified within the film as the female form of capitalist enterprise, what underlies this "justification" is the assumption that capitalism and thus imperialism are unquestioned, natural. (Turim, 1985, p. 375)

When Lorelei casts her gaze on Piggy, it reiterates her objectivity as an item of exchange, effectively, for sale. Her gaze only enhances her role as commodity; it is powerless.

Kaplan (1983) asserts, "The men's weakness does not mitigate their diegetic power, leaving to the women merely the limited control they can wield through their sexuality" (p. 314). The actions of Lorelei seem to corroborate the contention made by Weininger (n.d.), a favorite student of Freud, that woman "seeks to create as much personal value as possible for herself, and so adheres to the man who can give her the most of it" (p. 220). Moreover, the camaraderie and unity of purpose between the two women in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* do not serve to display the efficacy of relationship between woman and woman, as argued by some feminist critics (Kaplan, 1983, p. 313-314). In the end the women are divided (or rather will be) by patriarchal law as represented by marriage. They will give up their names and pseudo-subjectivity for their "proper" roles. Once again, their actions echo Weininger's (n.d.) interpretation of the behavior of woman: "Woman is not a free agent; she is altogether subject to her desire to be under man's influence . . . She is under sway of the phallus and irretrievably succumbs to her destiny" (p. 278). Turim (1985) proposes that "in *Gentlemen* the narrative assures us that, despite the bonds between Dorothy and Lorelei, their relationship is not self-sufficient; it seeks males for completion, so that when (heterosexual) love goes wrong, nothing goes right" (p. 378). Weininger's view is thereby reiterated in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, as it is in many mainstream American films.

Countless current films send the same messages to viewers that *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* sent in the 1950's: that women are incapable of subjectivity and are objects of exchange. *Pretty Woman* (1990), for example, a blockbuster starring Julia Roberts and Richard Gere, was immensely popular when it was released in 1990. In this movie, Vivian

Ward, portrayed by Julia Roberts, is represented quite literally as an object of exchange.

Basically a “happy hooker,” Ward helps a lost Edward Lewis, as portrayed by Richard Gere, find his hotel; he invites her in, pays her and dresses her well, and the rest is history.

At the outset of the movie, Robert’s character Ward is portrayed as a lower-class hooker; she wears tacky, cheap clothing and a brassy blonde wig, but by the end of the movie, she is transformed – presumably by love – into a suitable upper-middle class possession for the exceptionally wealthy Lewis. The movie makes a feeble attempt to portray her as “independent” by having her refuse to serve as a long term mistress to Lewis, thus “forcing” him into marriage, but since she has already provided him with her sexual attentions for a hotly bargained price, the feeble attempt falls rather flat. The ultimate message of the film is that if a woman is of the lower-class, she should find herself a rich man and win his heart by whatever means possible. With beauty, she should be able to do so. As for men, they are informed by the plot of this movie that if they have enough money, they can purchase any woman. If she is a lower-class woman, he can transform her into an appropriate adornment for his arm if he is willing to hand over his wallet.

Giroux (1994) postulates that:

The cultural and material capital at work in *Pretty Woman*, which was written as a narrative of investment and return, celebrates Edward’s willingness to invest in a woman who is also bereft of the regulating laws of the traditional family. Edward’s “generosity” and business acumen gain for him the benefits of Vivian’s sexual expertise, while simultaneously creating the conditions for Vivian’s own sense of agency. In Disney terms, the agency of women outside of the traditional family is reduced to the freedom to buy expensive clothing and to reinvent their identities within the logical terms of white, middle-class cultural capital. (p. 42)

This movie reminds students that the lessons that they are learning in the classroom – lessons related to class, race, and social privilege – are indeed accurate. As Giroux (1994) confirms,

Of course, beneath the play of innocence redeemed in *Pretty Woman* lies the violent erasure of avarice and sexism that links capitalism, consumerism, and patriarchy in Disney's world . . . .

In this film, white men constitute the source of all authority; women provide sexual pleasures and the potential for new markets; and people of color and working-class people “dream” about the possibilities of upward mobility. (p. 43)

In reality, of course, women who are forced to work as prostitutes are generally treated with disdain and disrespect, are often physically abused, and have high mortality rates due to drug usage, disease, and murder. *Pretty Woman* (1990), however, does not focus on a candid portrayal of prostitution, love, or social class division; instead, it focuses on beauty for sale. Darder (2002) proclaims,

the role of the media in the perpetuation of class-bound and racialized attitudes cannot be overlooked in our understanding of schooling or how students perceive their world and the relationships they forge in the classroom and the larger community . . . . These are the values and interests that actively shape and influence the attitudes and behaviors of young consumers and give meaning to fabricated ideals that are deceptively proselytized by the monopoly of the mass media. (p. 18)

Movies such as these teach students that money can indeed buy anything, even relationships, for in the end, both Lewis and Ward are happy. He has a pretty woman, and she has a rich man; they have struck a mutually satisfactory bargain.

### **THE ANNIHILATING GAZE: THE CINEMATIC EVIL EYE**

When the woman’s (and by extension any Other’s) gaze actually does wield power, it is that of the most destructive kind imaginable. Like Medusa, the gaze-wielding

woman seeks only to destroy. As such, she represents divergence from the power structure through her possession of the “evil eye.” Two films that exhibit this case in seemingly different ways are actually remarkably similar in concept: *Cat People* (1942) and *The Brood* (1979). Both films reflect the patriarchal fantasy/fear of the annihilating woman, and both are brimming with Freudian symbolism. In *Cat People*, Irena (Simone Simon) appears to be an average, sweet, marriageable female, yet the mere kiss of a man will awaken her destructive, enveloping sexuality, turning her into a predatory black panther. The concept of woman as a dangerous feline is hardly a new one. According to Bram Dijkstra (1986), “In literature, as in the realm of the visual arts, fantasies concerning women’s resemblance to animals increased steadily in frequency, ranging from simple comparisons (‘cat-like grace’) to elaborate psychological characterizations” (p. 288). Dijkstra (1986) goes on to discuss a myriad of turn-of-the-century pictorial representations of woman either with, or as, the cat (p. 291-296). He explains, that “whether the comparison [the artists] chose to depict was a bear, tiger, lion, or domestic cat, artists made certain to emphasize the affinity between woman and her pet . . . (Dijkstra, 1986, p. 294).

The logical extension of such a bond is that men are the prey of consumptive female sexuality. Once again, the dualistic concept of annihilation comes into play. According to Wood (1985), “Cannibalism represents the ultimate in possessiveness, hence the logical end of human relations under capitalism” (p. 213). Whereas patriarchal imperialism consumes and assimilates, destroying only dissenters, female/Other imperialism will consume and destroy all it encounters. Furthermore, woman, as Other,

does not have the power to rationalize; she lacks intelligence and the ability to make decisions. Weininger (n.d.) states that “woman is logically insane” (p. 147). To use a richly Freudian metaphor, woman in control of the gaze and all it encompasses is like a maniac wielding a gun; no one is safe. When the patriarch wields a gun, it is a symbol of protection; everyone who adheres to the Law is safe.

In *Cat People* (1942), Irena desires to usurp the male position. This desire is submerged in her subconscious: She is aware of her power to destroy, but she tries to conform to the Law, repressing her depraved sexuality. Therefore, when she has the chance to steal the key (and all it represents) from the lock of the panther cage, she resists. The psychiatrist she sees for help brings this to her – and thus the viewer’s – attention. However, as the film progresses, he is drawn to her sexuality; he thus uses her husband’s key to unlock her door (and by extension gain access to her). Irena, who tells us early in the film that she “like[s] the dark, it’s friendly,” is not willing to allow the psychiatrist to open her lock, so to speak. When she arrives home and receives a kiss from the psychiatrist, she murders him and steals off into her realm of darkness, the night, thus proving his statement to her earlier that “there is sometimes, a psychic need to release evil upon the world.” Woman, as representative of evil, will always release evil upon the world, given the occasion to do so. Irena accordingly goes to the zoo, opens the panther’s cage with the key she at last stole, and allows the panther to escape. The panther in its cage represents her repressed sexuality, which she unleashes by assuming the pseudo role of patriarch (they key holder). Nevertheless, the panther strikes her down as it rushes from its cage, revealing that female sexuality out of control is nobody’s friend. An interesting

sequel that followed the popular film *Cat People*, entitled *The Curse of the Cat People* (1944), displays Irena as totally transformed by death. As a spirit who returns to befriend the child of her former husband, her gaze never falls on him. Her focal point is instead his child, and she has returned to her natural realm as object: She is the child's imaginary friend (and, as Lacan (1982) has shown us, she can exist only in the imaginary). In *Cat People* only one kiss takes place, when the psychiatrist kisses Irena and meets his death for it. Irena's husband never kisses his second wife (his first marriage is naturally never consummated, which is why he is around to choose a second wife). In *The Curse of the Cat People*, Irena kisses the child twice on the forehead, exhibiting her appropriately dead sexuality. Her kiss has lost the power to destroy. Furthermore, her former husband and his second wife never kiss or touch (except to shake hands once as friends early on). The second wife is thus the ideal woman: She is completely nonsexual.

In *The Brood* (1979) there is also a psychotherapist who attempts to help Samantha Eggar's out-of-control sexuality; yet like the psychiatrist in *Cat People* he is ultimately destroyed by it. Eggar produces an endless "brood" of demonic children that according to Wood (1985) are "the terrible . . . physical embodiments of the woman's rage" (p. 217). In the film's graphic final scenes with Eggar, she produces yet another "baby," the first the viewer (through the personae of her husband, who watches in horror) ever sees birthed. (Before this scene it is not totally clear where these children come from. She holds it up for her husband to see, and cannibalism is hinted at as her lower face is smeared with blood. According to Wood (1985), "The film is remarkable for its literal enactment, at its climax, of the Freudian perception that, under patriarchy, the child

becomes the woman's penis-substitute. Samantha Eggar's latest offspring representing, unmistakably, a monstrous phallus" (p. 217).

Yet like Irena and her key, Samantha and her phallus cannot be allowed to continue together. She is destroyed by her husband just in time to protect their child, which was about to be destroyed by the brood that she produced herself. A blonde child, like Irena's former husband's child, the daughter of the couple represents stereotypical mainstream American purity. In *Cat People*, the blonde child is the result of a symbolically sexless union; in *The Brood*, the child represents Samantha's previous (controlled) sexuality under the law of marriage. Yet in *The Brood* the final scene provides the lasting terror of female sexuality out of control: the female child is shown to bear the mark of the brood as her skin begins to form pustules. Like her grandmother and mother before her, she will continue the female family history of annihilation. The implications are all the more powerful as she is a seemingly innocent child. The logical conclusion is that the female can never be trusted, no matter how innocent she may seem. Naturally, Freud's Oedipal Complex is brought to mind by the message presented in this film; the sexual aggressiveness masked by child-like innocence is a characteristic of stereotypically presented woman. Regardless of her age, she is evil.

More recent examples of the annihilating woman can be found within the movies *Fatal Attraction* (1987) and *Basic Instinct* (1992). Both were exceptionally popular movies: *Fatal Attraction* is considered a modern classic, and *Basic Instinct* is as well; in fact, it grossed in excess of \$100,000,000 in the United States alone. In *Fatal Attraction*, as the title implies, an upper-middle class white male (Dan Gallagher, played by Michael

Douglass) with a rewarding job, a beautiful, passive wife, and a child falls momentarily – in an elevator, no less – for the charms of an attractive, successful single woman. The attraction turns out to be fatal for the single woman, Alex Forrest, played by Glenn Close. She becomes pregnant; Gallagher offers to pay for her abortion, but she wants to keep the baby and get her man, as well. Herein lie the obvious complications. Forrest becomes increasingly crazed as the movie progresses, and in a slasher-movie-type ending, the quiet, innocent wife brutally murders the pregnant Forrest, who is last seen sinking into a bloody bathtub full of water. The values presented by this movie are clear: for men, watch out for independent, successful women whose out of control sexuality may destroy all that is sacred; for women, get married, stay at home, stand by your man no matter what, and everything will turn out alright (except for the occasional murder charge . . . but wait, it was self-defense!)

Like *Fatal Attraction*, *Basic Instinct* (1992) portrays a successful single woman who enjoys sex without love or commitment and leaves a trail of dead lovers in her wake. Sharon Stone gained a great deal of notoriety for her portrayal of the annihilating woman (Catherine Trammell) who dared usurp male authority by being independent. As it turns out, her independence was won at great price, for Trammell begins her killing spree by knocking off her parents for the insurance money, thus obtaining great wealth. The movie opens with a grimly Freudian scene of Trammell, portrayed by Sharon Stone, making love to and then brutally murdering her lover by stabbing him repeatedly with an ice pick as he lies on his back, under her. Of course, we cannot initially tell who the killer is, and Michael Douglas plays the detective (Nick) determined to find out. Nick becomes

obsessed with the stereotypically beautiful and highly sexual Trammell, but because of his sexual prowess, she decides, almost as an afterthought, not to kill him. Instead, in the final scene, she drops the ice pick under the bed, possibly reserving it for another time. Again, the messages sent by such a movie are relatively clear. As with *Fatal Attraction* (and, of course *Cat People* and *the Brood*) female sexuality is shown to be dangerous, even deadly, when not “properly” contained – and subdued – within marriage. Additionally, independence is shown to be a less than desirable trait for a woman to possess. Neither single woman (in *Fatal Attraction* or *Basic Instinct*) begins the movie needing a man, but by the end, both decide that they do. In *Fatal Attraction*, Gallagher is already “taken,” so Forrest must die. In *Basic Instinct*, it is impossible to tell whether Nick has “tamed” Trammell or not, but the viewer is left with a very clear sense that if he has not, his days are numbered.

### **THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY: THE CINEMATIC EDUCATION OF AMERICAN CHILDREN**

While the messages of mainstream American cinema reinforce and hence perpetuate delineated roles of women and specific marginalized peoples in films designed for adults, the extent to which adults are conditioned to accept these portrayals is secured in childhood. Children’s films serve to sustain the status quo while simultaneously teaching children to lust after an idealized vision of consumerism, classism, racism, sexism, and otherization. Colorfully gaudy and antiseptically plastic, the average mainstream American children’s film hardly reflects the average American child’s life or home. Instead, it represents what children are conditioned to want: a stimulus-bound, fantasy

world, structured by desire. No company better manifests the pseudo-innocence of children's film as a thinly disguised function of desire than the Disney Company. As Henry Giroux (1994) confirms,

There are few cultural icons in the United States which can match the signifying power of the Disney Company. Relentless in its efforts to promote . . . an endless regime of representations and commodities that conjure up a nostalgic view of the United States as the "magic kingdom," the Disney Company has become synonymous with a notion of innocence which aggressively rewrites the historical and collective identity of the American past. (p. 28-29)

Disney films, as well as most modern mainstream American films designed for children, play upon the alienation and desire inherent in American life, consistently reinforcing the dichotomy of good versus evil to structure and focus the desires of the child viewer. As Giroux (1999) explains,

Disney films combine enchantment and innocence in narrating stories that help children understand who they are, what societies are about, and what it means to construct a world of play and fantasy in an adult environment. The authority of such films, in part, stems from their unique form of representation and their ever-growing presence. But such authority is also produced and secured within a media apparatus equipped with dazzling technology, sound effects, and imagery packaged as entertainment, spin-off commercial products, and "huggable" stories . . .

The mass media, especially the world of Hollywood films, constructs a dreamlike world of security, coherence, and childhood innocence in which kids find a place to situate themselves in their emotional lives. Unlike the often hard, joyless reality of schooling, children's films provide a high-tech visual space in which adventure and pleasure meet in a fantasy world of possibilities and a commercial sphere of consumerism and comodification. (p. 84)

Children's movies, especially Disney films, present a decidedly dualistic and capitalistic view of the world. Furthermore, they capitalize on the specific cultural issues most children have learned to fear or value. Movies such as *The Jungle Book* (1967), *The Lion King* (1994), *Tarzan* (2000), and *Dinosaur* (2001), for example, play particularly well

upon a child's fear of loss of the parent. Disney films, in fact, are quite effective at killing off a parent, often at the outset of the film, or presenting a child as having to survive without parents at all. Messages such as these, clearly reflective of high-drama adult films that open with conflict or challenge, leave children feeling vulnerable and frightened, and hence eager to latch onto any positive or hopeful message that may be forthcoming to counterbalance the negative one. The reiteration of parental loss furthermore validates and actually bolsters the alienation of children from their parents. Sadly, in fact, the continual recurrence of a theme such as this is generally designed to give children, in the growing single parent marketplace, a sense that they are not alone in being apart from one or both parents. Yet would it not be better to provide children with cinematic companionship that does not play upon their vulnerabilities and losses? Reinforcement and validation of loss or potential loss do not strengthen a child's sense of self; they merely support the acceptance of loss, and by extension, the acceptance of desire and alienation as "natural" emotions. As Giroux (1999) confirms, "Kids learn from Disney films, so maybe it's time parents and educators paid closer attention to what these films are saying" (p. 85).

It is not this author's intent to present the Disney Company as an evil band of government-sanctioned underground conspirators intent upon subduing the American population by alienating and frightening our children. Obviously, this is not the case. Nevertheless, the Disney Company's movies – as well as most modern American children's movies – do follow a clearly recognizable theme, and it is a theme that resonates with both the movie makers and the American public at large. After all, these movies sell

well. The resonance of this theme is what is under examination here. The ready acceptance of Disney films as valuable entertainment is under examination here as well, for the fact that culturally condoned escapism follows a clearly delineated path indicates that it addresses our cultural fears and desires. One such fear is fear of loss; one such desire is the desire for cooperation, mutuality, love, and acceptance: what amounts to interconnectedness. For much like adult's films, children's films often begin with a tragic loss or challenge in order to incite anger as an outlet for our own subdued frustration, rage, loss, and subsequent alienation. We can then simply say, "I guess this is the way things are supposed to be." Blind acceptance such as this is almost inevitable when the messages vary so little. Essentially, these movies serve as social proof.

### **THE CINEMATIC COLOR LINE: RACISM IN AMERICAN FILM**

The message inherent in both children's and adult's mainstream American films is also a message that everyone has clearly designated places according to ethnicity. In their misrepresentation of people of color, popular movies reinforce racism and classism. Two such movies are *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius* (2001), a popular children's movie, and *Maid in Manhattan* (2002), a popular movie starring Jennifer Lopez. In *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius*, a young "genius" and his friends save their parents from evil aliens who intend to eat them. The movie attempts to reiterate a tired, "we can all get along" theme by featuring a "genius" white girl who is *almost* as smart as Jimmy; her best friend, an African American girl; and a clever Latino boy as part of the group. However, the smartest children are white, have mothers and fathers in the home, and are presented as solidly middle class. In contrast, the African American girl has either headphones or a

cellular telephone attached to her ear throughout the movie, and in spite of the fact that the entire movie is focused on the attempt made by the children to save their parents, this girl apparently doesn't have parents. They are never pictured. As for the Latino boy, he is constantly sucking on a lollipop, looks disheveled, and has a single mother who is shown only once and never utters a word. Additionally, he makes the statement, "I never got an 'A' in my life." He is portrayed as handsome, "cool," and not all that bright. Only the parents of the white males are featured. Children watching a movie such as this cannot help but notice that the white males run the show, followed by the white females. People of color are peripheral. These kinds of "courtesy" inclusions of people of color are insulting and damaging to children of all ethnicities, for they send the message that people of color *should be* marginalized, that they actually *want to be* marginalized, because they are simply not part of the team. They are different. The message seems to be: "we should be nice to them and include them because we are supposed to, but they are not like us, *they are not white.*"

*Maid in Manhattan* (2002), like *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius*, also presents a racist view. While it features a Latina, Jennifer Lopez, it portrays her as a single mother and a hotel maid. She falls in love with a wealthy and politically well-connected white man, a hotel guest, and while the movie tries to "out do" *Pretty Woman* by having the main character continue to work after the consummation of her affair with one of the hotel's wealthy patrons, the message is nonetheless that women of color should seek white upper-middle class males as mates. Men of color are hence marginalized as well, for they are rarely presented in modern American film as ideal mates for women of color, or for

anyone. Generally, men of color are most commonly analogized with guns, drugs, and high action drama. Rarely is a male of color presented as an upper-middle class wage earner or family man. As John Anderson (2001) proclaims, "Hollywood, which is really interested only in 'event' movies anyway, can put Will Smith in a blockbuster and feel good about itself (and the money he makes)" (p. 388). Interestingly, in *Maid in Manhattan*, it is the main character's young son who goes to great lengths to get his mother into a relationship with the white, upper-middle class man. Anyone who knows school-aged children of single parents knows that they do not generally greet prospective step-parents with such high interest. The message this movie promotes is that single women should get married to take care of their children, and that children of color do not need people who look like them; instead, they need rich white people to take care of them. In *Maid in Manhattan*, all of the people of color are maids. They are friendly, they are funny, but they are maids. Of course, they are presented as happy in their station, reinforcing the theme that people of color love to serve white people, and that lower-middle class people are lower-middle class because they want to be.

Furthermore, Lopez's mother is portrayed as a stereotypical Mexican woman (of course, there is no father). She urges Lopez to stay in her place, to remain a maid, and to work hard. What if the movie had featured a powerful, rich Latina who fell in love with a poor single father who worked as a maid? The possibility seems almost comical, specifically because the conventions of the American media are so rigidly defined.

According to Darder,

Again, there is no question but that the media are major culprits in perpetuating debilitating notions and false racialized images of class entitlement and privilege. Examples of this are highly prevalent in the media's portrayal of poor ethnic communities. Although the majority of people on welfare are Euro-American, a favorite portrayal of recipients is the large African American woman with many children, living in poor conditions. Along the same line, African American and Chicano youth are often portrayed as violent "gang-bangers," notwithstanding the fact that less than 10 percent of these youths are actually involved in gangs (Vigil 1997). (p. 22)

What movies such as *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius* and *Maid in Manhattan* present is a model of representative assimilation. People of color should be like whites. Stereotypically pretty women should seek out wealthy men. Working-class people are cheerful, obedient, and happy in their stations. Men should choose "good" women who are not overly sexual, powerful, or independent. Essentially, what these movies say is that *things are fine just as they are*. When coupled with the way we raise, educate, and then seek to gainfully employ American citizens, the media, particularly the film industry, reinforce the status quo and fortify racism, sexism, and classism.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE ENTRENCHMENT OF ALIENATION AND DESIRE: THE INTERNALIZATION OF POWERLESSNESS**

When reviewing the Law, American child-rearing practices, and the American public education system, we can see that they neither work effectively nor produce a superior result. The Law does not protect and validate its citizens, allowing them to live peacefully amongst each other. It is instead a bureaucratic labyrinth, exemplified wonderfully by the specific penal law that makes suicide illegal, carrying a harsher penalty than attempted suicide. One wonders how prosecution of a suicide “suspect” might transpire. The Law is a construct whose primary purpose has been shown to dominate and subjugate its citizens; whether or not it works in any concrete sense of the term has become irrelevant. As Hall (1989) explains in *Beyond Culture*,

*Bureaucratic* and *institutional* irrationality occur because, of all man's institutions, bureaucracy in all cultures has a tremendous potential to be counterproductive. This drive toward inefficiency . . . stems from bureaucratic needs for self-preservation . . . Established to serve mankind, the service function is soon forgotten, while bureaucratic functions and survival take over. (p. 218)

The Law, in essence, does not belong to us anymore; we belong to it. As such, it alienates and subjugates us, creating a simultaneous need and resentment. Nowhere is this dynamic better exemplified than in the ways in which we raise children. We separate them from adults, manage their time and space methodically, and then wonder why they are so “needy,” seeking approval from undesirable peers and acquisition of endless toys, clothes, and games in a convoluted form of desire transference. What children learn is to *want*: for there is purportedly never enough. How often does one hear, upon asking an American child what she wants, that she

wants nothing? The school system only exacerbates the crisis, alienating children all the more and allowing them to see their own desire mirrored and reinforced by their peers. Quintessentially, these systems do not *work*, in that they do not produce anything other than desire and alienation. Hence, Deleuze and Guattari (1983) argue that:

From his very earliest infancy, the child has a wide-ranging life of desire – a whole set of nonfamilial relations with the objects and the machines of desire – that is not related to the parents from the point of view of immediate production, but that is ascribed to them (with either love or hatred). (p. 48)

Deleuze and Guattari (1983) incidentally view the Oedipal triangulation formulated by Freud as something that “radically distorts the life of the child and his later development” (p. 49), thus reiterating the premise that understanding children is not necessarily a byproduct of theorizing about them.

American parenting techniques do not necessarily produce confident, fulfilled children who feel loved and hence entitled to a life of happiness; American public schools do not imbue children with a love of learning and a sense of social responsibility and interrelatedness; furthermore, the American corporate workplace does not give American adults, for the most part, a sense of contributing to a meaningful cause, or a life filled with purpose and meaning. Instead, these institutions basically use and dispose of people, leaving them adrift physically, intellectually, and spiritually. Those who have been shaped by these institutions accordingly suffer the inevitable alienation affiliated with meaninglessness, with an associated desire for the “something” that is “missing.” As Deleuze and Guattari (1983) explain,

From the moment lack is reintroduced into desire, all of desiring-production is crushed, reduced to being no more than the production of fantasy; but the sign

does not produce fantasies, it is a production of the real and a position of desire within reality. From the moment desire is welded again to the law [as] there is no desire without law – the eternal operation of eternal repression recommences, the operation that closes around the unconscious the circle of prohibition and transgression . . . (p. 111)

Deleuze and Guattari (1983) clarify that desire is synonymous with the Law, for in the space that law withholds and prohibits, desire is formed. Freud literally projected desire upon the child, claiming that the Oedipus Complex explained the deep longing a child had for her parents as a sexual longing; the Oedipus Complex became wildly popular and in some circles still remains so. As a theory, it justifies separation of parents and children, most specifically in sleep space, but it served the additional purpose of turning children into sexual creatures in need of curbing, controlling, and watching. Arguably, the adult transforms the desire to be loved and held by the parent into a sexual desire, a desire to be held and loved by another. While the desire for sexual love is not unnatural, our cultural fascination with it is, as exemplified by high adultery rates, high divorce rates, and high media ratings of television programs and movies that emphasize sexual longing and fulfillment, not to mention an endless array of ever-improved goods available for consumption that never seem to quell the apparent longing for “more.”

Alienated by the bureaucratic labyrinth of Western civilization, lured by cultural manifestations of desire, and longing for genuine human interaction, the American citizen is trapped in a regressive cycle of alienation and desire, with desire functioning as the insufficient palliative for alienation. Herein lies the interrelationship between this symbiotic alienation and desire, and the construction of time and space parameters. Time and space function as the ultimate goods, simultaneously enhancing both alienation and

desire. According to Illich (2000), "Leisure, according to Weber, is necessary for man to be able to work. For Aristotle, work is necessary for man to have leisure" (p. 63). Work effectively "buys" leisure time and space, and this leisure time and space is culturally positioned as commodity, subject to the realm of culturally acceptable conditions under which it should be utilized. Illich (2000) continues,

One way to fill available time is to stimulate increased demand for the consumption of goods and, simultaneously, for the production of services. The former implies an economy which provides an ever-growing array of ever newer things which can be made, consumed, wasted, and recycled. The latter implies the futile attempt to "make" virtuous actions into the products of "service" institutions. This leads to the identification of schooling and education, of medical service and health, of program-watching and entertainment, of speed and efficient locomotion. The first option now goes under the name of development. (p. 63)

The American citizen, through a system of her own making, is accordingly constructed as *consumer*, in a consumption production designed to quell an insatiable desire. Within this socially-condoned and reinforced consumption, the bureaucratic labyrinth is reinforced. More needs more; there is never enough.

### **EFFECTS OF TIME AND SPACE DESIGNATIONS IN AMERICAN CHILD-REARING**

An understandable question, in light of the limitations placed upon babies, then children, and then adults, is what long-term results might be expected from living with these types of limitations and confines. The initial impact is reflected in that as babies, we are already constructed into a system of desire and lack through want of human contact traditionally denied Western babies. Specifically,

In a three-way comparison of hunter-and-gatherer cultures, the United States, and other nonindustrial societies, the heavy hand of culture clearly maps out how parenting traditions influence the parent-infant symbiotic dyad . . . In all ten of the

hunter-and-gatherer societies studied today, infants are carried more than 50 percent of the time . . . In the United States, babies are typically in physical contact with their parents 25 percent of the day. This pattern is consistent in other areas of caretaking as well. In hunter-and-gatherer societies, mothers sleep with their infants and respond immediately to their cries. Parents in other nonindustrial cultures do that as well, but less often. In other words, when culture and modernity intervene, babies are not attended to as quickly and spend more time alone . . . From a baby's point of view, the hunter-and-gatherer life is better because it supplies all the necessary ingredients and opportunities for a symbiotic parent-infant dyad. (Small, 1998, p. 174)

In American society, babies are expected to become independent, with some advocates arguing on behalf of “keeping babies on rigid feeding schedules, letting them cry it out so that they don’t develop a ‘predisposition for immediate gratification’ and training them to sleep through the night as early as five weeks so that they don’t disrupt their parents’ schedules any longer than necessary” (Ezzo, 1998, qtd. in Talbot). Arguably, Western babies, denied the complete potential to experience a “symbiotic parent-infant dyad,” cannot but long for the warmth of being held, for

The [Western] infant’s waking hours are passed in yearning, wanting, interminable waiting . . . For a few minutes a day, his longing is suspended and his terrible skin-crawling need to be touched, to be held and moved about, is relieved . . . At first, it is hard for [the child’s mother] to put him down, after his feeding, especially because he cries so desperately when she does . . . Softly, she closes the door . . . Her will must prevail over his. Through the door she hears what sounds like someone being tortured . . . *It is precisely as serious as it sounds.* She hesitates, her heart pulled toward him, but resists and goes on her way. He has been changed and fed. She is sure he does not *really* need anything, therefore, and she lets him weep until he is exhausted. (Liedloff, 1977, p. 62-63)

In Western society, babies’ time and space needs are considered subordinate to their parents’ time and space parameters. Babies are not allowed to “control” their parents, as if they could possibly have any notion of what that would mean, or actually endeavor to do such a thing.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEGLECT AND DESIRE

In Western society, it is known and generally accepted that “the damage caused by early neglect – or even by physically adequate but emotionally indifferent care – can be deeply intractable, not least because it may have neurological as well as psychological dimensions” (Talbot, 1998). However, what constitutes “inadequate care” is culturally determined; consequently, while we may be able to calculate the affects of neglect in Romanian orphanages (Talbot, 1998), we tend to fail to see, in our rush to make our children independent and to get our lives “back to normal” after a child is born, the potential deficiencies in our own cultural childcare system. Arguably, the desire, the unfulfilled sense of longing which is experienced by infants in Western culture, prepares them for the cultural life, as well as its value system, which awaits them.

The search for in-arms experience, as the years pass and we grow up, takes on a great many forms. Loss of the essential condition of well-being that should have grown out of one’s time in arms leads to searches and substitutions for it.

*Happiness ceases to be a normal condition of being alive, and becomes a goal* (Liedloff, 1977, p. 109-110).

Western children play out this desire, as they are conditioned to, by wanting *things*: toys, with which they may quickly become bored, for example. And these childhood desires pave the way for adulthood, where more things are desired in a never-ending spiral of attainment.

The implication is that ownership of a thing of guaranteed [i.e., cultural] value will give oneself a value of the same permanence, unassailability, and absoluteness . . . cars, a good address, and so on also seem to attract the acceptance one longs for. At the same time, they surround one with security amid uncertainty, not unlike the encircling arms we have always missed. Whatever our culture holds out as the

right thing to have, to be ‘inside’ is what we want, for we feel chronically outside, though we try forever to tell ourselves that we are ‘in’ . . . (Liedloff, 1977, p. 113).

Within Western society, this desire, first for human contact, then, for its substitutions in its various forms, exhibits itself not only in the process of desiring.

Because we are a culturally competitive, individualistic culture, desire is readily coupled with the transference process – that is, the practice of displacing our own repressed feelings and longings which we cannot accept. Herein lies our cultural objectification process, for desire, as displaced by transference, is contingent upon the other and is played out in terms of the necessary inequality of power. According to Jacques Lacan (1977), “Desire begins to take shape in the margin in which demand becomes separated from need” (p. 265). Infants make no differentiation between demand and need: the two exist simultaneously. As children, however, need and demand begin to take shape as different from each other: a difference which creates an ever widening margin as we enter adulthood. Within this widening margin lies an ever expanding, unquenchable desire. Psychoanalysts tend to look at desire in terms of the mother, asserting that the male child develops a sexual desire for her (the Oedipus Complex). Clearly, they recognize the desire; however, the sexualization of the desire is a transference itself: the need for the mother is real; the sexualization of the need represents an inability within Western culture to recognize the true depths of the desire, which is a desire to be held and carried by the mother, to be with her and to learn about life by experiencing her life. For “marriage in civilized life has become a double contract in many cases; one clause might read . . . ‘and I’ll be your mother if you’ll be my mother.’ The

ever-present infantile needs of each partner are expressed" (Liedloff, 1977, p. 111). The psychoanalytic recognition of this need is notable; moreover, the sexualization of the need cannot be considered surprising in a culture that articulates women as sexual objects.

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESIRE AND POWER**

Unfulfilled desire is the matrix of power, and the categorization of Subject and Object play out the delineated power configurations. The body, whereupon desire is played out, represents the ultimate commodity in a society based on exchange because we are taught to want, to desire the other as object, to be either assimilated and made more like our own sociocultural needs determine we should be, or to be devastated in our constant drive for superiority and domination in a dualistically constructed sociodynamic. We grow from infancy into adulthood through the vehicle of jealousy, an emotion not necessarily present in children who have been frequently held and carried (Liedloff, 1977). This jealousy harbors displaced anger, which translates into desire of things.

Systems of power reinforce the desire, allowing for its displacement and perpetuation. In the increasingly political sphere of the family, the law and social policy impede the "symbiotic parent-infant dyad" by encouraging the separation of child and parent under the guise of fostering childhood independence. The government perpetually pays lip service to the need for children to have constant care by addressing the issue of daycare, for example; however, separating children from their parents only compounds the problem. We need, instead, to address the social and legal factors that discourage and even prohibit children from being with their parents at work or during social activities, and which effectively separate children from adult society. Ironically, the more babies are

separated from their parents and from adult society, the fussier they become when in society; in many societies where babies are taken everywhere their parents go, they are a nondisruptive, important and accepted component of the group (Liedloff, 1977; Small, 1998). In the school system, legal and social policy prohibit spontaneity, variety, and genuine exchange of ideas and knowledge, causing children to be further alienated from each other and from their own potential. After being raised in what could be considered an isolationist way, bereft of the constant human contact provided most non-Western babies, children are placed in an environment with an unknown adult and too many (Hall, 1989) (usually unknown) children, wherein a whole new realm of physical limitations are placed upon them. They are expected to travail through this system until they are prepared to enter the workforce, whereupon they enter a new hierarchical maze of competition-based, time-structured physical and mental limitations. This entire process allows for the most fortunate among them to purchase the most culturally condoned items available on the market: items that others may then look at and desire for themselves.

### **EFFECTS OF TIME AND SPACE DESIGNATIONS IN THE AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The timetable, the architecture and what could be called the choreography of schools, and the examination system are all mechanisms whereby objectification and subordination are entrenched in the American educational system. These manifestations of power remove the American public school system from the control of a set of individuals and transform it into a mechanism, a system which assimilates and shapes those within it, allowing for little deviation. No amount of curriculum reform will address the

subordination of bodies through the highly regulated delineation of time; no amount of teacher pay raises or culturally increased importance of the role of teacher in society will remove the teacher from the confinement of the architecture of schools and from the interactive net of objectifying gazes; no amount of multiculturalism in the classroom approach will address the examination format, which, irrespective of the content therein, discloses values of language and meaning. Foucault (1995) informs us that:

The workshop, the school, the army were subject to a whole micro-penalty of time (lateness, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behavior (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body ('incorrect' attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency.) (p. 178)

The public school system is in fact so highly regulated that it is already and has indeed long been "teacherproof" – the novel objective of many who believe that, in the ready passage of blame, the teacher is the one who has caused the downturn in test scores, the perceived erosion of the school system.

In actuality, we should scrutinize the examination system itself. If scores are low, maybe exams should not be considered the ideal method of assuring the transmission of knowledge. In fact, even if exam scores are high, the possibility that these scores are ultimately meaningless in light of actual usefulness, of actual transmission of useful skills, must be entertained. The specific problem with the examination system lies in its instruction, for what it teaches, beyond any memorized data it might recap, is that examinations are an authentic measure of success, and that a person's worth can be measured in terms of her production. According to Illich (2000), "In school we are taught that valuable learning is the result of attendance; that the value of learning increases

with the amount of input; and, finally, that this value can be measured and documented by grades and certificates" (p. 39).

Ultimately, the examination system structures time and space and teaches children to be good consumers, both of goods and services. As Illich (2000) explains,

Once a man or woman has accepted the need for school, he or she is easy prey for other institutions. Once young people have allowed their imaginations to be formed by curricular instruction, they are conditioned to institutional planning of every sort. "Instruction" smothers the horizon of their imagination. They cannot be betrayed, but only short-changed, because they have been taught to substitute expectations for hope. . . . This transfer of responsibility from self to institution guarantees social regression, especially once it has been accepted as an obligation. (p. 39)

The child who has been first raised by traditional child-rearing techniques is thus perfectly conditioned for school, whereby she will be further alienated and will transform her longing for parental closeness into desire of consumable goods. In school, she will furthermore be positively reinforced for this alienation and desire, and will learn through social proof that her position in society is as it should be. As Illich (2000) reports, "If it teaches nothing else, school teaches the value of escalation: the value of the American way of doing things" (p. 42). She is then prepared for the world of corporate America, where her time and space will be similarly structured and supervised, and wherein she will react to this structure and supervision by accepting and internalizing her objectification, and will think of herself as free because she has the freedom of purchasing power. The ways in which she spends her spare time will reinforce her self-objectification, for she can spend her time seeking more goods, watching movies or television, or reading books; in

other words, she does not have to live at all. Instead, she can watch and consume as she herself is watched and consumed.

## BUREAUCRACY AS PURVEYOR OF DESIRE AND ALIENATION

Continually, we ask ourselves why the public school system does not work effectively without inspecting the components of the system itself. Instead, we seek to blame teachers, students, administrators, any one or several loci of objectification – any one group already transcribed and specified by the system to such an extent that it could hardly be expected to make a difference as a group upon a highly entrenched and established system of objectification and subordination. We lack the innovation to move beyond the system, to consider that forcing isolated bodies into appointed roles may do more to damage a potential subjectivity than any amount of ineffective curriculum. We instead focus on repairing and building more of the same kinds of buildings, or addressing issues of compensation for teachers or administrators who are still educated and trained in the same ways, thus perpetuating more of the same results: students who are expected to succeed and who are a prevailing part of the system's methodology do succeed; those who are defined as "at risk" or who do not have a background which prepares them for the exacting mechanisms of the educational system, do not.

While it may be tempting to blame the weaknesses of the American educational system on the purported evils of capitalism and greed for profit, the causes are not so simply defined, and blame may not be so readily designated. In fact, it is the establishment and development of the educational system itself, and its subsequent growth and concurrent perception that the growth needed management, that create a complex array of

power structures. Essentially, once a system is established, it must be managed. Once it falls under an increasingly large system of management, it becomes a bureaucracy. And as Hall (1989) so pertinently states,

By their very nature, bureaucracies have no conscience, no memory, and no mind. They are self-serving, amoral, and live forever. . . . Changing them is almost impossible, because they function according to their own rules and bow to no man, not even the President of the United States. Custom, human frailties and the will to power keep our bureaucracies going. . . . Paradoxically, most bureaucracies are staffed largely with conscientious, committed people who are trying to do the right thing, but they are powerless (or feel powerless) to change things. None of which would be so serious if it weren't that these are the very institutions on which we depend to solve all major problems. (p. 218-219)

The bureaucracy, created in order to structure power, develops its own power, separate from the power of those who developed it. This, in fact, reiterates Foucault's (1980) significant insight that:

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. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (p. 98)

If a direct cause of the weaknesses of the educational system were to be named, it would have to be fear: fear of the other, fear of change, fear of loss of something (such as property, as outlined by Thomas Cooper in 1829), fear of pain. The American educational system evolved, at least in part, to address a variety of fears. Can the evils of children be prevented or at least managed? Can Alexander Hamilton's great beast, the masses, be taught how to behave, or at least how to vote? These specific questions reveal the fears

that underlie them. The educational system was originally and in fact still is designed to teach people to assimilate to an accepted system of behavior, to assuage the fear of difference. According to Foucault (1980),

What makes the presence and control of the police tolerable for the population, if not fear of the criminal? This institution of the police, which is so recent and so oppressive, is only justified by that fear. . . . if one imposes a penalty on somebody this is not in order to punish what he has done, but to transform what he is. (p. 47)

While an analogy between our perception of school children and our perception of criminals may seem extreme, what makes the presence and control of an educational system tolerable if not fear of the child, whether fear of whom she is or what she might do? In fact, the very first non-indigenous children to be educated on American shores were considered “evil and depraved, and usually in immediate danger of predestined damnation” (French, 1964, p. 7). Obviously, the indigenous children were considered much worse. If this seemingly irrational fear seems long since past, how obsolete, in modern psychoanalytic theory, is the Freudian supposition that female children subconsciously want to have sex with their fathers and that male children subconsciously want to murder their fathers and have sex with their mothers? Freud’s Oedipus Complex is still considered fundamental to psychoanalytic thought, revealing again the fear society has of the child’s potential to do wrong, to be depraved, to give in to evil.

By wrapping the bodies of children in the protective blanket of denoted time and space, we assure that they cannot harm us, rise up against us, defy us, challenge us. We always know where they are, that they are learning to sit still, to obey the teacher, and, by extension, to obey the clock. We know that they are learning how to think and how to

behave; we know that they are learning to become just like they should be. Just like us. We know therefore that they will one day be responsible citizens holding responsible jobs, according to predetermined social parameters. We know that they will accept what the media tell them and obey the law. Consequently, we know that they will remain comfortably ensconced in the prisons of their own minds. Illich (2000) concurs, stating that:

People who submit to the standards of others for the measure of their own personal growth soon apply the same ruler to themselves. They no longer have to be put in their place, but put themselves into their assigned slots, squeeze themselves into the niche which they have been taught to seek, and, in the very process, put their fellows into their places, too, until everybody and everything fits. (p. 40)

### **THE CONTINUUM OF INTERRELATEDNESS: THE POTENTIALITY OF SELF**

#### **CHILDREN AS PARTICIPANTS IN SOCIETY**

Obviously, it would be presumptive of this writer to propose a simple solution to the problems of internalization of alienation and desire. Short of deconstructing every bureaucratic institution in America, it is impossible to prevent at least some of the alienation inherent within large groups of people who inevitably must have at least some time and space parameters, as well as law, to, as Jared Diamond (1999) put it, allow people “to encounter strangers regularly without attempting to kill them” (p. 273). Nevertheless, some opportunities exist to create a less alienating culture, and to deconstruct the fabric of desire based on endless acquisition. The first and most obvious step would be to integrate children more fully into American society. As Small (1998) has informed us, to include children more fully in society would reverse the spiral of

misbehavior and noninclusion, for if babies were “in arms” (Liedloff, 1977) more, they would be less fussy and hence easier to take in public (Small, 1998). Babies who go with parents to work, to social events, to school are more satisfied babies who interact well with other children and adults (Liedloff, 1977; Small, 1998; Sears and Sears, 1993). This development would set the stage for allowing people to feel more fulfilled as babies, and thus less engaged in the longing inherent in the continual absence of one or both parents.

School aged children face a greater challenge, for although the proposal to “deschool society” made by Illich (2000) may be compelling, numerous factors make it an unlikely solution, not the least of which is the bureaucratic entrenchment of school as a concept. Bureaucracies have a life of their own, becoming progressively larger, more convoluted, and full of more workers with less and less power. American public schools are no exception. However, children raised with high levels of parental contact tend to be more secure and have greater self-esteem (Liedloff, 1977; Small, 1998; Sears and Sears, 1993). This alone would allow them a greater ability to survive the American educational process, although an added caveat would be to allow children to continue to accompany a parent or parents during the day on occasion, instead of meeting in school for “between 750 and 1,000 gatherings a year. . . [for] school, by its very nature, tends to make a total claim on the time and energies of its participants. This, in turn, makes the teacher into custodian, preacher, and therapist” (Illich, 2000, p. 30). This proposed practice might offset the fact that school, according to Illich (2000), “removes things from everyday use by labeling them educational tools” (p. 80). The alienation inherent in the separation of school from the “real” world and the practice of ensconcing children in a world that does

not provide them much opportunity to see how adults spend their time, how things work, and how to live on a day to day basis limits their minds, not to mention their bodies and spirits. As Illich (2000) confirms,

Not only the junk but also the supposedly public places of the modern city have become impenetrable. In American society, children are excluded from most things and places on the grounds that they are private. But even in societies which have declared an end to private property children are kept away from the same places and things because they are considered the special domain of professionals and dangerous to the uninitiated. Since the last generation the railroad yard has become as inaccessible as the fire station. Yet with a little ingenuity it should not be difficult to provide for safety in such places. To deschool the artifacts of education will require making the artifacts and processes available – and recognizing their educational value. (p. 83)

Illich's proposition that children have the opportunity to engage their surrounding communities more fully presents the possibility that they are not prisoners, to be kept in rooms of rows all day except for designated eating and elimination times. Almost anyone who has endured public school in America would attest to the fieldtrip as being a highlight of her educational day. These rare, exciting events energize and enlighten students, but they happen so infrequently, possibly because they require such a mass of paperwork and do not readily compartmentalize themselves into the required, state-mandated set of curricular objectives.

While the educational system does not encourage deviation and will not allow teachers to remove their charges from the classroom with any regularity, as teachers, we can nevertheless do our best to bring "real life" into the classroom in as many ways as possible. One way in which this can readily be accomplished is by discussing real life in the classroom, and tying it to the educational materials at hand whenever possible. This

practice can serve to educate students about different realities as well as to create a climate of mutual respect. If students are allowed to share the realities of their lives, without undue emphasis placed on favored mainstream students, then classroom experiences can be filled with meaning. Instead of asking students about their weekends, thus generating a plethora of stories related to consumption, we might ask them about their relationships and the ways in which they engage in cooperation, thus emphasizing the importance of love and community. Children need to experience a climate of mutual regard and cooperation in the classroom; they need to know that they matter as people, not as effective consumers. When they are able to participate in discussions that do not marginalize them because they do not have mainstream stories of consumption to share, they become important, not only to themselves, but to each other. Additionally, activities that foster cooperation instead of competition can be emphasized. As a result, students support each other instead of compete with each other. Activities such as these could involve a wide variety of ways of looking at things, so that all students would be able to participate. Group activities tend to alienate marginalized students and cause resentment in the mainstream, highly participative students, because the group “leaders” do all the work. Marginalized students are often so accustomed to being shut down that they feel they have nothing to contribute to group experience. For group activities to work effectively, they must be planned with great care, allowing each student a valuable role.

#### DECONSTRUCTION OF THE SUBJECT/OBJECT DICHOTOMY

Under bureaucratic systems of power based on inequality, the freedom given to the other is a freedom constructed by – and limited by – those in power. Wherever there is a

power-holder, there is an Other who is object of that power. For this reason, all efforts made by the Other to gain freedom – and by extension all freedom that is granted by those in power – is nullified by the system itself. Specifically, a bureaucratic system of checks and balances assures that power can never be possessed, any more by those in power than by those objectified by it. As Wink (1992) explains,

The gospel of Jesus champions economic equality, because economic inequalities are the basis of domination. Ranking, domination hierarchies, and classism are all built on accumulated power provided by excess wealth. In a peasant society, those in power see to it, by taxation, expropriation, debt, and monopolistic control of prices, that the poor are kept compliant by the promise of economic and social upward mobility, whereby individuals are able to rise above their class without subjecting to criticism a system built on class inequality. In either arrangement, brute economic control is given mythological and ideological sanction to guarantee that those who have most to lose from obedience to the ruling class become its staunchest supporters. (p. 113-114)

Rebellion against the system becomes almost unfeasible, either through revolution or bureaucratic due process of law, because the system is self-perpetuating and invincible to any genuine attack. The system is modified at times, but generally this modification results in a greater labyrinth of bureaucratic process, even when designed to simplify things. In order for genuine freedom and equality to exist, the system itself must be restructured. Feminist filmmakers who attempt to usurp the power of the patriarch by presenting male actors as objects of the female gaze, for example, only augment dualism. Our objective should not be to reverse roles but to destroy systems that define society as demarcated by dualistically defined roles. Kaplan (1983) proposes that “if rigidly defined sex differences [for example] have been constructed around fear of the other, we need to think about ways of transcending a polarity that has only brought us all pain” (p. 325).

To consider the extent to which it is possible to dismantle a culture entrenched in dualism, we must ask ourselves if we are able to consider every aspect of our reality as neither inferior nor superior. We all possess the gaze that is capable of registering difference, yet are we capable of possessing a gaze that categorizes nothing that enters its realm? Could we, for example, treat the cries of a baby as urgently as we would treat a summons from our supervisors? Foucault (1983) proposes that the reversal of dualism may be set in motion by first recognizing the detractor of freedom, which he defines as fascism: “The fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us” (p. xiii). Foucault (1983) then offers “a certain number of essential principles” that encompass the “art of living counter to all forms of fascism, whether already present or impending” (xiii). These principles present the potentiality of dismantling the structures of power that categorize and objectify; one such principle asserts that we must “[d]evelop action, thought, and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization” (p. xiv). This would inevitably mean not only refraining from objectifying and classifying others, but from subjecting ourselves to the internalized domination inherent in living inconsistently with the values we hold most sacred. Kushner (1986) defines this cultural illness well when he postulates,

Ask the average person which is more important to him, making money or being devoted to his family, and virtually everyone will answer *family* without hesitation. But watch how the average person actually lives out his life. See where he really invests his time and energy, and he will give away the fact that he does not really live by what he says he believes. He has let himself be persuaded that if he leaves for work earlier in the morning and comes home more tired at night, he is proving

how devoted he is to his family by expending himself to provide them with all the things they have seen advertised.

Ask the average person which means more to her, the approval of strangers or the affection of people closest to her, and she won't be able to understand why you would even ask such a question. . . Yet how many of us have embarrassed our children or squelched their spontaneity, for fear of what neighbors or strangers might think? How often have we poured out our anger on those closest to us because we had a hard day at work or someone else did something to upset us? And how many of us have let ourselves become irritable with our families because we were dieting to make ourselves look more attractive to people who do not know us well enough to see beyond appearances? (p. 15-16)

Values and perspective are inevitably skewed by internalized self-objectification: we become what we contemplate, it is said. Sadly, for many of us, this means that we become a mere consumer good.

Diversity is representative of growth, and difference needs to be celebrated instead of feared. We must come to realize that the world is full of difference, which ultimately cannot be categorized or judged. When we attempt to define, we limit. For freedom to exist, there can be no categories, no definitions, no limits. There can be no "Other." Furthermore, we must live lives reflective of our values, instead of internalizing objectification and seeing ourselves as inferior to the media-proposed version of perfection.

In the classroom, the aforementioned activities, such as encouraging discussion related to cooperation and community as well as group activities designed to foster genuine cooperation, can do much to deconstruct dualistic objectification. However, we must also do more than present a passing nod to "other cultures" and "other ways of doing things" while emphasizing mainstream culture. This practice only marginalizes difference all the more by subordinating it. Difference from the mainstream must not be

subordinated. A better strategy might be to subordinate mainstream cultural values; after all, their domination of society is already evident to students. It is not as though we need to teach students mainstream values.

### RECLAMATION OF THE POWER OF THOUGHT

Encouraged to and reinforced for constructing and participating in a dualistic, hierarchical construct, we compete and compare; we desire more, and then more; and we participate in the alienation of our children, ourselves, and others. We suppress our own inner sense of rightness in honor of superficial, externally imposed values. We go to church, synagogue, or temple but never meet God there. We love our children, but we see them less than their teachers do. We toil away our adult lives at jobs we often hate so we can buy unnecessary things. We watch television and movies, participating in constructed realities instead of living our own lives. We give up power over our own lives to “the experts” instead of eating when we are hungry, and sleeping when we are tired. We let others tell us what to want, how to spend our time, and who to be. Essentially, we give up the power of our own minds. No one has more clearly emphasized the potential of our own power to control our thoughts and hence gain power over our lives than Viktor Frankl, who managed to survive the horrors of imprisonment in a series of Nazi Concentration Camps. Out of his objectifying, humiliating, and debilitating experiences, he derived power in the realization that even the most severe physical domination did not have to coincide with mental domination. Frankl (1984) claims that even a prisoner in a Nazi Concentration Camp has the opportunity to gain mental strength in spite of his oppression:

When a man finds that it is his destiny to suffer, he will have to accept his suffering as his task; his single and unique task. He will have to acknowledge the fact that even in suffering he is unique and alone in the universe. No one can relieve him of his suffering or suffer in his place. His unique opportunity lies in the way in which he bears his burden.

For us, as prisoners, these thoughts were not speculations far removed from reality. They were the only thoughts that could be of help to us. (p. 99)

Frankl (1984) presents example after example of comrades who chose to die and those who chose not to, and while inevitably the choice was not always his to make, the power of a prisoner's attitude, his ability to control the focus of his mental attention, was repeatedly shown to have a fundamental impact on his ability to handle the demeaning, humiliating horrors of life in a Concentration Camp. Wink (1992) reinforces Frankl's intimation that the body's imprisonment does not have to reflect the mind's imprisonment when he discusses participation in nonviolent protest: "Of going to jail, a woman said, 'It is so freeing. It's funny, going to jail to be free, but it's very freeing to live without concern for the consequences'" (p. 162). The power held within the reclamation of thought lies in our ability to see beyond the vulnerabilities of the body and imagine the potential invulnerabilities of the mind and spirit. Potentially, our thoughts are our own.

In fact, what perhaps made George Orwell's *1984* such a frightening novel for most of its readers was its lucid presentation of the potential for total domination of the mind by virtue of the existence of thought police. What could be more frightening than thought police? Ironically, though, we police our thoughts rigidly with internalized oppression and conformation. We see ourselves through the eyes of others, internalizing the power of the objectifying gaze. Because the way we live is shared by so many around us and reinforced by the media and our bureaucratic institutions, we cannot readily

imagine an alternative. Instead, many of us go through life without any clear sense of why we are here. As Kushner (1986) mentions, “There is an old Yiddish saying, ‘To a worm in horseradish, the whole world is horseradish.’ That is, if we have never known an alternative, then we assume that the way we are living, with all of its frustrations, is the only way to live” (p. 22).

We may not be able to change the entire alienating function of the bureaucratic society in which we live; however, we can change what occurs in our own minds. Awareness is a powerful tool, a tool which nearly every facet of the bureaucratic system dampens. We are not taught how to think in school, we are not reinforced for original thought within the world of work, and the media consistently offer us a plethora of alternatives to thought. Even political debates between presidential hopefuls are now followed by designated experts who tell us who won, and why, an interesting concept in light of the purported purpose of these debates – to allow the public to decide for whom they will vote. As Eknath Easwaran (1991), writer, lecturer, and former professor of English literature at the University of Nagpur, India, aptly states,

For the most part, our thoughts think us, our feelings feel us; we do not have much say in the matter. The door of the mind stands open all the time . . . We can have a drink, pop in a tranquilizer, lose ourselves in a bestseller or a ten-mile run, but after we come back the beasts will still be there, prowling about the threshold. (p. 11)

In the classroom, we might work toward teaching our students how to think independently and originally. This may perhaps mean that whenever possible, we de-emphasize memorization and recitation of regurgitated facts and instead “test” students by application; in other words, how well can they apply what they have learned to their own

realities? Additionally, we need to actively work toward deconstructing escapism, media images of perfection, and attachment to goods. Instead of emphasizing what students did or bought on the weekend, and telling our own stories of adventure and consumerism to them, we might instead ask students to discuss *why* we like to see movies, for example. We do not have to make a valiant attempt to attack the media; it is relatively obvious that that will only alienate them from us and make them marginalize us! Instead, we might simply discuss what it means to watch constructed realities and why it costs money to watch them. We might discuss the differences between the images portrayed in the media and our own lives, and we might discuss how it feels to see images of constructed perfection on the screen, and advertisements for endless consumable goods. Students need to know that these images of perfection hurt people by making people aware of their superimposed deficiencies, and students need to be able to figure this out on their own without us telling them. Students also need to learn that consumerism is an endless cycle of superimposed deficiencies. However, if we simply *tell* them things, we only add to the educational model that presents them as containers to be filled with information (Freire, 1970). Instead, we must explore the issues without pushing them, allowing students to make discoveries on their own. Most of them know, on some level, that people matter more than things and that perfection is a myth – we just do not talk about such things.

## DECONSTRUCTION OF TIME

Indispensable to the success of the myth of unending consumption is the myth of compartmentalized time and its related implied significance. As Hall (1989) explains, “In

discussing time in the West, it is important not to forget that, without schedules, industrial society would be unknown" (p. 136). He also explains that:

white Americans are captives of their own time and space systems – beginning with time . . .

Time is so thoroughly woven into the fabric of existence that we are hardly aware of the degree to which it determines and co-ordinates everything we do, including the molding of relations with others in many subtle ways. By scheduling, we compartmentalize; this makes it possible to concentrate on one thing at a time, but it also denies us context. (p. 17-18)

Time is often the fabric with which we weave together our lives; events are thus the markers whereby we construct time. However, as such, Western time is distinctly removed from the present. Shunryu Suzuki (1990) concurs, informing us that “[a]s long as we have some definite idea about or some hope in the future, we cannot really be serious with the moment that exists right now” (p. 110). A schedule implies a focus on the future, and as such only serves to enhance the alienation and desire inherent in bureaucratic society, for to be removed from the present is inevitably alienating, and to live for the future requires a focus on desire.

Specifically, for there to be desire, there must be lack, and for there to be lack, there must be the perception of an alternative. The perception of an alternative relies on removing one's self from the present, as well as from accepting what is. The average American is not reinforced to give attention to the present. Instead, she lives in what once was or might have been, and what might yet be. Suzuki (1990) affirms, “Those who are attached only to the result of their effort will not have any chance to appreciate it, because the result will never come” (p. 123). The past harbors resentment, revenge, wistfulness, and longing; the future, desire and expectation. Neither, however, is real, by virtue of the

fact that the past is gone and the future can never be obtained. As such, another method whereby we can deconstruct factors of alienation and desire and to gain a greater sense of freedom is to move decidedly into the present – not necessarily forgetting the past or being unmindful of the future, but by living the life that is ours right now. Zen master Shunryu Suzuki (1990), emphasizes the power of deconstructing time when he contends, in relation to the practice of zazen, or meditation, which requires an intense focus on the present,

Moment after moment, each one of us repeats this activity [of breathing]. Here there is no idea of time or space. Time and space are one. You may say, “I must do something this afternoon,” but actually there is no “this afternoon.” We do things one after the other. That is all. . . . All that we should do is just do something as it comes. *Do something . . . We should live in this moment.* (p. 30)

Living in the moment, in fact, poses a challenge that asks us to supercede desire and regret, and it requires constant thought and awareness. Thought and awareness embody the antithesis of typical life in modern bureaucratic society. According to Kabat-Zinn (1994),

The best way to capture moments is to pay attention. This is how we create mindfulness. Mindfulness means being awake. It means knowing what you are doing. But when we start to focus on what our mind is up to, for instance, it is not unusual to quickly go unconscious again, to fall back into an automatic-pilot mode of unawareness. These lapses in awareness are frequently caused by an eddy of dissatisfaction with what we are seeing or feeling at the moment, out of which springs a desire for something to be different, for things to change. (p. 17)

As Kabat-Zinn (1994) informs us, mindfulness contrasts with lack of awareness, and with the effortlessness of life without concrete thought and awareness of the present.

According to Eknath Easwaran (1991),

As meditation deepens, compulsions, cravings, and fits of emotion begin to lose their power to dictate our behavior. We can see clearly that choices are possible . . . It is profoundly liberating. Perhaps we will not always make the best choices at first, but at least we know there are choices to be made. Then our deftness improves; we begin to live intentionally, to live in freedom. (p. 11)

In the classroom, we can help students develop a better relationship with themselves, each other, and reality by teaching them about time and space, and the ways in which these are constructed in our society. Living within the Western constructs of time and space is living within a prison, but as any long-term prisoner knows, the world outside the prison is like the world of the media – images float in from that world, but they are constructed only in terms of the world of the prison. As such, *they are not real* in the way that prison life is. This is why so many long-term prisoners, upon their release, cannot function in society and instead end up returning to the prison. Having the entire foundation of reality crumble before one's feet is not empowering, it is terrifying, and even former prisoners with supportive families do not readily know how to act within them. Because we, too, live in a prison, we must begin by teaching awareness: awareness of time, space, and the immediacy of the moment. The immediacy of the moment does not mean the plethora of media-sanctioned current events, but it does mean awareness of who we are and how we feel. Sadly, most students have no ideas who they actually are and how they really feel. Instead, they know who they are *supposed* to be and how they are *supposed* to feel.

There are no easy answers. But ironically, the world of public education tends to imply that there are by pouring facts over the heads of students in hopes that they might memorize some of them and hence succeed in life. Teaching facts is easy. Accepting the

way things are is easy. Watching a movie to forget about our own lives is easy. Gaining awareness and a sense of personal identity and interconnectedness with the world and all peoples is not easy. Teaching concepts such as these in the classroom is even less easy. However, most of us did not decide to enter the profession of teaching because it would be easy.

No matter what, as teachers, we will get up in the morning, walk into our classrooms, and face the waiting eyes of our students. The remaining question is, will we take that moment as our only reality, and live it, asking them to live it as well? If we do, then we are taking our first step out of the false, celluloid prisons we have constructed for ourselves. If we do, then we can honestly say that we are teachers indeed.

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