

**Department of Communication and Cultural Studies
Division of Humanities**

**Student, Text, World: Literacy and the Expansion of
Pedagogical Space**

Zlatko David Beretovac

**This thesis is presented for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Curtin University of Technology**

February 2009

Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature:

Date:

Abstract

Using Foucault's notion of a *dispositif* or social apparatus, this thesis charts the pedagogical relations established in contemporary literacy discourse in terms of a space of visibility and a form of sayability, and analyses them as operating within power-knowledge. It furthers this analysis by conceptualising the space of literacy as a normative heterotopia and as a recent mutation of bio-power, the government of the developing body. Such analysis problematises the discourse of literacy, from the term's systematic indefiniteness to its real effectivity in producing subjects, spaces and disciplinary techniques.

Literacy combines and interrelates a nineteenth-century establishment and a twentieth-century rearrangement of pedagogical space. The national language, the developing child, as well as the world of demands and national progress: all emerge as part of the nineteenth-century educational state, forming a set of disciplinary procedures, a structure of perception and a desire to recognise and utilise language development. Literacy discourse appropriates these knowledges and multiplies the sites in which they operate. It articulates the recognition and enablement of non-standard literacies with the governmental project of intensifying and directing the powers of a population. The pedagogical relations operationalised in literacy discourse project a continuous disciplinary power over a general social space.

Thus, literacy has become both a common and much theorised social concern, and a term which structures lives, spaces, discourse and power. Beginning with a close analysis of a recent education policy document, this thesis looks at the deployment of literacy as a way of organising experience through discourse and as a means of modulating the relations between three historically constituted terms: the student, the text, and the world. Schooling and literacy thus insert themselves into a machinery of social production and into the production of everyday concerns and processes. Consequently, literacy enters into our most material and non-linguistic moments through a teleological arrangement of time and space, a *pedagogisation* which is at the same time a *textualisation* of existence.

Introduction: A Difficult Space

This thesis contends that the discourse of literacy maintains a social apparatus in which the space and power relations of schooling are implicated within practices of examination involving the student and the text. These relations in turn make possible knowledges about language, identity and the world which sustain the discourse on literacy. The historical correlations between identity, world and text are rendered intelligible via their relation to schooling. The school itself functions as a generalised *heterotopia* of deviance and normality, a space that is increasingly imposed upon a world defined as both opposition and extension of the school. In this space, language and text mark the collision between the student and the world and register the “truth” to which the student is subjected.

Foucault’s notion of a *dispositif*, or social apparatus, is used to map the pedagogical relations structured by literacy discourse in terms of a space of visibility and a form of sayability, and to analyse their operation within power-knowledge. By power-knowledge I mean a circulating network in which ways of understanding and conceptualising also involve power and authority, and techniques of controlling, arraying and disposing people and objects are also productive of knowledge. The formulable/visible/operable “space” of literacy is conceptualised as a normative heterotopia and as a recent mutation of bio-power, the government of the developing body. Such analysis yields a coherent account of how the discourse of literacy articulates that term’s systematic indefiniteness with its real effectivity in producing subjects, spaces and disciplinary techniques.

The literacy *dispositif* articulates two distinct historical strata: an establishment of fundamental terms and relations in the nineteenth century, and a reorganisation of pedagogical space in the twentieth. The nineteenth-century educational state produced the national language and the developing child, as well as the world of demands and national progress, in biological and linguistic models of human development and in the insertion of pedagogised subjects into a graduated national table. Around these notions formed disciplinary procedures, structures of perception, and a configuration of desire centred

around the recognition and utilisation of language development. Contemporary literacy discourse appropriates these knowledges and multiplies their sites of operation, articulating the recognition and enablement of *all* literacies (with an emphasis on the non-standard) with the governmental intensification and direction of the powers of a population. As a result of this convergence and articulation, the pedagogical relations inscribed within literacy discourse project a continuous disciplinary power into a general social space.

Literacy has thus become a common social concern, a structuring of spaces, subjects, discourse and power. After analysing the integrated functioning of the literacy dispositif in a recent education policy document, the Western Australian *Curriculum Framework*, this thesis examines literacy in several levels of its operation and historical construction: as part of a discourse, as the substance of a power-knowledge regime, and as an organisation of space. Literacy is deployed as a way of organising experience through discourse and as a means of modulating the relations between three historically constituted terms: the student, the text, and the world. Schooling and literacy thus insert themselves into a machinery of social production and into the production of everyday concerns and processes. As a result, modern Western subjects live a pedagogised and textualised existence in which the most material and non-linguistic events are accompanied by literacy in a teleological arrangement of time and space.

Thus literacy, along with the structured discourse it invokes and the set of implicit powers and knowledges it activates, structures knowledge and action in a wide variety of events and practices, establishing the historical and discursive relations through which language acts as a surface of recording and a substance of power. An anecdote illustrates this by revealing the curious persistence of a concrete social apparatus circulating and relating notions about literacy across a range of sites, practices, divisions, connections and knowledges. The anecdote also serves to introduce the questioning philosophical intent of the thesis, aiming as it does to map relations which already pervade social space but remain, after their own fashion, both self-evident and invisible.

My fourteen-year-old brother Miki and I are in a room, and I am helping him with his English homework. For over an hour, we have discussed his assignment. Having noted his thoughts on the assignment and explored several ways of completing it, I have prompted him to criticise the fundamental assumptions behind the assignment's question, and we have decided upon an argument that follows a Russellian analytic line, looking at the logical structure of the question and ordering his discussion of the text according to this analysis. The assignment question itself was taken by his teacher from an internet source, and contains enough modifiers, such as "sometimes" and "perhaps," to make it meaningless. We logically reduce the essay question to: "In choosing to depict certain groups and human behaviours in certain ways some texts sometimes comment on some aspects of human society. Comment with reference to the film *Coneheads*."

Miki has written out an essay plan and is thinking, moving and uttering short phrases, talking about unrelated matters or arguing points as he alternately paces, sits and scribbles, always returning to his writing desk. I pace slowly or stand until I settle in a corner of the room. We are both aware that the essay is due the next day, but the work is simultaneously relaxed and tense. We share an interest in logic, and our discussion takes us far afield from the assigned topic of stereotyping and the social values in texts. Recurrently, however, we return to the text and the question, which we have read as unrelated (the final point in my brother's argument is that *Coneheads* is not about *human* society at all). In the midst of this activity, I find that he has again moved from the desk and is repeatedly gliding his face just above the floor, and slowly mewing. I can tell he is thinking of various things to which our discussion has led him, and that he uses this action to pull his thought away from the topic, but also to weave his thought around it. The mewing is non-phonemic; it results from the isolation of a certain glottal position, and a continuous variation of the tone with itself. I laugh, and he looks up, his eyes focus, and he laughs back. The curious thing was that for some time we had both not considered this at all, either as funny, strange, disturbing or normal. It was only by isolating it that it became something, and the laugh became a discourse on the object thus discovered.

In its everyday strangeness, this little experience involves a combination of spatio-temporal structuring, social imperatives, practices and forms of knowledge. It represents

an ordinary, intimate and biographically singular event, but it also extends into a fully social regime, an ordering of spaces, knowledges and actions. The strangeness and the humorous charge of this event is marked by and stands against a background, against a ubiquitous regime of disciplined language. In this latter sense, this ephemeral event may stand as an emblem of the difficult space this thesis explores. It opens up from a single point and instantaneously to reveal a whole latent social architecture, against which it acts as a sort of comic inversion, interrogation and interruption.

If there seems to be a shifting from “space” as signifying the episode with Miki, and “space” as signifying the socio-discursive space of literacy and education, it is because one is a part of the other. This space is part of a *dispositif*, a total social apparatus which coordinates places, discourses and practices. The space activated in this single, non-verbal performance involves a discourse: the formation of objects and concepts, speakers and statements. It is in this space that these objects (students, for instance) are operated upon and affected by forms of power. This space involves the formation of knowledge and the maintenance of power (techniques, tricks and tactics, ways of getting things done, programs, plans and procedures). The *dispositif* thus involves a certain articulation of power and knowledge within a single historical form. The specific form of this power-knowledge, moreover, is signalled by the relation of the mewing to language; language seems to be the substance running through this apparatus, the stuff that constitutes it, its residue and confirmation. A particular language of instruction – both that used in instruction and the language one is instructed to use – pervades this space and inhabits the various locations within it.

In its refusal of language, Miki’s performance invokes and interrogates assumptions about the nature of language and its relationship to thought and identity, assumptions which have a crucial status in literacy discourse. To bring this ordered space, the time that accompanies it, and the underlying knowledges that support it to light, I use the work of Deleuze and Guattari to offer a radical philosophical critique and the work of Foucault to build up a more systematic picture. While some of the assumptions used to build and maintain this space are usefully interrogated by Deleuze and Guattari, it is to Foucault that I turn for a guiding analysis, and it is with a Foucaultian methodology that the thesis

proper continues. With his slow, historical uncovering of knowledge and power as a single space, Foucault's theoretical *oeuvre* is the material from which I construct an analytic for understanding this space of invisible assumptions, self-evidences and lines of force.

The first point to make is about the laugh that made this experience possible. Perhaps there was a certain uneasiness in that laugh; perhaps that laugh arose from a recognition that something quite outside of all previous discourse was taking place, and I was registering that anxiety which brought Foucault to a sudden confrontation with the fact that we order a "wild profusion of things" (Foucault, *Order* vii) which constantly threatens to get out of hand or, rather, escape from our systems of classification and the order they assume. But while Foucault's laughter was directed at the fabulous ordering system of Borges' Chinese encyclopaedia,¹ my laugh was in response to a non-systemic action, to a combination of deep thought and other elements (boy – floor – cat – homework), which had somehow found a tiny gap in the dense network of social determinations and elaborated itself. At one and the same time, the gliding meow announced the absurdity of an ordering of the world that did not include it, and changed that order by bringing in a profound doubt.

But it could not have done this without the laugh that brought my brother back into order, that arranged the action as a complete act, situated in an objective past, within a time and space sufficiently distant and different for us both to laugh about it, and to wonder at it. The laugh was a break and a recalling into this world of something that might otherwise have passed and left no trace, a silence between events. In that, the laugh was certainly a christening act, making a unity, an object, of something. It was also, however, an intervention, a very real change in the experience, an activation of a certain set of things in action, opening them to new possibilities, connections and powers.

¹ See Foucault (*Order* Preface). The Chinese encyclopaedia is mentioned in "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins." Borges' essay criticises attempts to create a transparent philosophical language on taxonomic and ideographic principles.

The laugh was not a word, much less a phrase or a description, but it functioned with all the facility of an elaborated system of indices, of optical equipment and indexical markers, to isolate the thing it transformed. In short, it was always virtually accompanied by a social complex that gave it precision as well as direction in its cutting up of “the world” into unchanging units and functions. There is a social world here, in the little room that we share, which comes in to invest the laughter at every point with potentialities over which we have only a little control. Foucault describes his encounter with this text, not merely as the recognition of an impossible other system that bears upon “our” own, but as “the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought” (Foucault, *Order* xv). Thus, it is a disordering that makes order itself visible. The laughter referred Miki’s action to a division of time, a system of structured and related spaces, and a cluster of assumptions about language.

The first thing that came into view as a result of the meow was related to time, to how it is ordered, and how that was ordering our action. The homework is for the next day, when a minor authority (a teacher) will examine it for what it tells her about my brother’s understanding of a list consisting of certain properties of texts and language, and his performance of a certain capacity of producing thought on demand in essay form. It is clear that time is divided into two, into school time and home time, and labour is likewise doubled. No doubt this has much to do with an educational view of the human mind, but it is also a way of marking two arrangements of time; a chaotic or free time which is characterised by an anxiety focussed upon the deadline, and a tightly prepared time which is distributed into periods, activities and subjects of study/instruction.

This situation also involves division of space, a way of organising it and making certain things appear. To take an example, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (and Miki’s activity could easily have activated this anxiety about the inability to order one’s faculties) can be diagnosed only if a child is disruptive in two distinct social settings. Thus, the division of a child’s life, of the reality of childhood, into two distinct spaces,

creates an overall space of correlations.² In fact, all of school performance is correlated with aspects of another environment, one which is used to explain a wide range of performance characteristics as they are manifested in the school's observational regime. This space – and the practices of recording and reasoning operating within it – makes visible an ideal student, one who is abstracted from all complicating forces and appears as a justification for various interventions. Among the indices of this ideal student is a path of optimum literacy development. This developmental destiny converges the parts of a total instructional environment around the figure of the developing student. The little room in which the homework is being done is tightly joined to a network of spaces concerned with observing, evaluating and forming the student.

The space which impinges on us, here and, in a certain sense, everywhere, is a space concerned with the control of conduct; it is a “governmental” space, to use Foucault's terminology. It is concerned, moreover, with my brother's conduct of a certain set of behaviours believed to indicate the development of language in the individual. There is also here, then, a way of making a certain language appear, of controlling that language and turning that control into an imputed nature (universals, invariants, constants, implicit rules, language as a vehicle for values and world views). This is not to say that this model of language is untrue, but rather that it is a particular treatment of linguistic facts, and one closely related to the techniques that structure its appearance. Language may be said to contain invariants, but that is only when it is cleansed, in a presumptuous way, of anything that varies, including the way a “constant” is used. A presumptuous delimitation of language, denied by our little performance, seems to inhabit this impinging space of governance and concern, and seems to light up in the fire of our laughter, to glimmer as the substance upon which this governance is exercised.

Beyond this, and approaching assumptions of which it is difficult to speak, the mewing and the laughter bring into question the fact of language. The language of governmentality is illuminated by a counter-language, by a sort of impugning, doubting

² See the American Psychiatric Association's *DSM-IV* for diagnostic criteria. For a discussion, see Taylor and Timmi. Graham furnishes a Foucaultian reading of ADHD as constituted in discourse, but unfortunately confuses “performative” with “emotive” language.

figure of difference. This strange thinking assemblage of place and sound and bodily disposition occasions a doubt whether there is such a thing as language, or whether it operates only as an object under certain regimes, or if it hides different objects under one denomination, or if it is heterogeneous and contains “non-linguistic” things in its essence. In any case, it brings into question what role of the school in legislating the boundaries of language and of *a* language, in designating not just what is correct but also what is linguistic and what is English. To mew is clearly not a linguistic fact – it is a paralinguistic vocalisation, according to accepted delimitations – but it *is* a way of carrying thought within the body and reordering its components. Gliding the face above a surface is not linguistic but somatic, a way of drawing a particular quality of voice, enacting a particular type of thinking. What it is not geared to is communication or representation, the cardinal qualities of language in linguistic disciplines.³

The mewing speaks: it introduces a positive characterisable practice; the laughter, on the other hand, marks the enormous distance between this act and the disciplined language, ordered in time and space, which we had taken for granted the moment before. In its very rejection of linguistic form, Miki’s actions summon up a group of assumptions about language, about what it is composed of and what it is for. These assumptions form a kind of substance through which this discourse takes form. How does one achieve the distance to view the outline of so a self-evident a notion as language, and how may one relate it to this situation? To do justice to the immanent critique that informs our laughter and to further this charting of an insistent space, it is necessary to take two directions. The first is to look at notions of language, via Deleuze and Guattari, from a radical philosophical perspective, and the second, using a Foucaultian methodology, is to examine the relationship of language to the other elements of a total social apparatus.

³ Grace argues that descriptive linguistics is undercut by its attempt to describe languages dominated by a prescriptive elite, drawing on Kloss’ distinction between *Abstand* and *Ausbau* languages. Grace’s argument relies on the assumption that there are changes that are natural or internal to a language – that is, actual usage “when languages are left alone” (Bailey 10) – and external changes. Assuming language to be integrated into a social assemblage, however, suggests that “language” is a convenient demarcation, and that linguistics therefore arises from a presumptive definition of language as an integral system.

Deleuze and Guattari's analysis in *A Thousand Plateaus* demonstrates that language is primarily neither communicative nor informational. Rather, they argue, the functions of communication and representation are derived from modes that are usually considered by linguists as peripheral to the function and proper character of language: the performative and the illocutionary. The performative is a statement that is indistinguishable from what it says, such as "I swear." The illocutionary is a mode in which language gets things done ("the command, the expression of obedience, the assertion, the question, the affirmation or negation" [Spengler, qtd. in Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* 76]). From this beginning, Deleuze and Guattari develop an alternative model of language to mainstream linguistics.

The mewing, understood in these terms – as a way of getting things done, as an instance of the illocutionary mode – is not a perverse use of voice, body and space; it is as language-like as any sanctioned utterance. It functions like Deleuze and Guattari's radical project, destabilising the authorities establishing language as an object, returning language to the dynamic image of indefinitely branching systems in constant transformation, to a *physis* of constant rearrangement. Their project retrieves this event from the status of anomaly, instead creating a form of description and a way of conceptualising that resists the "organising" language (that is, describing and controlling it as if it were a system of functional interrelations with a common end). Like Foucault's laughter, they shatter order and render visible the power that pretends to be a thing:

When the schoolmistress instructs her students on a rule of grammar or arithmetic, she is not informing them, any more than she is informing herself when she questions a student. She does not so much instruct as "insign," give orders or commands. A teacher's commands are not external or additional to what he or she teaches us. They do not flow from primary significations or result from information: an order always and already concerns prior orders, which is why ordering is redundancy. The compulsory education machine does not communicate information; it imposes upon the child semiotic coordinates possessing all of the dual foundations of grammar The

elementary unit of language – the statement – is the order-word (Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* 75-6).⁴

The insistence of the space activated by the “statement” here, however, points to the inadequacies of Deleuze and Guattari for this thesis, in both process and project. While they provide a salutary critique of the underlying postulates of linguistics, their ensuing reconceptualisations are more a rendering of language as rhizome, or its disaggregation into a chimera of transformations, than a set of landmarks, concepts and procedures with which to capture the kind of interrelations with which this thesis is concerned. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari are concerned with a defoundational project of repeatedly forming new concepts (Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 7), generating new terms with which to describe and intervene. Their emphasis is on changing the language of philosophy as they engage with it. Such a practice does not provide the analytic detail required to deal with the definite historical relations between spaces, words, gazes, gestures and meows activated in my brother’s action. Nor does it address what this thesis is more generally concerned with: a peculiarly open space or, alternatively, a space with distinct components which nonetheless form a series of communications, loops and articulations. If the language of the classroom imposes order, it also emerges from an ordering space. Deleuze and Guattari open up an analysis by putting into question what is taken for granted, while Foucault furnishes the analytical schemata for distinguishing the historical functions of this discourse. Moreover, Foucault makes the space in which this discourse operates analysable as a form of power-knowledge. Language is not merely a way of getting things done: statements are themselves ordered by, at the same time as they order, the space in which they appear.

This space produces a particular consciousness of the pressure of time and of the purpose of the exercise, which compels the desire to *write the thoughts down*. This desire is not yet a concern for literacy, for a display and assurance of the capacity to read and

⁴ That classroom discourse is primarily an ordering is made clear in Bellack et al. While classroom talk is conceived as a language game, the analysis focusses upon “soliciting and responding moves” (87-132) “structuring moves” (133-65) and “reacting moves” (165-92). While the result of the research is a set of “rules of the language game” (237-52), it is clear that each of the teacher’s moves is an ordering, both in terms of setting out the conceptual, spatial and serial orders, and in terms of issuing instructions.

write, and to think of texts, in appropriate ways. It is, rather, the experience of an imperative that has spread itself throughout this time and space, throughout the social body, and has found an application here, in this room. This space is not any particular place, but, rather, the simultaneous interrelation and distinction of places.

Such a disciplining space is marked by the insistent effort to make the child recognise itself both as an expression of the nature of language and as inhabiting a stage of development. That is, the desire to write thought down is an artefact of a pedagogical space that involves a subjection of the educational subject and the making-visible of a developmental scale. The school, as a place, as a set of persons, as a regime and a body of ongoing evaluations, knowledges and interventions, constitutes a complex social practice of constant training, not only of teachers and students, but also of parents, friends and relatives, in a game of concern and applause, tracking and tracing, a game which is simultaneously moralising and calculating. The school/home division is a loop of subjectification. It creates in the student an observation of her/himself, and of an order, parallel to this self-observation, into which s/he fits and which s/he expresses. This circulation involves a distinction and articulation of persons. Through this game of concern and training, through this constant observation, a subject of education emerges who is also subjected⁵ to education. Concurrently, the school separates itself off from “the world out there” and brings this world back in various fashions: as different ways of speaking, writing, reading and knowing, as the demands of the new economy, as the order of nature. The school, as place and practice, is the perfect spatial metaphor of the privacy of thought, of internal representations of the world, and at the same time an efficient mechanism for the disciplining of private thoughts, of their ordering into a text, of this desire to write thought for the judgment of progress.

The space analysed in this thesis and referred to obliquely in the anecdote is also a special kind of social control by enclosure, separation, treatment and release. The ease

⁵ There are a number of sites involved, and a variety of subjects, but they are all related to a single system of pedagogical subject-formation. See Covaleskie for a discussion of the subjection of students and teachers. Marshall (“Busno-Power”) argues that, as part of an attack upon the welfare state, neo-liberal discipline forms the pedagogical subject as a consumerist “autonomous chooser.” For an early formulation of education as a mode of subjection, see Adams (73).

with which this confinement (even though it requires a legal sanction) is accepted as a universal “cure” for childhood is the result, or the enactment, of complex relations between economic processes, institutions, authorities, practices.⁶ But these are themselves connected to the status of children as deficient but potential adults. The darker historical associations of childhood with disease and madness enter into contemporary disciplinary space, but they do not explain it. It may be that childhood is treated as an inevitable disease, but only according to a Renaissance model, since it must express itself and go through its various stages if the patient is to get better and become a healthy adult.⁷ Nonetheless, schooled childhood presents a spatiotemporal focus of vigilance that is curiously akin to watching the crisis of an illness. On the other hand, in the first formulations of insanity that emerge from “the great confinement,” childhood haunts the figure of regression, of a disease that arises from the reactivation of childhood patterns of thought and behaviour. Childhood is defined both as the foundation of adulthood (reason, order and work) and the symptom of its degradation (unreason, disorder and “play”).⁸ This childhood-madness association remains virtually present in contemporary schooling because childhood is invested with the time of development, corresponding to a plotting and monitoring of appropriate stages. This is why a meow that acts as a vehicle for thought is so difficult to accommodate. The notion of childhood that operates within the space I am charting presupposes an imperative time that mandates intervention and diagnoses the disruption of an ideal trajectory. The fear of a type of madness (regression) and a type of bio-psychic disease (retardation/arrested development) intersect in this labyrinthine circuit of concerns and techniques, diagnostic suspicions and sites of treatment. The space here involves and invests obscure dreams and ghostly fears, all of which have as their object the child. These desires are related to the insertion of the child into a cloud of disciplines and sites of intervention.

⁶ Although literacy theorists regularly point out that literacy should not be reduced to schooled literacy (e.g. Barton, 34; Freebody et al.), the use of out-of-school literacies is almost always to improve schooling. The recognition and codification of Aboriginal “ways of learning” is a particularly clear instance of this (see Batten et al., 7-17).

⁷ See Foucault’s *Madness and Civilisation*, 79.

⁸ For a discussion of the historical status of play within education, see Brehony.

A single term, “literacy,” explains this space and the combinations of sites, objects, models and ideal entities, its interventions and recordings. It unites this space and makes its geometry seem orderly and beneficial, its power commensurate and proper, its knowledge sober and intelligible. Literacy is the sign under which my brother’s subjection occurs, and it is thus the term confronted and refused in that strange act marked by a laugh in the privacy of his room, that act strangely connected to the space of his subjection. Literacy is the central figure of this space, combining all of these concerns and processes in a single term. This term, difficult to define yet constantly invoked, is essential to making sense of this space and its divisions and practices. This is largely independent of the various definitions of literacy and the complex series of debates concerning the properties of this entity, the best way to assist in its development, the rules for its definition, engaged in by literacy theorists.

The meow and the laughter mark the presence and witness the insistence of a structured and regulated practice of knowing literacy. Moreover, they arise from a difficult and circular relationship inscribed in this discourse between experiences and delimitations, between practices and their naming. The meow itself was indifferent to literacy as desired, to literacy as an object of concern and discovery and as a substance to build, and this indifference was underscored by a laughter of recognition. Nonetheless, it was this discourse, this network of desires, assumptions and ways of knowing which impinged upon this paralinguistic act as part of an inescapable “everywhere,” a sort of practiced reality. It is thus this relation of a difficult, perhaps impossible knowledge to an inescapable and everywhere evident reality that forms the outline of this self-problematizing discourse.

Literacy discourse presents a series of problems that act paradoxically, putting the definition of literacy into doubt while guaranteeing its existence beyond discourse. The disciplines that involve literacy (it skips and jumps across and along various circles of signification) always tempt the researcher into examining the thing that is touched by literacy, that it skims upon. There is always a foundation, a nature, that literacy seems to rely upon, and that can be easily undermined in order to enter a new discourse, a critical one that leads us out of a labyrinth. This escape, this liberation from former strictures, is

always false, since literacy is a de-founded signifier which merely skips and skips back along different lines, with no ultimate regard for a foundation. It is a purely pragmatic construct, even when its discourse goes into the depth of the bodies it inhabits, the societies it changes, and the individual histories it affects. It is the critical mapping of literacies that assures their effect as tools of power-knowledge.

Literacy, or the impulse to study literacy, can be sustained by the claims that are made for it (in connection with modernity, science, egoism, visual bias, rationality, for example) or by the emptiness of these claims (historical non-correlations, studies establishing the schooling-literacy distinction, critique of numbers and tendencies, of individual developmental sequence). Literacy motivates these visions; it is something like the ground on which the battle for its decipherment takes place. Again, the status of literacy is difficult to see here because of its necessity and self-evidence. One cannot even be sure what are the effects of certain practices and techniques of measuring literacy and what might be its ideal correlate: can we say that the notions of language, text and student operating in this discourse precede the notion of literacy? The “there is” – not only of literacy but also of its concatenation of objects – may be only the necessary correlate of a practice of knowledge which produces its own objects.

Moreover, tracing an historical experience of language, such a narrative contributes to an account of the means by which language came to be recognised as a single system. To speak of an elementary unit of language presupposes too much and leaves too much unexplained here. To search for statements as the structuring units of a discourse, on the other hand, does something different: it makes intelligible the extraordinary rendering of a space of correlations by the meow and the laugh that marked it, or by the regulations and definitions in the *Curriculum Framework* and in many other documents like it. Where a culture locates and controls, studies and exacts language *qua* language (as both a picture of itself and a symptom of its quality) has considerable bearing on the question of language’s primary nature, whether it should be seen as a variable assemblage of forces or as a system of representation. This specific and privileged site of language is entangled in a space of “non-linguistic” things – in persons, acts and times, in techniques and knowledges that are themselves part of the specific effects of this site. A historical

account of how a particular taken-for-granted model of language is discursively constructed goes beyond an insistence on such heteronomous connections and the provision of evanescent examples of language as a battery of effects. A discursive analysis situates the statement, not within the aleatory wanderings of a too-general object, but rather within a definable discourse producing its own modality of language.

Thus, rather than announce a preferred view of literacy and language, this thesis looks at where these ideas go, how they are circulated and put to work. This thesis is concerned with the function of the term “literacy” in the organisation of social space and conditions under which the development of linguistic competence become a kind of truth for human beings. It examines the historical and discursive relations under which language became the key to a form of recording which is also a form of power. It argues that the study of literacy is made possible only by a preceding historical arrangement and a co-determination of elements that secure its obviousness. Analysing a policy document, the 1998 *Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia*, shows these historical relations in a highly organised form, at the end, so to speak, of a long process of assembly and articulation. From this terminus, it is possible to reconstruct a historical account of the elements of this discourse and to relate them to the present, while at same time underlining a set of historical differences.

The space which was recognised as activated in a single, non-verbal performance (though as a node of that space, not as a representation) is an insistent space, involving the formation of objects and concepts, speakers and statements. In addition, it is a space in which something like those objects (for instance, the persons marked as students) are operated upon, are inserted into forms of power, coercion, incitement, cultivation. One should not say that there is a difference here between discursive elements and operations, but rather an interaction of what may be taken as two distinct levels. On the one hand, this is a space for the formation of knowledge (holding and relating bits of language as much as non-linguistic materials, perceptions, situations and events) and, on the other hand, it is a space pregnant with powers (techniques, tricks and tactics, ways of getting things done, programs, plans and procedures).

Since literacy is discussed in a range of vastly different sites, this attempt to delineate a single discourse is a big gamble. Such a discourse does not correspond to a scientific discipline, nor is it limited to a range of them, but is, rather, distributed throughout the social field. The thesis requires a definition of discourse that accounts for all these facts, and is able at the same time to characterise this diffuse speech as a unity, as a single discursive formation. The material evidence it looks to is a collection of words, graphs, formulas, even photographs; a set of objects, texts and acts which refer in some way to literacy. The convergence and interaction of these elements to produce power-effects and ways of knowing is established in the analysis of the *Curriculum Framework* as an exemplification. The contention of this thesis is that the discourse of literacy activates, and is activated by, a set of relations in which the space and power relations of schooling are implicated within practices of examination involving the student and the text. In turn, these relations make possible knowledges about language, identity and the world. The circuit of codeterminations between identity, world and text are intelligible and *thinkable* only if one begins with a relation to schooling. The school itself, as a general type of space, functions as a *heterotopia* of deviance and normality, a space that is also a reflecting mirror upon a world which is defined by its very difference to the school. Language, and the texts that embody it, come to function in this space both as the signifying surface of collision between the student and the world and as the truth to which the student subjects her/himself.

In moving from a particular manifestation of literacy to more general discursive and genealogical analyses, this thesis moves from a particular discursive site to more generally a discourse that surrounds, informs, imposes, measures and judges literacy. In doing so, it does not oppose a true understanding of the processes of reading and writing to mistaken and mythical ones. Literacy is dealt with not as a real substratum over which descriptive and prescriptive regimes play out a certain clarification or distortion, but rather as a set of formal persistences, patterns of being and saying, that constitute at one and the same time a discourse and its object. The thesis sets about, then, to characterise a *discourse which is concerned with literacy*. The terms identified as central in the *Curriculum Framework* provide a historical and discursive point of arrival, not only to

draw the past into an intelligible relation with the present, but also to focus the historical material while nevertheless emphasising its heteronomy, its distinct situation.

Chapter One analyses a specific and recent manifestation of the discourse of literacy, of the relations that persist in this difficult space. It argues that the Western Australian *Curriculum Framework* for English constructs and enacts literacy as a means to know, assess and subject students. Literacy thus forms a linguistic substance connecting and articulating student and text, knowledge and ability, the school and the world. Each of these articulations is structured by the space of schooling as a component of a naturalised pedagogical form of power. Literacy provides the observable basis of a power-knowledge coupling in which the powers of the student as a linguistic being are intensified, multiplied and generalised as a model of development. This close reading of a policy document in the first chapter yields up a general thesis that literacy is central to the pedagogical organisation of social space and constitutes a key set of knowledges that render current forms of power inescapable. Securing this power is the status of literacy as both the necessary access to the world as text and as the natural substance of the student as subject. This allows literacy to function, then, as an insistent demand for a particular form of subjectivation, simultaneously liberating and disciplining the literate subject.

The vantage thus gained makes it possible to interrogate the discourse of literacy more generally as the projection of knowledges constructed by the terms, spaces and practices involved in the schooling of a national developmental subject. The formation of literacy as an object of study in the discourse reveals the persistence of a national developmental subject and an inevitable reference to an educational rationality. To this end, Chapter Two explains as a groundwork the analytic elaborated by Foucault in his investigations of historical discursive formations, that is, in the interrelations between objects, concepts, strategies and statements. Literacy discourse is examined as the construction of an object, in particular through “myth lists,” which establish an ontological guarantee of literacy while removing the possibility of its direct perception.

These lists establish a world in which, whatever it is, literacy bears an imperative to be studied and investigated. Three types of listing are dealt with: the lists of theoretical

positions; the mapping of a public discourse; and the recounting of an ideological legacy. In each case, a world is drawn, simultaneously unified by the notion of literacy and assuming literacy as an unknown thing that is a concern for researchers, the public, the state and the educational establishment. Literacy is constructed as an indispensable force, the contours of which are defined and redefined according to the practical context, social needs and political ends with which it is associated. As Foucault has argued about other historical concepts, the chapter argues that “literacy” is systematically constructed by the discourse and owes its existence to practices that allow it to appear. Rather than seeing literacy as discursively constituted, such lists assume that one may cleanse the concept of unwarranted accretions and recover a core or real definition. This is itself a mode of construction, positing a pedagogical space as terminus for the discourse, imposing a specific developmental urgency that is mapped onto both the student and society.

Chapter Three shows that this guarantee of literacy as the protean object of the discourse involves literacy discourse in a set of undecidable circularities. Without an understanding of this discursive formation and the relations that are immanent in it, the discourse provides an insufficient account of literacy as concept, object or experience. The discourse fails to account for itself, systematically forming its object while at the same time obscuring this process. However, the statements of literacy persist in putting into play a consistent set of relations between schooling, the developing subject, language, text and nation-state. These radical inadequacies of the discourse, combined with this discursive consistency, call for a Foucaultian understanding of knowledges concerning literacy as a discursive formation rather than as a persistent object over which definitional disputes are conducted and towards which differing disciplinary approaches may be applied.

The practices that form its object are necessarily invisible to this discursive formation, are beyond the space bound and organised by its statements, its fundamental orientation, its array of speaking positions, concepts and possible arguments. Three areas of the discourse are analysed here, the *historiographical*, the *epistemological* and the *political*, all of which are involved in circularities and ambiguities inherent in the discursive foundation of literacy as an organising term for historical inquiry, as a

knowable object and as a political problem. Moreover, there is the general political problem of a form of knowledge that ineluctably affects implementation, policy and everyday practice. These circular relations or “analytics of finitude” (Foucault, *Order* 270) are always presupposed and entered into by the discourse.

Discourse analysis is not sufficient, however, to form a complete picture of literacy as a social apparatus, and how this operates in the *Curriculum Framework*. This discursive work is supplemented and transformed by recourse to Foucault’s analyses of how knowledge and power condition each other, and how this may be thought as the analysis of a single complex social apparatus and a single, complex network of places. Chapter Four elaborates on the articulation of power and knowledge in Foucault’s work, explaining the notion of *dispositif* as a systematic relation between forms of sayability, in which statements operate, and spaces of visibility, where techniques of power work, within a larger schema of the operating ensemble. Power is discussed as a grouping of historical techniques of disciplining and arranging bodies in space and time. Power-knowledge is the interaction between fields of knowledge and power, intensifying and supporting each other in a recent confluence in disciplinary sites such as prisons, schools and factories, and developing into distinct technico-political regimes such as bio-power. This set of concepts explains the power-effects of literacy better than standard accounts of context and ideology. The chapter continues by differentiating the uses of Foucaultian concepts in this thesis from other Foucaultian studies of education and literacy.⁹ Studies of literacy using Foucault are taken to operate within the literacy discourse, and thus to be part of the object under investigation. While this thesis also lies within the discourse, it differs from other Foucaultian studies by historicising the discourse of literacy as involved in the historical extension of pedagogical space, and thus employing the elements of this discourse – the statements and power-effects – in a new and differently critical way.

Chapter Five argues that the discourse constructs and maintains a special type of space, a *heterotopia*, a type of emplacement that is connected in an uneasy way with the totality of social emplacements. This heterotopia is not the same place as the school, but

⁹ For an early overview and introduction to such studies, see Ball.

is structured by the relations of schooling. Literacy performs an important function, projecting the pedagogic heterotopia into the social space at precise points, generalising the “pedagogical condition,” a set of relations that are becoming “visible” everywhere, hence a structure of perception, a way of ordering space. The danger for literacy theorists and literacy workers is that recognising subaltern and neglected literacies subjects the groups who bear them to more intense forms of pedagogical power. This recognition is not simply the sign of an expansion of rights and opportunities but also signals the extension of a discipline extended throughout social space – in the workplace, the school, the family and even the self – in the observation, training and developmentalisation of language.

In detailing the spaces, practices and forms of knowledge involved in the constitution of literacy and pedagogical governmentality, the thesis moves over a great deal of historical ground, frequently shifting from one continent, century or institution to another. This study does not seek to describe a past which is still with us in a certain relation of government to the moral regulation of individuals, although it does take for granted the long history of disciplinary techniques in education and their extension throughout the social field.¹⁰ Nor does it seek to unmask the ideological values underlying certain definitions of language, text and student. What it seeks to isolate is not an image of society as it really was or is. Rather, it seeks to determine a single level of existence, both practical and conceptual, at which the question of language traverses the school, is projected onto “history” as a whole,¹¹ is found and examined within the workings of a student both ideal and typical, within a schema of successive steps, cognitive leaps and abilities, and where language assumes the aspect of a substance to be recognised as the truth of self and society, of a set of forces, needs and impositions, where the text emerges

¹⁰ See Foucault, *Discipline* 227-28.

¹¹ This projection is done in several ways: by positing written records as the precondition for historical knowledge (as opposed to archaeological and ethnographic); as the *sine qua non* of civilisational development; and as a fundamental factor of development. While the forms of projection have been used to promote ethnocentric Western arguments and privilege “Western” histories, it is nonetheless the entire historical field, and not merely a Western precinct, that is marked thus.

as the surface for deciphering, reordering and questioning the proprieties, rights, and possibilities of this space. In shifting from place to place, then, it determines the spaces, practices and knowledges of literacy as a historical formation, as a recent convergence of elements. This is distinct from literacy as an essence with an ever-receding origin, an eternally developing but nonetheless self-identical *thing*.

It is precisely at this point that the thesis differs from the other works within the discourse on literacy. While even critical literacy theorists see literacy as an unseen constant substance with historically and culturally variable forms, this study treats the experience, practice and knowledge of literacy as arising only in a very recent articulation of schooling, developmental psychology, the nation-state, and a new set of relations between language and human subjectivity. The danger of this is that attempts to define liberatory subjectivities may thus be ultimately aligned with a deeper and more persistent project of pedagogised governmentality, thereby naturalising a multiplying form of power.

In light of this danger, Chapter Six suggests some elements of a Foucaultian history of literacy in order to problematise, and to make visible, the taken-for-granted effectivity of the knowledge of literacy. This “counter memory” links the notion of literacy with the practice of schooling and a recent developmental construction of childhood. While neither a comprehensive historical account nor a full analysis of the relations in which literacy emerged, it dramatises the possibility of a Foucaultian history of literacy that describes literacy as a historically constituted power-knowledge assemblage rather than as a contested term, and of the introduction of new dimensions to the historical, epistemic and political understanding of this assemblage. Fundamentally, the thesis works to interrogate and interrupt what Mark Depaepe calls the process of “pedagogisation,” in the sense not of sabotage but of a different questioning.¹²

¹² See Depaepe (“Demythologising” 220; “Comparative History” 119; “History of Education” 338). While Depaepe restricts his work to the emergence of a pedagogical discipline in the late nineteenth century, it is used in an extended sense here. In Foucaultian studies of education, this term is almost exclusively related to the “pedagogisation of sex” as part of the historical turn to bio-power, the management of populations through the policing of health (Foucault, *Knowledge* 104). See Jose (33) for an exemplary application.

1: A Curricular Manifestation

The disordering act presupposes the antecedent order it violates: the surprising epiphany begins in disorder with an inarticulate mewling, but the space it opens to view is secured by a network of official determinations, by an apparatus that polices the space of literacy in its everyday functions. Clearly, a space emerges that traverses social emplacements and marks them as places of learning, development, performance and assessment. This space is formulated through a set of knowledges that are activated, in more or less concrete ways, by the term literacy: ways of seeing self and other, ways of judging, marking, measuring and explaining with reference to literacy, to its levels and components. Conditioned by and conditioning a corresponding ordering of time, this organisation of space enables and informs operations and processes, interventions and interactions which are made intelligible in the light of these knowledges.

This chapter maps some of the official orderings of this vast and ramified space. It investigates the statements on literacy in the 1998 *Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia*, looking at how this term works in the articulation of knowledge and power in national education policy. Analysing the way in which notions of literacy are deployed in this document clarifies literacy's importance in the structuring of a national pedagogical space, integrating political, epistemic and technical elements into a single complex. In addition to rendering intelligible the placing of children into school for a period, and validating schooling as beneficial and necessary, literacy forms a complex that marks a whole set of things: material artefacts such as portfolios and transcriptions, modes of control, acts of regulation, and forms of evidence and knowledge regarding the essential nature of students of English.

The *Curriculum Framework* allows us to understand how the practice of confining the young in special institutions is made thinkable, and how that practice is tied, first, to both a knowledge of the young as beings specially destined to learn and incapable of living in the world outside of the institution and, second, to a set of special technologies for controlling and converting this population into this image, by way of designating

them as linguistic beings. The forms of power enacted by the schooling of literacy are most evident in documents like these, the procedures regulating its implementation and change being clearer and more immediate than anything in philosophical essays or popular representations.

Added to the order disclosed by the mewing is a power enforcing and securing that order. The *Curriculum Framework* is a regulatory document accessing and controlling a real function, and a discursive component of a larger integrated social apparatus or dispositif.¹ The dispositif realises a form of power. Within the dull, anonymous language of the *Curriculum Framework* is a prescription for transforming the child into a learner, for fashioning and seeing a being composed of a substance made visible by schooling. The literacy dispositif is not an immaterial pedagogical will, manifested without reference to a material practice that mandates it. Statements, practices, orders and procedures circulate “literacy” throughout the social as an articulation of power and knowledge.

Central to this analysis, then, is the connection that education policy exploits between the systematic use of pedagogical discipline and the discourse of literacy. The *Curriculum Framework* incorporates literacy discourse, including critical literacy discourse, into the project of state-directed schooling. By instrumentalising the discourse of literacy within the rationality of schooling, and by defining the human subject as unavoidably a subject of language, literacy policy makes possible the extension of pedagogical discipline to the entire social field.

The *Curriculum Framework* is an outline of the legally enforced standards and orientation of schooling in Western Australia. It codifies a system that had already been operating in compulsory education, and was to be extended to post-compulsory secondary schooling. It is based on an “outcomes” model of teaching and assessment, one that underpins the curricula of all Australian States and Territories. The outcomes describe “what students should know, understand, value and be able to do as a result of

¹ O’Farrell (*Michel* 129) defines a dispositif as “the various institutional, physical and administrative mechanisms and knowledge structures, which enhance and maintain the exercise of power within the social body.” The importance of the concept is argued in Chapter 4.

their curriculum experiences” (*Curriculum Framework* 14). The main part of its three hundred and twenty-eight pages consists of an “Overarching Statement” (11-48) and the “Learning Area Statements,” each about 35 pages long (49-320). The “Overarching Statement” gives directions for the practice of schooling in general. It is divided into five sections: the “Overarching Statement,” “Principles of the Curriculum Framework,” “The Major Learning Outcomes,” “The Scope of the Curriculum,” and “Learning, Teaching and Assessment.” Each Learning Area Statement is also divided into five sections: “Definition and Rationale,” “Major Learning Outcomes,” “The Scope of the Curriculum,” “Learning, Teaching & [sic] Assessment,” and “Links Across the Curriculum.” It is in documents such as the *Curriculum Framework* that literacy assumes a function as power-knowledge, and it is in regulatory frameworks like this that the discourse of literacy achieves its most direct articulation with social existence and the forms of power pervading Western societies. The *Curriculum Framework* was chosen because it administers schooling, because its power of application extends over a whole state, because it stands in many ways for contemporary Western education, and because it is operated as a way to discipline teachers and to measure the compliance of teachers and schools. The focus of the analysis is the “English Learning Area Statement” of the document, as it most clearly exemplifies and enacts a pedagogico-political² construction of “literacy” and “language.”

The outcomes model and the full implementation of the *Curriculum Framework* (the successor to an almost identical consultation draft) have both come under sustained attack³ in Western Australia. Despite this, the *Curriculum Framework* remains paradigmatic as an attempt to institute a fully integrated national pedagogical regime. The criticisms, which are concerned with the articulation of clear standards and their

² This is a compressed formulation, implying the use of at least two kinds of knowledge (knowledge taught and the knowledge of teaching) and two kinds of power (of educational and state institutions). More concretely, it denotes the merging of these into the concrete everyday forms of assessment and instruction, the ordering of time and the ranking of students as learning beings.

³ These attacks are mainly from parents’ and teachers’ groups, as well as televisual and print media. See the Education and Health Standing Committee’s report. They concentrate on several key factors: the vagueness of assessment guidelines; the lack of prescribed syllabus material; the difficulty in articulating marks with tertiary requirements; the implied ideology of social constructivism; the bureaucratic or technocratic evangelism of the model; and failings in consultation and teacher training.

implementation, reinforce rather than undermine the document's claim to distil and codify a shared pedagogico-political project.

While the conservative attacks on “post-modernism” and “Marxism” in literature and history teaching may fairly be seen as an ignorant “attack on education” (Brabazon 286), the power-effects of integrating critical literacy discourse into the pedagogical state are often uncritically endorsed as a defence against conservative reductionism rather than a specific modality of the educational state. One of the major themes dealt with in this chapter is the problem of the transcription of “critical” knowledges of literacy into policy, a problem which is also an explicit, coded, and repeated feature, and yet one which nevertheless appears to surprise the practitioners of critical literacy, and seems, moreover, particularly to be cast as a rewriting of progressive knowledge into a reductive implementation of a conservative agenda.⁴ As later chapters will argue, this is because the determining relations of the discourse of literacy render imperative the conversion of literacy into an intensification of pedagogical power, whether it be construed as liberatory or not.

The term “literacy” is deployed in the *Curriculum Framework* to establish an epistemology of signs relating the surface behaviours of the student to a depth of understanding, allowing for the school's observation and disciplining of the student as a being defined in language. Literacy operates as a subjectivating device, articulating the power of the school onto an observable series of acts which have the understanding and use of language as their originating object. This object (and, *a fortiori*, the student) is itself divided according to the various uses and needs it supplies, the forces that act upon it, and the modes in which it is manifested. Additionally, literacy allows for the inscription of school power as restraint by marking the student as incapable: by defining both world and student as linguistic and normative entities, it legitimates their temporary prophylactic separation. Literacy is the central articulating term, the very basis for the intelligibility and operability of pedagogy as power-knowledge.

⁴ See Green (“Re-righting”) for a discussion of the Australian context in the 1990s.

The epiphany was also of a power that pervaded every space, an everywhere in which language is inserted as a disciplinary substance, a material and mental substance to relay, display and learn. In deploying the discourse of literacy, the *Curriculum Framework* articulates power-knowledge with both a general social space and a specifically pedagogical space. The discourse of literacy at work in this document furthers a long-term process of defining all spaces as subject to pedagogical intervention, control and measurement. Analysis of the *Curriculum Framework* demonstrates the use of literacy as a key term in binding together elements of pedagogical power-knowledge, defining as ineluctable a bond between concerns for the nation and the conduct of the subject within her/his relationship to language. Before the analysis proper, then, it is necessary to situate the *Curriculum Framework* within the context of pedagogical space and also with reference to the development of the “outcomes” model.

The *Curriculum Framework* is both a historical terminus of older practices and knowledges and a concentrated exemplification. The analysis undertaken here provides a detailed image of the operation of pedagogical space through the discourse of literacy, and an initial opening towards understanding the discourse, reconstructing the elements it articulates together and historicising their emergence and integration. The *Curriculum Framework* is thus a starting-point for the analysis of the discourse of literacy; it represents the surface of the discourse’s efficacy in official implementation as power-knowledge. Its statements traverse and organise a general space of pedagogical power, a set of relations, practices and knowledges that together constitute a current social apparatus.⁵ The apparatus of social production that emerges from the analysis of this document delimits the subsequent focus of the thesis; this apparatus is explained in later chapters as the effect of historical discourses and lines of descent.

⁵ Daphne Meadmore has argued in a similar vein that the Queensland Student Performance Standards are an instance of modern governmentality:

In terms of the national goals for testing and curricula which are in themselves expressions of governmentality, the production of subjectivity on an individual basis, but also in a totalising way from the earliest years of formal schooling, is now an integral part of the competency agenda at national and state levels. Foucault’s “slender technique” of the examination continues to be a means of securing the goals of governmentality. In current assessment discourses, this technique, in various forms, delivers its promise of power/knowledge. (Meadmore 628)

In laughing, Miki and I were registering a knowledge relating to language as a measure and product of the mind and, linked to that, a knowledge of social chances and judgments arising from one's performance of language. In putting literacy discourse to work in education policy, the *Curriculum Framework* weaves two aspects of this highly ramified discourse together: the psycholinguistic study of literacy and the sociolinguistic study of literacy as social capital. In mapping out the powers of the educational state, the document utilises accumulated and selected knowledges concerning language in the development of an individual. Additionally, it puts into operation a group of understandings about how literacy distributes economic opportunities, how representation affects social relations and reflects social and economic interests, and how patterns of language embody social power. Moreover, the *Curriculum Framework* transcribes these knowledges and configures them as operational terms: they are mobilised into an array of disciplinary techniques and a strategy of social management.

Perhaps what marked our laughter most was a combination of the multiplicity and ambiguity of literacy with its precise and differentiated regularities; literacy is amorphous as a whole but precise at the points of application. While "literacy," like most terms, is amenable to certain uses, misuses and politically selective definitions, its ambiguity and flexibility is structured and informed by the relations obtaining in its formation. Much of literacy discourse is written, as it were, with the "educational state" as an addressee, because of the role of the state in implementing literacy pedagogy and because a literacy theorist is virtually positioned at the same time as a literacy policy advisor. Policy does not univocally dominate and determine the knowledge of literacy and all that is said on the subject. A set of knowledges is drawn upon from a more general literacy discourse, operationalised in a type of power and arranged to articulate various social sites within a pedagogical *space*. This space confers upon these knowledges of literacy their currency and efficacy. Insofar as this knowledge is operationalised in education policy, its outlines are determined by this space. Further, critical studies of literacy and literacies are adopted by the project of schooling because they render subjects of literacy more visible and multiply the sites in which pedagogical intervention is practised. It is important, then, to understand the *Curriculum Framework* as a node in a more general space. At the same

time, however, the *Curriculum Framework* arrays, disposes and maps a pedagogised and pedagogising space by using this network of power-knowledge.

The discourse of literacy at work in this document is systematically related to a spatial organisation of pedagogical power. A set of “emplacements” or structured spaces exists in this discourse, corresponding to a set of modes of operation. The distribution of these spaces is not binary: one does not move, for instance, from an academic to a pragmatic mode and location. Nor is it a simple centre-periphery arrangement: no area or activity directly determines the form of the others, and one is not compelled to return an analysis to pedagogical concerns. Rather, the sites and ways are multiple in the practices they invite and in the knowledges they call forth. Literacy opens up an indefinite space calling for the multiplication of stages, of sites of intervention and study, in the act of reading. Because literacy discourse involves a relation between knowledge, power and space, it is not enough to note that the distribution of the concepts in this discourse is singular and recent, as is its tendency to address and to describe a society that mandates literacy and commands its visible performance. The *Curriculum Framework* must be analysed as effecting a practice, as activating a space and as enabling an ensemble of social relations. This practice is a form of *power-knowledge*, this space is *heterotopic*, and the entire social ensemble, the patterned interaction between knowledge, power and space is a social apparatus, a *dispositif*.

While no space directly determines the others, the space of schooling models the knowledge of literacy and structures literacy’s penetration into other spaces. Miki’s homework (along with his other actions) was, after all, done in reference to the school’s judgments, rules and criteria. This pre-eminent pedagogical space is thus special, the implementation of literacy within a pedagogical form having a unique status, an importance assumed by the discourse, as both the destination and the home of literacy. Another space, the state – with the nation, society and the standard national language as its surfaces – is generated from this general activity, a derivate growing from real pedagogical space (with the family, community and school as its sites). The state codes the value of the primary activity and of the actors, institutions and processes involved, and redistributes them onto the geographic scale of the nation. It is both for and against the coding of literacy by the state that literacy discourse is brought into being; the

discourse calls to be used in the formulation of policy by the state. The *Curriculum Framework* could not work without this disposition of relationships, this spatial and social array, and it is this space that determines the ways in which the *Curriculum Framework* utilises literacy. The term literacy is particularly important because it is coextensive with this space and facilitates its operation; it binds these various sites in terms of a single substance.

It is not that any of these sites carries within it its own political bias, although such sites may be said to have ways of proceeding: the developmental psychology of reading requires a closed and restricted experimental form; the teaching of early reading in a classroom requires careful attention to individual circumstances and a familiarity with the pedagogical options; writing a book advising teachers on the politics and pragmatics of adopting new technologies involves an estimation of the audience, an ecumenisation of the political issues.⁶ Beneath and beyond this play of different protocols and regulations, unifying this geography of sites and rules, is the uneasy union and mutual intensification of literacy and pedagogical discipline. Even where a work on literacy is not related, in content or manifest intention, to the state's educational project, it is brought into a relation with it by the discourse as a whole. The dependence of authorities is always reconstructed in a chain reaching from the most abstruse study to the most explicit directives. No word is written that is not destined by the discourse to enter into pedagogy. This state process of pedagogical extension is, like critical studies of literacy, antagonistic to the reduction of literacy to school instruction and the "basics," resulting in the strategic articulation of "conservative" and "progressive" modes of instruction.

Outcomes, Frameworks and Transcriptions in Power-Knowledge

Miki's violation was not simply of language and pedagogical expectations but of a subjectivity which takes language as its substance and develops through language. The discourse of literacy as it operates in the *Curriculum Framework* does not seek to liberate the subject except at the price of rendering her/him a subject of language, a functor from

⁶ See Green, Lankshear and Snyder for one such attempt.

which variables are deleted in order to arrive at the truth of language. It is only at the price of a new subjectivity, of a new and different form of subjection, that a freedom emerges. This freedom, however, is a freedom of language from its content; it is the abstract autonomy of a language, of the “system” to which one is subjected. Language is constructed in the *Curriculum Framework* as simultaneously immediate and unattainable, the whole set in an infinite series and accessible through any length as a general formulation. Language, moreover, is constructed as an induced performance, a set of rules for proceeding; distinct from signification and signalling protocols, and from any particular effort at communication, it stands at an infinite remove from its manifestation. Nonetheless, language as system superintends language as performance, lending all textual performance a silent normativity, guaranteeing the predictability of texts, enabling a parenthetical delimitation on any scale: the letter, the phoneme, the syllable, the genre. Language, as it is presented in the *Curriculum Framework*, tells us we are merely following orders issued from a non-place, an unassailable source with no foundation. The world outside, the world of a strange and unanalysable flux, is somehow the outside that constitutes the unfathomed material pressures that necessitate a new location of knowledge both *in* and *as* language.

The document’s statements on “literacy,” “language,” “conventions” and “understanding” are discursive constructions of concepts which regulate and manipulate the discursive objects, but unlike statements in the more theoretical works on critical literacy, they are both enabled and constrained by an intersecting discourse of governmental rationality. The “statements”⁷ of the document, that is, the immanent rules for forming objects and concepts that apply to this discourse, are already implicated within a problematic of knowing, controlling, and rendering productive a population.⁸

⁷ For a definition of what Foucault meant by “the statement,” see *Archaeology* (51-7) and Chapter Two, below.

⁸ As Bruce Curtis points out, Foucault’s use of “population” indifferently covers populousness, which involves the “hierarchical differentiation of essences,” the intermediate notion of the “social body” and population proper, which “depends upon the notion of a common abstract essence” allowing the identification of “analytic tools and objects of intervention, such as birth death, or marriage rates” (Curtis, “Foucault on Governmentality and Population”). The use throughout this essay conforms to the latter notion, with language as the abstract essence.

Moreover, this document (and the form of rationality it enacts) has a form of executive relation with the work of schools and teachers, that is, a power-knowledge relation. Further, the *Curriculum Framework* assumes a place within a dispositif, a functioning apparatus of a form of power. This should not be confused with the governmental function, although an articulation with governmentality should be noted and analysed in its specificity.⁹ The document codifies the form of visibility involved in the practices of schooling, in the operations of techniques of power-knowledge on a group. Students are a construction in this discourse that has a determining effect on the form of power-knowledge that schooling enacts. As objects of a structured visibility, students are constituted by, rather than pre-existing outside of, the practice of schooling. The concepts and objects of educational discourse have certain *consequences* for the relations between school, teachers and students. The objects constructed in policy documents correspond to and are constituted in a practice, and the kind of object constructed implies a form of power-knowledge involved in a particular practice. A limited set of discursive objects is arranged and related here: the *student of literacy*, the *world*, and the *text*.

The document is part of a rearrangement of Australian regulatory inscriptions of education, in that it renders regulations as “outcomes,” drawing upon a method of evaluation: the “objectives model” developed in the US by Ralph Tyler in *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* and Benjamin S. Bloom and others in the 1950s.¹⁰ David Hamilton itemises the features of the “objectives” thus:

the objectives model requires that the development team:

- (1) secures agreement on the aims of the curriculum

⁹ Foucault’s notion of governmentality may be summarised as “the rationalisation and systematisation of a particular way of exercising political sovereignty through the government of people’s conduct” (O’Farrell, *Michel* 106). Governmentality is a category that spans from the conduct of the individual to the construction of useful ways to determine the conduct of populations by the state. Foucault was concerned with governmentality because the concept opened up a field of analysis of modern forms of power (Lemke 2). Pedagogical power thus coincides with a broad notion of governmentality, but labelling the *Curriculum Framework* as merely an instance of the latter risks erasing its specificity.

¹⁰ See Bloom et al. (*Taxonomy*), Bloom et al. (*Handbook*), and Hamilton et al. This is not to argue that Tyler envisaged a standardised psychometric normalisation of teacher assessment. Indeed, Tyler’s work is presented by Helsby and Saunders (“Taylorism” 62-64) as an attempt to enlarge the scope of teaching and teachers’ agency.

- (2) expresses them in terms of pupil performance
- (3) devises appropriate curriculum materials
- (4) measures the fit between pupil performance and intended outcomes. (*Curriculum Evaluation*, 46)

The outcomes model is a modification of this, as is made clear by the confusions experienced by some teachers: outcomes assessment does not merely imply behaviours, as is the case with the objectives model, but incorporates a standardised set of interpretations of students' performance and products, and builds up a language of achievement stretched over "developmental continua."¹¹ Implemented from the early 1990s, the outcomes model is a system of reporting that became virtually compulsory in every Western Australian primary and secondary school with the introduction of the *Curriculum Framework* (which functions as something like a compliance test for teachers) and has similar counterparts in other Australian states. Teachers have often characterised this new regime as scattering instruction into bits and pieces. In part this is because it is superficially similar to the prior "objectives" approaches.

As Barry Kissane, one of the authors developing and adopting this system, pointed out in response to some teachers' criticisms of the outcomes model, the problem this new model attempts to counteract is the historical tendency to scatter the syllabus into small, unconnected fragments:

I do not deny that some can . . . reinterpret "outcomes" to fit the practices of the past; indeed, this may be precisely why the "outcomes based assessment" problem is described as a problem But the simple response to this problem is that such misinterpretations are missing the point about outcomes. (Canberra Mathematical Association 10)

¹¹ Forster and Masters give a working definition of developmental assessment, show how to use progress maps to monitor student "growth," compose an array of techniques to monitor the "full range" of outcomes, provide instructions on judging and recording performance and transcribing attainment onto progress maps and developmental continua, and demonstrate the use of descriptive and graphical reports of student achievement.

Outcomes are designed to render a normalised student knowable and tractable in depth and across time, and it is in this depth and fullness that we see the operation of power, as much as we see a division and exclusion at work in the haphazard scattering and fragmentation of objectives.

This line of descent is supplemented by a process of absorption: a highly significant feature of the *Curriculum Framework* is its transcription of a wide range of elements of critical liberatory literacy discourses. Marxist, feminist and Foucauldian terms, concepts and phrases are incorporated into the educational mode of disciplinary power. The *Curriculum Framework* recognises the contingency of the meaning of texts – the historical, social and technological genesis of both text and meaning – and the relations between power and language (*Curriculum Framework* 82). These critical theoretical insights multiply and strengthen the disciplinary forces of the school, contributing to this mode of power by encouraging students to recognise themselves as subjects of texts and language and thereby legitimating the articulation between student and text. These insights also multiply the spaces and categories of observation of student achievement, removing neither the object nor the problematic of contemporary schooling from the parameters of its operation as power-knowledge. Critical literacy discourse is employed in the formulation, mapping and assessment of student outcomes, and in the creation of a continuous field of intervention. This is done not at the expense of critical literacy theory, but rather as part of this discourse's claim to represent the truth of human identity at its most essential, general and manipulable. Whatever the indifferent success of this particular manifestation of pedagogical power it represents – in contrast to Miki's ephemeral refusal of the *dispositif* – a long-term trend and the legacy of an existing, elaborated rationality.

A further essential for the document's operation is a language of convergence and articulation. The *Curriculum Framework* is organised around a concentrated formulation of the problem of schooling: how might it “help ensure that students achieve the outcomes” (11)? This seemingly mundane question conceals both a history of the machinations and negotiations involved in coming to agree on the “values” and “outcomes,” and the subtle transcriptions of what the world requires which are written into these outcomes, the great variety of methods and ultimate purposes that these

outcomes seek to accommodate and simultaneously neutralise. The school is the agency that transforms the student according to a set of normative and agreed goals legitimated by the apparent agreement about them. An array of techniques is already presupposed, techniques developed from the knowledge of the student as a manipulable and transformable object. It is important to note here that this project of transformation and agreement is made possible by the use of general terms, and that such terms reinscribe education and its goals as the issue of the state, the nation, the community at large. To speak in general terms is both the office of the state as the accommodation and nullification of difference, and a feature of the metalanguage of critical literacy studies, as much as it is an aspect of normalising texts about the cognitive stages of reading, and other “reductive” treatments of literacy. In the English Learning Area, what enables and determines the knowledge behind the techniques of transformation is a complex articulation between students and texts.¹² This articulation is conceptualised as literacy.

Pedagogical power is already articulated with a body of knowledge of the student as reader. The careful articulation between these two heterogeneous orders is made possible by the discourse of literacy. The *Curriculum Framework* makes use of this, it does not impose it. The discourse of literacy performs a double function here: it enables and delimits. Without this conceptualisation of literacy as the meeting point between pedagogy and students, the relations of power between the school and its students would be, if not incapable of being put into practice, far more difficult to justify. The notion of critical literacy performs two functions here: at the same time as it allows the student to see the arbitrary and normative character of literacy, it reveals literacy as the unavoidable condition of the confluence of power and meaning. Further, the discourse of literacy allows one to speak of something visible, capable of being recorded and assessed, and materially related to the demands of the world, in the activity of reading. This is a growing, maturing thing, a thing acquiring ever new powers and functions. In the terms set up by the document, literacy exists both within the student and in relation to texts.

¹² Edwards and Usher, like Green (*Insistence*), contend that the copresence of student and text involves a kind of Derridean violence, in which the “institutionalised violence, where bodies and souls are disciplined and controlled . . . is intimately linked, and perhaps . . . made possible, by the metaphysical violence within which the message and hope of education is concealed” (Edwards and Usher 139).

Literacy is defined as a capacity within the student which needs to be developed. As a propriety regarding the use of texts, literacy is a demand for sensitivity to “context.” In both cases, literacy requires the recognition of a truth: a truth of the subjectivated body (the organised capacity for language) and a truth of language (the system of which one partakes, of which one expresses a greater or lesser amount). The *Curriculum Framework* regulates schooling as it operates on the development of these truths through technologies of observation and assessment. This notion of literacy enables, and combines with, an ensemble of techniques which make the student as visible, knowable and manipulable as possible.

The *Curriculum Framework* places the concern for providing students with literacy in the English Learning Area, which is accorded two essential characteristics. This Learning Area is, first, an object of study, knowable in the organisation and functions peculiar to it, and, second, part of a technology of self-fashioning, a way of acting upon students and of transforming them into the improving object of the educational process. These characteristics are united in the figure of the student and are seen in what students do with English. The student is presented as a condensed construction, in terms of her/his interaction with (the English) language. First, students learn about language in terms of its effective practice, the systematic objectivity by which it may be observed, and the modality that is characteristic of it. Thus, they “learn about the English language: how it works and how to use it effectively” (*Curriculum Framework* 81), and they study language as a “vehicle for communication” (82). That is, language is encountered as a use, an object and a purpose.

Second, studying English accompanies the variform development of the student: in study, the English Learning Area is involved in the development of literacy as the existing powers of language; it enhances the concurrent “learning in all areas” (*Draft Curriculum Framework* 74)¹³ and provides new ones, namely “functional and critical literacy skills” (*Curriculum Framework* 82). For the *Curriculum Framework*, English is an important part of the curriculum for two reasons, reasons that are simultaneously

¹³ Although the released *Curriculum Framework* does not retain this formulation in the “Definition and Rationale” section, a close analogue is present in the “Links Across the Curriculum” section. This omission seems to be a negotiation between the specificity of English as a subject and literacy’s status as a fundamental basis of all schooled knowledge. See *Curriculum Framework* (108, 110).

related to two places (inside and out of school) and two times (before and after graduation). Studying English enhances students' learning in all areas of the curriculum and, further, it provides them with "the ability to control and understand the conventions of English that are valued and rewarded by society" (*Curriculum Framework* 83).

The importance of the English Learning Area is established through a relationship between literacy and the official national language: English "has a special role in developing students' literacy because it focuses on knowledge about language and how it works" (*Curriculum Framework* 83).¹⁴ Literacy "gives [students] access to knowledge, allows them to play an active part in society and contributes to their personal growth" (*Curriculum Framework* 82). There is an implicit definition of the student here: s/he is at the same time a social and a personal being, but also, and above these, a linguistic being. A certain parallelism is developed between outcomes and literacy, since they constitute and make accessible a level that persists across sites, that constitutes a position in a developmental continuum, a level that is simultaneously real and potential.

At every point, literacy is accorded the greatest importance as both entry point and medium in the acquisition of knowledge, as the natural basis and measurable manifestation of learning, as the set of practices with which to respond to the changing world, and as an entity whose changeability enjoins schools and researchers to follow its transformations. Literacy is both the technical basis for discipline and the figure that unifies the endless differences separating its ephemeral forms. In the section just quoted and throughout the document, there are several definitions of literacy, each of them presupposing certain relations within which literacy occurs, is practised, defined and altered. Literacy is, first, a faculty, whether acquired or inherent, already there in the body, already present and active, when the intervention of schooling takes place. Second, what assures and directs the development of literacy is the study of English, a language which stands as the exemplar of language in its general conditions and properties, and which, as the sign of a social demand and propriety, defines those standards of language that are to be demanded of students. Third, although there are different forms taken by

¹⁴ Australia is the first country to develop a national literacy policy, with others following. For Britain see Department of Education and Employment; see Goodwyn for a critical appraisal.

literacy, literacy itself is also a kernel, a general identity that remains as it is transferred, as knowledge and ability, to the other learning areas. Fourth, specific forms of literacy are required and defined, both for the proper comprehension of texts and for the production of texts acceptable to the regimes, generic and disciplinary, represented by the learning areas and enforced within corresponding social sites. Fifth, social and technological developments demand literacy, in specific forms. Sixth, social and technological change define literacy, which is in itself an unstable and dependent entity. Literacy is therefore both something greater than the English Learning Area and a legitimization of the English Learning Area's importance.

Once again, literacy is both legitimated and problematised by the demands of the world: it is both the thing that will preserve students in response to the world, and that which must be carefully guided and controlled, that which must be altered, in order to conform them to these demands. The knowledge required to face the vicissitudes of life is supplied, the *Curriculum Framework* claims, by literacy, by the concerted interaction and control of the interaction between student and text. Students must have knowledge of and skills with texts because "Changes in the nature of work and social life and the development of new technologies have produced a proliferation of new and different forms of communication" (*Curriculum Framework* 82). Students must inhabit this "communication-saturated society" (82) with a functional and critical knowledge of language and texts.¹⁵ This world takes a position of prominence in literacy discourse.

Students and the Demanding World

An invocation of the world and of the changing expectations and demands of society has historically been a feature of educational discourse.¹⁶ However, representations of the demanding world have been either national and politico-economic

¹⁵ Lo Bianco and Freebody (8-24) give a more detailed construction of contemporary global change from within the rationality of literacy education. While their work distinctly echoes the *Curriculum Framework* and other official policy documents, it was not adopted as official policy. Green, Lankshear and Snyder hail it as a progressive step (79). Appendix A shows the world as graphically represented in the *Curriculum Framework*.

¹⁶ See Mikulecky and Kirkley for an example.

or national and humanistic, if they are not national and religious.¹⁷ In the *Curriculum Framework*, however, the world exerts a different kind of pressure, and bears the marks of new discourses and disciplines. The society that produces the needs of students and delineates the imperatives of schooling is technico-semiotic and technico-informatic,¹⁸ as is the set of needs it imposes. Setting aside the question of what the authors really think about the nature of society, and whether the invocation of such pressures is not just part of the rhetoric of educational planning, this is nonetheless a significant difference, a vast shift in both the nature of the world described and in the mode of its influence.

The idea that the outcomes respond to the demands univocally imposed by the changing world does not sit well with the way the outcomes were constructed: they arose from a long and complex set of negotiations, translations (especially from the US model), and a ministerial level of formulation handed down for “consultation” and modification. The outcomes model derives in part from an international trend in adopting management practices from commerce and business, specifying outcomes as “attainment targets,” “standards,” “benchmarks,” or “competencies.”¹⁹ The first formal statement of “Agreed National Goals for Schooling” was issued as the result of the 60th Education Council, attended and drafted by the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education in 1989. This, with its ten goals, was to provide the basis of the outcome statements, and established the project comprehensively to assess and monitor educational practice on a national level, within the bounds of a single document, the annual *National Report on Schooling*:

The annual *National Report on Schooling* will monitor schools' achievements and their progress towards meeting the agreed national goals. It will also report on the school curriculum, participation and retention rates, student achievements and the application of financial resources in schools. The

¹⁷ For the first of these, one can draw a lineage which extends at least as far back as Joseph Priestley's 1765 “An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life;” the second is exemplified in Arnold's 1867-8 *Culture and Anarchy*, and the third by Comenius' 1658 *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*.

¹⁸ That is, it generates an imperative for the interpretation and efficient operation of communications technology as the *sine qua non* of the social good.

¹⁹ See Moore; Brindley; and Eltis.

annual national report will increase public awareness of the performance of our schools as well as make schools more accountable to the Australian people. . . In the history of Australian education there has never been a single document which informs the citizens of Australia about the nation's education systems and the performance of our schools. (*Hobart Declaration*).

Moreover, the new framework would render teaching directly answerable to a hierarchy of supervision, a hierarchy simultaneously bureaucratic, political and expert, since the outcomes straddle the divisions between these areas:

In making judgments of student achievement, teachers relied upon a whole range of criteria based upon their experience and knowledge of their students and upon their familiarity with certain curricula documentation which also provided them with specific criteria. Among these were documents comprising statements organised and sequenced in ways that described achievement and progress in English language and literacy. These “frameworks” of student achievement were designed by expert teams commissioned by Commonwealth or States and Territories ministries to provide detailed descriptive criteria in order to inform teacher monitoring and their reporting of student progress to school and school systems throughout the State or Territory. (Breen et al. 5)

The judgments of the *National Report* would be based on the criteria laid out by ministers as the “agreed” goals, with an argument derived from a representation of the changing world as the motive force for educational innovation. Aim 4 of the *Hobart Declaration* is:

To respond to the current and emerging economic and social needs of the nation, and to provide those skills which will allow students maximum flexibility and adaptability in their future employment and other aspects of life. (Australian Education Council)

From the standpoint of critical literacy studies, it is easy to contrast this imperative with sensitive analyses of the “New Times,” of “just-in-time capitalism” and the “New

Work Order,”²⁰ but a simple contrast would miss an important dimension. The point here is not that critical literacy is being hijacked and translated into a vision of the transnational corporate state, but rather that a description of the changing world and its imperative for better communication (including critical understanding of sources, media, genre, and of all the manifold interests and ideologies served by texts) serves as a bridge in this translation. Redefining Australia as a corporate enterprise and recasting literacy skills as communication skills are attractive both to educational planners and proponents of critical literacy pedagogy. Literacy discourse serves the purpose of running the state as a business in the communication-saturated world:

A leading edge education and training system drives development of an innovative society. Information and communications technology in education and training has the potential to raise education standards and minimum skill levels, including information and communications technology literacy skills, necessary for the future economy. A workforce with access to individualised and flexible, quality training through new technologies will address Australia’s need for competent workers who learn throughout life.
(MCEETYA, *Information Economy* 29)

This can easily feed into the growing construction of demographic knowledge which is itself purpose-built to intensify the (ministerial and state-sponsored) demand for greater surveillance of the achievement of outcomes and the standardisation of teaching. *A National Report* bolsters the need for “change” in educational priorities (that is, an intensified pedagogisation of the population) by citing research on the employment chances of early school leavers, while at the same time defining the imperative as national and economic. Thus, for early school leavers during the last two decades of the twentieth century

²⁰ Gee et al. is the standard reference, but the phrase, and the associated concepts, have been adopted widely in critical circles, as the work of Faraclas, Farrell (“Reconstructing Sally;” “New Word Order”), and Luke (“Genres”) testifies. Similar conceptualisations of the inequities arising from the internationalised and textualised economic order can be seen in Pusey, Mickulecky and Kirkley, Porter et al., Seddon, Green (“Re-righting”), and Rassool.

there has been a growing body of research linking high levels of education and training to high levels of employment and, conversely, low literacy levels and early school leaving to high risk of unemployment. (MCEETYA, *National Report 78*)

The *National Report* frames this as part of a project to develop people through education that might better serve the national economy:

There has been a growing recognition that the strength of the Australian economy is inextricably linked to the quality of education and training. *Skills for Australia*, published in 1987, highlighted the need for Australia to become a highly competitive trading nation with an industry base characterised by high levels of productivity, innovation, technology and workplace skills. (MCEETYA, *National Report 80*)

The world sets the stage for this new project of intensely monitored schooling; it establishes a necessity as well as legitimating the general direction. It does not, however, determine the form of schooling. Indeed, the form of schooling and the developments in educational practice constitute an international climate in themselves: in March 1997, MCEETYA decided to “examine the common and agreed goals of schooling in Australia to ensure that they reflect current and possible future educational developments” (MCEETYA *Common 4*).²¹

The demands of a communication-saturated world are appropriately met through the use of texts. The *Curriculum Framework* deploys the text as a way to connect its constructions of social demands, schooled discipline and student subjectivities. Texts are indispensable, but the choice of text and content is subject to discretion, because texts

²¹ For a departmental description of the world as the context determining definitions and implementation of literacy, see the DETYA *Annual Report 1995/96*. This involves, inevitably, a definition of the nation state in terms of the international economic order, presented as a set of imperative “requirements” for continual acquisition of skills:

These developments, together with technological change and the efforts to improve the competitiveness of Australia’s industry in the international environment, have had major implications for the skills base of the Australian work force. The requirements for initial entry into the work force have been changing, and there is a growing recognition of the continuing need to acquire new skills, upgrade current skills and maintain the relevance of qualifications, that is, for life-long learning. (DETYA, *Annual Report 3-4*)

Needless to say, externalising the reasons for intensified discipline places them, if not beyond criticism, then, at any rate, beyond control.

function generally: there may be better and worse texts, but they all demonstrate the workings of language, and they all develop literacy in the presence of a reader. Obviously, what really happens is a selection of typical texts selected for their generic conformity, not because the content is chosen for its lack of deviance from generic formulae, but because the generic outlines and the function of the text in teaching a systemic view of language convert each text into a textbook. If the school has a great deal of discretion in choosing texts, then, it is because, while the content of each text differs, its general function does not vary. Hence, texts “provide the means by which students achieve the desired outcomes of English” (*Curriculum Framework* 82). As the precondition for the outcomes and the surface on which outcomes are achieved and made visible, the text cannot be excluded from this space. The presence of the text is one of the conditions of possibility of literacy and literacy instruction. The text is aligned with the imperative for literacy that is established here as the supply of student needs, as both historical and endogenous forces.

Literacy is constructed as a pedagogical imperative because of the functions it performs in relation to the terms established in the *Curriculum Framework*: namely, it contributes to the successful navigation of a communication-saturated world, because it is teachable, and because it is the precondition of schooled knowledge. Literacy permits the insertion of the appropriate subject into the world of proliferating texts, genres, broadcasting and technical communications, because it both adapts to this world and affirms it. The student of literacy is thus a historically singular being, simultaneously a sign of capacity, a storehouse of skills and understandings, and a degree of flexibility in adapting to the changing use of language in the world. Literacy must inhere in the individual as a discipline and as a set of measurable outcomes performed by her/himself within a space of freedom enclosed in a field of necessity. Far from being merely a vague term, literacy allows for the precise structure of divisions necessary to pedagogical power.

This structure of divisions is repeated closely in the *Curriculum Framework's* definition of functional literacy as “the ability to control and understand the conventions of English that are valued and rewarded by society” (*Curriculum Framework* 83) and has several consequences. The set of student needs related to the use of non-standard English

is subordinated to a greater need, secured by a social demand, for learning to use Standard Australian English effectively. While this new division does not necessarily mark non-standard English as deficient, it nonetheless subordinates it: what is necessary, therefore, is to translate the functioning of pedagogical power, namely subordination, to society, to its values and rewards. The agency of the school is simultaneously translated into the interior of the child in its deficiency and displaced into the society to which the school responds.

Thus, when the document states that teaching in the English Learning Area “involves recognising, valuing and building on students’ existing language competence” (*Curriculum Framework* 82), it is performing this double operation of uniting the social and individual dimensions in the one site. Existing competence, the interstitial site of operation, unites the divisions in a functional parallel, and provides at the same time the individual and social knowledge upon which pedagogy, in a constant and individualised elaboration, problematises and corrects, renders deficient and supplies, the student. Existing competence is the point at which the current state of the student is assessed and, as a result, instruction is enacted; it is the site at which knowledge is constantly generated.

This intervention is superior to a mere marking of deficiency, or to the application of instruction to a *tabula rasa*, or even to a whole person, since it is the empirical intervention into an empirically apprehended object, the individuality of which is both internal (developmental, medical and teleological) and social (arbitrary, environmental, necessary for survival). Existing competence, locating the student as a point in a series of series (Foucault, *Discipline* 145) is thus an individualising technique at the levels of both knowledge and procedure. One is evaluated according to one’s position between origin and destination, and pedagogical intervention is designed, evaluated and thought in relation to this position.

In the *Curriculum Framework*, functional literacy is defined as having a number of uses and serving a number of purposes. In one sense, a whole generation of literacy research lies behind these statements, a whole tradition of defining literacy as that which is defined by its uses. In another sense, the literacies of uses are returning to a reductive

state pedagogy, disguising the imperatives of the national economy as needs, impositions as services. The result is an extraordinary compromise, a cartography of the “basic” social uses of language and a mapping of how the powers of schooling are situated.

These uses are separated into three domains: the interpersonal, the professional, and the intrapersonal. First, students need functional literacy as the basis of interpersonal communication: “to communicate ideas, feelings and attitudes [and] interact with others” (*Curriculum Framework* 83). Second, professional uses of functional literacy serve the need “to cope with increasingly complex communication demands” (*Curriculum Framework* 83). The student is thus the inverse image of this demand to cope, to reflect the world and to be its sign, its efficient relay, a functioning component in the circuit of communication, continuously making her/himself adequate to these demands. Third, the intrapersonal needs “to explore and develop ideas, and to access an increasing range of knowledge and ways of thinking” (*Curriculum Framework* 83) mark the student as a cognitive being in need of a functional literacy in meeting the need to develop internally. Thus, the student stands in a threefold relation to literacy: as a social being, as a potential professional meeting the needs of a world suffused with “communication,” and as a private being in need of a way to develop ideas and integrate them within modes of knowing.

Several assumptions operate here which are implicit but necessary. The student needs an ability, not an act. This small but important point is vital to the placing of knowledge in the depth rather than at the surface of behaviour. It is not that students do not need to cope with the demands for communication imposed on them by this world. What is at stake in the placing of the response to demands in the depth of an ability is the validity of schooling: this is a knowledge which is necessary if the acts demanded of the student are to represent a response, not to the school, but to the world for which it is preparing students. Students, beyond their need to cope with the demands of communication, need to be *able* to cope.

Below the act, at its source, is a potential which is essentially removed from the act, which is its general, persistent nature residing within the student. A ground is established in the gap between the act and the potential for action, where the needs of the student and

the operations of the school intersect. This operation, where the knowledge itself writes the object and renders it subject to intervention, is necessary: there must exist a potential, a depth where acts secure their repeatability. The school must have a potential within its object attainable by its intervention.

Within this division between act and ability, another opens up, both as consequence and as elaboration. The student's acts become a body (of acts and abilities) divided according to a bifurcated and teleological organisation of time. The student, as the body on which intervention occurs, exists across the division between a current state and a desired one, between the state last tested and appraised and that to which it is destined. This temporal division marks the current student as deficient in knowledge and insufficient for a life in the world, and the future student as sufficient in knowledge, and as able and adequate for the world. Lying above this temporal division, a division of space renders it visible, physical and true. If the current student is saved from the peril of the world, it is because schooling effects the division of space and the division between student and world, in the same process. This student, separated from the world so that a transformation may be enacted in a space and time of the present, is confronted and made needy by the demands of the world and by her/his own social and private needs.

The student, then, is defined in being divided temporally, spatially and socially. The nature of the student is anterior to a future life where s/he copes with the world's demands and with the ubiquity of communications and the challenges of technology. Students, that is, cannot yet be part of the outside world because they are inadequate, incompetent, and incomplete: inadequate because they cannot yet meet the demands of society, technology and business; incompetent because they cannot yet communicate appropriately or take a critical distance; and incomplete because they cannot yet elaborate their own thought and ideas, cannot yet be responsible for their own development through language. These three divisions assemble the criteria for, and the nature of, students as the object of intervention: they are constructed as a *not yet* that necessitates a careful control of their development towards a destination. Hence their incompleteness, which is neither pathological nor criminal, but a complex of normative needs regarding three spheres of activity. The school is positioned between the student and this complex, which in turn allows students to be defined as deficient

and in need of transformation. Literacy, in its many guises, is the substance of this transformation. These divisions, and others which reinforce them, are made necessary and palpable by the historical process of the separation of children from the world, and are perpetuated as necessary divisions in the practice of schooling.

The *Curriculum Framework* then defines and operationalises critical literacy, which “focuses on knowledge about language and how it works” (*Curriculum Framework* 83) and on understanding the relationship of language to social relations. As a set of practices, critical literacy involves a sensitivity to the varieties of English in use, an understanding of the ideological legacy carried by English, and an ability to reflect upon the use of language, both one’s own and that of others (*Curriculum Framework* 82, 83).

Critical literacy here reinforces the authority of the school, for it reiterates the opposition between the student and the protean world of texts and language. Although the student’s release from the isolation of school is not conditional upon him/her becoming “competent, reflective, adaptable and critical” (*Curriculum Framework* 83), this is as a further condition for negotiating the world. Schooling is already aligned here with a stage of the body’s development, crucial to the accumulation of the desired qualities, thoughts and dispositions. The student is regulated according to certain propositional attitudes regarding language: what s/he is to believe, think, know and understand.

This situating of the student in relation to knowledge establishes a distance between the subject of knowledge and the knowledge itself. In the *Curriculum Framework*, students understand their knowledge as beliefs, not as things known. What is drawn here is a specific relation, not of indoctrination but of the management of the relation to knowledge through an understanding, over and above any specific knowledge, of the operations of language in constituting knowledge. Rather than impose a doctrine in teaching literacy, the *Curriculum Framework* enjoins schools to elicit a linguistic truth of being. That is, the *Curriculum Framework* encourages students to recognise themselves and texts as inhabiting a universe composed of the fabric of language, with its rules inscribed in the understanding and buttressed by an array of constitutive practices. Understanding, then, is not merely a euphonic synonym for knowing, but the encoding of

a displacement of knowledge, the opening of a space removed from belief, where belief becomes visible as a possible construction, and where a higher truth resides.

Critical literacy is defined in the *Curriculum Framework* as consisting in three understandings, or sets of understandings, which may be roughly categorised as sociological, hermeneutical and political, each of which defines the student as a different kind of agent. The agency of students is triply determined here in their connection to language. In partaking of these understandings, students are participants in a shifting and dynamic social process (and inasmuch as their language is confined and cut off from its social purposes, it is all the more closely regulated and assessed); they are seekers of the truth of society through its manifestation; and as subjects of power, they are agents of their own power, affecting the power of others while themselves being also the objects of power. First, then, critical literacy requires an understanding that “language is a dynamic social process which responds to and reflects changing social conditions” (*Curriculum Framework* 83). Language is presented as coterminous with society, surrounding the subject and constituting the medium for social action.

Second, students are to understand that language is a sign of society emanating from the social, that it is subject to a speech situation, and that it bears with it doxastic, ethical and cosmological dimensions. One must understand that language “responds to and reflects changing social conditions,” that “any form of communication depends on context, purpose and audience” and that the use of English “is inextricably involved with values, beliefs” and world-views (*Curriculum Framework* 83). The world appears in the interstitial gap separating words and things, texts and their complex sources. Language is the result, instrument and reflection of social forces; the text is the surface where the world is both made known and removed. Third, critical literacy involves “an awareness of the relationship between language and power” (*Curriculum Framework* 83). With this third set, language suffuses and controls the world, and the student is placed in a definite relation to this world. The world described by this political set of understandings is one where language determines and redetermines the power of individuals as they use language as producers and consumers, and as speakers and listeners. Students reflect here on their own power as it is mediated by language, and use language as power in operation.

“The use of English is inextricably involved with values, beliefs, and ways of thinking about ourselves and the world we inhabit” (*Curriculum Framework* 83). This is the student’s necessary position, the universal position for language users, which critical literacy allows the student to understand. The three needs of functional literacy are transformed by the understandings of critical literacy, so that social, personal and private life are penetrated by a series of knowledges reproduced in the student, who becomes a constant calculator of ideology, power and cultural conventions in her/his use of language, in the language of peers and family, and of professionals and companies. The school is the dividing line between these three groups and the student, and must represent them while removing them, to prepare the student for the desired kind of relation with each.

As a concept, then, literacy arranges elements of the school’s power. It establishes a nature common to the student as the object of discipline, the text as a means of discipline, and the world as the source of needs: language. It establishes the existence and nature of student needs by providing a measure required for a survivable (functional) and ideal (critical) life. It locates the school between the student, on the one hand, and self, community and the professions, on the other. It allows all activity to be observed, plotted onto a developmental schema, and evaluated according to outcomes. It also dictates the range of the outcomes, though not their specific content. Literacy constructs a student to be known, a truth to be extracted, and the nature of the acts – though not the acts themselves – to be elicited and observed.

The Context Outcomes

In specifying the “English Learning Outcomes,” the *Curriculum Framework* (84) adds a significant dimension to the visibility of students, where these outcomes, each occupying a small subsection for itself, create two surfaces: one of deep inscription and one of codifiable behaviour. These subsections, cutting up the student’s behaviour into topical and behavioural divisions, lay down the table on which all students are ideally assembled, the model of which the classroom is but the instrument and shadow. These divisions are not an inventory of data to be gathered, but a table of spaces for any

collection or arrangement of possible data. These outcomes are both highly ideal, then, and highly corporeal: while some (outcomes 1-4) are concerned with language in general, others (outcomes 5-9) codify the behaviour of students, of their bodies, as manifestations of language. That is, the table makes this body, as both abstract and real, available for evaluation. This section composed of sections, the “English Learning Outcomes,” thus does more than codify the body for a teleological observation posing as descriptive: it also, as it describes them, puts into play the forces and forms, the justifications and orderings, informing the power of the school. A quite singular operation of the play of forces, involving its own modes of calculation and reasoning, is described here, a peculiar interaction between schooling’s objects and functions, specific to contemporary education. Each outcome codes a play of visibilities and operabilities within a dense series of discursive operations.

These nine general outcomes are subsumed under two labels, “context” and “language modes.” “Context” covers four outcomes relating to “language as a whole.” Thus, in the first outcome, “students understand that the way language is used varies according to context” (*Curriculum Framework* 84). Students “adapt to” and “appreciate” the role of context, reducing the specific text to a general relation, rendering their understandings intelligible in operating upon the interplay between the specific and immediate text and an invisible, variable patterning of language. The student is here desired to understand a multitude of things, to adapt so as to render him/herself intelligible, and to appreciate diversity in textual practice (*Curriculum Framework* 86). The division between surface behaviour and propositional attitudes is made visible, once again and with more specificity, in the interaction between text and student. The invisible level of understanding, appreciating and adapting is manifested at the level of observed textual activity and related to the (invisible) truth of context. The second of these outcomes requires that “students understand that language has an important effect on the ways in which they view themselves and the world in which they live” (*Curriculum Framework* 86). Students are to understand that language affects their ideas about the world, that it is the mediator between the world and them. It is language that forms the plane of division between them and the world, and, as the product of the division between

world and student, also constitutes that *in which* “beliefs, attitudes, values and world-views” (*Curriculum Framework* 86) are manifested.

Language is the parallel image of a division effected by and for the school. It is by effecting a set of divisions, by constructing objects and concepts to traverse these divisions, that the school becomes the necessary remedy, as the representation of the world through language. Students are those who are separated from the world, and who cannot understand, appreciate, and adapt to the language that describes it and issues from it. It is this incapacity to appraise language which becomes precisely a problem in their isolation from the world and, paradoxically, makes it necessary to isolate them, to provide them with a regulatory space in which to reflect upon language. In this division, texts are the language of the world and the experience of students.

Although situated on a division between words and things, texts are here primarily ideological. Students “identify different explanations or versions of the same events or phenomena in texts” (*Curriculum Framework* 87), not to get to the truth of the *representamen*, but to understand that, wherever there is language, it reflects, encourages, marginalises and influences beliefs, values, attitudes and world-views. Words, students are to understand, carry associations and connotations, and reflect ways of thinking and attitudes. Language here has a dual nature, both bearing a supplement of associations and working as the vehicle for attitudes and ways of thinking; it is both aporetic and precise. Its powers to influence, reinforce and reflect, to encourage and marginalise “may serve the interests of some social groups and disadvantage those of others” (*Curriculum Framework* 86). The understanding of students is situated between three terms: the *thing* represented; the *representation* as language; and the *attitudes* of the linguistic participants, observers of events, and subjects of representation. The uniqueness of the distribution of these domains and the specificity of their objects becomes clear with further examination.

That to which the text refers is not necessarily outside the reader, and includes “individuals, groups, and concepts.” What marks referents is that they are outside the text, that is, they are things that may undergo a variety of explanations, that may be described in different versions, but nonetheless remain identifiable. Without this quality,

one cannot guarantee that versions are of the same thing, that they are versions: the referent of the text remains identical to itself in its separation from the text.²²

Representation and referent are placed in a certain relationship, where the referent is dense, rich and unknowable outside of the text, and the text is both the point of access to the referent and its trace. Further, representation has two aspects here, as a property of language in general and as an array of specific instances. These two aspects are united in their ability to inform affects, evaluations and perceptions through the text. Because the privileged site of textual representation is the reader of texts, the text, in this operation, mediates and constructs the psychological relations between the objects (rendering them subject to conceptions, beliefs and affects) and the affects of the perceiving subject, whose understanding of objects is, inevitably, mediated by texts. Words, because they must operate within this psychological ensemble, cannot be neutral, cannot simply bear the object to the perceiver, and cannot leave any direct perception of objects unaffected by prior representations.

Because words, texts and language are connected with a certain social and personal residue, because they reflect or influence the affective and cognitive relations between the self, objects and the world, they “can influence people’s beliefs, attitudes, values and world-views.” In the *Curriculum Framework*, however, the referent, the object insofar as it is not the reader, is removed from the student, and placed beyond the student’s reach, aligning the epistemology of reading directly with removal from the social world effected by the school. The relation between student and the objects represented, then, is constructed, by virtue of this separation, as “ways of thinking.”

What remains in this absence is a mode of subjectivation where students must recognise themselves in this game of representation, where they stand for the subject of language in general, and know themselves as subject to the influence of texts, caught in

²² This referent is therefore similar to Kant’s *noumenon* or “thing-in-itself,” of which nothing may ever be definitely known. The function of the *noumenon* in reifying knowledge and separating it from action receives its classical expression in Lukács’s *History and Class Consciousness*. The function here is similar, but not underpinned by a teleological understanding of class. Moreover, it is the text that realises this “ideological” category, rather than a metaphysical experience of alienation.

the refractive trap of language, subject to beliefs and attitudes which are the vestiges of the object that lies beyond the text and which can be approached only through texts. The student understands representation as independent of its objects, as the arbitrary evaluative veil placed over the inaccessible event or phenomenon. The phenomena are not to be examined, experienced and known: they are evacuated; they form the hollows in which words are placed. Nothing is to be learned of them but the means of mediation effected by the text.²³

For students to understand – that is, to be observed as understanding – is for their manifest, visible and nameable acts to be translated into the privacy of understanding. The state of the student named as understanding regulates the space of instruction, the organised space between the teacher and the student. Students, superintended by a regime of observation and instruction, are to understand language as a surface meeting between the psychology of the language user and the text. The stability of this pairing is secured and maintained by the absence of the referent. This understanding of language is the basis of a subjecting practice, a series of complex operations elicited from the student, rendering the student available to assessment, operable as the agent and recipient of language. In recognising themselves (as required) as subject to the affective charge of language, students acquire a depth that is both social and individual. They are to conduct a self-examination which is simultaneously an examination of language in general. From this operation, a visible residue is obtained, which the teacher identifies and registers as the required understanding. A distribution operates here, then, between a surface that is observable in this confined space, and the latent depth that structures it, that may be recovered from it. The surface is constituted by acts, whereas the depth is composed of states or steady relations between students and the abstracted properties of language. Functionally, there is only one state here: understanding, which may also be rendered as knowledge or awareness.

To be visible, understanding must be accompanied by an activity. The consequence of the school's assessment is not a mere depth psychology, but a property, an activity and

²³ Nevertheless, the object is a regulative category for teaching about representations; an intact identity is essential to thinking about “versions of the same events or phenomena in texts.”

a form of knowledge: the student's knowledge-ability. This is not only a correspondence between act and understanding, since, if it is to signify a steady state, and not a fortuitous performance, it must be repeated. It is necessary to unify a multitude of acts, to array them as evidence of understanding, and some acts are given here as exemplary.²⁴

The regime of assessment brings into being the understanding as superior to mere beliefs and attitudes, a quality abstracted from language and the world it represents. Within this regime students recognise themselves as the ground, the representative and symptomatic ground, of the psycho-semiosis of the text, of representation, and of language in general. At the same time as the student of literacy is at work dissecting her/himself, s/he is subject to the teaching gaze, a gaze ratifying this self-examination, aligning the perceptible and the nameable, allotting the true and the false, the mistaken and the intuitive.²⁵ Thus, at the same time as assessment individualises the student as the privileged site of the workings of language, language normalises the student as its manifestation: one accedes to the true nature of language, known in advance, and learns to perceive oneself correctly, as the subject of language. The student is normalised in the realm, and as the realm, of signs.

If the student reaches the understanding by way of attitudes and beliefs, this comes about at a certain price, and alters the status of these preliminary states. The understanding accounts for them, and thereby marks them as the derivatives of representation, rendering them inadequate experiences unable to account for their own constitution. What is constituted as beliefs, values and attitudes (and these are brought into existence only from the vantage point of understanding) becomes something to be described, something available to assessment as overcome and understood, as influenced, reflected or marginalised. As the student's relation to the truth of representation and to herself intensifies, other relations (to objects, to others, to one's own acts) are divided up

²⁴With the *Draft Curriculum Framework* was released professional development literature, replete with carefully graded work, overwritten with the outcomes it demonstrates. Such literature was already published in the early nineties, following pilot projects, in light of the need to give model examples of implementer-teachers, especially in the wake of widespread confusion. Appendix B is from these, showing precisely how the outcomes model directs the overwriting of writing by the stages of language development, that is, how the discipline of the text adopts the forces of "language."

²⁵ Teachers, no doubt, mark according to other criteria such as correctness; this is a description of the teaching inscribed within the *Curriculum Framework*.

and mediated within this understanding. A single ground, the space of assessment uniting the teacher and student, is also that on which the understanding is established as the background (or higher ground) from which to examine oneself, to recognise language as the fabric of belief, as the basis of the self and the constitutive substance of one's thoughts. The acts and signs of this space are always demonstrations of understanding in a machinery of approval, development, reporting and guidance. The form of the understanding is always pre-empted, always subject to whether it fits an outcome, and to whether (and how) it meets with the teacher's approval.

The nation, as dominating and regulating force, enters in the third outcome, where "students use the conventions of Standard Australian English with understanding and critical awareness" (*Curriculum Framework* 87). The *Curriculum Framework* defines Standard Australian English as "the forms and usages of Australian English that make up the dominant languages [oral and written] of government, business, education and public life in Australia" (87). Between the student and the world, between her/his language and that of education, government and business, stands the mediating form of Standard Australian English, as sign of the insufficiency of students and of the function of the school. What is performed here is an adduction, a bringing into line of the language of students towards a language that claims both a certain power (of exclusion and inclusion) and a validity as representative of Australian society. Students thus are brought to "understand that many of the conventions of Standard Australian English are highly valued [and] following them is often rewarded" (87) and that "departing from them may be used by some people to make negative judgements about [the offending students] or discriminate against them" (87).

In this way, forces are arrayed through and with language as a representation and a required understanding of deviation and its punishment. The language to be acquired marks the direction in which the the speech of the student is guided: it designates a goal that is sought, an ideal language that is neither higher nor natural, but actual and powerful, a language that must be attained. With this description of the power relations obtaining between students and the great institutional organs of the nation, this direction is ensured, insistently placed in the students' understanding. From this a special physics of curved lines, of adduction, may be drawn: far from rigidly imposing correctness, this

language discipline continuously charts reorientations and approximations along with shifts in the destination itself. Moreover, because conventions themselves may change and produce further curves, changes in direction, changes in what counts as Standard Australian English, “people sometimes disagree about which conventions are appropriate” (*Curriculum Framework* 87). A further set of curves is produced in the student’s relation to established conventions: students “understand that some conventions may reflect attitudes, values or beliefs with which they disagree and that they can contribute to changing current practices” (*Curriculum Framework* 87). Nonetheless, this is built upon a knowledge of existing conventions, and it is against these, and against a knowledge of these, that the language of the student is evaluated.

Despite this freedom to question and change conventions, the school ensures, through its evaluation and intervention, a general trajectory of language development by managing particular deviations as mistakes and by correcting them according to the appropriate forms. The articulation, through the notion of appropriate conventions, between students and public life, is clearly outlined in the examples given:

Students may, for example, greet an official visitor to the school appropriately; check their own spelling in a letter; write an appropriate letter of complaint to an organisation; read an official document with understanding; speak appropriately to a representative of a government organisation; write a report for a wide readership; or produce an essay using current academic conventions. (*Curriculum Framework* 88)

Not only does the *Curriculum Framework* suggest a list of activities and a range of acceptable activity, but it inscribes students within two operations, two interactions with public life and its institutions. Students are to observe the conventions of Standard Australian English, and thus to redouble its censorship and exclusions, as well as its positive injunctions, within themselves. In addition, they are to adopt these appropriate conventions when in contact with the various audiences, representatives and functionaries of public life; that is, they are to work as part of the public ensemble. The range of possible actions here might extend to the contravention of standard conventions and speech situations to the point that the powers in question react and repress. However, the

dangers this poses to the authority of the school, and in particular to the relationship between the school and the public, between the student and the world to which such performances are addressed, whether fictionally or in fact, are controlled by the teacher's intervention and judgment. Whatever the communication to the world, it is to be assessed and emended by teachers, who ensure the performances' safety and appropriateness.

In requiring that "Students select from a repertoire of processes and strategies when listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing by reflecting on their understanding of the way language works" (*Curriculum Framework* 88), the "Processes and Strategies" outcome enjoins the discipline of students as the bearers and practitioners of a set of skills and corresponding capacities enabled, assessed and directed by the school. Students are here a stockpile of abilities, those persistent inner powers that guarantee a regularity of performance, a discipline, beyond and outside of school. In this outcome it is the abilities themselves that are organised and regulated as the appropriate selection from existing capacities of those that serve a given purpose.

The strategies that students adopt depend upon, and are evaluated according to, "purpose, context and audience" (88). Purpose, which in literacy theory multiplies the possible forms of literacy, is here projected into a regularity residing in the student, multiplying the points of observation and intervention. That is, it provides a reference point for checking the proper application of the powers of literacy, for measuring their efficiency, in an environment where the consequences of the speech act are displaced onto the text. The normative purpose is defined as the transmission of information, the efficiency of which is evaluated and individualised, referred to the student's level of development and to the relevant learning area. This evaluative and intervening observation is not, however, a mark of the authority of the teacher's judgement: this, too, has to be trained, and professional development materials and teacher training in outcomes-based assessment is both assumed and enforced.

Using a detailed list of expectations, teachers plot the student onto the scale of achievement levels. The teacher is engaged, then, in a hermeneutics, interpreting acts as signs of development, placing students within an array that is both logical and spatial. A student must be known and judged to be placed in the appropriate grouping, and this

placing in turn informs the evaluation (*Curriculum Framework* 93-101). The uses to which literacy is put are divided into five language modes: listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing. What is expected of students, what the school must ensure, is that students accumulate the techniques appropriate to these modes, and the proper judgement in selecting these techniques. Thus, it is not only with abilities that the student's body is invested, but also with strategies, which must themselves be accumulated, repeated and adapted to purposes. The student is an agent of choices superintended and assessed on the basis of to their appropriateness and efficiency. As the subject of strategies, the student occupies a unique position, participating in the relationship between language uses and ends, regulating this relationship, subordinating language strategies to the ends they serve. At the same time, this judgement and deployment is watched over, assessed and corrected: students are subjects of language only insofar as they are subject to the school and to the linguistic truths it produces.

In this distinction between knowledge and ability the student duplicates the observing power of the school, continuing it long after the period of formal schooling. The student is developed in two ways: as a body of accumulated and practised strategies, and as a critical faculty, a deliberative regulation of these strategies. Schooling is the model, the structuring space, of the linguistic contact between the individual and the world, both as a cognitive diagram and as a real, observable practice. If the understanding develops a critical distance between student and text, a practice of reflection continuously develops the understanding itself, oscillating between the particular text and the general properties of language. The understanding is not sufficient for this, but a *reflection* on this understanding is necessary. This reflection is performed by both school and student, is enforced and normalised, and must be (if the outcomes are to be realised) internalised.

The student poses the problem of the learning of new ideas, for which the solution is the use of strategies involving language. In this reflection, in this representation and regulation in the depths and foldings of language's self-representation, the relations between the subjectivation of the student, the topology of texts and the teleology of ends are elaborated. Students are brought into an unavoidable relation to "new ideas"; they confront, collide with, produce and transmit new ideas. Language, as the activation of a supervisory power, swarms everywhere: students are to use the language that is outside

them, they are to appropriate and understand it, they are to relay new ideas with it. At the same time, they are to generate, through the internal creative capacity for language, new ideas of their own.

The division between outside and inside is a false analysis insofar as it fails to represent the transmissions, modifications, mutations and reduplications of the interplay of language, thought and communication. It does correspond, however, to two levels of the practices that manage and record the use of language in students. Thus, in treating of ideas from the outside, the school measures the degree of exact duplication of a text in the student's answers, where a text acts as the arbiter between itself and the student's account, use or reduplication of it. Naturally, tracing the life of language and ideas inside a student requires an indirect method, a sort of discursive interferometry, where a set of mutations becomes the legitimate form of the student's own thought, and is neither error nor falsification. Beyond the relaying of ideas, then, a student must develop a self, a relation to the text of mutation and variation, as a guarantee of the presence of thought in confrontation with the text. The technological ensemble of the student must be tested against problems, difficulties, and new ideas. "The student" is a distinctive and unique development arising in part from the accurate reproduction of ideas. Each student is thus both the subject of an imperative of ideational reproduction and an elaboration of self.

The problematic that opens the space around the student has as its beginning and end the student's practice of language. It is not enough that this practice is visible, assessable and tractable: it must be *rendered* visible as something, as the expression of a relation, as the use of language in the solution of problems. All problems here are defined as problems of language. The student presents an internal set of problems as a set of ideas with only potential content, and is invested with an imperative to name and to develop ideas through language. S/he also presents an external set of problems, with the demands of language in the transmission and understanding of ideas. These processes are assessable because a knowledge relates the invisible inside to a public, imperative, stable set of demands made visible and tractable by reference to a body of texts and to language as a general, systematic object.

In the birth of ideas, in the demand that ideas be made known, and in the division between the external and internal is generated a knowledge of, and a struggle for, development. Students “use strategies such as brainstorming and discussion” to develop ideas and experiment with language “as a way of developing their language skills” (*Curriculum Framework* 88). Development, a process that is both natural and compulsory, both enforced and observed, assures the visibility of the student. Above and apart from the development of skills and language, the understanding superintends them, deploys the strategies of language, and produces a further dimension of visibility, another dimension for assessment. The abilities and the acts, together with the external demands and the internal necessity of language, are unified and coordinated by the understanding and its deployment of arrangements and strategies, of a permanent attitude of adjustment. The selection of strategies transforms the understanding into strategic action, turns the strategies onto an undeveloped inside, and assembles new forms.

Quite apart from the specific problems mentioned here, a general field of “problems” is delineated in the development of language skills. The knowledges at work are delicately arranged, conditional, related to the existing developmental stage and referred to a problem. While fundamentally the imperative is that the student transform her/his language (as acts, skills and understandings), it is subject to a function of appropriateness, to whether a strategy solves the linguistic problem at hand. Even the repetition of an existing successful strategy may be a failure, if taken too far, if too mechanically applied, if in the repetition there is regression rather than the proper transformation. Under these pressures, under this regime of surveillance, encouragement and problematisation, the student must regard and transform her/himself well and constantly. Each transformation must clear up a difficulty, resolve a problem, come to grips with a new idea and develop new language skills.

This field of problems is knowable because of, and derives its specific character from, the purpose for which language is used. Four categories structure the purposes and problems: they are ideational, informatic, epistemological and ethical. Thus, students need to identify the ideas they seek, to “clarify what they need to know when seeking information for particular purposes” (*Curriculum Framework* 88). For the need to know and the act of seeking, purpose is the precondition here: ideas are drawn out, refined and

clarified in the search for information and under the evaluative gaze. Again, an inside is made visible by a technique of drawing its relation to an outside, by tracing back from the purpose the formulation of ideas that were necessary to reach it. Further, the problems and purposes allow students to be assessed in their ability to use the heuristic conventions leading to information, a judgement involving an economy of time and motion against the location, and the path leading to, the information required. Hence, students are to “use key-word searches and their understanding of the conventions of informational texts . . . as aids in locating information” (88).

Once it is located, the information must undergo another set of more or less visible operations, judging its truth according to certain standards: students “assess the usefulness of information for particular purposes” and evaluate its “reliability and currency” (*Curriculum Framework* 88). Moreover, students must employ a range of representational devices in the quest to comprehend, and in the process of making comprehension available to a higher judgement: they are to “make notes and graphic representations of information and combine [it] into a coherent whole by summarising, comparing and synthesising” (88). Finally, the ethical set involves a rectitude in the use of texts, with students recognising the importance of proper attribution, of representing information in a way that is “not misleading,” observing the scholarly conventions of quotation and citation. Further, students “take into account the possible effects of and responses to the presentation of ideas and information” (88). Not only are the legal conventions to be observed, the whole fact of language use is to be continuously submitted to a normative anticipation and anticipatory modification of language if students are to be the proper subjects of language. Students thus not only produce a set of actions, but also mimic and embody a normative developmental trail and a schema of the language-using mind defined in advance by the pedagogical regime.

The Language Mode Outcomes

Through a number of operations, divisions and tabulations, the outcomes under the title of “context” create a complex mechanics of recording and intervention and a teleological diagram of the student. What allows this diagram to function is the more or

less manipulable, endlessly complex and ramified substance of language. The “language mode” outcomes enact this endless complication. This exemplifies the *Curriculum Framework*’s use and appropriation of critical literacy discourse for the project of state-directed schooling. The “language mode” outcomes further the making of students as subjects to and of language, employing critical literacy concepts to complicate and further subdivide the student, creating a diagram both of pedagogical technique (observation, assessment, instruction, evaluation) and the workings of language (according to mode).

The central terms of the context outcomes – *purpose*, *awareness* and *critical understanding* – are used as the core categories for the measurement and amendment of student achievement. These terms are mapped onto the language outcomes, which “relate to the specific language modes of listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing” (*Curriculum Framework* 85). The transcription of one set into the other is perpendicular and reiterative; it is a series of cross-sections. These terms recur throughout the language modes: they constitute the central functions of language instruction and the destiny of students as developing and language-using beings subject to social demands. In addition to describing their object, these terms also correspond to the procedures for generating that object; they are corollaries of the technologies of observation and elicitation (purpose) practised by the school and through the knowledges (understanding and critical awareness) generated by it. While this ramification generates important details, it also establishes a central trunk. The transcription and reiteration of the “context” terms thus enacts an *economy of reduction*; these are the central lines of language in general as it concerns the outcomes. All else, however important for instruction, is peripheral.²⁶

It is enough here to note two points: the reiterative transcription of the general nature of linguistic performance is given to some variation and complication as it meets the different language modes, and it divides language into functional modes that are at the same time sited on the body, related to its organisation, and coordinated as the intervention, the emendation and appropriation of the body as the bearer and being of language. Thus transcription is also a *line of complication*; these main terms are mapped

²⁶ See Appendix C.

onto the division of language modes (with writing, for example, purpose and understanding are active, but critical awareness is not a stated concern).²⁷ Hence, a new division is introduced, whereby the student is separable into the five modes of language, five ways of marking and directing language, five ways of mapping the acts of the body and correcting them, where language consists in the presence of purpose, understanding and critical awareness. This section of the *Curriculum Framework* reiterates and refines the mapping of language onto the body, escalating both the knowledge and the power involved in this mapping.

This is a mapping of the body as a vehicle, as the possessor, as the organ of language. In the outcomes pertaining to listening, the student's relation to language is governed by three imperatives: purpose, truth and obedience (assessing information according to a goal, clearing language of distortions and being critical of the sources of information, and obeying the orders of the teacher). The powers of the student are increased by her/his understanding of language, but only insofar as these powers are given definite normative forms. That is, the school traces the development of language as the understanding and following of conventions. This normative supervisory environment is signalled: "Students may, for example, contribute appropriately to conversations; follow directions; . . . use body language to signal attention, understanding or response [or] build on the comments of previous speakers" (*Curriculum Framework* 89). As the understanding of language, context acts as the landscape of forms by which language might be known by the student, allowing the understanding of the student to be mapped. The language modes exemplify and delimit the normative operations ensuring the student's proper use of context.

Two main figures dominate here: language constitutes both a relation between the student and truth, and a relation between the student and discipline. This first relation codifies the conditions of the student's release: the student must dissolve the wall of language in order to gain the truth. This is done by operating the criteria of truth upon the

²⁷ The omission of critical awareness from the "writing" outcome belies the stated reliance on written work in assessing a student's understanding.

text, upon the deceptive material that gives form to truth and necessarily imposes a distortion. Release is legitimate once the school has produced the proper subject, the appropriate seeker and evaluator of truth, and when the student has cooperated with her/his own formation. The second relation, found in the appropriate uses of context, involves the student's sensitivity to, and observation of, a whole set of impersonal instructions which will be carried implicitly by language. Students observe conventions at a number of levels: their speech and listening, their deportment (as a sign of attention and understanding), their potential thoughts, and the content of their thought. The school's language corresponds to the wall that forms the condition for the power of students to understand and obey instruction. What is released is the docile body sensitive to the instructions embedded in language. At this point, the construction of language in literacy discourse has modified the operational and epistemic dimensions of schooling, changing the space from a *crisis* heterotopia into a *transitional* heterotopia,²⁸ from a distinct institutional space to a persistent and unavoidable *condition* of the subject in language. This wall, which may have been an absolute threshold between childhood and adulthood, has assumed the form of a constant and inevitable division within the linguistic subject.

In the "speaking" outcomes, student performance is distributed across a wide range and mapped as a self-reflecting, self-observing subject of language. The mapping of speech generates a whole ensemble of overlapping acts and knowledges, and renders visible a loop of subjectivation, where language moves in a circuit between the student's mind and language to each speech context: "students speak in order to interact socially, communicate ideas and information, tell stories, reflect on their experience and values, explore ideas, express their thoughts, feelings and ideas, and for pleasure and enjoyment" (*Curriculum Framework* 89). The student is observed as a developing speaking being, and precisely as an observing being: the school's gaze must be reduplicated, must be imposed by students upon themselves. The student's experiences and values, in being spoken, are thus offered up to the reflection, observation and intervention of both student and school. The problem presented by the student is a normative one, the problem of making speech appropriate to every

²⁸ See Foucault, "Different Spaces" (178) and Chapter Five.

situation. Language possesses here a will, a propriety in its modes and contexts, which functions to indicate student achievement and to erase the power of the school, to displace it to an impersonal and general demand of context. The forms of propriety may change, but its general function – imposing an awareness of language’s proper uses – remains constant.

In the viewing and reading outcomes, the appropriate critical, aesthetic and informatic manipulation of texts is practised by students. The representation of gender and ethnicity are to be examined critically, as is “the use of language and manipulation of conventions” (*Curriculum Framework* 90-1). Text and context intersect, fixing meanings and determining what is appropriate, what is to be assessed, what place and value are to be given to each use. The truth that emerges from this meeting of assessment, the text and the student has four components: convention, representation, exclusion and meaning. Representation comprises a power to enforce attitudes towards the social types and categories present in the text, and to marginalise or disempower, within the matrix of language. The surface of the text is to be interpreted as it acts upon the reader’s mind, as it assigns a place in representation to these types and categories. Propriety of interpretation is what is secured here, in three ways: in assessing the interpretation against the mutual determination of text and context (that is, in the relation between text and historical, social and technological forces); in measuring the student’s use of language against the problems and purposes that emerge from an encounter with a particular text; and in judging the consistency of the student’s language, both as a stylistic and propositional entity and against his/her current stage of development (*Curriculum Framework* 102-7).

In the “writing” outcomes, students “communicate . . . information, tell stories [and] keep records” (*Curriculum Framework* 92). However, the bulk of purposes involve writing as a manipulation and transfer of the contents of thought: students “communicate ideas . . . reflect on experience, explore ideas, express their thoughts, feelings and ideas, and [write] for pleasure.” The pattern of subjectivation continues and intensifies: at the site and in the act of writing, the student is folded back into him/herself, and the inside is made available, in the process of its development, to the teacher’s observation. While the acts are the site of observation and intervention, the real object of this power-knowledge

is the inside, the reflective faculty of language. The students of writing are also self-correcting and self-assessing in “testing their work with an audience, revising, editing and proof-reading” (92). What is achieved in the outcomes, what is aimed for in pedagogy, are students continually aware of their place in language and of the problems of power and representation, students aware of the power situated around inclusion and exclusion, and of the powers of punishment and reward circulating at the border of standard and non-standard languages. What is engendered is a sensitivity, locating the forces that determine the correctness of a use, and the demands that are associated with them. Rather than enforcing arbitrary forms upon the student, the school situates itself at the line between the student’s current inadequacy and the needs and demands, insofar as they are linguistic, of a successful and self-determining life participating in the forms and powers of the world.

Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated upon a single document, and upon the way it instrumentalises the discourse of literacy within the rationality of schooling. Literacy operates here as a transversal function repeating itself throughout the *Curriculum Framework* and the configuration of school power, functioning as a “statement.” The *Curriculum Framework* is not an unequivocal, unproblematic expression of school power and operation: however much it may seek to do so, it does not exhaust the way in which education operates within the state.²⁹ It is removed from any particular site of schooling, it is general, consultative and administrative. However, precisely because of its generality it constitutes a diagram, a model that can be appropriated and adapted to a variety of circumstances. This diagram also represents a threshold for the acceptable workings of any school, and this general relation is important for its effect and power.

²⁹ While the analysis here refers to the draft version of the *Curriculum Framework*, it remains valid for the final form, which was not substantially altered. The principles of the *Curriculum Framework*, moreover, form the explicit basis of much subsequent policy planning, including post-compulsory education, for which see DETYA’s (2000) *Post-Compulsory Education Review*.

Underlying both the schooling of English and the discourse of literacy are two central objects: the student and the text. Schooling, in its legitimacy and in the forms of its intervention, is referred to an outside, to the demands and usages, conventions and powers of a world of which schooling is a transient part, a passage and a preparation. Schooling relies upon the marking of the student as inadequate, and it is the site where this inadequacy appears, is mapped, modified and remedied. At the same time, schooling is the representation, the reduplication and substitution of the world through texts. The proximity and confrontation of text and student, and the isolation of these elements within a space of observation, form a condition of possibility for literacy education, whether it seeks to train productive citizens or teach critical cultural agents. This space and this combination are both the model and the reflection of the textual workings they describe and problematise: the division between reader and world, the mediation of this thin membrane of representation, the imperative to problematise this surface which affords both distortion of and access to a world beyond. The epistemology of this pedagogy, however much informed by critical social, historical, psychological and sociological scholarship, is thus haunted by a space of division and replication, a space both practical and conceptual.

This is where it shares a certain basic identity with the discourse of literacy, a foundation for the transcription of literacy into education. The proximity between student and text and their isolation within the school allow these elements to commingle in a dance of truth where the student is to recognise and understand a state of affairs, a power joined to forces that train the body insistently. Pedagogy and educational discourse form their knowledges by observing and manipulating the interaction between student and text. Language, such a fugitive and ever-vanishing, yet ubiquitous object here, comprises the transcendent locus of this meeting, the system that is always at play and never realised, never glimpsed as a whole. It is the common substance of which student and text partake, and which allows them to interact intelligibly: it is their mutual order. Language, which is intersected and partitioned here in a variety of ways, remains whole, since it is a nature, a level of operation, a mode of being.

A rationality superintends the meeting of these three terms and codifies the techniques and knowledges that attend it. The technical operations of this rationality and

the knowledges informing it interpenetrate, building upon each other with new crossings and overlays, absorbing the technical and critical discourses surrounding its object. This rationality is motivated by a central question: how is it best to make the student recognise the truth of language through the text? While the contours change with each configuration of text and student, with each introduction of new levels (context, stages of development, language modes), the boundaries and the elements remain constant. Thus, when the discourse describes a demanding world as the basis for literacy pedagogy, this is more of a permutation than an establishment of these relations. Accompanying the student, the text, and the isolated space of their contact is an array of techniques of watching, aiding and directing the student's development toward a recognition and manifestation of the truths of language. This rationality enacts a hierarchy between the teacher and the student, a teacher who instructs and distributes students according to the place of each in the development of language, in the performance of those acts which stand as evidence of the knowledge and recognition of language. Language, the substance shared by student and text, the knowledge that must be acceded to and practised, homogenises and translates the forces and processes at work.

Literacy, the notion of a set of abilities and understandings relating to certain social uses, demands and needs, is not merely an importation into educational discourse but is, rather, intimately bound up with the knowledges and practices of contemporary education. The notion of a faculty results from the regulation of performance, the laboratory quasi-repeatability of tasks, which establishes the existence of a faculty rather than the occurrence of an event. This faculty, which turns the fact of language into a human "organ," has as its precondition the repeated and assessed task, marked always with the observance of the signs of power (e.g., appropriate conventions) as the character of its health and maturity. I use the term "organ" because, although the parts of the production of language are not localised in a single mass, they are united in instruction under a single function – it is neither metaphor nor fiction to say that a human organ is manufactured under the sign of literacy. Literacy passes from its visible sign through the body and back into that organ: this rationality requires a protocol of recognition, a trained habit of seeing things backwards, of seeing in the surface effect a deep cause which lies at the centre of a being.

For this to be established, however, it is necessary to institute and refine procedures to produce that depth. A continuum is drawn between the invisible and the visible; a set of divisions establishes need. A dispositif is generated, allowing a constant flow of truth between its elements, a truth that presents itself to student and teacher alike. The gaze of the school catches the tiniest details it is possible to catch, including the movements of the mind, and reproduces its gaze within its objects to render them facilitative and understanding, to allow them to agree in a place beyond disagreements, the place of language revealed.

For that reason, it is difficult to see exactly how a liberatory pedagogy enters the discourse and remains liberatory. Within the workings of this social apparatus, the insistence of the copresence of text and student, and the whole impossible relation of this to the world of need and demand, does not serve to liberate the student but rather to articulate her/him with a putative representation of an indefinite and protean outside. At the same time, and far more concretely, the relation of the student to the text, to appropriate conventions and the other signs of power, as it complicates itself, as it integrates a more convincing account of textuality, forms the basis for a more complete subjection to a regime of language. It is by no means an automatic regime, one which merely presents the texts and watches and nurtures the development of a textual consciousness. For there are, as the discourse attests, many ways of reading, and a great many more ways of using, a text. Rather, the work of the school is to render the student serviceable to a knowledge of literacy through its disciplinary techniques and its legal security; literacy assumes discipline and enclosure for the text and the reader to appear, and for the text and reader to return to the discourse the truth of their development and elaboration.

The relations established here between expert knowledge and teacher practice, and between curriculum and student understandings, are a set of doxastic confirmations and subjectivating recognitions: the teacher confirms the expert view on the nature of literacy development as s/he becomes more adept at seeing and recognising the performance of language and text under the concept of a normalising schema, while the student confirms the expert account of language in the production of its performance and learns to understand her/himself as the relationship between a personal portfolio and general

outcomes. The *Curriculum Framework* is both a grid of perception and a regime for enforcing that grid, for activating in every act of language an assessment and an evaluation, for referring every act to a general externalised goal, for seating language in a vast expanse between the mind and a world that demands something evanescent and shifting, flexible and adaptable from that mind. The *Curriculum Framework* removes the seat of power to a place so distant and ubiquitous that it evades all responsibility for laying down an imperative, while at the same time demanding the fulfilment of that imperative, and ordaining the achievement of outcomes that connect the soul to that world. It is within this place of operation that literacy attains an unchallenged power in setting the boundaries of the self, in defining its substance, and in charting the acts, the understandings, and the uses in which it is manifested.

2: Discourse, Authority and the Ontological Guarantee

There are many aspects in the *Curriculum Framework* that are more or less uniquely contemporary and local, reflecting very recent changes in educational practices and specific circumstances. However, the document participates in a larger discourse of literacy, combining elements of pedagogical power-knowledge that emerged at least a century ago, and coalesced to form the relations spoken, enacted and operationalised in the *Curriculum Framework*. The general relations obtaining within the *Curriculum Framework*'s codification of literacy as a mark of development from immaturity to employment and independence, from the school to the world, are formed in the discourse of literacy at large. The discourse of literacy, however sensitive it is to the more recent uses of literacy within power, nonetheless operates within a system of general relations which combine and operate upon the student, the text, and language and, further, position these between the pedagogical power of the school and the economic and social concerns of the nation-state. What is needed, then, is a conceptualisation of discourse and a general account of literacy as an object acting within and produced by discourse. Thus, in laying out the philosophical and methodological legacy at work in the *Curriculum Framework*, this chapter discusses and applies the work of Foucault, going from a general characterisation of his work to a more detailed discussion of discourse. To explain and explore these notions, it examines the use of "myth-lists" in the discourse of literacy. These lists produce an ontological guarantee of literacy and secure the persistence of discursive relations that characterise the discourse, in terms of the circularities in its arguments and in terms of its historical articulation of spaces where literacy emerges as an object. Demonstrating a broad system of discursive regularities, this section lays the groundwork for the chapters to follow, which will deal with more specific elements of the discourse.

The discourse of literacy, while being ostensibly about the one constant object, thing, or referent, arises within a complex field of relations which we may call, after Foucault, a discursive formation. This discourse cannot be assigned the status of an

ideology, since it neither serves the interests of a particular class or group (though ideologies and ideologues may select and deploy regions of it), nor explains certain social relations of production as inevitable, nor bears a particular social purpose for which its disciplining effects are intended. Nor can it be called a theory, since its authors do not even agree on a definition of literacy, let alone the appropriate concepts and methods with which to study it (though of course there is a range of definitions and a scattering of methods). The discourse of literacy bears the appearance of a discourse about to collapse, judging by the extreme relativisation of the definition of literacy. Despite this appearance of conceptual fragility, however, it maintains a kind of regularity in a wider, more dispersed sense – in the public outcries it enables, in the concerns it excites in private exchanges, in the disputes it generates in pedagogy and the disciplines that inform it. Although individual participants in this discourse may construct strong or weak, principled or unprincipled arguments (and stake out tenable or untenable positions) regarding literacy, teaching, and the nature of students and the world, the *dispersal* of these positions and their effects follows a greater, more crystalline regularity. Analysed as a discursive formation, the discourse of literacy can be seen to actualise a set of historical relations regulating the appearance of discursive objects and speaking subjects, the formation of concepts and the elaboration of strategies.

Foucault: Establishing an Archaeology of Literacy

In order to situate a discourse of literacy, to identify its correlative field of power-knowledge and the spaces into which this discourse is inserted, to chart its internal ramifications, its historical conditions of possibility (what made it possible to think about literacy) and its historical limits, this thesis uses the work of Foucault. What makes Foucault particularly useful is his delimitation of discursive formations, especially in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, at a level of existence which is not the same as that of linguistic function, ideological systems, or logical architecture (*Archaeology* 10). Text and language, and questions of their status, uses, boundaries and extensions, are not therefore neutralised by assumptions about their nature, but may be situated as unities formed through discursive relations. Statements about literacy, moreover, are not referred in Foucault's discourse analysis to an external being but may be described at the level of their conditions of existence. Other aspects of Foucault's work, dealt with in later

chapters – his problematisation of the notion of power, his history of power-knowledge relations, the analysis of governmentality and heterotopias – serve a number of other purposes in relation to this thesis. They provide an understanding of techniques of observation and control which inhabit, and proliferate in, schooling, explain the specific function of “the nation” within this discourse, and provide for a general type of cultural space with which the discourse concerns itself. Moreover, Foucault’s work provides an *ethical attitude*: in his proliferation of subsidiary projects and concepts (problematisation, eventalisation, limit-experience, the “endless ramification of reason,” the specific intellectual), one can see the outlines of an ethical practice of intellectual work which offers it up to social uses without prescribing reforms.

Throughout his work, Foucault has a consistent aim: to offer an alternative history of the human subject as a construction. Using his concepts has often been a fraught process for researchers, and a variety of adoption procedures have been attempted. One may adopt the “toolbox” approach, where certain concepts and historical claims help to analyse various discourses and the processes associated with them; or an “ethical” approach where the forms of thinking and writing engaged by Foucault constitute a way of life, a way of operating as a responsible knowing person within a larger project of liberating the subject from knowledges which encircle and dominate her/him. In addition, Foucault has been rewritten into the disciplines of Gadamerian hermeneutics (Kögler), sociology (Gane), curriculum planning, educational psychology, philosophy, the history of science and the philosophy of history. This thesis approaches the discourse of literacy with a specific reading of Foucault’s work, its orientation, meaning and ethical attitude, its objects and strategies. At the same time, it uses his concepts in a fairly piecemeal way, since their modularity is one of the strengths of Foucault’s conceptual repertoire.¹

Foucault’s work is traditionally divided into three periods, often thought to supersede each other: the archaeological period, concerned with discourse and knowledge; the genealogical, charting the formation of power-knowledge; and the ethical, historicising the human subject’s relation with itself. Foucault has claimed that he pursued the same underlying project throughout his philosophical and historical *oeuvre*,

¹ For a thorough analysis of Foucault’s project see O’Farrell (*Philosopher*); for a clear and concise introduction to Foucaultian concepts see O’Farrell (*Michel*).

and that its abrupt breaks were occasioned by shifts in its emphasis, objects and techniques. For instance, he characterises his work as a history of the forms of experience, as a history of forms of judgment and regimes of truth, as introducing new figures of thought, as specifying preterminal regularities (*Archaeology* 76), as writing books both as transformative experience and reflective transitions (Foucault, “Interview” 241-46), as a critique of the modern category of man (*Order*, passim.; *Discipline and Punish* 13; *Madness*, Chapter 1; *Clinic* 195-199), as an “historical ontology of ourselves” in relation to truth, power and self (“Genealogy of Ethics” 262), as the application of philosophical fragments to historical problems, as game-openings and invitations, and as a history of problematisations (“Polemics” 114). These self-descriptions, however, are undercut, not only by their shifts and incompatibilities, but by the frequent pronouncements that his work is informed by neither a theory nor a method.

Foucault’s work on space and power-knowledge will be dealt with in detail later; it is important at this point to outline his notion of discourse. His first attempt to systematise this work was in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, where he explains to readers and to himself what he has meant, in his previous analyses, by the term “discourse.” This summary may be thought of as a culmination of his “first period,” the historical treatment of discourse and knowledge. It is important to note, however, that the problems he would later address as power-knowledge arise from this first period, and determine the emphasis on discourse as a set of effective material relations. Hence, his formalisation of discursive analysis is also an opening to his subsequent work. Describing literacy in archaeological terms, then, establishes a first layer of analysis. Once the limits of this kind of analysis are reached, it will be supplemented by characterising literacy as a space that extends through all social emplacements (a heterotopia) and as a set of techniques and procedures and forms of organising and instrumentalising knowledge (power-knowledge).

The constitution of literacy as an object involves a productive interrelation of knowledge, practice and space. In tackling literacy as a discourse, it is necessary to recognise that Foucault neither supposes that there is something outside, a real and permanent object, of which this knowledge speaks (and may recover as a pristine reality), nor that literacy is merely fabricated from words. A material interface, implicating words

and things alike, a set of mutual interrelations which delimit and determine the object, a dispersal of it in speech and in space, is what is in question. A fundamental assumption is that literacy does not exist without something being said about it, and that the fact that something is being said implies a sensible, verifiable experience. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault identifies four major sub-fields which must be analysed in order to account for the constitution of a discourse, or a historical enunciative practice. These sub-fields, or “conditions” for the formation of statements, are: a domain of objects, a set of enunciative modalities (or types of statement), a group of concepts, and a number of themes and theories (or “strategies”). Understood in these terms, literacy discourse can be seen systematically to construct and maintain its own objects even as it claims to describe them. Such a description serves to explain the peculiar mode of existence in which literacy has both an ephemeral definitional fragility and a robust persistence.

The term “*surfaces of emergence*” signifies, for Foucault, the institutions and practices in which a particular object becomes differentiated from others before being “designated and analysed” (*Archaeology* 41, italics in original). In this analysis of the discourse of literacy, these include any institutions, groups and situations from which a prospective student could be isolated, where a set of behaviours can render schooling necessary, where norms and prohibitions produce the sort of partial expulsion that offers the child to the school. Before objects are “designated and analysed” they undergo a kind of primary differentiation, whether by becoming excluded by mute processes, as in the case of a working class adjusting to shifts in the labour market from production towards service,² or by being designated as individual anomalies (the misbehaving child in a class, the truant, the “unrecognised” dyslexic). These surfaces of emergence are: the school; the family (the site of proper roles, concerns about attainment, diagnostic confirmation, dissonant attitudes to school, cultural deprivations); the regime of normative judgments (which extends to the policing of truancy, the measurement of self-esteem, and the recording of presence, aptitude and attitude); a whole network of surfaces on which one may misspell, misspeak, and be judged; the multitude of immediate sites where literacy

² See LoBianco and Freebody (11) for an example of the way education and literacy are situated within this larger social and economic construction.

and its absence may become visible, where it is possible to point them out, to begin to decipher their relation to existing spaces, to notice them as themselves and not as something else. A regime of space, an arrangement which already inhabits power-knowledge relations, is necessary for the existence of literacy to be noted, to constitute both a self-evident thing and a problem.

By “*authorities of delimitation*” Foucault refers to the ensemble of institutions, professions and practices that were able to define discursive objects in a particular culture and time. They delimit, designate, name and establish an object (*Archaeology* 42, italics in original). It might be that teachers themselves are recognised authorities on what students are, or what education includes, but the authority of teachers has always been suspect and subject to supervision and training. Certainly, teachers have never been recognised authorities on literacy. Parliamentary committees, linguists, cultural theorists, historians, radical educationists and test designers have great difficulty defining the term, yet it persistently reappears in connection with a constellation of themes: new communication technologies, education, work, social cohesion, cultural achievement, language acquisition and development, national economic development, international trade and revolutionary struggle. What seems the highest authority is the national literacy testing body, which is at once a government body and an authority on pedagogical efficiency, psychometric methodology, norms of reporting and developmental progression. However, this too is an analysing and complicating authority. If literacy is given anywhere as an object, it is where students are offered to examination, that is, primarily in the school, with its systems of reporting, referral to psychological authorities, failure thresholds and pedagogical specialists. It is from this institutional site, too, that literacy comes to designate a community in the form of a statistical table, at its largest scale designating a world divided into literates and illiterates. A set of national and international bodies defines the learner as endowed with a right to education and literacy (basic, functional, or level-specific) while at the most minimal and obvious level the law and the police ensure the spatial co-presence of learning cohorts and define the surrounding institutional spaces into which non-attendance may place the deviant.

The authorities of delimitation define and designate in ways which are historically available in a culture. An inspectorate, for instance, may by virtue of its power to observe

and judge, to command a response from pupils and their teachers and to inspect the conditions of teaching, designate an improper practice of reading, map a whole system of relations where, against a norm for which they act, literacy is not taking place. For literacy to appear as an object, before any analysis, researchers chart it as a concern pervading the social body, signaling vague anxieties or legitimating nation-wide testing. The hierarchy of authority, distributed as it is throughout a variety of scientific disciplines (psychology with its behavioural, cognitive and medical divisions; sociology; anthropology; linguistics; and the various hybrid disciplines), is also extended throughout the social field, to the family and the neighbourhood, the teacher (and, at various times, the head teachers, assistants, pupil teachers and mentors), newspaper editors, reporters and readers, employers worried about competitiveness, media commentators, and to communities seeking empowerment and independence.

Such designations can have quite different spaces and objects as their immediate targets: a government campaign can designate a moment of crisis extended throughout the nation or localised in an ethnic group; a report on schools can point to a group of failing institutions; a psychologist may diagnose a child as needing special instruction; parents may demand more effort in light of a given report card. Also, authority is based here not so much on the logical consistency of an analytical schema or the agreement of hypothesis and result, but on the existence of power relations established through techniques that place, number, measure and judge. It is not so much the respect accorded to judgments that sanctions these operations as it is their effectivity and their concurrence with concerns arising in particular social setups. For instance, class, sex and ethnicity may have a greater determining effect on social chances than literacy does, but literacy is more easily mapped and more clearly rendered in existing recording and remediation mechanisms.

The “*grids of specification*” are for Foucault “the systems according to which the different ‘kinds of object’ are divided, contrasted, related, regrouped, classified, derived from one another as objects of discourse” (*Archaeology* 42, italics in original). The division of courses – into commercial and classical, or between English grammar and English literature – divides a body of students into heterogeneous units in relationships of complementarity, opposition, or prefiguration. As was seen in the *Curriculum*

Framework, the division into “phases of development,” grades and levels hierarchises students along lines of cumulative instruction.³ In addition, a three-dimensional schema of development situates students in relation to a norm according to a typical hierarchy of development, a plane of skills and understandings within a subject, and a comparison with other subjects. Placement of students into percentiles ranks them in relation to both their immediate group and to a national totality;⁴ this also arranges schools according to comparative success. Schools themselves, as institutions holding aggregates of students and producing particular results, are again distributed according to sector – public, private or independent – and this is submitted to further analysis, in terms of career destinations, social and economic origins, ethnicity and behaviour of parents. Literacy not only operates in schools, in Australia providing a national average for grades 3 and 6, grading and separating by State, by school and sector, and monitored across subjects, but divides, by a complex of markers, different types of illiterates. A parasitic political discourse also operates here, manufacturing a crisis, constructing or repeating a false causality between illiteracy, crime and unemployment. This, however, modifies the rules for interpreting the “legitimate” table of correlations and allows for a more diffuse system of myths to emerge.

Grids of specification can be seen in the various species or kinds of literacy, with the historical and anthropological field dividing partial “scribal” literacy from a full social one, but also deriving the latter from the former; in psychology and ethnography one detects literate modes of thought without noting any necessary skill in writing and oral modes of thought that may accompany writing skills.⁵ More generally, literacy as a mapping of social usages spawns a whole range of subdivisions: scientific literacy, computer and technoliteracy, emotional literacy, print and media literacies. Finally, a hierarchical and cultural model distinguishes literacy in its various levels and complexities, from a general understanding that texts carry meaning to a variegated

³ See *Curriculum Framework* 93-101.

⁴ See, for example, Rothman.

⁵ For examples of work in these areas, see Luria; Green, Lankshear and Snyder; and Cole and Scribner.

ability to reflect upon the capacity of language and text to construct power relations, to de/legitimate types of knowledge of the world, and to construct identities.⁶

Discourses, Foucault points out, not only constitute discursive objects, but also regulate the appearance, status and roles of enunciating subjects. The planes of emergence, authorities of delimitation and the grids of specification complete a work of making-visible, but they do not, of themselves, constitute knowledge. There is the crucial question of the speaking subject, which Foucault takes, not as the knowing subject, whether as transcendental consciousness or psychological empiricity, but rather as a dispersal of subject positions with their own rules for relating to objects, their specific distances and functions. Enunciating subjects operate according to *enunciative modalities*. This is an important dimension in accounting for a dispersal of positions concerning the definition and promotion of different literacies, not as a pure contestation but as a set of regularities.

The first of these modalities is the *status of the speaker*, which allows the researcher to identify who can speak, under what conditions, in relation to what, and to whom. Each category of speaker is subject to further subdivisions which affect their authority, their area of competence, the situations in which they speak, and the institutional and practical effectivity of their speech. This area of analysis examines what particular speakers can speak about, and whence a speaker's authority is derived. Teachers, for example, are capable of pronouncing authoritative statements about particular students, and about students as a collectivity in relation to a mode of teaching. The teacher's status is built up by its many relations with, and involvement in, institutions, forms of training and accreditation, and legal rights and restrictions that specially apply to it. In Australia, for instance, teachers were frequently rearranged into categories based on age, position and sex (a table from the 1890s enumerates a Head Master, Head Mistress, Assistant Master, Assistant Mistress, and a girl or boy Student

⁶ See Goodwyn (19-21) for an analysis of the recent political prominence of "literacy" as a favoured term, and a discussion of its proliferation of "phrases incorporating the word literacy." See Sensenbaugh for an early list of "multiplicities of literacies." Barton (13) also mentions this multiplication, as is mentioned below. For science literacy, see Aikenhead; Shamos; and Sagan; for computer and technoliteracy, see Green, Lankshear and Snyder; for emotional literacy, see Steiner and Perry.

Teacher, each having a different set of requisite skills and tasks), and certification through a hierarchical arrangement of authorities.⁷

Moreover, each category of speaker is situated within a ramified field, connected to other speakers, with their own authorities, jurisdictions and effectivities. In Australia, at the level of the administrative educational authorities above the teachers, there have been a number of persons, offices and institutions: the Inspectors of Schools (particularly the Inspectors General), the Minister for Education, the members of the Central Board of Education, the Curriculum Council, and other supervisory Boards and Committees. These are qualified to speak about education as a codified and observed whole on a State or Federal level, on the amount of funding, facilities, the powers of committees, the general quality of the current students, the quality of teachers, the problems of attendance, and on the relevance of courses and methods to community concerns. The status of these authorities involves the differences between their fields of concern (literacy, health, curriculum, work opportunities), range of comparative knowledge or experience (the Inspectors General constantly reported on practices in other countries, and committees frequently refer to international and foreign models), legal powers and duties, and relationships with groups outside education (various business sectors, the judiciary, the press, civic groups, government).⁸

A range of diverse speakers also speak about a general student, an object intersected by various faculties and processes (lexical acquisition, conservation of quantity, IQ, moral development, the effects of ethnicity, parental inputs in development, gendering effects of schooling), reported on in different ways by linguists, psychologists and sociologists, to use very broad terms. These derive their authority from institutional settings, publication, academic credentials, and inclusion in educational reports and plans. They speak from the site of the university, which involves a hierarchy of knowledge, an organisation of time (timetables for classes and meetings, annual reports, deadlines) and hierarchies and departments of knowledge. They also speak from the “laboratory” (a

⁷ For a detailed discussion of Foucault’s concept of the speaker’s status, see *Archaeology* (50); for the Australian examples, see Rankin (28-9).

⁸ See *Archaeology* (50); Australian Language and Literacy Council (53).

place involving the control of variables and the ability to verify general hypotheses), the field of selected social data, and a “documentary field” which involves a global correspondence and staging of debates.⁹

There are, then, many speakers in literacy discourse, with very different statuses allowing them to speak in specific situations, on certain matters, and in particular ways. One must not confuse this array of speakers with individuals, since different statements imply a different subject: a teacher’s report to the school, for instance, does not involve the same relation between speaker and object as the same person’s report to a family, or a reflective book on pedagogical practices. This discourse does not present a single speaking subject to state it: it distributes these positions according to the operation of a particular statement.¹⁰ In terms of an interrogative project, these speakers are involved in the struggle to recognise true (or at least best) literacy. As a series of programmatic designs, they address a set of authorities and processes at the level of a national polity (this includes national governmental bodies themselves, which address each other).

What is more, the authority of a speaker may be transferred to another situation and made subject to new forces by means of quotation, as the following excerpt from *The Australian* of 10 July 1980 (qtd. in Green, Hodgens and Luke ch. 5) shows:

The report [the interim report of the Committee of Inquiry into Teacher Education in Victoria] said: “Looking realistically at all the influences that affect the acquisition of literacy and numeracy, and at the competition that the school faces from homes with poor communication, impoverished language, absence of quantitative logic and excessive television watching, it is clear that the beginning primary school teacher should have a basic competence in the teaching of literacy and numeracy if the child is to be equipped to meet the increasing demands made by the community.”

The authority of the report is used to reinforce the “realistic” mythology of a culture threatened, by its own forms of communication, with educational

⁹ See *Archaeology* (51).

¹⁰ See *Archaeology* (54).

decadence. The role of the teacher and school is coded as the final defence against this threat, and “literacy” and “numeracy” stand as “order-words” for this defence. The authorities, moreover, are hierarchised, so that teachers submit to the appropriate supervision, and this is in turn made palpable, visible and unobjectionable by the same words, by the same repeated invocation of “literacy and numeracy.”

In other words, the quotation demonstrates the working of a circuit of discourse between popular concerns and authoritative definitions, within which each enunciation has a specific position. The effect of the statement is modified, however, by the position of the speaking authority. Thus, while the *Curriculum Framework* may be situated within the same circuit, it operates from a different position, and therefore establishes a different relationship between the relevant speakers and objects. At the same time as the *Curriculum Framework* claims to address popular concerns through consultation with “community reference groups” and feedback, it presents an official authority in defining what literacy is to be, consolidating its definitions, orientations and measures by listing the “expert learning area committees” involved in assembling the document (*Curriculum Framework* 323).

Discourse analysis also offers a means of investigating the formation of *concepts* as a material practice. Foucault divides his discussion of the formation of concepts into forms of *succession*, forms of *coexistence* and “*procedures of intervention*” that occur within groups of statements, and makes further distinctions and divisions within these three groups (*Archaeology* 56-9). This is a powerful inventory, allowing the researcher to see, for instance, the discursive implications of describing the progress of a student in semesters (a type of succession), or of the overlaying of student work with letters that stand for outcome statements, and thus relate the marked work and student to a generic set of statements (as a type of dependence [cf. *Archaeology* 56]). Schooling assembles a legitimate corpus of student work, marking it not only with a grade but with the fragments of a schema of judgement, and assembling with it, as the year’s work or in forms such as a portfolio, the character, stage and rate of an individual student’s development.

The formation of concepts also involves a *field of presence*, the “statements formulated elsewhere and taken up in the discourse” (*Archaeology* 57). The *Curriculum Framework’s* description of national economic priorities (itself a reinscription and simplification of economic modes of description) and the discourse on criminality (in a parsimonious set of assertions bearing little relation to criminology) as repeatedly brought into educational documents and speeches, operate in this way. These are not only reactivated and given a legitimating force (as in the quotation from *The Australian*); they are also subjected to scrutiny, criticism, discussion and exclusion (taking the same quotation as included in a critical study of the “literacy debate” by authoritative researchers). What concerns discourse analysis is not these formulations in themselves but the relations established with them in the discourse: “the relations established may be of the order of experimental verification, logical validation, mere repetition, acceptance justified by tradition and authority, commentary, a search for hidden meanings, the analysis of error” (*Archaeology* 57). The discourse of literacy establishes a critical relation with popular theories, explains partial theories or observations with subsuming metaphors or more extensive definitions, and excludes certain historical or psycho-cultural interpretations by narrowing the criteria of rigour. That is, it uses a set of analysable techniques of concept-formation, which may be studied as historical and material relationships between statements.

An archaeological account of educational discourse must also analyse the conditions for the formation of *strategies*. That is, it must chart the field that produces the thematic structures and theoretical options available to a discourse at a given time, in a particular dispersion and pattern of recurrence. In this connection, the constant themes of the civic, personal and national economic utility of education present themselves as the products of a certain ramified arrangement of established forms of argument, with rules for appropriation, relationships to other discourses, “*points of diffraction*,” and even the positions of desire that are discursively possible (*Archaeology* 64-70, italics in original).

Foucault notes that the above groups of productive relations are not in themselves enough to account for the formation of statements, but that one must look also at the relations within each group and between them. Together with the analysis of relations

productive of statements, this thesis deals with statements themselves as operations that modify the correlative field of constitutive forces that allows them to appear.

“The conditions necessary . . . if one is to ‘say anything’ about” an object of discourse, constitute a complex set of relations. These are difficult to identify, but one can already see, developing in the archaeology, a realm that is productive of objects, that offers them at the edges of “saying.” The discursive object “exists under the positive conditions of a complex group of relations” (*Archaeology* 45). A communion exists at precisely the discursive level, which is defined as at the edges of discourse: “these relations characterise not the language (*langue*) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is deployed, but discourse itself as a practice” (*Archaeology* 45). The difference between these relations and those of power-knowledge seems infinitesimal, and yet it is because the model followed refers, after all, to systems of representation, to a distance in which one may speak of something, that the dimension of the statement is a distinct one. The relations that permit objects to be spoken of “determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, etc.” (*Archaeology* 46).

What characterises a discourse is the interaction of these levels of operation, unified as they are by a transversal function, the function of the statement in ordering and evoking a correlative field. A discursive formation is a structured way of speaking about something, but its object does not exhaust its characterisation: it is united as a practice in the way it forms, distributes and relates objects, concepts, speakers and strategies. This is important in explaining the relationship of the *Curriculum Framework* to the literacy discourse in general, since it is not to be assumed that all the possible arguments about, and uses of, literacy, are to be found in the document. While the *Curriculum Framework* selects definitions of literacy and applies these to a particular social institution and model of subjectivity, it is important to note the “statement” function, the insistence of the general discourse, the way its evocation is also involved in structuring the *possibility* of the knowledges and practices at work in education policy. In its discursive provision of this possibility, the discourse of literacy announces an ontological guarantee, in a way that demonstrates the interaction of the correlative field within the condensed statements

taking the form of lists detailing the alternative definitions, disciplinary allegiances, popular myths and political usages to which the term literacy is subject.

In applying a Foucaultian analysis, then, one cannot expect to discover a simple level, onto which the more elaborate details and theories are superadded. Each statement, if it is to be taken as such, also involves the operation of a whole discourse, mobilising and altering the relations that make it possible. However, approaching the discourse where the establishment of its object is most schematic allows us to see the discourse, *qua* discourse, more clearly. Literacy is established as a guaranteed object of discourse by the use of lists in authoritative academic studies. These lists are not literature reviews merely, since they contain mention of non-academic theories, unwarranted assumptions, abuses and anecdotes, side by side with research from different disciplines. Examining such lists of the myths, debates, models and ideologies of literacy reveals a complex discursive interplay between the social production of literacy as an object, the status of certain speakers with regard to a true or useful model, the validation of certain concepts, and the mapping of available strategies of argumentation. Above all, however, they guarantee the status of literacy not only as an object of social concern but as a reality about which one must speak, a truth with which one must contend.

Myth-Lists: Charting the Literacy Discourse

This discourse can thus be approached transversely, but from within, charting these myth lists from the viewpoint of their production of ordering statements. The myth lists order the discourse, representing its rules, possibilities, personae and social importance, as well as guaranteeing the existence, beyond the discourse, of literacy as a *definiendum*, that is, “that which is to be defined,” namely, a reality just beyond the definitional disputes. Taking the discourse and explicating it in this way is not a survey of all the work done on literacy, nor is it an examination, by recourse to authorities, of an inferior discourse (myths about literacy, mistakes and misconceptions). Rather, it is a cartography, a charting, of the material production of this discourse, including the transcription of statements between authoritative, executive, bureaucratic and popular sites. The myth lists arrange the group of authoritative discourses concerning literacy and the relations obtaining between them and the whole field of their production, the

necessary relations through which they achieve their existence. Rather than reveal the discursive conditions of possibility proper to various *disciplines*, they array and coordinate a hybrid form, the discourse that concerns itself with literacy, traversing as it does a variety of disciplinary domains.

A central function of these lists is their setting out of what it is possible to say, in its greatest extent, of literacy at the time of their publication, reproducing the positions, interests, emphases and definitions available at that time. This is not to ask what literacy is today, nor what may be said to be true within certain regimes of veridiction. Nor is it a question about the meaning of literacy as a term, for what is said in this discourse concerns also what meanings are to be disallowed and what connections cannot be drawn. Rather, the question is: what things, whether represented as true, false, doubtful or beyond question, is it possible to set out as statements relevant to a discourse of literacy?

What it is easy to say in the discourse of literacy has been established, varying across a number of social sites. It is important to note that this discourse has also emerged in a set of authoritative and executive sites. Within these sites, literacy is no longer just a set of popular prejudices, which the enlightened researcher must combat. No longer is literacy unproblematically the strong causal agent of Western consciousness, visual bias, industrialisation, and so on. No longer is it in any sense merely the possession of an individual or a quality of her/his mind. That is, there is a long trail of the more and less theoretical fallacies which it is possible to record, order, and restate in a familiar formula. This kind of restatement, this setting out of the landscape of literacy, is an important and persistent feature of this discourse. The lists of fallacies, presuppositions, myths and beliefs about literacy are a fundamental staple of literacy theory. They define what is being argued against, what contentions are being modified and abolished, what general associations will be ruled out for literacy, what will (for the theorist, at any rate) survive scrutiny. In addition, these lists situate literacy as a social product, as the result of a certain struggle and cooperation in the effort to obtain social goods and political power, as the effect of a cultural network of assumptions, as the object and site of mediation for certain anxieties about a culture's identity, about its redefinition in facing an uncertain future.

The list of myths comes almost always at the beginning of a work, and it secures the social importance of literacy, and the intellectual importance of properly defining it, for the work dealing with it. It always seems that these lists are dispensable, that what is being said could, in principle, be understood without reference to the myths and misrepresentations of literacy. Nonetheless they recur with a great deal of consistency: literacy is routinely lamented as misunderstood and politically manipulated, as invoked in specious arguments for Western cultural superiority and cultural imperialism. Such lists, then, provide a ground for the existence of *works on literacy* and, in this sense, tell us a great deal about the organisation of literacy as a discursive field, as a means for the production of statements.¹¹ That is, at the same time as they claim to represent discourse, they put into play real discursive relations, calling up and relating statements, affording them a form of *coexistence* (cf. Foucault, *Archaeology* 56). How exactly is literacy constructed, in the first place, as an invocation, as a call to thought and attention, as the alibi for the appearance of another book? The function of myth-lists in literacy discourse is to establish literacy as an object endowed with an unshakably necessary ontological guarantee. The boundaries delineated for this discourse – by the functions which literacy serves in it – prevent it from understanding literacy as a discursive entity. Thus, however “constructed” it may be, “literacy” is always at the foundation of this discourse, uniting fields which have no other *topos*, no other ground of correspondence upon which to appear. The specific discursive function of literacy, the very historical interactions of the term “literacy” (with normative practices, veridical discourse, and ethical ways of self-reflection), render it impossible, within this regime of statements, for such a grounding function to be recognised. This listing of lists performs a double function, showing that literacy is involved in a discourse that sets it out in its various versions and orders it; and giving an outline, by way of other authors, of what positions are held regarding literacy. Among other things, literacy lists establish a set of rules for the consequences of

¹¹ Defined by Foucault as a “distribution” that may be reconstructed, “with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden . . . with the variants and different effects – according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated – that it implies; and with the shifts and reutilisations of identical formulas that it also includes” (*Archaeology* 171).

discussing literacy in different ways, tabulating dependencies attached to various strategies.

In *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*, David Barton furnishes a list, based on Kenneth Levine’s (1986) work, of “ways of talking about literacy,” “metaphors” which entail assumptions about the nature of learning, the purposes of reading and writing, and presuppose a set of power relationships (Barton 12-13). Barton arranges a table where the absence of literacy is the *condition* (sickness, handicap, ignorance, incapacity, oppression, deprivation, deviance), which is met with a *response* (treatment, rehabilitation, training, therapy, empowerment, welfare, control) via a *means* (clinical intervention, compensatory aids, and so on), pursuing a particular goal (whether it be remittance or political rights), and may involve an *application* (a context where intervention is appropriate). The full table is reproduced below (Barton 13):

| <i>Condition</i> | <i>Response</i> | <i>Means</i> | <i>Goal</i> | <i>Application</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| 1 Sickness Handicap | Treatment Rehabilitation | Clinical intervention Compensatory aids | Remittance Alleviation | Dyslexia |
| 2 Ignorance | Training | Instruction | Mastery | Orthodox literacy tuition |
| 3 Incapacity | Therapy | Counselling | Adjustment Assimilation Autonomy | |
| 4 Oppression | Empowerment | Political organisational/ legislation | Rights | Conscien-tisation |
| 5 Deprivation | Welfare | Reallocation of material resources | Benefit | Positive discrimination |
| 6 Deviance | Control | Isolation Containment Physical coercion | Correction Conformity | Negative discrimination |

Barton expands on the dangers and benefits of metaphor, noting that literacy itself has become a metaphor: “in terms like computer literacy, visual literacy and political literacy,” where literacy means “loosely . . . understanding an area of knowledge” (13). Argumentation about literacy is tied not only to its power as metaphor, but also to different regimes, processes and interests, tabulated into quasi-Aristotelian categories.

At the same time as it cautions, such a list records and circulates literacy as a range of metaphorical extensions that may be adopted and utilised elsewhere. A remarkable number of such metaphors, for example, simultaneously operate in the *Curriculum Framework*, coordinating these arrays of meanings within a single concise network. This is partly to do with the polysemous blandness of the document’s language that is nonetheless carefully accommodating of these metaphorical additions, and is partly the result of a discourse that has already been mapped, and is capable of extracting these complexes of established social meaning and practice. In addition to this complex interaction of statement and discursive field, there is a more fundamental operation at work in tables like Barton’s: these tables guarantee not only the “field” of literacy as a set of social meanings and uses, but literacy itself, as an entity of broad concern and a constant behind the table of variables.

Instructing the Practice of Discourse

Beyond mapping the discourse as knowledge, lists establish it as a practice. In *The World on Paper*, David Olson produces a list of “widely shared beliefs or assumptions about literacy” (3). Such a recital recurs regularly in the work of literacy researchers, and the destruction of such myths, of “widely shared beliefs or assumptions” is routine. Olson’s recitation mostly outlines alternatives in argument about the proper definitions and associations of literacy. Ostensibly recounting a list of myths, he assembles the image of the discourse of literacy as a strategic practice, setting down a map of topics, arguments and counter-arguments. Moreover, he constructs an image of a world in which a plurality of debates concerning literacy emerges. To these ends, he outlines the pros and cons of six common propositions: 1) that writing is the transcription of speech; 2) that writing is superior to speech; 3) that the alphabet is a superior technology of transcription; 4) that literacy is a precondition of social progress; 5) that literacy is the

key to scientific modernity; and 6) that literacy is synonymous with schooling. In Olson's discussion of these myths, in the limitation of alternatives and the return of implicit themes, the discourse works to connect literacy to imperatives of national economic and social development and to the practice of schooling.

Olson's point in making a list of myths and controversial propositions is not to argue that myths should be demolished, but rather to instruct the researcher as to how literacy is to be argued about in an already constituted field of controversy, and to establish an underlying orientation towards teaching and studying individual and social development through literacy. It is not a refined definition of the necessary relations between writing and speech; it is a reflection on what literacy acquisition inherently is, and on how that may teach "us" how to read, and understand reading, better. An inherent quality of learning is appealed to as the arbiter of better teaching: "Learning to read in part is a matter of coming to hear, and think about, speech in a new way" (*World 8*). It is the lessons about learning, teaching, and policy that are paramount, even here. It is not a question of a voluntary ideological position, it is a matter of ineluctable discursive relations, a mapping of the discourse where each *topos* is a point of bifurcation. At the same time as these points in the discourse are mapped, another point is silently established. This is the ontological guarantee that there is something, obscure and not directly approachable, yet too self-evident to deny: literacy as the object *beyond* the discourse.

Olson begins by discussing the role of writing, assembling reasons to support and to refute the contention that it merely transcribes spoken language. Writing, he states, is widely supposed to be the transcription of speech, but writing only captures some properties of speech ("verbal form – phonemes, lexemes, and syntax"), leaving other aspects absent (*World 3*); moreover, the unsaid in writing, when resupplied as "intonation and emphasis," can "give rise to a radically different interpretation" (*World 8*).¹² While neither argument is clearly preferred, the relationship between writing and speech is

¹² This cannot, of course, be an exhaustive critique. Writing systems produce, in addition to transcriptive effects, graphical and temporal relations that cannot be directly verbalised (cf. Roy Harris 164). The table by Barton, above, is an obvious example, as are algebraic equations.

established as an important issue. Literacy, lying invisible and unstated, renders the controversy intelligible, as that to which both sides of the proposition refer.

Merely outlining the theoretical options for various positions and arguments gives the literacy theorist the opportunity to occupy and argue for a series of positions, beginning again at each new theme, thereby charting what Foucault calls the “points of diffraction” in the discourse. This can be seen in Olson’s discussion of the legacy of Eric Havelock, Milman Parry, numerous UNESCO documents and, in effect, every educational authority since the 1870s, addressing their propagation of the myth of “the superiority of writing to speech” (*World 3*). As Olson points out, this idea is as old as the Renaissance.¹³ This myth is, on the surface, at odds with the derivative status of writing. Rousseau, at any rate, argues from the first position that a mere mode of transcription should not receive such care as writing does. Olson’s provides a counterargument by quoting Rousseau and Saussure and arguing against the superiority of script, stating: “So convinced are modern linguists of the derivative quality of writing that the study of writing has been largely neglected until very recently” (*World 8*). This argument is, of course, at variance with the point that is made to rebut the “transcription” argument. Countering the characterisation of speech as “loose and unruly,” Olson states that “all human languages have a rich lexical and grammatical structure capable, at least potentially, of expressing the full range of meanings” (*World 8*). Olson assumes a position he has already disqualified, namely, that written language communicates the same thing as the spoken. However, the assumption is taken to the more difficult plane of *meaning*, rather than verbal form. Concluding, Olson remarks, “One’s oral language, it is now recognised, is the fundamental possession and tool of mind; writing, though important, is always secondary” (*World 8*). How speech is fundamental is not explained, and the old status of writing as derivative seems to be reinstated in the interest of this new argument. The difference here is one of emphasis – writing may be secondary, but it is not purely derivative. Writing is always surrounded by speech in its preparation and explanation, it is always something that can only arise through, with, and assisted by

¹³ Mignolo (1995) confirms this in some detail.

speech, but cannot be without its counterpart.¹⁴ Despite his seeming preference for one side, then, Olson is charting the possible branchings from a point where the discourse offers them.

Next in Olson's list is the belief that the alphabet is technologically superior to other writing systems. This idea is charted back to Rousseau's division of scripts and societies into the pictorial (hieroglyphic) signs of savages, the ideographic scripts of barbarians, and the alphabetic systems of civilised peoples (*World 4*). The argument substantiating this prejudice as historical and sedimented comes from a variety of different sources from different levels. The French language, with its "alphabetisme" for "literacy" seems to assume that the alphabet is the only true system of writing, and thus that non-alphabetic readers and writers are not truly literate (*World 4*). Samuel Johnson is corralled alongside "the three classical theories of the invention of writing" . . . "Cohen (1958), Gelb (1963) and Diringer (1968)," all of whom "treat the evolution of the alphabet as the progressive achievement of more and more precise visible means for representing sound patterns, the phonology of the language" (*World 4*). From Havelock, Olson adduces a Western presumption of the "genius" of the alphabet as an "invention" of the "Greek mind," and underlines the epochal meanings attributed to the advent of an arbitrary set of phonographic signs with a quote from McLuhan. From these criteria, "alphabetisme" is superior in its universal applicability, its simplicity and its learnability. In answer to this, Olson points out that the alphabet was an adaptation of existing technology to a new use, and its conceptual novelty was unnoticed until recently. What is more, it is less than optimal for monosyllabic languages like Chinese.¹⁵

The arguments for alphabetic superiority, Olson continues, have been unmasked as ethnocentric and selective:

Nor is the simplicity of the alphabet the major cause of high levels of literacy; many other factors affect the degrees of literacy in a country or in an individual. Finally, our tardy recognition of the literacy levels of non-alphabetic cultures, especially the Japanese who routinely outperform

¹⁴ This is demonstrated by Roy Harris to be an argument from a special case, namely, transcriptive writing.

¹⁵ For a full discussion of "graphic relativity," see Bugarski.

Western children in their literacy levels . . . has forced us to acknowledge that our view of the superiority of the alphabet is, at least in part, an aspect of our mythology (8).

Quite symptomatically, Olson cannot escape the anonymous, Occidental perspective even as he denounces it: “we” are concerned about whether the alphabetic few of the West acquired a tool or agent of reading and writing which, whether because of a genius or not, had certain other, world-shattering effects. The distinctions and hierarchies of a previous and contradictory tradition of self-flattery and cultural imperialism give way to a guarantee that the importance of literacy, whether it is connected to superiority and progress or not, is also an imperative. Beyond the myths there is a thing, both guaranteed and resistant to historical manipulations, which forms the grain of a real process, which in turn determines the efficacy of instruction. This is why the alphabet, curiously, has taken on an explanatory role for western literacy levels, as if these were defined by a well-known standard, as if (high levels of) literacy were a social good. It does not change things that Olson, like most other literacy theorists, does not consider literacy an unambiguous social good. Any intervention like this is bound, at every point, to reactivate the assumptions floating about the term, to use the prejudices in their argument, since literacy itself is socially determined by the popular discourse in which it is constantly spoken of.

The insistence of a popular discourse is even more evident in Olson’s presentation of the most recurrent, most fugitive and denounced myth: that of “literacy as the organ of social progress” (Olson 5). Literacy, by virtue of its correlation with other social factors, is assumed to have some causal status *vis à vis* productivity, industrialisation and democracy. Olson cites Carlo M. Cipolla as a prime example of this contention and comments that “The correlation invites the inference that literacy is a cause of development, a view that underwrites the UNESCO’s commitment to the ‘eradication of illiteracy’ by the year 2000 as a means to modernisation” (5). Olson’s rejoinder to this myth cites the various studies which see literacy as a means of social control (10). Olson ignores the distinction between, and thus reinforces the fusion of, literacy as a historical argument and as a policy objective. The slippage in terminology Olson allows here is not a symptom of sloppy thinking but an index of how the “public debate” has connected

these issues, especially with the all-purpose term literacy, which is not as institutionally identifiable as education:

A number of historical studies have suggested that literacy is a means for establishing social control, for turning people into good citizens, productive workers, and if necessary, obedient soldiers (Aries [sic], 1962). Strauss (1978, 306) concluded that the emphasis on literacy by the Protestant church in Reformation Germany could be seen as the attempt to convert the populace “from their ancient ways and habits to a bookish orthodoxy resting on the virtue of conformity.” The rise of universal, compulsory education has rarely, if ever, been sought by the uneducated as a means of liberation but rather imposed on them by a well-meaning ruling class in the hope of turning them into productive citizens (de Castell, Luke and Egan, 1986; Graff, 1987; Katz, 1968; but see Tuman, 1987, Chapter 5, for a critique of revisionist accounts). Recent calls for improvements in basic skills whether in Canada, the United States or Britain, come largely from employers in business and industry rather than from the workers themselves. And, with notable exceptions, the demand for evening, adult education courses, is a direct function of the amount of education people already have. So, is literacy an instrument of domination or an instrument of liberation? (Olson 10)

Somehow, literacy becomes equivalent, in an unspoken way, to imposed literacy, and to an imposed education. Divisions of knowledge and class, the state and its populace, the learned and the ignorant, are superimposed, via the categories of the educated and the uneducated, onto the literate and the illiterate. In determining the function of such a list it is important to note that the argument, that literacy is a cause of social development, is hardly glimpsed. This is not only because the measures have changed, the scales have been altered and the very terms tailored to other questions, but also because the list functions to lay out a set of rhetorical and social possibilities for literacy. Here the central question is whether the state and its representatives and powerful groups, its measures of progress and development, are the same as, or can ever coincide with, the good of the majority, the people, the “workers themselves.” More than this, there is an implicit disaffection with the status quo, with existing educational

inequality as a mark of continuing broader social inequality. The question, “is literacy an instrument of domination or an instrument of liberation?” signals these concerns, for an instrument is to be wielded by someone, for some purpose. What is at stake discursively is that literacy is historically implicated in projects of domination, and the literacy researcher is inevitably speaking about this question. Whether liberation is or is not always (at least historically) the domination of another, the necessary assumption is that literacy is, at any rate, an instrument of change at some political and systemic social level.

Because the myth list is a setting out of alternatives and an establishing of a controversial field of parents, teachers, researchers, students and policy makers, Olson is necessarily inconsistent in his use of the criteria of social development and progress. Olson cites Clanchy’s *From Memory to Written Record* in stating the case for two literacies in nineteenth-century Europe, one for the elite and another for the rest, in the interests of preserving the social order from critical assaults (Olson 10). With Cipolla and Graff, he notes that “advances in trade, commerce, and industry sometimes occurred in contexts of low levels of literacy” (Olson 10). Moreover, he quotes Kaestle et al. that “literacy must be analysed in specific historical circumstances and that ‘although for purposes of public policy, increased literacy is assumed to benefit both individuals and society as a whole, the association of literacy with progress has been challenged under certain circumstances’” (Kaestle et al. 27, qtd. in Olson 11). The inconsistent use of criteria involves a simultaneous mimicry and presentation of literacy as a social and rhetorical entity. Thus, it is not to be assumed that Olson agrees with economic measures and ethnocentric cultural values or that the notion of progress is open to question for him. This is clear when he furthers his argument by citing cross-cultural historical studies:

The same point has been made in regard to the lack of scientific and economic development in other countries. In China the number of highly literate people always greatly exceeded the number of employment opportunities available . . . and in Mexico while literacy levels have been found to be related to economic growth those effects were restricted largely to urban areas and to manufacturing activities. (Olson 11)

It is beside the point to take issue with the implicit teleology and progressivism in the remark about “scientific and economic development,” or with the mapping of cultures according to Western categories, or with the slipping back and forth, throughout Olson’s list, of “from above” and “from below” criteria of progress. Beyond simply summarising the researches of others and reactivating certain class-related sociological assumptions, Olson is distributing the discourse into points of diffraction and into possible speaking positions. What is evident, moreover, is that literacy, as a term that has accrued so many meanings, and that has been used in so many battles over the definition of the good,¹⁶ inescapably reactivates these battles and their corresponding strategies, tropes and truisms.

The omissions in Olson’s reasoning highlight a number of features of literacy discourse. Olson equates the theoretical option of connecting literacy and social development with the ideological and political movement that produced, in a number of powerful sites, the notion of “functional literacy” (Olson 11) and relegated non-industrial and non-capitalist societies to the status of the superstitious, the imbecile and the inefficient. Opposing this dualistic ideology in his role as advocate for both sides, he contends that it is only appropriate to view literacy as beneficial in specific settings. While he relates literacy to a setting and a purpose, he does not fully pursue the formulation “functional for whom?” (Olson 11): he situates literacy at the level of a service for *individuals*, though it has both been imposed on entire countries and situated in one region of the brain. The research he himself has cited does not speak of individuals but of social systems and classes and the relevant social unit for which literacy varies in value. That Olson does not fully address the question of benefit is symptomatic of the fundamental pedagogical orientation of the discourse rather than of his own failings as a theorist: literacy in the functional mode, and as an imposition, must have above all a benefit for the imposer. The question “for whom?” if it is to be relevant, must include uses of literacy other than acquiring it for oneself. This, however, entails a lack of presumption concerning the purposes of (and persons involved in) defining, packaging and disseminating literacy. Here the presumption is that such activity is, or ought to be,

¹⁶ “Good,” that is, in the various dimensions discussed by Olson: individual and social benefit, communicative superiority, civilisational advancement, distribution and political power.

an effort to serve, benefit and advance the interests of individuals, within their existing social roles. This concern for helping – this propaedeutic theatre – is not merely a rhetorical device; it is a fundamental condition for the existence of literacy and a direct result of how the discourse is situated within a social and epistemic context of operation.

It is in engaging with and distributing these positions in the discourse that literacy is established as an object of therapeutic concern, as an enduring and mysterious force and as a problem of national schooling. To fully understand the functions of a listing such as Olson's, then, it is necessary to examine it in its entirety. Olson contends that as a recent tradition, more or less echoing an earlier one, has maintained, "writing and literacy are in large part responsible for the rise of distinctively modern modes of thought such as philosophy, science, justice and medicine and conversely . . . literacy is the enemy of superstition, myth and magic" (Olson 6). In the light of further study, however, claims about the fundamentally literate mode of western (ancient Greek) thought, and about the primitive or non-scientific character of oral societies have been questioned, leading to wide disagreement on the affinity between "higher" thought and literacy (Olson 12).

Finally, Olson enumerates the literacy myths relevant to a pedagogical site of application:

Genuine knowledge, we assume, is identifiable with that which is learned in school and from books. Literacy skills provide the route of access to that knowledge. The primary concern of schooling is the acquisition of "basic skills," which for reading consists of "decoding," that is, learning what is called the alphabetic principle, and which for writing, consists of learning to spell. Literacy imparts a degree of abstraction to thought which is absent from oral discourse and from oral cultures. Important human abilities may be thought of as "literacies" and personal and social development may be reasonably represented by levels of literacy such as basic, functional or advanced levels. (Olson 7)

To this Olson provides the rejoinder that knowledge, far from being identical with its vehicle, can be presented in a number of ways. The tone is properly educational: "Emphasis on the means may detract from the importance of the content being

communicated” (Olson 12). That is, the discourse here is addressed to teachers, as well as to others whose care is also to oversee and ensure cognitive development and ability. The intellectual claims are tested on the basis of pedagogical space and teacherly concern: “Reading ability depends upon not only letter and word recognition but in addition on the general knowledge of events that the text is *about*; consequently, a strict distinction between basic skills and specialised knowledge is indefensible” (Olson 12). Moreover, “the role of the school is not to displace children’s pre-school perceptions and beliefs but to explicate and elaborate them, activities that depend as much or more on speech as on writing” (Olson 12). Similarly, the use of literacy as a measure of general competence “underestimates the significance of both the implicit understandings that children bring to school and the importance of oral discourse in bringing those understandings into consciousness – in turning them into objects of knowledge” (Olson 13).

The entire critique here derives its persuasive force from several problems, all of which are associated with the relation between the literacy discourse and the project of schooling. Olson uses schooling as the site to which literacy discourse defers, a site onto which it opens, as its evidence and its rationale. First, Olson is concerned with the relation between the preexisting knowledge and skills of students and the optimal speed of cognitive development. Second, and partially superimposed upon the first, is the question of the right mix of modes, both oral and literate, to facilitate this development. School does not equal, but is somehow closer to, the literate mode, while home is where one acquires one’s first and most natural language. Third, he argues that the fundamental role of the school is to bring that which is implicit within a competence “into consciousness.” The skills of discourse must be not only practised but also represented, recorded and reproduced at another level separate from the level of practice, which it is the end of schooling to reproduce. Olson is not singular in claiming this; he is representing the bifurcations of existing arguments. Literacy has been constantly placed within the truths of educational discourse and has assumed the positions and cares of the school. Its very definition, if not identical with the course of the mind as conceived within schooling, is nonetheless accountable, as a source of danger (in “ideological” or in “mistaken” conceptions) for schooling, for knowledge and for the society it creates.

An autonomous level disrupts Olson's discourse, for, to pay it a proper tribute, literacy is everywhere to be discovered, promising and forbidding a better world, inhabiting fantasies of "our" superiority, subject to confusions and premature definitions, closure and control, and working as the tool of a neocolonial tutelary order. It has escaped the boundaries of easy lists, if in fact it ever corresponded to such boundaries. Literacy is a shimmering, an obviousness established by its ubiquity, subject to dangerous misconstruals. It is an item of such power that this misunderstanding will make it available to dangerous misuses which will change the nature of knowledge itself, insofar as literacy is social and involved in power: "despite the fact that virtually every claim regarding literacy has been shown to be problematic, literacy and its implications cannot be ignored" (Olson 13). The ontological guarantee of literacy, its insistent dangers and definitional pitfalls, entail a discursive, and a specifically pedagogical, imperative.

Rescuing Literacy from Myth: Understanding and Implementing

The danger posed by misunderstandings of literacy appears also in another type of list common to the discourse, wherein the list directly presents literacy myths as popular misconceptions and manipulative political distortions. Harvey J. Graff's list of myths, presenting a different kind of "public debate" material, opposes the simplistic identification of literacy with democracy and progress to the methodological rigour of historical studies. He has two fundamental strictures for anyone researching literacy: first, "a consistent definition that will serve comparatively over time and across space." This means primary levels of reading, since this is the most reliable measure historical sources can give. Second, one must "stress . . . that literacy is . . . a technology or set of techniques for communication and for decoding and reproducing written or printed materials." Literacy has too often been identified with putative consequences which empirical studies do not support, on the one hand being credited with changing personalities, thought patterns and cultures, and on the other with propelling "economic development, 'modernisation,' political development and stability, fertility control, and so on and on" (Graff, *Legacies* 21). Literacy does none of these things, writes Graff: the mistake made here is to argue from a notion of literacy in the abstract, which is at best a "set of techniques . . . [at worst,] meaningless" (*Legacies* 271). Quoting a colleague, he

asserts that “The only literacy that matters is the literacy that is in use. Potential literacy is empty, a void” (M. M. Lewis, qtd. in *Legacies* 271).

Graff’s best-known work, *The Literacy Myth*, outlines the mythic elements in a way specific to his techniques and concerns. He begins with the conceptual muddle which pervades the public sphere, citing US Senators, newspapers, education studies and postage stamps:

[T]hese are only samples of recent commentary that has become commonplace. The recent bombardment of woeful tales of literacy decline, drops in Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, low levels of preparation for fulfilling and productive lives, and illiterate high school graduates can too easily obscure the significance that lies behind these familiar words. (Graff, *Literacy Myth* xiii-xiv)

His list continues, more as an itinerary for argument than as a conspectus of all the relevant myths. The first “myth” is not a myth at all, but the value, arising through the “western tradition,” which has been attached to literacy since the Enlightenment or even the Protestant Reformation. This value is the source, according to Graff, of much confusion and misrepresentation, of premature definitions and question-begging research. The two fundamental problems of literacy, as a social entity, are its taken-for-grantedness and the inordinate value placed upon it. But this is all a repetition of a historical discourse, of a constant rhetoric which characterises the west:

Contemporary discussions about literacy, basic skills, and mass schooling are hardly unique They are at once reflective and derivative of ideas and [Enlightenment and post-Reformation] assumptions These are ideas that permeate the trans-Atlantic western cultural heritage and influence social thought broadly and deeply: in our assumptions and theories of society, economy, culture, religion, as well as education. Indeed, the commonplaceness and ordinariness, I fear, have reduced their significance to many. (Graff, *Literacy Myth* xiv)

The “primacy of print . . . has advanced to universality,” and the outcome is the unquestioning acceptance of literacy’s value. According to Graff, the consensus (in 1979,

when *The Literacy Myth* was written) was that, whatever its uses, the value of literacy for a whole range of sites, and for society as a whole, was unquestionable. These sites, beginning with the advent of mass schooling, form one great interacting field of progress:

Value to community, self- [sic] and socioeconomic worth, mobility, access to information and knowledge, rationality, morality, and orderliness are among the many qualities linked to literacy for individuals. Literacy, in other words, was one critical component of the individual's road to progress. Analogously, these attributes were deeply significant to the larger society From productivity to participation, schooled workers and citizens were required if the best path to the future and its fulfilment were to be followed. (Graff, *Literacy Myth* xv)

For Graff, the history of the rise of literacy is that of a series of ideological accretions, equivalences and evaluations that reflected the rise of print dominance. The "primacy of print" takes the institutional form of mass schooling, mass schooling becomes associated with progress and enlightenment, and literacy, seen as benefiting the individual and society, comes to be identified with progress itself (Graff, *Literacy Myth* xv). The problem, from the standpoint of a historian, is that an unvarying story, seated in these self-serving prejudices, comes to be repeated by scholars: "in theory and in empirical investigation, literacy is conceptualised . . . as an important part of . . . the evolution of modern societies and states" (Graff, *Literacy Myth* xv). Underlying this persistent simplification is the assumption of literacy's value, and the result is an unchanging myth:

Primary schooling and literacy are necessary . . . for economic and social development, establishment and maintenance of democratic institutions, individual advancement, and so on. All this, regardless of its veracity, has come to constitute a "literacy myth." (Graff, *Literacy Myth* xvi)

Constructing an epochal moment in this narrative, the turning point of its subversion, of the dethronement of literacy, Graff situates himself alongside a growing minority of researchers, a "movement," which had begun to reappraise this legacy (Graff, *Literacy Myth* xvi).

In constructing a narrative of the consolidation of cultural notions and the investigator's work in clearing those notions of their unwarranted historical accretions, Graff's list is more diffuse, more addressed to populist notions, than Barton's or Olson's. His list invokes a world of misunderstanding brought about by the accidents of history: the mistaking of literacy, an historical element of "progress," for the progress itself. In Graff's account literacy is on the one hand a sign for an ideological phantom, an alibi for self-congratulation, a delusive, overstated misrepresentation of a real process. On the other hand, however, it is a real thing, minimal, atomic, and yet with a substance all of its own, reacting in different ways to the various practices, understandings, purposes and techniques with which it comes into contact.

The list of Graff's preface to *The Literacy Myth*, in addition, leads to another, in which the deficiencies of past research establish a set of criteria, and a set of imperatives, for studying the topic. As in other lists, popular and theoretical conceptions of literacy are but part of a continuum, and the needs of theory are also the needs of society, of a global but western "us." "A literacy myth surrounds us," he claims, "our uncertainties and anxieties are striking" (*Literacy Myth* 2). It is not simply the European countries that have a literacy crisis; the underdeveloped world is suffering from "book hunger" and UNESCO has made literacy a global concern (Graff, *Literacy Myth* 2-3). "We" are all the responsible agencies, "ranging from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Army, and the Navy to the census authorities of Statistics Canada and the United Nations," and governments around the world (Graff, *Literacy Myth* 3). It is with a view to these agencies, in a conversation with them, that Graff presents his most basic criterion. Against the failure of these agencies to define literacy, in light of their purpose of recording its rates and proportion in the population, of enforcing and planning its dissemination, Graff sets out the criteria of a "useful" definition.

In his discussion of definitions, Graff adopts a systematic ambiguity: while the usefulness of a definition is subject to criteria such as clarity and flexibility, it clearly also relates to the recording, assessment and teaching of populations. UNESCO's definitions of literacy and functional literacy, while they acknowledge the context-specific nature of literacy and its subordination to certain needs and uses, fail to define these latter terms and are thus "less than useful" (Graff, *Literacy Myth* 3). Likewise, David Harmon's

distinction between literacy as tool, skill attainment and ability developing in necessary stages is “a useful beginning” but replete with unwarranted assumptions (Graff, *Literacy Myth* 5). The obstacle is not only to a theoretical understanding but also to the testing of literacy, to its being rendered within useful programs unencumbered by a dislocation between the actual skills needed in a particular time and place and the method of recording them.

Enumerating the various misunderstandings of literacy as a changing historical practice, denouncing the manipulations of popular prejudices, drawing out the provenance of ideological distortions and criticising existing official and scholarly definitions, Graff’s list also performs a subsidiary but discursively essential purpose: it establishes literacy’s existence and places it just beyond final definition. To be sure, it is a thread to draw through history, a thing to be explained by recourse to social and economic categories, but it is itself guaranteed before explanation and definition.

Disciplining Literacy: Literacy as Inevitable Substance

The socioeconomic history of literacy exemplified by Graff is one of many disciplinary types of discourse surrounding and investing literacy. In order for the discourse to constitute itself, it has brought these into a single space, but it is only with a great deal of effort that these can in turn be brought into some kind of order, mapped and tabulated. One such effort is the tabulation by Naz Rassool. Rassool discusses popular literacy mythologies worldwide, as well as the various policies, in particular colonial and post-colonial, in which literacy has been implicated in the maintenance of hegemonic relationships. It is in this context that she arranges authoritative literacy discourse according to bounded scholarly disciplines (Rassool 37):

| <i>Subject discipline</i> | <i>Literacy foci</i> |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Experimental behavioural psychology | Focus on the individual Perceptual process Logographic knowledge Phonological awareness Decoding of texts Functional literacy Methods of instruction |
| Cognitive psychology | Focus on individuals and groups Impact of literacy on intellectual development Abstract thinking skills |
| Social psychology | Focus on groups Variety of positions taken: a) great divide theory – differences between oral and literate cultures (e.g. Goody and Watt; Hildyard & Olson) b) emphasis on development of cognition and consciousness in relation to social relations within external world – ideological and political aspects of literacy (e.g. Luria; Vygotsky) c) emphasis on need to understand various ways in which different societies and cultures make sense of their world – challenge great divide theory (Scribner; Cole & Scribner) |
| Psycholinguistics | Focus on the individual Reading and writing <i>process</i> Internal relations between perceptual processes, orthographic systems and reader's knowledge of language Meaning production at interface of person and text |
| Sociolinguistics | Focus on individuals and groups Different forms and functions of written and spoken language within variety of social contexts Bilingualism and multilingualism Discourse and subject registers Communicative competence |
| Social anthropology | Focus on groups Interpretations of social consequences of literacy related to groups of people within their sociocultural contexts Social change |

This tabulation arranges conceptualisations of literacy within two levels: as a set of foci and in their relationship to a discipline. Implicit in the table is a historical progress and elaboration of the concepts, away from the individual and towards groups and sociocultural contexts. Where a concept of literacy emerges, it is the excrescence of a discipline, the effect of a certain organisation of knowledge. Such a table constructs correspondences between forms of knowledge, concepts and their social expression as

policy (Rassool 39). Beyond this, however, lies the object that organises the table, and that guarantees it at the same time as it is established by it. Literacy is the meta-object, the thing to be remade in the image of a discipline, that must be subject to an ever wider, ever more *socialised* conceptual network. In beginning her mapping of literacy “with the question, ‘What is literacy?’” (1), Rassool sets out from literacy as a guaranteed term, which allows her to anchor her analysis of the various informal notions and hegemonic truths *about* literacy, even where these differ to a degree that suggests, not only that literacy is a contested and flexible term, but that there is nothing there to conceptualise, that nomination and conceptualisation are exclusively related to a power struggle. Indeed, Rassool’s attempt to characterise literacy seeks to integrate real literacies, whether subaltern languages or official dialects, with myths relating to literacy and development, histories of restricted access and hegemony to official literacies, and the symbolic suasion of the definitions of literacy. It is *through*, and not despite, this thoroughly constructivist and socialised account of literacy, that the completely de-foundational but ontologically secure *guarantee* of literacy is uttered.

In “Mapping a Typology of Literacies” (10), Rassool moves from pedagogical forms of literacy (3) to the struggle for power played out within the nation-state (59-128), to the changes in international policies, definitions and socioeconomic relations (129-214), and finally back to the need for a new pedagogy of multiliteracies in response to the needs of a changing world (215-40). Her typology is thus increasingly socialised, connecting the multiple identities – charted through the concept of literacy – to new needs, designing a new relationship between the school and the world. It is important to recognise here that a similar mapping of these understandings (as well as their coordination and operationalisation) occurs in the *Curriculum Framework* and similar policy publications. However much the myths of literacy have proved illusory, literacy remains in them the inevitable substance invoked in this mapping of the world.

The chart, then, is part of a larger process of establishing the ubiquity of literacy within the ensemble of social forces, as a reactive agent of power and hegemony, as a contested term in struggles for justice and recognition, and in official and disciplinary definitions. Finally, literacy carries here an imperative for the *right* literacy, historically and culturally appropriate but otherwise arbitrarily defined, to be provided. Beyond the

nation-state, the world establishes its demand and sets out the parameters for the needs of its inhabitants. Thus, *Literacy for Sustainable Development* “explores the range of skills and communicative competence, knowledges and awareness [necessary] to function effectively in the democratic process, within the flexible parameters of the information society (Rassool 21).”

The discursive functioning of myth-lists and social and disciplinary cartographies thus begins to explain how literacy discourse operates so insistently in both private experience and national policy. These lists establish a world in which, whatever it is, literacy implies an imperative to be studied and investigated, for all of the things it touches, whether discursively, historically, politically, socially, pedagogically or practically, and at whatever scale. Several types of listing, often overlapping, are practised: the theoretical distribution of positions and counterpositions; the analysis of a public discourse; the historicisation of an ideological and institutional complex; and the tabulation of disciplinary concepts. In each case a world is drawn, simultaneously unified by the notion of literacy and assuming literacy as an unknown substance, a misconstrued but present thing, a concern for researchers, the public, the state and the educational establishment. Literacy is a silent, anonymous force, the contours of which are difficult to grasp, are presumptively defined and redefined according to the practical context, the societal needs and the political ends with which it is associated. This is close to, though not quite the same as, the imperative world, the world of change and challenge, which prefaces the policy planning literature and demands the creation of a literacy which will lead the nation into prosperity, competitiveness, development, and so on.

The lists are ordered in a variety of ways: according to a serial list or in two dimensions on a table: as a series of pros and cons or as a flat plane of interaction between the disciplines, a field of interactions and disconnections. None of these lists explicitly characterises a discourse of literacy: rather than seeing literacy as discursively constituted, they assume an absolute separation between the organisation of knowledge and the object of knowledge. The practice of listing itself assumes that the same object is being spoken of and that an educational purpose is and should be served in any study, in conjunction with the proper national and international bodies. That is, listing assumes that one may cleanse the concept of unwarranted accretions and recover a core or real

definition. A Foucaultian analysis suggests, on the contrary, that this object is systematically constructed by a discourse and at the same time owes its existence to practices that give to the object the possibility of appearing. The cleansing of the object performed by these lists is itself a mode of construction, and participates in a pedagogical space which acts as a problematic terminus for the discourse, as the source of a specific developmental urgency that is mapped onto both the student and society.

3: Three Circularities

In the analysis of the *Curriculum Framework* in Chapter One, statements on literacy were shown to integrate the various elements of a national project of schooling. These elements are comprised of a set of knowledges concerning texts, students, language, the world, and the nation; a way of disciplining the population through schooling, measurement, analytical distribution and pedagogical intervention; and a referring of these knowledges and practices to the space of schooling, reifying this space as both travesty and image of world and nation. Chapter Two demonstrated that literacy is discursively established as both the guaranteed foundation and the unknown object of study. This chapter advances further the analysis of literacy as a discursive construction, arguing that the discourse of literacy presents a set of circularities obscuring the discursive formation that supports it even as its statements activate it. That is, the discourse suppresses its conditions of possibility, with the result that knowledge of literacy encounters a number of curved horizons beyond which the discourse ceases to operate. This chapter's discursive analysis situates literacy within a set of relationships internal to the discourse and enables the thesis to progress to a fuller account of literacy's historical provenance. This guides the later analysis, in Chapters Four and Five, of literacy within the contexts of power-knowledge regimes and historical spaces. Through these overlaid and integrated levels of analysis the thesis will account for the efficient articulation of pedagogical discipline and conceptual construction, via the term literacy, in the *Curriculum Framework* and also within a pedagogised social space.

The discourse of literacy engages in three forms of circularity: historical, epistemological and political. First, in its historical treatment, literacy is either the source of social thought or a site determined by social relations. Second, the discourse defines literacy as both the basis and object of knowledge, thus creating an analytic of finitude, an undecidable epistemological circularity. Third, in the political relations it establishes, the discourse ties literacy to changing the world to serve people, and to changing people to serve the world, involving it in an ambiguous and ineluctable relationship to power. The analysis in this chapter demonstrates that these ambiguities are immanent to the discourse, and so accounts for the systemic ambiguities and constitutive themes exploited

within current policy literature, as exemplified by the *Curriculum Framework*. At the same time it also explains some of the anxious laughter with which the thesis began.

“Literacy is,” this virtual content of the lists, is not merely an affirmation, but a *statement* arising from a *discourse*, that is, from a social ordering of thought. A discourse does not correspond to the boundaries established by participating disciplines, to any one set of ideological values, to hierarchies of propositions, or to a succession of phrases. Nonetheless, this statement operates in a privileged way, as an unobtrusive and unnecessary affirmation, even when its very definition is put into question. In fact, literacy has already claimed a separate site for itself, as a hub between different systematic bodies of knowledge, and it is constantly claimed that “literacy studies” have, or are about to attain, the status of a separate discipline.¹ Looking at the circularities that result from the ontological guarantee of literacy opens up the prospect of an historical account of the discourse of literacy as the effect of an ongoing intensification of pedagogical power. Analysis of the discursive peculiarities and limits of the literacy discourse bears out Foucault’s contention that discourses systematically construct their own objects while disguising this construction as the gradual revelation of a pre-existing reality. As a consequence, the discourse of literacy exhibits symptomatic paradoxes, irreconcilable dualities and circular relationships between object and ground. In apprehending these features of the discourse, one can begin to chart the broader set of historical relations immanent to the emergence, experience and practice of literacy.

To describe literacy as a discursively produced object of knowledge, it is necessary to go beyond standard accounts of the structures and divisions of knowledge into which literacy fits. The extraordinary flexibility and polysemy of the *Curriculum Framework*, combined with its precise operationalisation of knowledges of literacy, are effects of the structure of this knowledge, of the porous and undecidable nature of the relations it establishes between itself and social practices, and of its inscriptions of text, subject and world within its very constitution. Thus, it is insufficient to note that literacy is related to a division between disciplines in their modern form, as Goody and Watt have done:

¹ See Street, “Introduction,” and Black.

The accepted tripartite divisions of the formal study of mankind's past and of his present are to a considerable extent based on man's development first of language and later of writing. Looked at in a temporal perspective, man as animal is studied primarily by the zoologist, man as talking animal primarily by the anthropologist, and man as talking and writing animal primarily by the sociologist. (304)

Far from fitting into this disciplinary correspondence, literacy, as an organising notion and as a set of knowledges to be applied to data, is the product of a very recent confluence of events, discourses and practices. What the discourse takes as an object is not merely the sociological construction of “man as a talking and writing animal” but humanity insofar as its language interacts with institutions, practices and knowledges that together form the literate subject as the object of knowledge and discipline, study and correction, across a variety of disciplines.

Applying a Foucaultian archaeological technique allows one to outline the unity of the discourse in its parallelisms across disciplines, and in the circularities and undecidable problems that it concerns itself with. In historical studies, using the category of literacy to select historical data is illegitimate (or deeply problematic) as history, but also necessary. Moreover, it results in an address to a transcendental subject of history, even where this is explicitly denied. Even the most critical histories, anchored and instigated by the category they seek to challenge (literacy), retain the language of the powerful mythology they challenge. Interpreting these circularities as orderings effected by statements suggests that the history of literacy, while a paradoxical enterprise in terms of representing a real entity, is intelligible as the construction of a social reality. The discourse is structured by possible strategies of definition and argument, which are themselves undecidable. These dispersals are part of the one discursive formation. Similar circularities pervade the epistemological and political problems faced by the discourse, revealing a discourse that finds itself both impossible – in terms of defining a real object, forming concepts or prescribing policy – and at the same time imperative, because literacy must, regardless of its lack of definition, its historical dubiousness and its political implications, be researched, argued about and used as a pedagogical tool.

While studies from a variety of disciplines investigate literacy from quite different perspectives, the discourse they form faces difficulties which arise not merely from logical considerations, nor from the structure of these disciplines, but from the function and dispersal of literacy in them. Moreover, a set of associated themes, claims and aims resurface despite being dismissed or falsified. Literacy is not merely an object, or a concept, in this discourse. Rather, it functions precisely as what Foucault calls a statement, as a transverse element organising and constituting the discourse, organising what can be said into a set of concepts, themes and strategies, and involving historically specific speaking subjects, in a patterned dispersal (*Archaeology* 54; 122). This discourse behaves according to an “analytic of finitude” (*Order* 364), where the term under discussion forms both the limit and the possibility of knowledge, thereby confining it within a circularity. These three broad aspects of the discourse are arranged, that is, as paradoxes that cannot be resolved without removing the limits which give them their definition.

Historical Circularity

The history of literacy defines and discovers literacy within circularities set forth in the discursive relations that constitute the knowledge of literacy. These relations determine the possible hypotheses concerning the roles and uses of literacy, which are themselves the consequences of the possible definitions of literacy, pre-given and determined by the rules for the formation of statements. In their objects, in the roles and modes of possible speakers, in the branching of alternatives and in the distribution of concepts, the history of literacy presents itself as a division between two alternatives: theories based on the “Great Divide” hypothesis and theories that emphasise a context of use. These are two available branchings within a single distribution of possible positions. These options occur within the one system of dispersal, within a set of strategic positions already activated as part of the discourse, already operating as a condition of its existence. The history of literacy, in assuming the existence of literacy, cannot historicise its own emergence as a discourse because it finds it necessary to project a modern notion of literacy onto historical data, rearranging this data as a result. It cannot help but

reactivate certain constitutive themes: the transcendental social subject, the development of both the individual and social mind, and the relationship between mind and textual form. Literacy is recovered by reconfiguring the historical archive along the continuum between individual and social usage, creating artefacts as a result, such as the hybrid text (a text showing traces of both “oral” and “literate” culture) and social meanings, which are in fact projections of pedagogical categories. An interpretive spiral, moreover, endlessly renews the concept of literacy by rendering it both historically insufficient and necessary.

Within a variety of disciplines and perspectives, literacy offers to the researcher a line of historical development. But this is not as pure knowledge, as description bereft of any instruments and desires. Indeed, the first impulse is to reform, to save the neglected or mutilated subject, group and epoch from a distorting linguistic violence, a violence overlaid with a power that distributes bodies, biographies, fortunes and social goods. Beyond this gaze into the silence of a mute alterity, but reproducing it in another dimension, lies the paradox of the illuminating sequence of leaps in consciousness, where the present state of the Western mind stands as the destination to which history tends, marking every epoch as both a leap forwards and as a prior absence, and possibly also as an amputation, as the presence of an unreachable other. Beyond its internal divisions, the literacy discourse is concerned with finding traces of literate activity and referring them to the problem of the relationship between text and the development of a subject who is social, individual and typical at the same time.

The discourse’s writing of the history of the west as the development of literacy, rather than disclosing the progressive revelation of a structure that was already there, of the material relations that lie beneath the level of ideology and prior to the moment of a positive discovery, constitutes the emergence of a discursive formation. A group of discourses on literacy undergo a series of operations establishing their unity. However, no unity is guaranteed by the fact that these discourses are concerned with what appears to be the same object (Foucault, *Archaeology* 32). The discursive formation surrounding literacy is characterised by “the interplay of the rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a given period of time” (*Archaeology* 33), by “a group of relations between statements,” the forms in which they appear, and the subjects who produce them

(33-34), by “the simultaneous or successive emergence” of concepts, “in the distance that separates them and even in their incompatibility” (*Archaeology* 35), and by “the dispersion of the points of choice that the discourse leaves free,” or the “field of strategic possibilities” (*Archaeology* 36-7).

A discursive formation, Foucault proposes, is traversed by *statements*, both determining and determined by the space of its dispersals and possibilities. Unlike the relation between a proposition and its referent or that between a sentence and its meaning, the statement does not name a thing so much as it activates domains:

what might be defined as the *correlate* of the statement is a group of domains in which . . . objects may appear and to which . . . relations may be assigned: it would, for example, be a domain of material objects possessing a certain number of observable physical properties, relations of perceptible size – or, on the contrary, it would be a domain of fictitious objects . . . [or] a domain of spatial and geographical localisations. (*Archaeology* 91)

The notion of the statement is the essential component for Foucault’s archaeology, for in the rareness of statements one finds the historical specificity of a discourse, rather than being lured by the retrospective illusions and “conveniences” of what Foucault terms “traditional history.” In this case, the historical field is selectively arranged wherever literacy appears and, in addition, literacy confers meaning on history, bestowing a shape to affects or intuitions, drawing a developmental line as the biography of either Europe or the Western mind. The fundamental paradox in these histories is not that they are unable to fix the boundaries of literacy, but that they transfer a recent, dated concept into a historical experience structured by concepts pre-dating literacy, and often quite at variance with it. Hence, either a proper account of reading and writing is structured by the meanings held in the past, in which case these histories are no longer possible, since the reading-writing couplet is structured by a notion of literacy, or the account of literacy is avowedly a fiction for today, in which case it can no longer claim to represent the meaning of the experience of reading and writing in the historical past.

As Chapter Two demonstrated, lists of claims about literacy, whether of positive claims or myths, are a way of establishing literacy, of providing it with a place in

discourse. But this is not the only function of the lists, and not the only part of establishing the existence, and perpetuating the experience, of literacy. It is not only that literacy is, but also that it is a certain way, and that it is necessary for us to recognise it. These lists also establish the overall form of the discourse, the various phantasmatic binarisms, the popular and scholarly fallacies, and the whole range of epistemic, ideological and political abuses to which these are put. As the *Curriculum Framework* suggests, and as the historical works on literacy reiterate, literacy teaches the Western subject, by way of internal necessities which are also accidental and historical, to separate text and interpretation, to lie, to confess, to be an individual. At the level of discourse it does not matter that these contentions are routinely questioned, undermined or falsified. These contentions organise the discourse, they give flesh to literacy, and form the axes around which strategies immanent to the discourse oppose each other. These axes, insubstantial in themselves, form the substance of literacy while at the same time leaving room for a further substance, deferring to that impossible object which is known only by the name of literacy.

The great explosion of historical studies of literacy, concerning themselves mainly with national statistics, demographics and class, occurs from the 1960s, but this tradition is preceded by decades of work on orality and literacy in classical studies. These two “traditions” in the history of literacy are dealt with here: that arising from the work of Milman Parry and extended by Havelock, Ong, Illich and Sanders; and that emerging from demographics and class analysis as exemplified in the work of Cipolla, Graff and Vincent. These selections, though restricted, are arguably representative of these two ways of doing the history of literacy. A part of a discursive formation, this history forms the objects of which it speaks and the problems it confronts are discursive effects. It arranges the field of history according to a set of statements.

These two ways of historicising literacy begin with the re/construction of an exemplary text that is both literate and oral, thereby uniting and separating two modes of language. This hybrid text furnishes a composite from which one may extract a literate and an oral mode. What is said of the oral/literate hybrid text finds a domain of candidates; that is, various textual traces of “different” combinations of oral and literate modes are rendered discoverable. At the same time, what is claimed for literacy finds a

domain of falsification: on the basis of the traces found in the hybrid text one can claim or contest, on the one hand, that literacy inhabits both the literate mind and its civilisation, or, on the other, that it organises a field of uses into social meanings. In organising a space for the arrangement and reconstitution of history – according to reliable literacy rates, or with regard to concepts implied in the forms taken by certain exemplary texts – histories of literacy perform a productive function on the archive of historical data, constructing the literate society or the literate mind. Works dealing with the history of literacy arrange statements in terms of a style, as either a biography of western thought or a series of understated affect-object connections, and they imply a transcendent subject, conferring meaning across time. The histories here are not scatterings of opinions, but rather evidence of a patterned dispersal. Rather than judge these histories as failed attempts to represent some historical object, then, the thesis deals with them as part of a discursive formation.

The classical tradition of literacy studies begins with Milman Parry's work on Homer. A "first work" always has antecedents to be discovered, but Parry's work is credited by several literacy scholars (Havelock, Ong, Illich) as the work which produced the possibility of a rigorous historical study of literacy. Whether it was preceded by other work on orality, it was the earliest to be recognised and used as the foundation of a possible history of Western literacy. Parry, writing in the 1920s and 1930s ("Traditional Epithet;" "Epic Technique"), established that the poems of Homer show patterns of construction which differ fundamentally from other poems in the Western canon. Certain functional parts, such as ornamental epithets, were either meaningless in Homer's time or irrelevant to the meaning within a passage. Parry explained their presence in the Homeric poems as insertions to keep the metre and rhythm of a line. This formulaic character derives from the oral delivery and composition of the poems, relying on a repertoire of learned formulas which would maintain the rhythmic movement of the poem while leaving the narrative relatively unhindered.

Parry's analysis has had several consequences. First, it establishes definite criteria for the recognition of a true transcription of oral poetry; second, a new aesthetic experience is described to recognise the real value of oral poems (with the ear as the organ of appreciation); third, a fundamental difference can be perceived between oral and

literate experience; fourth, all “literate” criteria are *prima facie* invalid for the judgment of oral literature and constitute either an injustice or a misrepresentation (for instance, there is no “original text” of Homer). A whole other world is established, defined and delimited, different in kind to “ours.” Our world, the literate world, becomes, as a negative image of this, a mass of literate automatisms and blindnesses, and bears the possibility of a new kind of characterisation. For the first time, the oral mode is accorded a positive and constitutive difference, not as a lack, but as grounded within a set of proper cultural virtues (the values of “heroic” culture, in the Homeric example), its own aesthetic situation: the sound of a musical composition (not a recitation) going to the appreciative ear, and a recognisable cluster of forms. It is no longer caught up in a mistranscription that had devalued and despecified it for over a century.

Parry establishes the distinction, for centuries vague, unsystematic and scattered over a wide range of discourses, between the literate and non-literate cultures, between two modes of speech, two ways of thinking and perceiving, two types of society, two types of mind. At the same time, light is suddenly thrown upon the relative values of literate culture, values which appear only in the light of this positive difference. Havelock, taking up and inflecting Parry’s work, reconstitutes a long transition from the “oral mode” to the “literate mode.” If literate culture is haunted by a set of assumptions which have for millennia blinded it to the proper appreciation of Homer, what are these assumptions? How has the form of writing and reading constituted the perception and experience of language in the literate mind? For Havelock, the alphabet forms both the absolute condition for the rational and analytic character of Western thought and the beginning of a series of graduated conceptual changes, seen in their effects on the form of texts over the centuries. All that we take for granted about language – the text, the author, commentary and analysis, the decomposition of speech into words, the idea of a single language as both written and spoken, the distinction between form and content, and even the notion of language itself – are consequences of this literate revolution.

For Havelock, the invention of the “true alphabet” is an opportunity to investigate for the first time the historical conditions of the development of Western thought in its analytical, rational and scientific structures. Without the alphabet, there would be no concept of words as separable elements, of language, of the text. Going further, he and a

group of scholars – Illich and Sanders (*ABC*), Olson (*World on Paper*), McLuhan (*Understanding Media; Gutenberg Galaxy*), Goody and Watt (“Consequences”), Goody (*Savage Mind; Traditional Societies*) and Ong (*Orality*) – claim that alphabetic writing and the technologies of writing building upon it are the necessary condition for “the forms of consciousness found in modern Western thought” (Fleischer Feldman 47). A proliferation of lists of cognitive consequences arises from this work, sometimes at variance with each other but nonetheless univocal in their assertion that Western literacy is the latent basis for Western thought.

This tradition has produced a sequence of important literacy events, signposts, rearrangements, crises and revolutions that indicate a new stage in the development of latent conceptual structures of the West. The first Greek adoption and conversion of the Phoenician script constitutes the first true reduction of sound to script; the Homeric texts attest to a compromise between poet and scribe and the Platonic dialogues mark the point of departure between an oral philosophy and a new, perhaps reluctantly literate one; the twelfth and thirteenth centuries see the oath replaced by a contract, and from then on someone “holds” land (as a tenancy guaranteed by a title deed) rather than sitting on it (“possessing”); the book at this time becomes an indexed, randomly searchable document catalogued in a library (rather than merely put there), and the common people are taught that their lives and afterlives are controlled elsewhere, in account-books and the Book of Life. These, among other things, are the landmarks of literacy, as both a cultural syndrome and a road to modern reason, before the acceleration caused by the moveable-type printing press (cf. Havelock, *Preface*; Illich and Sanders, *ABC*; Ong, *Orality*).

In an old move – at least as old as Ferguson’s *Civil Society* – contemporary non-literate societies are drawn into this not only as an illustration of the great gulf between *our* thought and *theirs*, but also as an intimation of the character of the preliterate ancients. Thus, a traveller’s tale of oral inventions is related by Havelock to illustrate his point that early histories are remnants of creative oral fabrications:

Achieving alphabetisation, in a period restricted to craft literacy, these “histories” were able to survive. Preceding compositions lacking this advantage would have enjoyed only an ephemeral existence, the character of

which can be gauged by analogy from the reported experience of a nineteenth-century explorer of the Sudan. (Havelock, *Literate Revolution* 23)

The quotation follows, telling of Sir Samuel Baker's discomfiture in having a highly fanciful "history" sung of him, and especially at having to pay an exorbitant price for the performance. Havelock expands this into an observation on the essential difference between oral memory and literate history:

oral record of what is supposed to have been the past represents an act of free composition, not less so when cast in epic form. It can never be historical in our sense. The true parent of history is not any one "writer" like Herodotus, but the alphabet itself. Oral memory deals primarily with the present: it collects and recollects what is being done now or is appropriate to the present situation. . . . What it preserves of the past is partial and incidental, and is woven into coherence by the use of fantasy, like the Mycenaean background emplaced in the Homeric poems. (Havelock, *Literate Revolution* 23)

Though Havelock is credited with perpetuating a Great Divide, he proposes that the Western mind was built in heterogeneous steps corresponding with new conceptualisations of writing, the text, and language itself:

The change (from pre-alphabetic to alphabetic cultures) became the means of introducing a new state of mind – the alphabetic mind . . . [T]he alphabet converted the Greek spoken tongue into an artefact, thereby separating it from the speaker and making it into a "language," that is, an object available for inspection, reflection, analysis. Was this merely a matter of creating the notion of grammar? It is true that Greek originally had no word for a word singly identified, but only various terms referring to spoken sound, and that syntactical categories and parts of speech first became subjects of discourse toward the end of the fifth century, after nearly three hundred years of alphabetic usage. But something deeper was also going on. A visible artefact was also preservable without recourse to memory. It could be rearranged, reordered, and rethought to produce forms of statement and types of discourse not previously available because not easily memorisable. If it were possible to

designate the new discourse by any one word, the appropriate word would be conceptual. Nonliterate speech had favoured discourse describing action; the postliterate altered the balance in favour of reflection. The syntax of Greek began to adapt to an increasing opportunity offered to state propositions in place of describing events. (Havelock, *Literate Revolution* 7-8)

The Great Divide is not so much a divide as a series of steps charting the development of Western man and his distance from the oral, preliterate, and illiterate Others he has left behind him.

It is a small step from this general form to the elimination or substantial modification of the categories of development and progress deployed in these works. As analysis of the *Curriculum Framework* demonstrates, the discourse imbues literacy with a flexibility derived from its interaction with social demands and ways of mapping and tracing it as an index and cause of social development. If each age or society represents a different modification of oral and literate modes, then there is no fully literate *telos* to which the human mind, civilisation and society tend. Moreover, the recovery of statistical data has fueled arguments over the interpretation of this data, and of the criteria for progress with which one argues for or against. Statistical and social-psychological histories of literacy, though they claim to be at odds in their object and its measurement, are really two versions of developmental history, two ways of arguing for or against literacy's association with progress. Beyond this division of discourses is a version of development divorced from progress, where mutation and transformation constitute the key concept and progress is a matter of preference or political project. There are two important events to be noted here: the introduction of statistical tables and sociological concepts, with literacy becoming a matter of populations and percentages, and Graff's questioning, in the context of a statistically informed social history, of the association between literacy and terms associated with progress. As a consequence literacy, while never given the status of a real essence, becomes a proliferating and protean entity requiring endless study. Literacy is no longer an absolute limit but rather a variable form

(according to usage), an element in larger mosaics (varying with roles of other components), a sociopolitical self-image, a recoverable clue to the suppressed Other.²

What secures this interplay and flexibility of concepts, however, relies upon a basic circularity in the discourse, where the object to be explained and studied is also the foundation of this knowledge. This leaves a series of questions unanswered, since the discourse disclaims its construction of this object. Hence, it cannot date the birth of a coherent, integrated concept of literacy. Nor can it explain why this concept seems to leap from its scattered popular, technical and speculative uses to an absolute division between two types of mind. It generates undecidable oppositions and unanswerable questions because it constitutes literacy outside of history. Literacy as a historical object is inconstant both in terms of its meanings and its practices, and thus one can never be sure that histories of literacy delineate the one thing, the one set of concerns, signified by “literacy.” These lacunae and ambiguities do not silence the discourse; rather, they mandate the extension of literacy to the entire social field, as both object of study and area of demand, concern and intervention. It is therefore important to examine these circularities in explaining the *Curriculum Framework’s* extension of literacy into the categories of the nation and economic and cognitive development. It is also important to examine the problems and questions that this discourse, by its very constitution, leaves unaddressed.

In providing an insight into the practices where “literacy” emerged, where “industry” and “intelligence” may have come before, historians not only cast light on the notions surrounding literacy, but they also throw the notion of literacy itself into doubt. This is not a question of the refinement and redefinition of the concept, but a question of extension. If concerns about literacy are really about a particular structure of relations among language, observation and instruction, or derive from a modern form of subjectivity where language is an absolute limit and defining substance of the human, then the value of literacy as a historical heuristic concept fails. First, former and other ways of reading and writing must be understood as anticipations within a teleological development towards literacy proper, or there is no particular connection, and the idea

² See Mignolo for an extended discussion.

from which one began looks like cultural *hubris*. Second, it may be that “our literacy” is simply a regional example of other ways of ordering and practising language through marks; but then the question arises as to whether we have abstracted our experience as the kernel of experiences which may only have an identity when seen from the perspective we are forced into as subjects of our relation to language.

Historical studies of literacy, then, are faced with the suspicion that their founding assumption, the existence of literacy (and therefore its effects on the historical domain) is valid only where literacy constitutes a particular historical experience. Thus, in a culture where non-literate capacities were the foundation of education, the effects of literacy are either the effects of a cultural ensemble not recognising literacy (and literacy is not the effective unity), or literacy is a set of material facts operating autonomously in relation to a cultural apparatus, or it is merely an element, recognised from one historical perspective, with no general law or explanatory value outside of a particular cultural practice.³ But the intelligibility of a history of literacies, the reason for their being, is “our” recognition of literacy as a real entity. The concepts underwriting this intelligibility are not writing and reading, but the character, effects, possibilities and powers these bestow upon ways of thought, lives and societies.

The later historical tradition in literacy studies, which uses statistical evidence and sociological concepts, also comes up against a series of problems. Literacy and illiteracy have remained terms that are difficult to define, the evidence for which, on a population level, is difficult to interpret. Historically, and particularly before the advent of literacy studies, a variety of measures were taken. In any case, as soon as a division between literate and illiterate is given, a borderland inevitably opens up, with its profusion of differences:

the word “illiterate” may be employed to connote a person unable to read a text, whether printed or in manuscript. Logically one might be tempted to

³ Most treatments of literacy claim more than one of these propositions, differing as to whether the material or the cultural elements are more determinative in forming literate scientific practice, social relations or experiences of internalised thinking (Olson, *World on Paper*; Eisenstein, *Printing Press*; Havelock, *Preface*; Ilich and Sanders, *ABC*), establishing a problematic interaction connecting society, cognitive spaces, scientific and technological progress, economic and political circumstances, and book format conventions (tables of contents, index pages, alphabetical ordering, emblemata and illustrations).

deduce from this that a person who knows how to read is “literate,” but the deduction is not a legitimate one. Between the totally illiterate and the literate there is the intermediate army of the semi-illiterate. There are, to begin with, those who can read but cannot write. . . . However, those who can read but cannot write are not the only inhabitants of the uncertain land of semi-illiteracy. There are those who can both read and write but can hardly understand what they read and can hardly write anything besides their signature. (Cipolla 12)

The difficulties were already present in Cipolla’s 1969 book *Literacy and Development in the West*, and they have only proliferated since then. For instance, Cipolla points out that while a high number of literate workers is recorded as building the *Fabbrica del Duomo*, the large number of sculptors, a trade involving more education than most builders, makes this figure unrepresentative of the wider society. “Another group of labourers working on a different building” without all the *Duomo* statues “would have included fewer *scultori* and more *muratori* and consequently would have shown a lower rate of literacy” (Cipolla 57). The meaning of these numbers, rates and percentages, however, is not confined to a dead referent. The agencies for which they were produced, the new instruments of statistics, the powers, concerns and character of the modern state become both a problem and a set of answers. A society introduced measures of compulsion and assessment precisely when the literacy of its members became a concern and the substance of its power. The meaning of literacy becomes a problem in that it can no longer be confined to the silent processes of economics, but must be found in the unrepresentative supplement of autobiographies, anecdotes, and ideological pronouncements (cf. Graff, *Literacy Myth*; Vincent, *Popular Culture; Mass Literacy*). Cipolla had already called for studies into “what people read and to what purposes,” but his assurance that “the set of values prevailing in a given society ultimately determines to what use existing techniques will be put” (Cipolla 109) both masked and revealed the problem of the relation between literacy and power.⁴

⁴ This kind of circumspection has also entered into studies of ancient literacy: see William V. Harris.

Cipolla's judgment, since overturned many times, was that literacy, while presenting a danger to social stability in the eighteenth century, was an essential ingredient in the technological and political progress of the nineteenth. His chronological scope is almost as great as that of "cognitive" historians of literacy, but the strategies adopted are significantly different. It is not the quality of a mind that characterises a civilisation, but the economic structure of a nation that interacts with the proportion and class of literates in the population. His most famous successors in economic and institutional histories of schooling in Europe, Harvey J. Graff and David Vincent, have since restricted the temporal scope of such work, and have transformed the notion of "values in a given society" into dialectical struggles between authorities and workers, and multiplied the forms and status of the uses of literacy. The discursive function remains, however, the tying of literacy into notions of development, and the insistence on organising social, economic and personal development as instances, correlatives and qualifications of notions of literacy. In this historical tradition as in the first, literacy orders the field by acting as a substance that makes the historical data intelligible, and as that which is to be discovered, explained and qualified by the interpretation of these data. Moreover, literacy invests an ambiguous transcendent subject that unites the nation, the society and the individual. Whereas this subject is marked by the exemplary text in the "philological" tradition above, in this sociological mode it is structured by a variety of different instruments: statistical tables, case histories, policy pronouncements and autobiographies.

Though Graff claims that *The Literacy Myth* focuses "on individual men and women in society and the meanings of literacy to them" (19), it consists mostly of a statistical argument pitted against the "literacy myth." Rather than present Western cultural history as successive realisations about texts, Graff decorrelates literacy and illiteracy from the various concerns they have been linked with, both in nineteenth-century North America and in contemporary Western societies. The people are allied with the powerful truth of the statistical table against the myths of the press and the educational authorities. Thus, in arguing against the notion that literacy brings economic rewards, Graff's contention that people did not see it this way is substantiated by the statistical evidence:

An illiterate could achieve some success in the working world of the nineteenth century. These conclusions form one baseline against which to assess the rhetorical claims of middle-class school promoters and by which to understand the criticisms and aspirations of the working class. Much more than the skills of literacy were at stake to them; other issues were thought to be at least as central to the curriculum of the future workers. (Graff, *Literacy Myth* 200)

Graff contrasts the exactness and authority of recent statistical research into literacy and employment against the opportunistic inexactness of nineteenth-century officials such as Horace Mann. Strangely, this form of argument elevates the reviled falsifier to the status of interlocutor, while silencing the people for whom Graff is ostensibly speaking. Discussing Mann's abuse of statistics to show the moral and economic advantages of education, Graff chides:

Mann also failed to show that additional education for each child was economically profitable, exaggerating differences between markers and signers, and ignoring the factors of age and ethnicity. He further confused the value of education to parents with its worth to the community, firms or individuals – these could be very different. Finally, his use of wage rates ignored the imperfection of the labour market, social inequality, and discrimination. (Graff, *Literacy Myth* 204)

Literacy here organises the lives of workers, so that one may see what effect it has on them. While in cognitive histories one finds in literacy the explanation for an ideal mind, here it is the ephemeral and contradictory phantom placed and removed over otherwise silent lives, in the context of their labour, their employment, and their relations to the powerful institutions that largely determined the economic content of their lives. In the first kind of history, the ideological and the historical elements are perfectly coincident; in the latter, ideology forms the veil to be drawn back, and also the alibi for writing of the great historical processes in which literacy has only an accidental role to play.

For Graff, literacy is always characterised by a purpose. It is not that the essence of literacy is modified by the end to which it is put; rather, it attains an essential character

only within the pursuit of some end or other. Hence, any knowledge of literacy is a knowledge of purposes. Actual processes can be measured only with reference to a goal. There is no universal scale of higher and lower functions. The shoehorning of one literacy (a rule-bound dialect, say, used strategically to order social positions via authority and *bonhomie*) into another (a national educational scale, for instance) will misrepresent the fact of success (whether the literacy in question has attained its end) and will code the other literacy as a deviation and failure of the one measured. Nonetheless, a minimal relation of resemblance permits all literacies to be classed as forms of the same thing.

As a consequence, the literacy researcher has to be sensitive and discriminating, keeping the purposes of literacy study in mind. The identification of different literacies illuminates both the essential character of a literacy and the nature of society:

The study of literacy, I urge, is important not only in and of itself; it also illuminates the dynamics of society and provides penetrating insights into how its processes functioned – for example, in stratification, in mobility, or in family adjustment. Literacy study therefore constitutes a valuable mode of analysis for students of society. (Graff, *Literacy Myth* 19)

The study of literacy is a study in social cartography, in the variable benefits derived from literacy and the involvement of literacy in forms of social gain and injury. This historiographical perspective is an ironic counter to the “literacy myth,” and, indeed, the demolishing of this massive, ramified and diffuse cloud of fallacy and misconception is frequently invoked as a reason for studies of literacy: the historical study of literacy is “one way of confronting directly the literacy myth, the value assigned to literacy, and its place in social theory” (Graff, *Literacy Myth* 19).

Here, literacy functions on two scales: as the symptom of a total social environment and as the meaning and uses of reading and writing in the lives of “individual men and women” (19). That two things are being studied is the sign of an essential agonistic impulse behind the writing, and the result of the social apparatus producing both the myth and the facts. Literacy, the course of writing and reading at two distinct levels, characterises a society as the index of its complexity and contradictions. The agonistic impulse is to denounce the pretensions of an ideological complex and to

bring it into conflict with these pretensions at the point of its application. Thus, society produces and maintains inequalities alongside the provision of literacy, and distributes different literacies according to existing social hierarchies and divisions. Further, the study of literacy aims to recognise the excluded individual or the marginal social group, with their specific forms of speech, their existences marked out by the exclusions of power and the difference peculiar to them, outside of the presumptuous mismeasures and declarations of a social centre.

In order to engage in such a study, however, one must comply with the fundamental division of individuals into literate and illiterate, and fortify this division with the solid language of economics and demography:

The daughters of illiterates who persisted in the cities, in sharp contrast to other illiterates and many literates, remained at home longer; the persisting families' ratios of children at home are nearly equal. For settled families, it was apparently less important to send out young females into service and thereby to further reduce family size and dependency ratios. (Graff, *Literacy Myth* 178)

As a consequence, literacy functions as both the obfuscation and the revelation of a social structure and the people within it. The transcendental social subject that was discovered in the philological tradition was replaced by an analytical image of social structure derived from the ordering of various sources into statistical tables.

In *The Rise of Mass Literacy in Europe* (published in 2000), David Vincent reinstates the transcendental subject as “meaning” and “society,” while retaining the appearance of cautiously objective history. He also excises orality from his history while acknowledging it. The operations of the correlative field of literacy, the insistent desire to locate literacy in the discourse and to rearrange the archive around a modern experience of literacy, are difficulties posed by the object founding the discourse being also its *definiendum*. The battles for the definition of literacy bear the marks of a long tradition in *The Rise of Mass Literacy*, a history that presents working-class autobiography as the other side of the state ideologies and uses of literacy, and where a degree of popular militancy secularises the curriculum. The dispute between the “autonomous” and the

“ideological” model is a barren one, writes Vincent, not because it has been proved one way or the other but because “the limitations of measures of nominal literacy,” for a social history based on statistical tables “are so well established” that the historian may study only “the use to which the skills might be put” (Vincent, *Mass Literacy* 5). Vincent is referring, in fact, to Graff’s earlier formulation:

Basic or primary levels of reading and writing constitute the only flexible and reasonable indications that meet the criterion; a number of historical and contemporary sources, while not wholly satisfactory in themselves, can be employed Only such basic but systematic indications meet the canons of accuracy, utility, and comparability that we must apply consistently. Otherwise, quantitative and qualitative dimensions cannot be known, and only confusion and distortion result. (Graff, Legacies 3-4)

In Vincent’s work, this limitation is bypassed, since the transcendental category of the Western Mind is replaced by an aggregative one. This collective mind, which had disappeared under the prohibition against myth, resurfaces as the mind of society, as a social assemblage of feelings, pleasures and associations operating at a manifest material level. Thus, with the Europe-wide change from parochial to standardised time, new combinations of feelings with space or objects are traced out in a spare and cautious language:

Fact was sold as newspapers, further anchoring reading to the formal calendar, although for most of the labouring poor, it was only Sunday that was identified in this way. (Vincent, *Mass Literacy* 107)

What is signalled in this passage is what one can no longer say: it is too much to propose that people believed newspapers contained fact, or even what the status of that fact was; it is overstepping the bounds to name those who identified Sunday, lest one attribute thought where there was none. Instead, a number of evasive substitutions both erase the expressions and reinstate them, at the level of a social semiotic that pretends to be only the material residue. History becomes a studied vernacular of rigorous material statements of meaning; society, without quite becoming the grandiloquent destiny of the

West, echoes the text of the great cognitive history in a series of new pleasures and private communions:

A new dimension of privacy was made possible as individuals transmitted their secrets to each other over long distances, and families established lines of contact beyond the confines of their villages and neighbourhoods. . . . And the use of [postcards] reflected both the growing variety of applications of literacy and the unpremeditated appropriation of the labours of the teachers for the pleasures of the poor. (123)

An empty space reopens in this passage: who is not premeditating? Society? The teachers? The poor? An empty, transcendent consciousness leaves its mark in the impersonal volitions and social feelings, granting to the historian a unity of meaning. This is because literacy discourse always hails a transcendental subject, whether national and social or individual and universal, for it cannot do away with the double pedagogical knowledge that calls it into being.

In dealing with the problem of an oral culture, Vincent argues it out of existence. First, “the ‘oral tradition’ is now regarded more as a by-product of European intellectual history than a substantive category of cultural analysis” (91). Second, it was long dead: “at least in western Europe, communities uncontaminated by the written word disappeared at the Reformation and Counter-Reformation – if ever they existed” (91). Having dismissed this category, he is free to discuss the various interactions between voice and print in the new social order of the nineteenth century. All signifying activity in modern Europe thus becomes “literacy,” and its literacy, in turn, becomes an expression of the character of society as a whole. Oral culture is subordinated to the study of “Reading and Writing in Modern Europe” (the subtitle of Vincent’s book). The use of the oral other in making the literate self visible is a persistent pattern, beginning with Parry’s recordings of Yugoslav minstrels to confirm his conclusions about Homeric poetry. In this determination of the literate through the oral a flexible boundary asserts itself, one that refers both to the geographical and cultural domains proper to literacy, and to the boundary between sociological and cognitive history.

But there is a further boundary, another level of excision, the local expression of a dispersal common in literacy discourse. If an oral culture is studied, or if it is not Western (or “modern”), it belongs to comparative studies. An illiterate group within the West, on the other hand, partakes of its essentially literate social subjectivity. Further, the opposition between oral and literate, which structured this discourse in its beginnings, is rearranged. There are oral elements, but all of social reality is corrupted by the presence of the written text: prayer book passages were read out to Hungarian peasants, the names of newspapers were shouted in the streets: “Preachers, street-sellers, workplace and fireside readers engaged the illiterate in the world of print” (95).

The undecidability of literacy’s boundaries depends on where one sees its primary manifestation: in social discourse and the character of a society, in a text symptomatic of such a mind, in the extent of educational institutions, or indeed in the negation of literacy. The search for literacy in oral discourse is completely reversible. This excision of the oral is inverted in the hunt for the vestiges of orality within a written text. If the oral is everywhere possessed of an original or distinct form of perception, this can only be demonstrated in an exemplary hybrid text, a proper transcription. Or, if a text cannot be found to meet the criteria defined by Parry’s and Lord’s successors, then the certainty that this transition took place allows one to find other vestiges of orality, in a way that restores the distinction between the two ways of relating to the word. Thus, when Illich and Sanders fail to locate a true transcription of oral composition, an analogue of Parry’s Homeric hybrid, at the end of the European Dark Ages, they rearrange and reread the Book of Kells according to their existing hypothesis about a transition from oral to literate society:

The book talks as if literacy had not yet settled in. It talks through the style of its meandering threads. They challenge the reader to weave the one story of Christ’s life out of four tales, thereby fleshing out the “Word of God,” the Gospel Truth. Seen in this way, the Book of Kells is a kind of “Homeric page” in which, at an early date in England, oral storytelling has been for a moment visibly frozen in the cadence of knot and link that punctuates the series of letters – just as the strum of the lyre punctuates the utterance of the singer. (Illich and Sanders 30)

If we accept the Great Divide hypothesis, we inevitably write about oral life within literate categories; if we accept an indefinite variety of oral/literate combinations, of different modes of literacy, we risk misinterpreting these with a contemporary, class-based or universalising model. Each strategic reordering of the boundaries of difference imposes a silence which will nevertheless be broken. Thus, with Illich and Sanders, both language and words, which are made possible with the alphabet, are inapplicable to oral experience, and therefore there can be no real history of the time before writing:

The historian misreads history when he assumes that “language” can be spoken in that word-less world. In the oral beyond, there is no “content” distinct from the winged word that always rushes by before it has been fully grasped, no “subject matter” that can be conceived of, entrusted to teachers, and acquired by pupils (hence no “education,” “learning,” and “school”).
(Illich and Sanders 7)

[The] immense yet evanescent power [of the songs of preliterate poets] eludes description, and those who uttered them were unable, for all their oral skill, to see their own speech as a string on which words were the beads. (Illich and Sanders 7)

It is this very silence, the violence of the misrepresentation, which establishes the unrepresentable other as either the mute, black background against which a knowledge of the effects of alphabetisation begins, or calls for representation as another form, peremptorily excluded by a machine of power and presumption. Indeed, the threat of a violent incorporation takes both epochal and intercultural forms in the same book:

As the two of us wrote this book, the literary *we* constantly silenced us, a deafening silence that makes it impossible for the reader to know anything about the writer. Using this contemporary *we*, the speaker engages in semantic violence, incorporating groups, whose way of formulating the *we* is heterogeneous to that of the observer, and thus driving them into silence.
(Illich and Sanders 127)

At the level of discourse, literacy is a fundamental reinscription of history, society and knowledge, either as the great necessity for an event, concept or experience, or as the

parasitic level which silently shaped their character. But this set of propositions is also ordered as a set of fundamental alternatives. That is, one speaks either for the deep wellspring of thought or for the epiphenomenon which may, at times, achieve a measure of prominence. The delicate line of division between these alternatives in historical studies is carefully charted not only with relations of opposition, tabulation, critique and exclusion, but also with strategies of reinscription and changes in emphasis.

The reinscription of history through literacy is insistent and exacting, often prescribing the causalities to which historical features of societies should be tied. Indeed, sometimes the difference between the account of a literacy sceptic, claiming the fundamental cognitive structures do not change with literacy, and a literacy proselyte, claiming that literacy is indispensable to anything to do with texts in the West, is almost unnoticeable. This rewriting is, however, crucial to the maintenance of literacy as a discursive entity; it is in the regular distribution of such oppositions that literacy is sustained as an object. A particularly clear case is David Olson's review of Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Historical Change*, in which he attempts to reinstate a cognitive model of literacy as the basis of the Protestant Revolution, rejecting Eisenstein's more materialist interpretation. He quotes her as writing that "Intellectual and spiritual life were profoundly transformed by the multiplication of new tools for duplicating books in fifteenth century Europe. The communications shift altered the way Western Christians viewed their sacred book and the natural world" (Eisenstein, *Printing Press* 704, qtd. in Olson, "Modern Science" 150). This may sound like an endorsement of literacy as a rewriting of cognition by the book, but Olson takes issue with it, since it does not accord literacy the deep organising role it must have, in his view. The problem is not that Eisenstein advocates "a multivariable explanation even while stressing the significance of a single innovation" (Eisenstein, *Printing Press* 702, qtd. in Olson, "Modern Science" 151). She has failed, rather, to see literacy in the depth that explains history as meaning:

Admittedly, Eisenstein provides abundant evidence that printing (and writing) did serve different purposes in religion and science, yet a second look reveals a deeper relation between them than she allows. (Olson, "Modern Science" 151)

That we may assent to his recasting, the appropriate reorientation of perspective must be written in, which allows us to see literacy just below the surface and tied to everything:

To see this we must distinguish skill in the medium of writing, that is literacy, from the technology of printing. Printing may indeed have been used in quite different ways by science and religion as Eisenstein suggests. Yet writing as a medium of communication and the required competence with that medium – literacy – played much the same fundamental role in the Protestant Reformation as it did in the rise of modern science. (151)

Hence, Eisenstein's contention that the printing press was better suited to the service of science than that of the Church (and therefore was important in their separation) is reordered, with literacy in the centre and in the depths, guaranteeing an underlying homology between the critical distance established by the printed text and that involved in scientific scrutiny:

In both cases [literacy] permitted the clear differentiation of the "given" from the "interpreted." Literacy generally, and printing in particular, fixed the written record as the given against which interpretations could be compared. Writing created a fixed, original, objective "text;" printing put that into millions of hands. (151)

Such rewriting is possible because of the system of strategic ambiguities in the discourse, where it is possible to define literacy as social and individual, as the text generating change and the society dictating the uses and forms of texts. Lying at the basis of this set of ambiguities is a circularity, tying the changing causal status of literacy to changes in its definition. The strategic rewriting goes further than this; it imposes a need, an imperative, to distribute and reconfigure literacy throughout the historical reconstruction of the social. One must create the need, within the text, for a better popular and scholarly culture concerning literacy, create a desire to purge the concept of binarisms, multiply the forms of literacy, expose the fallacies, uncover and reform the abuses. One should lay down a complex circuitry for the endless renewal of the concept, its currency, its urgency. Thus:

In most urban and suburban communities, most children will pick up the printed code anyway, school or no school It is likely that teaching destroys more genuine literacy than it produces. But it is hard to know if most people think that reading and writing have any value anyway, either in themselves or for their use, except that they are indispensable in how we go about things. Contrast the common respect for mathematics, which are taken to be *about* something and are powerful, productive, magical; yet there is no panic if people are mathematically illiterate. (Paul Goodman, *Compulsory Miseducation* qtd. in Graff, *Literacy Myth* 1)

This circuitry depends, however, upon the selection of data as evidence of literacy, demonstrating certain arguments about its nature. A set of historical data, for instance, which comes from marriage registers and military tests, as well as educational examinations, is subjected to scrutiny: did signing one's name imply the ability to write, or just to sign? Were there social relations which prohibited signing, even when the ability existed? Does the language of the Prussian and Austrian scales of literacy correspond even approximately with developmental stages? At first, these measures are admitted, then rejected, then readmitted with greater caution, since they cannot be done without, but cannot be assimilated with certainty. A communication is maintained between the level of data and that of interpretation, and meanwhile the data widen, to include working-class biographies, anecdotes, court transcripts, non-literate "reading" methods (the slave who reads to the illiterate master, the mass that is read to the congregation, the radio script read to a mutually anonymous audience), non-western writing systems, and writing below the familiar thresholds of phonological and ideographic representations (*quipu*, pictographic stelae, psychic writing). Literacy, destroyed at its mythic level from the outset, renews itself and multiplies the sites in which it appears.

A discursive circuitry like this is not, however, the complete circuit, for the discourse of literacy demands also that recordings be made, that populations be assembled and measured, distributed according to age, sex, ethnicity and disability. This whole disciplinary apparatus is not directly derived from a desire to serve the knowledge of literacy (or even of the learning process); likewise, the discourse of literacy does not

always serve these techniques of display, measurement and division. Nonetheless, the physical arrangement and measurement of performing bodies is the physical and political fact that lies behind the knowledge of literacy we have today, and the discourse of literacy makes sense of this arrangement of bodies.

All cultures differ in their employment of literacy and orality (Street, Gee, Lankshear, Green) or, *mutatis mutandis*, literate and oral cultures are essentially different (Havelock, Ong, Ilich and Sanders). The discourse produces two different historical divisions, on the axis either of culture or of literacy. Both divisions suggest that the identity of a culture is related in some essential way with the unity of its literacy practices. Sometimes, an established social group or subgroup is the basis for the discovery of a specific literacy (the middle class, working-class girls). In other instances even the most individual utterance can be assimilated to a major literacy practice. The hybrid text resurfaces in a new space, where the truth of children before they are captured and reshaped by the powers commanding literacy shines through.

At the historical level, literacy can be assigned as neither cause nor effect. Prior to this, however, it requires a commitment to a particular definition, or rather to a relation between literacy and social processes, cognitive structures and textual practices in order to see one or the other literacy at work, or in order to see literacy as a relevant factor at all. It is literacy, moreover, that confers a new status on the text as a historical artefact, not in its material appearance, nor as a message addressed to someone, but as a succession of abstract historical models of arrangements of signs and organising structures in a graphical space. Moreover, the text, in its form and frequency or in the fact of its having been written by someone, is evidence either of the il/literate character of a society (and the structure of meanings and distribution of cultural goods within it) or the condensed image of a social mind. The *Curriculum Framework* utilises these discursive powers of literacy to mark all social practices as relevant, to mark surfaces as manifestations of depth and development, and to mediate expert knowledges and popular expectations. In unifying the system of dispersals, the available theoretical and political options, curriculum policy is also the site *par excellence* of this discourse.

Insofar as the history of literacy operates as a system of regularities, it is circular and undecidable. The hypotheses about the role of literacy are consequences of preceding definitions of literacy, which are themselves given in the rules for the formation of statements, in the objects one should refer to (not only literacy but the text and society), in the way one may speak of them (whether one distinguishes an underlying depth or a multiplicity of correlations), in the branching of alternatives (the Great Divide leads one to the unfolding of literacy in the Western mind; cautious demographics permits a history of local conditions and a specificity of struggles which nonetheless constitute a communal meaning), and in the distribution of concepts (the circular codetermination of mind and text or the fight for kinds of texts). However, these are not two distinct discourses; they are two possible branchings of a single distribution of alternatives. Even if a struggle occurs between them (falsifying the claims of the Great Divide or rewriting the sequence of social usage as the epiphenomenal development of the single underlying history), or if a reconciliation is attempted (where the Great Divide is written as aleatory and subject to uses and ideologies, but is nonetheless the history of “our” literate selves), these options occur within the one system of dispersal, within a set of strategic positions already activated as part of the discourse, already operating as a condition of its existence.

Epistemological Circularities

The discourse of literacy is a historically constituted circulation between social practices and the forms of knowledge that take these practices as their object and in fact require them as the conditions of knowledge. It is important to examine the epistemological circularities operating around notions of writing, language, text and knowledge that inform the discourse and project a complex of knowledges upon literacy while denying their historical constitution. By tying language and literacy to notions of a fundamental truth of humanity and the world, the discourse of literacy creates an imperative to study the various manifestations of textuality and at the same time to banish its object to a vanishing-point beyond the reach of analysis. Hence, a second group of

circularities in the discourse, those relating to its epistemological organisation, need to be described and analysed.

If the *Curriculum Framework* suggests that subjects are constituted in textuality, it draws upon a fundamental feature of literacy discourse, which locates subjectivity within the marks left by the text and, conversely, marks the subject, humanity and consciousness as a form of textuality, a visible mark in a system of meaning. The discourse recurrently presents the text as the model of our humanity, encircling us in a native power that can best be seen in the uncorrupted narrative of oral peoples, as in James Paul Gee's example of a tale told by a small black girl, "L." Having recounted L's "show and tell" story about the freedom of her puppy, the brutal authority of her father, and her attempt to understand, and having identified its array of devices, he muses:

Why is there so much similarity between oral poetry and narrative in oral cultures . . . myths, and certain types of "high literature," and what some black children and adults can do when telling a story? The answer, it seems to me, is that it is in these cases that we see the fullest, richest, and least "marked" expression of our human biological capacity for language, narrative, and sense making generally. (Gee, "Narrativisation" 92-3)⁵

The text is seen in the very absence of written language because, in distributing the text into the social, the discourse transmutes the text and language, projecting their

⁵ The identification of oral narrative style with examples of "high literature" tends, then, to gesture at an elusive essential linguistic mode, at the deep biological seat of language. Here Gee aligns the oral performance of L with literary modernists and modernisms from "Pound and the Imagists" to "Frank and Spatialisation," returning to an essential identity with a deep spring of language that unites these to "early Hebrew poetry, Greek epic, American Indian narratives, or African poems and stories." He uses this motif elsewhere, for example, "Meanings," where it recurs, almost word for word, in his discussion of another text:

The language of this text is recognisably part of an African-American cultural tradition that has now been fairly well studied The child uses language in a poetic, rather than a prosaic way; she tries to "involve the audience, rather than just to inform" them (Nichols 1989). She uses a good deal of semantic and syntactic parallelism, repetition, and sound devices (phonological sequences, intonation, and rate changes) to set up rhythmic and poetic patterning within and across her stanzas, just as do Biblical poetry (e.g., in the Psalms), the narratives of many oral cultures (e.g., Homer), and much "free verse" (e.g., the poetry of Walt Whitman). (280-81)

operations onto the body and onto the world. This operation can be seen in Derrida's interrogation of notions of writing, in which he deconstructs the claim that the alphabet constitutes the key to Western history. His work is often invoked in the discourse as an authority on the meaning of writing.⁶ In *Of Grammatology*, he describes the paradoxical quality of any Western history of writing:

What Saussure saw without seeing, knew without being *able* to take into account . . . is that a certain model of writing was necessarily but provisionally imposed . . . as instrument and technique of representation of a system of language. And that this movement, unique in style, was so profound that it permitted the thinking, within *language*, of concepts like those of the sign, technique, representation, language. The system of language associated with phonetic-alphabetic writing is that within which logocentric metaphysics . . . has been produced. This logocentrism, this *epoch* of the full speech, has always placed in parenthesis, suspended, and suppressed for essential reasons, all free reflection on the origin and status of writing, all science of writing which was not technology and the *history of a technique*, itself leaning upon a mythology and a metaphor of a natural writing. It is this logocentrism which, limiting the internal system of language in general by a bad abstraction, prevents Saussure and the majority of his successors from determining . . . that which is called "the integral and concrete object of linguistics." (Derrida 43)

Can one write a science of writing when writing is both the condition and the limit of that science? Writing itself is the presupposition of all scientific knowledge. Thus, all science is at one and the same time both enabled and silenced (at least as concerns its conditions of possibility) by writing. For Derrida, the notion that writing is a system for the representation of spoken language is both the foundation of the science of language and a false delimitation of language on the basis of a "bad abstraction." He questions Saussure's characterisation of the linguistic sign as arbitrary, which hinges on the

⁶ See Ong, and Mignolo (317-21).

opposition between nature and institution. Derrida argues that this is a false opposition, since the material relations of writing are shared by all systems of signification:

If “writing” signifies inscription and especially the durable institution of a sign (and that is the only irreducible kernel of the concept of writing), writing in general covers the entire field of linguistic signs. (Derrida 44)

Since difference, and not the supposedly natural bond between sound and thought, is the source of meaning, all systems of signification, including “the world,” are analogous to writing. The science of linguistics, in short, derives its claims to scientificity from a bad metaphysical fiction, but this fiction (of presence, representation) is the *pudenda origo*⁷ of Western science and metaphysics, the presumptive exclusion which has no basis in logic but which nevertheless serves as the basis of logic. Thus ends logocentrism, and a general practice of writing, a general condition of textuality, invades the space that was always there but hidden for the exigencies of logocentric thought. Writing, in the sense of meaningful differences, is the model for all signs, and the vulgar concept of writing as an orthographic system of sound-representation, particularly as it relates to “phonetic-alphabetic writing,” is a deadly error, keeping us from the play of the world.

For Derrida, there is no difficulty if a knowledge of the alphabet is the necessary precondition for both the misrecognition of writing as a separate and derivative form of language and for the recognition that the world is, in its play of difference, primarily a form of writing. This is because, for him, writing is both logically and ontologically prior to any system of inscription. The histories of a great mind constituted through literacy, of a mind made in the image it beholds, moving from ear to eye, seeing its thought, arranging and analysing it as both outer and inner text, are histories of a logocentric colonisation. Writing, in the sense of differences manifested in the trace, is what is repressed in the logocentric search for certainty and sharp, absolute divisions.

Thus, when Derrida invokes “writing before the alphabet,” he is not being ethnocentric. It is understandable that Mignolo (271) misreads this as an ignorance of

⁷ “Shameful origin.” I take this terms loosely from Nietzsche, particularly *The Will to Power*, where it is characterised as a first step in the critique of accepted (and especially moral) concepts and evaluations.

other, non-alphabetic, non-book writing systems. Derrida situates the notion of writing, however, as prior to systems, as something that is both “instituted” or “arbitrary” and, at the same time, “natural.” For a Foucaultian analysis, Derrida’s analysis may be interrogated in its historicity: this rewriting of the world as text is a historical practice with a discursive determination and derives from historically constituted entities (text, language, writing). Writing became the condition for knowledge of the world, that is, under certain historical conditions.

Apart from these general conditions, literacy is also continually and visibly constructed, systematically as a concept within scientific and formalised disciplines, therapeutic and pedagogical practices, and unsystematically (but with precise functions) within policy planning, parental concern and popular culture. Since literacy is dependent upon these for its definition and uses, should these be the criteria for determining the particular level of reality it inhabits? Does literacy have a substance apart from a social definition? Is a minimal definition at all tenable when the actual social practices of literacy have only writing in common, and when even the notion of writing is a troublesome one (cf. Ginsburg, “Morelli” 88-89)?⁸ In fact the discourse of literacy relies on the assumption of a set of problematic concepts, in particular of language as system and representation, and as the unity that is being realised in all instances of literacy.

Participating in the epistemological circularities of the discourse of literacy, policy literature inherits its circularities and definitional problems. By situating subjectivity within textuality, the *Curriculum Framework* is compromised by the problems inherent in the way knowledge of literacy is dependent upon, and restricted by, the situated material manifestations of language. In assessing the language of a person, in distributing performance across a developmental graph of abilities and knowledges, does the measurement of literacy measure the language only as it inhabits the body at the price of eliminating its function? Is the condition for the pedagogical and psychological

⁸ Ginsburg proposes a continuum from the tacking narrative of hunting societies (“something passed here two days ago”) through Mesopotamian divination and the image of “the book of the world” to medical semiotics. Because the mental operations in each are similar (with differences such as the level of abstraction in signs, and whether they point to future, past or both), Ginsburg suggests a genealogical descent of the interpretation of natural signs that comes close to destroying the possibility of a clear analytical distinction between written character and physical trace, and thus between the writing of the world and the writing of the book.

measurement of literacy the silencing of language? Is it not then fundamentally a *mismeasurement*? If literacy functions differentially according to purpose and setting, does literacy testing not assume a set of conditions, a set of expectations, that measure only one type of literacy, namely, that brought out, shaped and constructed for the purposes of testing? Is the space of visibility in which an object called literacy emerges, then, both the only means by which we can know literacy and, at the same time, a guarantee that this same literacy does not operate elsewhere? Does the isolation of literacy as a cognitive entity within testing distort the complex object from which it is abstracting an essence? The discourse's vacillation between a social and an individual entity is deployed in the peculiar ventriloquy engaged in by the *Curriculum Framework*, in its consistent claims to represent an objective economic situation that demands certain forms of literacy, a social demand that rewards certain literacies and, at the same time, a personal set of needs that are supplied by the literacy provided.

Literacy is, insofar as it can be attested, a series of performances which assume certain unities and properties. A psychological test or a pedagogical examination restricts the tested individual in the materials s/he would use to discern meaning. The set of relations which aid or impede effective understandings is narrowed to a triangulation: the subject is given a text and a question, and mediates between text and question to produce an answer. The text is assumed to bear the right answer, even though a number of ruses and external disturbances are acknowledged – teachers will instruct their students on the correct procedure for navigating a test; questions will be deliberately misleading, coding the question rather than the text as authority; test results may be minimised as a measure of true literacy in favour of judgments about ethnicity, gender and class. Nonetheless, these relations produce an ideal entity that relies for its existence on a testing regime, and cannot exist anywhere else in this form. Despite this, it remains an indispensable notion in our understanding of the life of language in the individual, and a fundamental measure of her/his potential value. Literacy is fundamental to this discourse: regardless of how many correlations it sheds (economic, cognitive, political or personal) or how much it eludes characterisation, literacy is after all the organising term.

Is the problem here that intimations of language (and the knowledge-ability nexus) in the individual are destined to remain intimations because there is an

impermeable barrier between surface manifestation and inner reality, or is it that language does not operate, even in literacy testing, on the basis, and within the site, of the individual? It appears that knowledge of literacy is actuated by a desire, not to see the effects of language and its course, but to see the career of language insofar as it concerns the individual in the presence of a known text. The concern about language is a concern about the replication of a capacity to use a text in approved ways (though not necessarily to replicate its approved meaning) and to situate the truth of the individual in his/her relation to the text.

This is even more the case when orality is constantly brought back into a positive relation with the text. Whereas for Ong, Havelock, Olson, Goody and Watt, Eisenstein and others, literacy derives cultural and cognitive significance from the experience of language as a separable text, anthropologists like Carol Fleischer Feldman and J. Peter Denny emphasise that the “fixing and interpreting of texts” are features “present in nonliterate hunter-gatherer and agricultural groups” (Denny 86). In Fleischer Feldman’s view Western culture does not have “oral systems of text and interpretation,” not because they are impossible but because they “have been handed over to writing” (Fleischer Feldman 62). Her evidence, and therefore evidence that literacy was not the key to Western consciousness, is the anthropological literature on “highly patterned and artful oral forms found, usually, in cultures that have no important (or any) written literature” (47). The text is reinstated in the silence from which it emerged as the positive condition of the Western mind, and the discourse produces the abstract image and drama of the human being confronted with and growing in the presence of the text. The history of literacy, in this view, is the history of the different relations in the human-text dyad. But the text, which separates language and thought from the utterance of the speaker and the time of utterance, does not become the new key to consciousness, nor does it dissolve the insistence of literacy as the object of the discourse. Rather, the relationship between subject and text becomes a universal condition, and literacy becomes a universal substance.⁹

⁹ At certain points in this thesis, the “substance” is nominated as “language.” This “language” is that constituted by, or invoked in, the discourse of literacy. Although literacy is more often conceptualised as a relation, and thus may be thought of as the “form” to the “substance” of language, it is impossible to make

The textualisation of the world structures the reciprocal relations of causality between language as social demand and as individual performance. Literacy is, thus, formed as an object of knowledge in its relationship to language dysfunction and in the correlative interactions between the language-making subject and her/his environment. In Western cultures, literacy emerges in a relation to language abnormalities and normalising institutions, within which the proper performance of language, and language itself as a normative complex, are defined. For Alexander Bannatyne, knowledge of language function and dysfunction are co-determinant elements in the study of literacy: the absence of a function in certain disorders allows one to see the real components of language, which emerge as absences:

The major problems for the genetic dyslexic are (a) auditory fluency and sequencing, (b) auditory vowel discrimination and closure, (c) associating auditory symbols to sequences of visual symbols and (d) sound blending or vocal-motor sequencing. (*Learning Disabilities* 25)

Language dysfunction, according to Bannatyne, also points to the familial and social preconditions of linguistic competence: hence, primary emotional communicative dyslexia is caused by the absence of a good mother (marked as the presence of disinterested, depressed or angry mothers), or by other anomalous early situations (institutionalisation, twins, living in a foreign land) (17-19; 27); in the case of “social, cultural or educational deprivation dyslexia,”

the published evidence indicates that several superimposed causes may be operating, namely, a language barrier between child and teacher, a subcultural value system which undervalues education and a lack of personal motivation in the father in the form of job ambition. (Bannatyne, 26)

The dispersal of language dysfunction into the brain and body,¹⁰ into personal and emotional aetiology, into social institutions demanding or rejecting literacy, is necessary

such a strict distinction. This is because both terms are strategically redeployable, and because they alternate between surface and depth.

¹⁰ Dronkers provides a short history of language-brain studies and their conceptual dogmatisms; see also Hissock.

if one is to relate language disorders to their causes, and establish an essential and hierarchical classification.

A dyslexic subculture, a dyslexic social class, or a dyslexic organism, all become visible in terms of the institutions whose functioning they interrupt. The study of literacy, then, situates the subject within a set of institutions – the family, the school, the psychiatric institutions, business – and therefore inevitably involves, as therapy, the restitution of their smooth functioning, either as better versions of themselves or as the production of an individual better suited to them. The literate subject is thus not only one to be known, but also one to be made: the function of the knowledge of literacy is to enforce literacy and to eradicate its other. As a consequence, this knowledge also seeks to eradicate the classes, cultures and institutions that produce this other at a social level. If language is the being that speaks us, then literacy, the smooth functioning of language, is the being that we form, enforce and regulate from that speech.

At the physical level, this psycholinguistic typology disperses the opposition between literacy and illiteracy, but at the social level it multiplies it. It identifies the essential order behind the surface order of symptoms. Bannatyne assumes, if not an allegiance with the social order, at least a principle of economy: the quickest way to return the system to optimal functioning is to remedy the proximate cause. There is a distribution of the dyslexic subject here within the social circuit of language-production, tracing the distributed function of speech. In addition, there is the silent and polymorphous writing around the dyslexic: not only is s/he reduced to a symptomatology, but also to statistical analysis, to a regimen of testing and recording her/his language, inscribing it upon a personal and family history, and enrolling the social field in the remedy. Needless to say, the psychologist is the subject of this enunciation, is the authority who draws the social field; but the social field must first appear at the other side of the description, testing and diagnosis.¹¹

Literacy discourse has been characterised, famously, as one side blaming the victim and the other side blaming the system (Gee, “Narrativisation” 273). But between them these sides constitute the field they claim to describe. Literacy discourse involves a

¹¹ Earlier studies follow this general pattern; see Gray and Schonell as examples.

fabrication, a thin tissue of recording and communication, a surface of mutual inscription between the literate subject and the world. In a radically relativist construction, the writing is different wherever one goes, whatever one uses it for, but it is always codetermined by a social context. Social context and individual purpose are thus brought together to become two sides of the same plane. Hence, as in the example of Gee and “L,” the literacy researcher imports a new social code for appraising (but in fact rewrites as stanzas) the performing subject’s work and derives not only a new text but also a universal human subject of language. This removes “L” to the world of literary appraisal (or, more exactly, literary appraisal within a book on literacy studies), and out of a classroom where the same performance was deficient. This means, however, that the discourse of literacy can never have an “unmarked” relation to the speaking subject, but is destined, within this arrangement of elements, to see the world as an act of constant inscription. This is not, however, because the subject of this constant inscription is not an object of this discourse – s/he is both subject and object, and under the same conditions.

Inscription is both the limit and the origin of knowledge in literacy discourse. It is the origin because it is only by drawing a surface of inscription between the subject and her/his *socius* that we derive their reciprocal “meaning” in history, in school. It is the limit because a transcendental subject is written into literacy, whether as the social totality (nineteenth-century Europe, for example) or as the mind of a civilisation; it is the totality of which any individual performance is an instance. In recognisably analogous terms, Foucault describes the general function of “signification” and “system” in the “human sciences”:

The role of the concept of signification is, in fact, to show how something like a language . . . can in general be given to representation; the role of the complementary concept of system is to show how signification is never primary and contemporaneous with itself, but always secondary and as it were derived in relation to a system that precedes it, constitutes its positive origin, and posits itself . . . in fragments and outlines through signification; in relation to the consciousness of a signification, the system is indeed always unconscious since it was there before signification, since it is within it that signification resides and on the basis of it that it becomes effective In

other words, the signification/system pair is what ensures both the representability of language (as text or structure analysed by philology and linguistics) and the near but withdrawn presence of the origin (as it is manifested as man's mode of being by means of the analytic of finitude). (*Order* 361-62)

This analytic of finitude, this circularity and bringing back of representation to the conscious subject, occurs because the human sciences, though deriving their concepts from biology (function, norm, development), economics (labour, need) and linguistics (sign, system, meaning) found their knowledge of "man" upon a notion of representation as both object and condition of knowledge:

representation is not simply an object for the human sciences; it is, as we have just seen, the very field upon which the human sciences occur, and to the fullest extent; it is the general pedestal of that form of knowledge, the basis that makes it possible. (*Order* 363)

Two consequences follow from this: the human sciences tend to extend representation everywhere (in this case, everything is a text), and "they find themselves treating as their object what is in fact their condition of possibility," thus constantly unveiling themselves:

It is always by an unveiling that they are able, as a consequence, to become sufficiently generalised or refined to conceive of individual phenomena. On the horizon of any human science, there is the project of bringing man's consciousness to its real conditions, of restoring it to the contents and forms that brought it into being, and elude us within it. (*Order* 364)

In literacy discourse the level of analysis is constantly raised to a transcendental one, to a meta-language (cf. Gee, "Narrativisation") or to an account of the way "our civilisation" thinks, or to an exhaustive table of causes. Derrida's contention thus has the aspect of a historical arrangement rather than an ontological priority, and shares with literacy theory the epistemic circularity of this analytic for archaeological, not for logical, reasons. The *Curriculum Framework* is heir to this circular and necessary inconsistency in the definitions of language and text. In the extraordinary regulation of the relation between self, text and world, it performs an

unveiling that is as epistemically necessary as it is integral to the power it instrumentalises.

Political Circularity

The *Curriculum Framework* is also haunted by literacy's ineluctable connection to power and distribution, presenting it with unresolvable conflicts between liberatory and prescriptive literacies, and between the extension of social power through literacy and the hierarchising of literacies as the basis for restricting social goods. Some form of exclusion is necessary to the operations involved in literacy: a definition and delimitation of language (not only of what the proper language may be, but also what language itself may consist in), and a separation of people according to levels of literacy and the literacies of their language communities and places of work. Several points about the discursive connection of literacy to power and the political need to be made at the outset, before dealing with instances invoking this connection.

First, there is a connection, ineradicable and necessary, between literacy made and literacy made known. It seems that the knowledge of literacy arises from an attempt to make or to induce the performances recognised, codified and problematised as literate. Knowledge concerning literacy and its induced and recorded performance are two distinguishable but inextricable moments, two aspects of the same process.

Second, this co-implication of recording and imposing, of knowing and inducing the appearance of the object, means that a political field is generated, a field concerned with the technical achievement of literacy, with a constant redefinition of literacy as a set of goals and conceptualisations (inclusion, exclusion and general formulation), with an evaluation of techniques, and with the formulation of criteria of evaluation. Moreover, the co-implication produces the general political problem of a form of knowledge that always ineluctably affects implementation, policy and everyday practice. Simultaneously, literacy study is involved in determining or questioning what is good (and bad) in literacy and orality; what is practicable and possible (and impractical and impossible); and what the object of literacy study *is*.

Third, there is a set of restricted relations that characterise the productive relations of literacy (as knowledge and power, as the extraction, recording and planning of performance), and a set of exclusions, eradications and restrictions. It is important to note that these do not exist in a dimension of power separate from that of knowledge: the operations of power directly inform the knowledge constructed, and the knowledge gathered directly invests the power operations, in their extraction and constitution of performance.

Fourth, the very terms in which literacy is discussed cannot be freed from the suspicion that they are reifications of contemporary forms of control. It is not simply that the knowledge of literacy reifies a dispossession or distracts from a real dispossession;¹² literacy discourse is constituted within a dimension which is directly political, which directly involves dispossessions and empowerments through language.

This means that one cannot escape the political by shifting the scale and distance, by concentrating upon a single field, such as the historical or the cognitive and mechanical. Indeed, one may distinguish between the political effects of the different disciplinary emphases, noting the authority each derives and the field of practice encoded into it. A historical argument may claim that a numerical progress has occurred,¹³ or that the definition and uses of literacy have altered, and that consequently policy should be concentrated upon numbers, or upon the engineering and definition of effective literacies within the present context of use. Again, a psycholinguistic developmental sequence will be instrumentalised in the construction of an optimal literacy experience and the design of a mapping system and the training of teachers in recording the progress of their pupils. In each case, a political use is already codified and has already a set of consequences.

While this positioning of literacy discourse in a relation of articulation with pedagogical technologies and policies implies a responsibility concerning definitions, programs and evaluation, this political immanence is itself a part of the discourse, a part of its problematisation of itself and of its effects. This is not a privileged moment of self-consciousness; it occurs in a set of well-known patterns, as a reflection upon the social

¹² The argument that literacy reifies a dispossession based on class and race is made most forcefully by Stuckey.

¹³ See, for instance, Vincent, *Mass Literacy*; Cipolla; and Stone.

and individual effects of literacy discourse and teaching (determining whose languages are excluded, what kind of society is constructed or privileged) and as a reflection upon the demands of the world (specifying what needs to be done in response to the challenges and demands of new technology and economic organisation, new cultural forms and norms). When regarded as a set of social and individual effects, the implementation and epistemisation of literacy is active and constitutive; when thought in relation to the world, the operations of literacy are reactive and compensatory. Literacy is both a choice of necessarily arising political effects and a necessary choice of response to political and economic demands.¹⁴

This co-implication does not constitute the impossibility of literacy in politics, but it does mean that the discourse is characterised by a certain circularity. Whatever naive discourse was involved in the study of perceptual and cognitive processes in reading has long since abandoned the promise of learning what is involved in reading *per se*, but is interested in retaining the auxiliary role it always had in technicising the constitution of a population instructed under the gaze of the state. The problem of the political presents a division, or bifurcation, of political alternatives, not because some prefer a monocultural and others a multicultural society, but rather because the acquisition of literacy involves a contest over the definition of this concept and a controversy over the proper and most efficient relation between non-standard and standard literacies. The problem, then, is not the exclusion of certain minorities, but the inclusion of the entire population, whether or not their cultures treasure literacy, or their minds are capable of developing it. The whole political problem, written as one of exclusion, is precisely the opposite: it consists in the explicit aim to subject everyone, without exception, to a rule of language connecting and distinguishing margin and periphery. What is at stake in the discourse is the delineation of specific relationships between a population which is “made” through literacy, and a world that demands and defines this making.

This political project of constituting a single subjected population must account for and respond to the requirements of hegemony, of the acceptance of the governed to be subjected in this way. Consequently, a range of political options runs from the

¹⁴ In this connection, see Lu and Taylor as exemplary cases. Taylor takes the transcendentalist view that power will always be an intractable problem.

representation of the governed insofar as they concern the provision of language, to the demands of the world insofar as they can be a problem of instruction. Below the practices and projects of the state, with its objects (the population and the individual as writing and written beings) and its alibis and actual practices (the world's demands, the literacy needs of different groups, the working of subtle and explicit exclusions) there operates a process of inscribing difference and power as language, as *writing*, as the image of a linguistic reality that hovers just beyond the appearance of things and can be reconstituted only by a constant effort of inducing its performance. These relations determine the operations of literacy in the *Curriculum Framework*, and are characteristic of the discourse.

There is a persistent set of themes even in the early twentieth century, in which reading became, for the first time, the one essential road towards emancipation. Mortimer Adler, later to become associate editor for the Encyclopedia Britannica's *Great Books of the Western World* series, in 1940 wrote *How to Read a Book*. It includes a critique of how American schools are failing democracy, and anticipates many of the points made by contemporary researchers. As for the reign of newspapers and advertisements, indifferent schooling prepares us for a life of gullibility:

Slighting the three R's in the beginning, and neglecting the liberal arts almost entirely at the end, our present education is essentially illiberal. It indoctrinates rather than disciplines and educates. Our students are indoctrinated with all sorts of local prejudices and predigested pap. They have been fattened and made flabby for the demagogues to prey upon. Their resistance to specious authority, which is nothing but pressure of opinion, has been lowered. They will even swallow the insidious propaganda in the headlines of some local newspapers. (Adler, *How to Read a Book* 75)

The secret to an active, critical and democratic mode of life is the art of docility:

To be docile is to be teachable. To be teachable one must have the art of being taught and must practice it actively. The more active one is in learning from a teacher . . . and the more art one uses to master what he has to teach, the more docile one is. Docility, in short, is the precise opposite of passivity

and gullibility. Those who lack docility—the students who fall asleep during a class—are the most likely to be indoctrinated. Lacking the art of being taught, whether that be skill in listening or in reading, they do not know how to be active in receiving what is communicated to them. Hence, they either receive nothing at all or what they receive they absorb uncritically. (Adler, *How to Read a Book* 75)

For Adler, the problem of reading was tied to the disintegration of civilisation. The Great Books were not being read, or were read without being understood. They had lost what he supposed to be their proper historical role in stimulating an ongoing “Great Conversation” between ages and members of Western civilisation.¹⁵ The substance of freedom was already a relation to the text, in this case the corpus of the Great Books, which would transform the individual reader into a proselyte for a better, more critical way of life, and in turn transform her/his friendships, and thus, ultimately, the character of society. The Great Books were conceived as the indispensable higher knowledge that casts a searching light of reason upon other texts, and other, more ephemeral forms of reasoning and action.

Adler defines the concern for reading as both the prerequisite for subjectivation and the condition of freedom early and precisely. While his discussion owes much to the *Culture and Anarchy* tradition, there is also a novelty in his work in that the quality of reading, as a technical and cognitive exercise, becomes directly related not only to the understanding of the text but to the quality and viability of society as a population to be disciplined. This is completely unlike Matthew Arnold’s “sweetness and light,” since Arnold is explicitly not concerned with “civilisation” or institutional politics, whereas Adler, an active controversialist in economics and political theory, is directly concerned with the effectiveness of political rule, with the persuasiveness of true and “great” thought over the art of the “demagogue” and the advertiser, two figures that dominated the plans and the fears of this period in both capitalist and communist countries. The distinction in the forms of rule was, for Adler and many others, between a totalitarian

¹⁵ See Hutchins’ introduction to *Great Books of the Modern World* for the full argument.

country with a literate but uncritical style of reading, and “democratic” countries with a critical and actively participating constituency.

For Walter Mignolo, the definitions of literacy, relying very much, from the fifteenth century, upon the presuppositions of the culture of the book, mark cultures using other sign systems as deficient, both in terms of their access to truth and their ability to represent and extend thought apart and away from the forms imposed by speech. Thus the *quipu*¹⁶ were not only misunderstood, but served as an othering device within the practice of colonial conquest.¹⁷ The mute, the idiot, the illiterate and the society without books, are established as the negation of, and hidden basis for, our experience of knowledge.

Acutely aware as Mignolo is of all the powers of English in the postcolonial system of difference and identity, of power and speech, he recognises that language is at the same time the road to recognition as it is the unlocked door that keeps the excluded out of the sanctuary of culture. Thus, he relates his decision to write his study of Renaissance definitions of the book and language, and their connection to early colonisation, in English, because in that language the book has a greater chance of being heard. Two important things occur: the book is the vehicle for the recognition of excluded textual forms, and English is the language in representing the racial exclusions of the Spanish Conquest. The question of writing in a dead Indian language, or even in a surviving dialect, is not even a possible one, since the market does not exist. Inevitably, the material effect is a reflection of the discursive arrangement of elements: a fading language is rendered in a strong one; the non-book is rendered within the pages of a book; and the book itself takes the form imposed by a market that is acknowledged as political and exclusionary.

This positioning of resistance within a form of power, an inverted image of the *Curriculum Framework*'s extension of power to subjugated groups, is not the result of a poor navigation in the currents of power, but rather of an exemplary one. Quite properly, if one is sensitive to the prestigious forms through which power is exercised, divided and reproduced, the result is a book that writes power into itself as its problematic but

¹⁶ The thread and cord recording devices made and deciphered by Quipucamayocs in the Inca Empire and in the early period of the Spanish conquest of Peru.

¹⁷ See Mignolo (69-122).

necessary form. It is perfectly consonant with the idea and aim of recovering a silence and a silenced subject, for this is precisely what the discourse claims to do and at the same time finds itself, or its correlative practice, failing to do. Literacy discourse proposes the positive mission of recognition and authenticity, with the effect of laying down the criteria and the experience of linguistic exclusion. It makes such an exclusion thinkable and palpable. It trains the gaze to discern the ineffaceable result of a state-supervised production of language. The standard justification for making the workings of power visible is that it makes power harder to exercise. And yet such a political epistemology has nothing to back it but a conviction, perhaps an imaginary store of dramatic images, memories and scenes of discovery. The material effect is to attach a respectable opposition to power to the greater efficiency of the power it opposes.

Knowledges concerning literacy do not occur in a vacuum, nor in relation to an object which exists independently of the power-knowledge in which it is inserted. The act of constituting literacy within a knowledge is always attended by power-effects, by the enabling of some subjectivities and practices, some forms of control and conduct, to the exclusion of others. Literacy, as a constant social reinvention and indispensable productive mechanism, is particularly sensitive to the statements defining it: it constantly changes according to the political imperatives imposed upon it, the substance assigned to it, the body described as bearing it, and the authority of the discipline in which it is inserted.

Literacy embodies, thus, certain relations of domination: literacy as a class marker (Cressy); as a device of exclusion and division (Stuckey); as an index of productive capacity relative to population (Vincent); as part of bio-power (Marshall); as indoctrination in middle-class norms (Gee, Williams, Luke and Freebody); as the basis of hegemony (Graff). Finally, literacy functions to explain, and to correspond with, the schooling regime and its attendant legitimating sciences. These relationships between literacy and power engender problems which remain circular as long as the relationships hold. Is it a liberating strategy to expand the number and range of permitted and recognised literacies, or to close down the schooled society? How does literacy relate to the way we use and experience power? If literacy establishes, or operates upon, a mechanism of power through the governance of “knowledge-ability” through the life-

cycle, can one possibly escape this power? If expanding knowledge and effectivity is the basis for our agency in a pedagogical society as well as the site at which power seizes, produces and enables the individual, is it possible to think beyond it, without reverting to a romantic muteness, or a mad speech, or a speech beyond competence and the work of representation?

Literacy is constituted as a substance by means of which power may be exercised. It unites a regime of control and manipulation with a regime of observation. It does not coincide with the recognised divisions of class: at the same time as it makes class visible (or audible), it slides away from class to divide the population in different ways. There are two simultaneous relations between literacy and power: on the one hand, because its uses are defined by structures of power and authority, it is a contested term which, by virtue of its fingency and effectivity, may be an important point of articulation between ideologies and practices. On the other hand, literacy is also the result of an *a priori* delimitation, the artefact of an immemorial division on which our experience, and our political imagination, depend. Literacy, while a tool of contestation, is also a horizon of modern political subjectivity.

If linguistic performance in literacy tests is subject to a pervasive coercion, enticement, or normalisation of obedience, then does not the docility of the population, in being tested, signal a circuit of truth and power, a way of measuring and controlling? The very existence of the concept of literacy marks the character of a form of domination and normalisation. And yet, is not literacy itself the key to liberation, the way towards a better understanding of domination today, and a means of escaping, resisting, and liberating? In short, is not the means for liberation the same as the substance and witness of oppression? And is it not the sign of a form of therapeutic internment, like that of mental patients, with which society claims the right to protect itself from the irresponsible youth until s/he becomes capable, of easing not only the economic burden s/he presents, but also the moral and political dangers s/he presents?¹⁸ In short, literacy presents us with the bad

¹⁸ See American Youth Policy Forum, which relates that the authors

presented evidence, from their research and by others, that America's schools are failing to help students attain . . . critical skills. As a result, many public policy interventions have been either ineffective or failed to directly address the problems young people face in attaining

conscience of our form of freedom, the exclusions which allow us, the sane, the healthy, the mature, to minimise the disturbance threatened by the insane, the sick, and the irresponsible, to our way of life.

At the level of the politics of pedagogy, a certain transcription occurs, where the recognition of local literacies reinforces a central and universalising one. This can occur in subtle and circuitous ways, but the same relations resurface, as the effects of a social organisation of knowledge and of the state's inscription of the demands of the world. The literacy researcher finds him/herself engaged in the inscription of power, in the enforcing of definitions. Thus, in the National Literacy Survey, the validity of local practices must echo the truth of the central authority:

The Management Committee has written an introduction to the Report which documents its role [in] developing and implementing the Survey assessment methodology. This assessment methodology was unique in the way it linked the richness and validity of classroom assessment practices into the framework of a reliable national data collection process. While the focus on teacher judgment meant that this methodology was more costly than assessment processes dependent on external marking, the methodology proved to be a very effective tool in obtaining assessment data across a wide range of achievement that was reliable and valid. Additional strengths of this assessment model included professional development benefits for teachers and the enhancement of teacher professionalism through the emphasis on teacher judgment. (Forster and Masters iii)

There is a distinction in this passage between data that are valid and those that are reliable, corresponding to a distinction between the local, intractable but observational and empirical data of a teacher, secure in its context, and the decontextualised, abstracted and essentialised, but tractable and centralised, data of standardised testing. Professional development does not merely bridge the gap between teacher assessment and external testing; rather, it is the subordination of "valid" teacher assessment to "reliable" external

labour market success. This, in turn, has led to an education system which often wastes its scarce resources.

tests. At the same time that the teacher is being introduced into the collection of these data, she/he is being erased and omitted, converted into a redundant double, a validation whose difference is simultaneously cancelled out in a univocalising move that is meant to reinforce validity.¹⁹

As far as contemporary literacy studies are concerned, political threats are posed within words, within images, within the ceaseless discourse of everyday life. This occurs on two fronts: the media-saturated arena of consumption, where everything becomes commodified, where rhetorics of cool and authenticity entice youth into needless consumption and unthinking attitudes; and in the information-rich arena of production, where the structure of work-relationships, the ethics of the corporation, the forms of domination, are rendered natural within an ongoing, ever-changing use of language.²⁰ The illiterate have three obstacles here, situated on three entirely different planes: the functional, which secures at least the right to work, the right to subjection; the critical, which allows one to question and modify that subjection; and the powerful, which allows one to participate in government, law, science, and other prestigious genres. This follows from the recognition that the form of contemporary power is constituted within language.

Literacy discourse was traversed from its beginning by a question that relates the study of literacy to the making of a person, a society, and a mind, a question that asks not only what “we” are (as opposed to “them”) but also how we may be remade, either in defence of essential cultural forms, or in the interests of constructing a better version. The question assumes the involvement of a state, a society, and the authorised and subaltern forces which in reality form a social character. In all its far-flung meta-historical speculations, in its mapping of cultural recombinations and neuropsychological correlates to literate processing, the question which remains at every level of this discourse is not far from educational planning. It is precisely stated by this literature: how may schooling best “help ensure students achieve the outcomes?” (*Curriculum Framework* 11). This question organises the entire discursive field. All literacy workers want to make children literate according to their own preferences, commitments and so on. The knowledge

¹⁹ See Keeves and Masters.

²⁰ For examples, see Lo Bianco and Freebody (Chapter 1) and *Curriculum Framework* (inside cover and passim).

generated is rarely against literacy *per se*, and even in such cases it is still in the interests of forming a better person through a good education.

The question makes it clear that, whatever one's hopes for literacy, the power to define it is available principally to the state, the (inter)nation, the educational policy-makers. One is thus always in a relation to governmental definitions of literacy, and always making (scholarly authority permitting) an attempt to influence policy. This is exemplified in debates between official survey bodies and literacy theorists. In a response to the published findings of the first *International Adult Literacy Survey* in 1995, Harvey J. Graff launches into a thoroughgoing critique of the presumptuous and mythic definitions of literacy to be found in the document:

The research cited and the great revision in thinking about literacy challenge, qualify and contradict the science and certainty of *Literacy, Economy and Society* from the assumptions of its first paragraph to its last. Ironically, or perhaps not, the results of IALS needlessly circumscribe themselves as they reveal, to borrow my own phrase, the persisting power and costs of the literacy myth. (Graff, "Power and Costs" 3)

The IALS report closely follows the definitions of functional literacy, it perpetuates a deficit model, ignores recent research both into literacy and work pattern (the "New Work Order"), and rewrites new, progressive terms into old, reactionary ones:

The terminology for describing the complexity of literacy practices likewise suggests a reductionist view in which what "really" counts is skills and levels rather than the broader and more complex uses and meanings of literacy indicated by such terms as "practices." While the term "literacy practices" is frequently employed, there is equally often a slide towards more narrow functionally defined evaluative terms; skills, activities, levels, tasks, and abilities are used as though they all meant the same as, and were a gloss on, "literacy practices." Under the heading of "literacy practices at work," for instance, a gloss is provided that immediately reduces practices to the test situation: "most adults must face some literacy tasks at work;" and again under "literacy practices in the community" we are told "everyone, whether

employed or not, can engage in literacy activities.” (Graff, “Power and Costs” 7)

In other words, state institutions have the power to absorb and reinscribe the meanings of research, to deploy progressive or theoretically nuanced research in the pursuit of long-standing institutional and ideological goals. In criticising the IALS study, Graff also makes visible the inevitable relationship between the literacy researcher and official implementation and instrumentalities. Brian Street supplements Graff’s criticism with similar findings and a number of close analyses of the survey questions. He concludes:

There is a power relation, then, between the researchers and their respondents, on the one hand, and between this particular style of research and other research traditions, on the other. The research team indeed have immense power as the very debate now going on about their findings indicates. . . . That they do not draw attention to this power but instead write as though their findings are the neutral product of objective scientific inquiry is itself a classic procedure of institutional power. (Street, “Literacy, Economy and Society” 11)

Stan Jones, the author of the data analysis on the chapters, replies with a defence of the non-ethnocentricity of the survey questions, and describes Graff’s and Street’s work as that of a modish but useless new school of research:

Graff and Street represent a view of literacy and a view of learning and social science research in general, that has had a brief prominence, but has failed to deliver insights which are helpful and which move policy forward. (Jones, “Ending the Myth” 14)

Jones cites the accuracy of the IALS data, their superiority over other questionnaires and surveys when correlated with other data, and the accuracy of his information on the job market. Moreover, the fact that literacy does not correlate with employment opportunities or socioeconomic status does not prevent it from having some effect (21). His decisive argument comes, however, when he states that it is not he (or the survey team) who define literacy, but society:

Street and Graff are sure to claim that we have thus privileged this one kind of literacy. But it is not the IALS researchers who have privileged it, it is society. While we might determine test scores, we don't determine employment, income, social participation or any of the other characteristics we found associated with IALS literacy. It is not for the IALS research team to determine whether it is fair that this one kind of literacy is so valued by society. It would have been negligent of us, however, having discovered these connections not to have reported them. (Jones, "Ending the Myth" 20)

The social world inscribes the subject once again, and this time the researcher provides a recording and an amplification of that inscription, raising it to the status of an international benchmark for success; defining the form that success ought to take. Does the understanding of literacy as the result of power, as the sign of a hierarchical social structure inscribing its own uses into the subject, free the subject, or is this merely the ghost of the promise that Adler brought into the discourse, the promise of subjects freer and more discerning, more self-making, than the form of society would allow? Is it, moreover, the consequence of the discourse having made a contract with a "democracy" it distrusts, with a world that it both seeks to serve and to overturn?

Within these three areas the literacy discourse engages in peculiar forms of circularity that distinguish it as a discourse. First, it accounts for the historical existence of literacy within an undecidable polarity, where literacy is either the source of social thought or where the organisation of uses by the social determines the form of literacy. Second, it situates the analytical problem of literacy in such a way that literacy is both the basis of the discourse about it and the object, thus creating a circular analytic of finitude characteristic of Foucault's "human sciences." Third, it involves a relationship to politics which is both completely tied to serving society by changing the world to serve people, and insistent on changing people to serve the world, depending on the shifting boundaries between student and world.

To paraphrase Foucault, the discourse of literacy cannot speak of literacy precisely because literacy is the condition of possibility of the discourse. That is, the practices that form its object are invisible to it of necessity, are beyond the space bound

and organised by its statements, its fundamental orientation, its array of speaking positions, concepts, and possible arguments. And yet these relations that form an outside are always presupposed, entered into, activated and acted upon, in the discourse. It is thus necessary to go beyond this discursive analysis in order to more fully account for the ways in which literacy effects its role in the pedagogisation of social space, to determine how it articulates the elements of a dispositif, and how it secures the insistent and multiplying forms of power encountered in the *Curriculum Framework*.

4: A Passage to Power

This chapter outlines the work of Foucault that extends the archaeological treatment of discourse into an analysis of space and power-knowledge, and explains the place of discourse within a concrete social apparatus, or *dispositif*, a complex of heterogeneous social practices that forms a historical unity, constituting the historical substance of literacy through an interrelation between forms of sayability, spaces of visibility, lines of power and curves of subjectivity. To do this it is necessary to show how, in Foucault's work, the concepts of discourse and power-knowledge are interrelated and necessitate each other. Foucault's integration of discourse and power-knowledge within the *dispositif* allows this thesis to chart the discourse of literacy both as discourse and as an effecting of power relations, not merely of the relations the discourse claims to analyse, but of those relations within larger cultural experiences of subjection. This mode of analysis goes some way toward characterising literacy as a discursive entity, moving away from the discourse's use of it as *definiendum*, removing the distance that confers upon it an ontological guarantee.

The deployment of Foucaultian analytical terms and procedures does not necessarily yield a satisfying explanation of the pedagogical extension of textualised and disciplined subjection in policy documents like the *Curriculum Framework*. The second part of the chapter discusses the work of theorists of pedagogy and literacy who use Foucault, and charts the differences between them and this thesis. Beyond the mere encoding of power the *Curriculum Framework* connects literacy to a whole array of powers and to a configuration of procedures and spaces. Foucaultian theorists of literacy and education both miss and enable such an articulation in various ways: in their de-specification of Foucaultian concepts, their appeals to national and transcendental subjects, and their axiological distortions.¹ The discussion of their work is therefore both a review of their contribution and a critical analysis of their power-effects within the literacy *dispositif*.

¹ Keith Hoskin ("Examination") goes to the length of claiming Foucault as a "crypto-educationalist."

The Dispositif: Foucault, Power-knowledge and Space

Studying the discourse without a space of correlation and a power-knowledge nexus produces a number of ramified oppositions and ultimate circularities, and is therefore not sufficient for understanding the discourse of literacy. Thus, to invoke cultural context as the explanation of different definitions and uses of literacy, or to multiply literacies in an indefinite taxonomy of practices is to reaffirm these circularities. Context explains certain co-constitutive relations contributing to certain literacies, but it does not explain the space that makes literacy visible (or the space that is adjusted to enable its recognition), nor does it explain the complex array of interventions, concerns and assessment techniques that come into play.

Turning away from the circularities in the discourse, it is clear that the concatenation of propositions about what literacy is and is not operates in a field of power relations: these propositions are focused not on a problem of definition but on the issue of pedagogical techniques and educational policy. On the one hand, there is a variety of official and lobbying bodies arguing the benefits for literacy education, literacy standards and literacy-based skills, and on the other there are theorists defending a moderate view of literacy's social benefits, a recognition that there are no good standards to go back to, and that current standardised testing has questionable social value.² It is from here, from what is essentially a political debate, that literacy derives its status as an object of extreme scrutiny, continual research and public controversy. Literacy is established not as a guarantee of social progress but as a pivotal term in the definition of the political community, in assumptions and fears about social reproduction and survival, where language, power and identity coincide.

The *Curriculum Framework* draws upon a historical development of educational discourse, wherein literacy has become a term indispensable in the exercise of educational power. In it, language becomes the single unifying term in educational discourse, the object and the instrument of education. It is through language that children

² Graff (*LiteracyMyth*) and Street ("Introduction") argue for a broadly Marxist understanding of context, and Stuckey goes to the extreme of defining literacy as a reification and obfuscation of class inequality; Curtis (*Educational State, "True Government"*) argues that nineteenth-century Canada is an example of a modern "educational state" forming disciplined and productive citizens through education and inspection.

learn, and all subject areas, all disciplinary fields, are but differently organised ways of using language. The definition of literacy, then, is a direct intervention in the definition of knowledge, and an indirect attempt at defining the power-knowledge nexus of a society. With centralised, national education policy, this is a debate about how to (re)shape the nation-state.

The puzzle posed by the Foucaultian analysis of the *Curriculum Framework* is not what, if anything, literacy is, but why it has very recently become a *substance*, and such an important one. This substance is not only something which is made up of some kind of matter, and which exhibits certain properties in all the forms in which it manifests itself; it is also a historical discovery and invention, something to be seen, measured, and acted upon. It operates as the object of a knowledge, as the ground for normative interventions, and as a site of self-reflection. In addition to the problem of what it does there is a question posed by its affirmation, by the asserted fact that it is and must be investigated. The discourse opens out onto, invites, reproduces and incorporates a space and an array of powers that offer, modify, and instrumentalise this substance. To treat literacy as an historically produced substance means, then, to reconstruct a mechanism for its production, to look at the formation of institutions, objects and processes that combine to secure literacy as an object of scrutiny, manipulation and concern. Understanding the operation of this substance in power-knowledge takes the analysis beyond the recognition of the discourse's undecidability and beyond the externalisations of power such as the appeal to context, and enables a conception of literacy as a modality of the imposition and spread of power-relations.

To outline a picture of this power, it is important to note the way in which literacy is divided, put into use and established in the discourse. Literacy is distributed between two sets of scales, two sets of instrumentalities and objects of visibility: the social and the individual. On the one hand, it is that which will lift millions out of unemployment, render national economies vital and competitive, reduce crime, contribute to democracy, redistribute social goods and so on. On the other hand, it is the substance that animates the linguistic performance of children, which can be seen by applying a certain vigilance, eliciting performances, and checking them against a diagram of normal developmental stages. Between these two poles is the nucleus of the ontological guarantee: it is not so

much what is seen, nor is it necessarily what is there in the observed subject, that forms the basis of the discourse. What is important is an invisible act of affirmation, that literacy be agreed, by all concerned (except possibly a few reluctant subjects) to be *there*. As an object appearing in a space of visibility and a substance of power-knowledge, literacy is a set of experiences, knowledges and operations dependent on the pedagogical organisation of space that connects with its dispersal in discourse in a productive way. Literacy is the indispensable assumption in the pedagogical disciplining of language.

The relationship between the often unspoken affirmation of literacy that operates within the discourse and a structured space that makes literacy visible threatens to defy analysis. An insuperable dichotomy presents itself, since the said and the seen, the known and the done, each have their own separate modes of being. What makes the isolation of students and the training of performance into a recognisable manifestation of literacy is by no means the result of a simple connection. Since much of Foucault's work addresses this problem, it is important to discuss that work in some detail. Of particular importance is the crucial role played by concepts of space, power-knowledge and *dispositif*.

Foucault provides a way of posing a problem and arranging an argument that escapes such dichotomies, stepping back to examine the historical conditions under which knowledge and its objects are constructed, always relating knowledge to a reorganisation of space and the practice of power. This is exemplified in *Mental Illness and Psychology*. In this short book, Foucault executes a strategic reversal in epistemology typical of his work. He organises what he takes to be the central elements and problems of psychological discourse, then elaborates the fundamental lines of a deep epistemic problem ("can psychology really know madness?"). After answering this in the negative through a discussion of how knowledge is constructed in the case at hand, he proposes a different way of understanding both madness and psychology. The notion of mental illness we now have was made to appear through a silencing and confinement, an historical event quite peculiar to Western societies, and this has affected the forces that constitute madness, and the experience of madness itself. Psychology cannot speak of madness because madness is the condition for the possibility of psychology. Those neutral presuppositions, the division of body and mind, the use of discourse as a symptomatology, the dual tracing of an evolutionary development and a personal history,

are made possible by a history that locks madness up, and finds its truth in what is isolated and set apart from the world, a mind that both hides and reveals itself.

Like madness, literacy appears to its investigators as something that has always been present, at least for the past five thousand years, since human beings began to inscribe characters onto materials, or, alternatively, the past three thousand years, that is, since the Greeks won for themselves a “truly phonetic” system of transcription, an alphabet. This invention is presented by a number of scholars³ as a world-historical event that changed the entire horizon of human possibility. The alphabet made possible the inspection of past thoughts, their accurate reproduction, critical assessment and revision. It shifted the experience of language from the ephemeral medium of sounds which passed from the mouth to the ear to a relatively permanent recording of utterances onto the visual plane, passing from the page to the eye. Thus, language, and thought along with it, passes from an essentially temporal experience to one that tends to be localised in space.⁴ The old formulaic speech of epic poetry, where thoughts are amalgamated and connected in a narrative, becomes the philosophical treatise, organised into topics, divided according to analytical elements. That is why, they contend, the discipline of rhetoric loses its gestural components and certain characteristic verbal components such as redundancy, to become the essay and the dissertation.⁵ Finally, it seems, this historical career is qualitatively changed by the printing press, which democratises the word and opens it towards an empirical criticism of its representational status: the printed word announces the possibility of the empirical sciences.⁶ Literacy is written into history as the hitherto undiscovered but real substance of an epochal transformation, rather than as the recently invented object that animates a new discourse.

In order to account for a discourse’s formation without recourse to an autonomous and pre-existing object, Foucault frequently, across all his works, deals with the role of historical spaces in the construction of discourses. Foucault’s work is dominated by the notion of spaces, by the variety of spaces in history, whether they present figures of

³ It is promoted by Havelock and Ong in particular.

⁴ See Goody (*Savage Mind, Traditional Societies*), Ong (*Orality and Literacy*); Illich and Sanders (*ABC*).

⁵ David Hamilton (*Theory of Schooling; “Fordism”*) is a proponent of this view; Ong (*Ramus*) is an early source.

⁶ See Ong (*Orality and Literacy*), Olson (*World on Paper*) and Eisenstein (*Printing Press*).

enclosure and confinement, tables of resemblance and difference, sites of reflection, inversion and representation, or places of subdivision and discipline. To explain the advent of the modern experience of madness, for example, Foucault finds it necessary to isolate a total reordering of space in the “Great Confinement.” To explain the emergence of clinical medicine in *The Birth of the Clinic*, likewise he demarcates the novelty of the regulated observation of ordered bodies made possible by teaching hospital. In deriving the historical convergence leading to disciplinary society, he points out the construction of a classificatory space:

The organisation of a serial space was one of the great technical mutations of elementary education. It made it possible to supersede the traditional system (a pupil working for a few minutes with the master, while the rest of the heterogeneous group remained idle and unattended). By assigning individual places it made possible the supervision of each individual and the simultaneous work of all. It organised a new economy of the time of apprenticeship. It made the educational space function like a learning machine, but also as a machine for supervising, hierarchising, rewarding. (*Discipline* 147)

In Foucault’s work space unifies words and things, seeing and saying. Historical spaces integrate and explain relationships between knowledge and power, and historical uses and knowledges inform the creation of spaces. Indeed, the preface to *The Birth of the Clinic* proclaims that “this book is about space, about language, and about death; it is about the act of seeing, the gaze” (*Clinic* ix).

As Chapter Two points out, Foucault’s notion of discourse is always situated at the edges, opening discourse to particular spaces, to forms of power and larger social processes: it is a matter of *relations*, investigating their form, strength and selectivity, their historical range of possibilities. A discourse is a complex arrangement that arises from a set of interlocking elements which cannot be reduced to linguistic elements. However, analysis at this level discloses only a dispersal of statements and a set of fundamental dependencies, an established circuit of affirmation and the branching complications within it. Discourse analysis explains how the notion of literacy operates

within the discourse, but does not explain the discourse's relation to processes and practices that cut across it, invest it with power, and establish the spaces with which it operates. For such an understanding the proper unit of analysis is the *dispositif*, the total social apparatus, which is a set of relations, practices, spaces, instruments and procedures that allow particular things to be said and done, and that ensure the saying and doing of particular things.⁷ This is not to be confused with the broad social context mentioned earlier. A *dispositif* is a lean, parsimonious attempt to explain elements of existence that are consciously done, that are techniques even when they pass into automatism. Thus, even those elements which do not cohere and threaten the structure must in some way be dealt with. As Deleuze notes, the *dispositif* is an analytic tool explicitly designed for Foucault's project of integrating heterogeneous levels, a tool built by an "archivist" rather than an anthropologist (Deleuze, *Foucault* 70-85).⁸ Analysing literacy as a component produced by a total social apparatus extends and incorporates the discursive analysis, and permits a more systematic understanding of its historical mode of existence.

The interrelation of power-knowledge, discourse, space and subjectivity in Foucault's work, then, is best explained and schematised as a *dispositif*, or "concrete social apparatus" (Deleuze, "Dispositif" 159). The *dispositif* is a tangle of heterogeneous lines. These lines follow directions and trace balances. Foucault has traced four kinds of lines in his studies: lines of visibility and articulability (together forming knowledge), power and subjectivity. However, the *dispositif* has many dimensions, and the four types of lines discerned by Deleuze in Foucault's work are "by no means contours given once and for all, but a series of variables which supplant one another" ("Dispositif" 159):

These apparatuses, then, are composed of the following elements: lines of visibility and enunciation, lines of force, lines of subjectification, lines of splitting, breakage, fracture, all of which criss-cross and mingle together,

⁷ Deleuze's account of the *dispositif* is used here because it carefully charts its utility in constructing a theory of the historical articulation of heterogeneous elements, thus moving away from the "archaeological" emphasis on discourse.

⁸ Admittedly, Deleuze's interpretation is in dispute. O'Farrell argues that the *dispositif* is equivalent to the "historical a priori" of *Order* and the later notion of "regimes of truth" (*Michel* 66). While I concede that "dispositif" designates in some sense "the same level" as the "historical a priori," (O'Farrell, *Michel* 66), its deployment within an analytic of power-knowledge results in the more articulatory notion presented here.

some lines reproducing or giving rise to others, by means of variation or even changes in the way they are grouped. (“Dispositif” 162)

What, then, might be the elements of a dispositif of literacy? Cutting across the conventional distinctions established by the discourse, it is possible to propose a different list of historically constituted spaces, persons and practices. These are: the student, the school, the text and the teacher. For each of these elements, there is a complex and quite contingent history, relying on small changes in practice, in unforeseen rearrangements and convulsions, in timid suggestions, and in the occasional migrations of knowledge and practice. At a certain point, a confluence productive of “literacy” occurred. Literacy studies owe their persistence to this accidental merging of elements into a machine that produces, if not the concept of literacy, then the conditions for its emergence. While the present study dates the emergence of these elements in a recognisable modern form as occurring in the nineteenth century, their confluence and arrangement in the production of literacy as concept, material entity, historical process and visible symptomatology is a far more recent development.

The student: literacy involves a number of necessary prior constructs, without which a compulsion to speak about it would have been untenable or absurd. First, it requires a population whose existence has become a problem, and whose ability to read and write is examined as part of that problem. Shortly after Bentham published the Panopticon letters, wherein he decisively connected observation with reform, convict transport ships were carrying doctors to teach transportees the reading and writing of morally improving works, particularly the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. Sunday Schools were begun with the dual purpose of keeping a troublesome population (in this case of poor children) away from public space, and imparting moral virtues that their parents would/could not, particularly by instructing them in the reading of the Bible.⁹ A national statistical apparatus measuring the efficiency of instruction was fully

⁹ See Reeves (“Literate Society”). This was by no means the case universally, even in the Commonwealth: as I point out in Chapter Five, the Sunday-schools in Wales were an indigenous invention whose function was the performing of communal theological disputations. In addition, Biblical morality was problematised by the emerging discourse of educational psychology, as it was by the later use of economics in moral instruction.

underway in Europe by the mid-nineteenth century, measuring the national space in districts, and giving literacy historians what would become the basis for their analyses.¹⁰

This situation has obviously not remained static since the early nineteenth century, and the problematic population itself (or at least the parents and relatives who were for so long the teachers' enemy) as well as the liberal state came to take up and change the schools and their work. By the end of this period, working-class and indigent families had won the right to secular education by a constant pressure of numbers, and the schools had dropped much of their religious instruction, though not all of it, and introduced technical and "vocational" studies, along with the "Three Rs" and English grammar. When Great Britain finally instituted national compulsory elementary education in 1872, it had already overseen and recorded the operation of schools for decades and developed a sophisticated statistical apparatus for measuring the achievements of students. The proximate reason for instituting a universal education system was the problem of finding a way to manage the poorer groups after a long series of popular risings culminating, in Britain, with the massacre at the "Battle of Bossenden Wood" in 1838.¹¹ The problem population became a national, indefinitely divisible and analysable one. A recording apparatus, especially one by which government measured its performance, required a reliable sign of success or failure. This internal concern for order was supplemented by anxieties regarding the power of the population as a productive force. That Germany had a greater number of people than Britain, it was argued, meant that the latter's population needed to produce more goods and generate more wealth.¹² Education became not only a problem of moralisation and population control, but a matter of national survival, strength and progress.¹³

The problem population of today, that is, the one subject to literacy instruction in documents such as the *Curriculum Framework*, retains many of these imperatives. More immediately important, however, are the particular knowledges that constitute the student as subject to, and of, literacy schooling. The student is tabulated as a visible surface of

¹⁰ See Vincent (*Mass Literacy*). Hunter (*Rethinking*) draws attention to the nineteenth-century emergence of a new statistical apparatus in education policy.

¹¹ For a detailed account of these developments, see Vincent (*Literacy and Popular Culture*). On the "Battle of Bossenden Wood," see page 85 of the same.

¹² See Wardle (*Schooled Society* 173), Connell and Irving (206).

¹³ See Curtis (*Educational State*) and Graff (*Legacies*).

behaviours and artefacts, utterances and assignments. These must be easily recordable, and are ideally unambiguous and consonant with a national and standardised language of description. The visible surface, however, refers to a deep structure, upon which the regime of instruction operates.

This encoding of surface and depth is cognitive and moral, in part. The student acquires understandings, and even a restructuring of the ways of knowing along with their accretion. Also, these understandings affect behaviour and disposition. Students become available to examination, they organise their activities and concerns towards it, and reproduce it within their own thoughts and routines. *What do I know now, and how am I to say so when examined?* The *depth* of students is thus divided into knowledge, understanding and ability. Ability is a partial reification of performance, a pushing of surface behaviour into the depth it is to call forth; ability is the term that authorises the power to detain, instruct and assess. This process must be lengthy, not only in order to produce a fully developed and skilled student, but also to ensure her/his reliability under assessment.

In addition, students are arranged according to a temporal and developmental dimension. At first they are unable, and therefore unfit, to enter the world. They are deficient in three ways: in relation to themselves, to their community, and to the world of work (at least as far as the dimension of literacy is concerned). What the student needs is defined by these deficiencies. As with internment in a penitentiary setting, the discourse is greatly concerned with the readiness of inmates to enter the outside world. As students develop, their deficiencies are replaced by a quantity of reflection, of engagement with their community, and of work skills. While the prison was designed to moralise the offender, school was designed to erase the dangers posed by deficiency and to save the child from the vicious influence that may come from the environment it is born into. Three objects of knowledge are elaborated here: the developing human being, the text, and a world knowable in the form of demands.

Insofar as they are conceptualised as children, students engender a special problematic quite apart from that posed by other populations. Children, as observable and manipulable beings confined to a regular schedule of tasks and to a regime of reward and

punishment, become a map of typical development. One can enumerate a series of stages and design particular regimens, texts and experiences to optimise development. There is a dual horizon here: a set of stages and activities typifying/producing them, and a proper, organic or natural sequence which sets limits on optimisation. This model, which limits the arbitrary imposition of discipline and operates upon a biological thinking being, has entered most Western education systems since its introduction by Seguin in 1844.

The student, as this notion appears in the *Curriculum Framework*, in other policy documents and in the discourse generally, is a diagnostic indicator of national health, at least insofar as s/he appears in a mass. It is important not only that students should be literate, but also that they be literate to a certain level at a certain stage. Failure to achieve the corresponding adequate level means that the school/teacher has failed, or the parents/social milieu, or the larger society. It is via the conceptual structures of optimal development and optimal (national) economic productivity that children acquire the right, *inter alia*, to be students. This is not merely a general cultural anxiety, but one that has a specific history and coordinates, allowing policy documents to sanction and codify a practice of power.

The school can be: an area of planning (a topic of organised thought), a particular body of training and technique, a real individual school, a jurisdiction, or a complex designed for instruction. The early schools in England and Australia were frequently small, isolated and subject to a quick death if people did not patronise them. Under Inspectors and a system of “payment by results,” the schools were often shut down, and in Australia were compromised by the need of labourers for seasonal work in farming areas, as well as by hostile attitudes among the poor in towns and cities, often making the minimal fulfilment of attendance requirements impossible.¹⁴ The great task of the schools in the three decades after 1872 was to enforce the compulsory attendance law. The school from here on assumes the presence and regular reappearance of students; it is the condition of possibility for thinking about students and for acting upon them. It is the place in which they appear; it renders them visible.

¹⁴ See Austin and Selleck (67, 118).

The school is specially organised. The central functional unit is the class, which usually is located in a separate and specially designed room. This room is designed for maximum effectiveness in drawing out the repeated performances of students and for the recording of their developing understanding, knowledge and ability. The national school being necessarily tied to a national statistical bureau, it renders results available for national and international comparison. While literacy percentages were initially fairly simple affairs (even in the Swiss army, where five or six literacy levels were recognised),¹⁵ the introduction of a developmental scale and a moving-target historical/economic perspective have complicated matters and necessitated tests designed and overseen by experts from outside the school.¹⁶

This organised disciplinary space also relates to the rest of the social space, to the various ways in which pedagogical knowledge subdivides and orders the population, and aggregates and composes groups and nations. The first mass literacy tests were the product of another institution of instruction and internment, the army. The technique arose from disciplinary practices and psychometric testing, and probably drew on earlier experiences with convicts.¹⁷ In any case, national supervisory and testing bodies constitute an area affecting the school rather than a separate element of the dispositif. The school is related to other sites in complex ways that tend towards a flexible pedagogisation of social space. The interrelation of pedagogical spaces does not mean that school is simply the model to be imposed upon other pedagogical emplacements. One can see this in national testing, a consequence of which is the ideal unmarked student, whose case is fully explained by correlative factors of age, ethnicity, parents' occupation, residence and so on. The space of schooling emanates into the wider world, but it mutates as it does so, engaging in an integrative coordination rather than in the formation of purely analogous spaces.¹⁸

¹⁵ See Cipolla, 12.

¹⁶ See Forster and Masters.

¹⁷ On instruction of convicts, see Reeves *Literate Society* 131.

¹⁸ The literature extending literacies to ever more arenas – especially work and leisure – and measuring, assessing and typologising them, grows almost daily. Belfiore et al. is a particularly enthusiastic example of pedagogising workplace literacies, while Knobel and Lankshear is a good example of assembling a pedagogy derived from mapping new critical discourses related to the internet. Watson and Johnson take this process to the mapping of “multiliteracies” in computer gaming.

The school is the site where a series of primary divisions is enacted, dramatised and made visible. The school functions as an encircling wall, from which students win the right to emerge when they are deemed sufficiently capable to operate in the outside world. It is thus a second world, a habitable and navigable simplification, in some cases a second world consciously designed for the construction of better social agents, where students are enabled to transform the corrupt world outside. What follows from this is a public concern about whether students are learning the right skills, appropriate values, self-control, strong personal defences, or a proper understanding of aspects of the world outside. Such concerns presuppose a school that bears responsibility for every child (or for a national child), rather than, say, a family, which bears a limited right to rear its children as it sees fit. With regard to literacy instruction, the concern produced by the school is that a student comes to understand the true nature of language, and to be able to use a set of skills within it. The pedagogical relations of schooling are distributed throughout the social field, while its functions of enclosure, representation, assessment and discipline generate a proliferating space, a division between self and world, a *heterotopia* relating the individual to the social through language and the text.

The text: within the school the student increases, in a way open to observation, her/his knowledge of the components of language, understanding of its principles, and facility in using it. This requires a regime of testing, a technology of eliciting performance, and a carefully selected group of texts. Whatever is being taught, it is the function of the text to manifest it. The text is a relatively static artefact upon which one practises interpretation. The fluctuation of the student's interpretations is visible against the stable textual background, as a source of accuracy, as a means of enriching prior interpretation, and as a way of examining features like structure and context.

Locating the text within the dispositif of literacy leads to some disturbing consequences. Insofar as it is part of the discourse of literacy, the text is above all an artefact of schooling. It relies on the isolated unworldly space wherein the student comes into contact with the text and has revealed to him/her the contours of its mysterious essence, language. That particular set of knowledges which is designated as language is also an artefact of schooling. Language is something that, above all, occurs in texts. In a

school, even speech is a text. These are functional elements that are necessary to a functional assemblage rather than “real” things towards which language can only gesture.

Naturally, the text of schooling is the site of concerns regarding the ideologies it carries, its effects on the reader’s character, and its complex relationship to a society’s events, forces and tendencies. These concerns recognise the role of the text within the schooling apparatus, and are quite appropriate to it. It is the apparatus itself, as well as its elements, which remain beyond question. Both traditional and critical literacy perspectives are fixated upon this singular relationship between the text and the student, and advocate different truths of language with which to prepare the latter for the outer world. At best, the school is a reproduction of fantasies and projections of the useful truth, which is no doubt why Foucault condemns it as a place of make-believe.¹⁹ The student, the text and the world will be the focus for the chapters that follow.

The teacher: while the status peculiar to teachers cannot be fully discussed in this thesis, they form a necessary precondition for much of what *is* discussed. Teachers are both a necessity and a danger in this apparatus. Historically, teachers have played a number of roles, such as the authoritarian missionary, quite often also as a foster family (it was common for the head teachers to be married and to conceive and conduct their roles as parental). Teachers might also be fellow students, as in monitorial schools, or apprentices, as in the colonial Australian schools. Today, they are closely regulated as to the results they provide, the procedures of instruction, and the norms of affective behaviour they observe.²⁰

The teacher of “English” has for a long time enjoyed a special status within popular culture as one particularly important in the transmission of ethical and aesthetic values in connection with the teaching of text and language. In many ways, they are responsible for the pastoral care of their students, even though that function has been recently redistributed.²¹ Obviously, teachers have to carry out the work of the school in the classroom (and the playground, but that is another matter). While they no longer explicitly gauge “character,” English teachers record the understandings of students

¹⁹ See Foucault (“Rituals”).

²⁰ See Masters and Forster (45).

²¹ See Hunter (“Personality” xi).

concerning language, many of which have an ethical or meta-ethical character – for instance, that texts carry their own value-systems, or that tolerance ought to be observed (*Curriculum Framework* 75).

This outline of the *dispositif* must be elaborated on, with respect to the provenance of Foucault's notion of power and its relationship to discourse and space. Returning to the notion of power and power-knowledge in Foucault, the emergence of these concepts can be found in Foucault's attempt to relate the visible and the sayable without reducing one to the other. Further, the notion of discipline offers a wealth of historical detail on the development of techniques through which human bodies were rendered knowable, mappable and manipulable, thus providing a model analysis of power-knowledge. Tracing the development of these Foucaultian concepts permits an elaboration and further definition of the literacy *dispositif*.

Foucault's work on the relation between the visible and the sayable is particularly important to analysing the literacy discourse, since this is where two central elements of literacy discourse – the subject of literacy and the text – emerge. This relationship is an especially acute problem in Foucault's early work, and is crucial to his development of the concept of power-knowledge. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Deleuze writes, Foucault was not able to articulate the relations between these two lines, these two historical dimensions:

Between the visible and the articulable we must maintain all the following aspects at the same time: the heterogeneity of the two forms; their difference in nature . . . ; a mutual presupposition between the two; a mutual grappling and capture; the well-determined primacy of the one over the other. (Deleuze, *Foucault* 68)

None of this dexterous manoeuvring and careful tracing of relations could be enough, since there was no reason for the two to enter into any kind of coherent relation, and thus there was a need for a way out of this mutual evasion and capture. Foucault “needs a third agency to the determinable and determination, the visible and the articulable, operating either beyond or this side of the two forms” (Deleuze, *Foucault* 68). This third agency was power, which operates in a fundamentally different way, but in a

relation, to knowledge. While knowledge is concerned with substances, and functions “divided up segment by segment according to the two great formal conditions of seeing and speaking,” power is a “pure function” without ends, which passes through points “which on each occasion mark the application of a force” (Deleuze, *Foucault* 68). Two forms of operation, power and knowledge, thus work in conjunction, forming the social apparatuses to which we belong and within which we act (Deleuze, *Dispositif* 164).

For the complex of power-knowledge involved in literacy, then, there is a composite form of power (techniques relating to life, labour, language) and forms of knowledge (ways of relating statements to visibilities). There are lines of truth, light, enunciation and subjectivity to be traced, but there is also the question of a space of visibility, or at least a space of coherence, where the *dispositif* manifests its objects, where they may be recorded and acted upon. The spare figure of the reader and the text, manifesting a knowledge of Western (or universal) man and of the world, and of the individual, replicates the functions of a school space, with its regime of writing and speaking, and of learning about the outside while others are learning about the learner. The model for this combination of sayability and visibility, for this functioning of power as both linguistic therapy and normalisation, is also the model of a school. That is not to say that this form of power-knowledge generalises the school: its functioning adapts, while retaining the minimal figure, to local conditions as the effect of its dispersal.

In Foucault’s early work, the relations necessary for the appearance of objects intersect with what would later form the field of power in *Discipline and Punish*. In the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, the distinction is maintained between concrete power relations and relations of knowledge, but there is a surface of attachment, a form of co-implication, which limits the relations of appearance to the role of offering an outline, a historically constituted visibility, in which it may, in a doubling motion that is nonetheless heterogeneous, be constituted in the “sayable:”

These relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterisation; and these relations are not present in the object; it is not they that are deployed when the object is being analysed;

they do not indicate the web, the immanent rationality, the ideal nervure that reappears totally or in part when one conceives of the object in the truth of its concept. They do not define its internal constitution, but what enables it to appear, to juxtapose itself with other objects, to situate itself with relation to them, to define its difference, its irreducibility, and even perhaps its heterogeneity, in short, to be placed in a field of exteriority. (*Archaeology* 43)

What was to become power in Foucault's later work – the invention, disposition, and proliferation of power-relations – is in the *Archaeology* something that “offers” but does not impose. In *Discipline and Punish* power would intersect with this constitution of objects, with the whole field of correlations activated by the statement. The correlative field plays a prominent, if problematic, role in the earlier works, buried in the description of statements but insistently resurfacing as the figure of a scattered, multiple and unsystematised dispersal, a ceaseless activity of power which acts throughout the social field, especially upon and through statements themselves. The description of statements in their rarity, accumulation and exteriority, in their extrasubjective operations (arraying speaking subjects without an author), in their extralinguistic relations (not to things, but to fields and regularities) within archaeological analysis, already follows their operation across a dimension of power and formulates it in relation to power:

[statements] are invested in techniques that put them into operation, in practices that derive from them, in the social relations that they form, or, through those relations, modify. [Moreover, statements when considered as] things do not have quite the same mode of existence, the same system of relations with their environment, the same schemata of use, the same possibilities of transformation once they have been said. (*Archaeology* 124)

Foucault attempts to situate the practice of discourse, the description of statements as both events (in their conditions of enunciation) and as things (insofar as they function) within two closely allied conceptual loci: the historical *a priori* and the archive (*Archaeology* 129). Analysing a discourse is a matter of deriving a general horizon of description and situating it, in finding out what, above the mere patterns of statements, he

had been describing, what relation it bore to a knowledge of ourselves, and what general project it furthered.

In later work Foucault shifts the ground, but not entirely, to one's relationship to power, to reinstate both knowledge and the historical subject within the rationalities and swarmings, and the historically specific modes of proliferation, proper to relations of power. Power is not massive and oppressive, but strategic, multiple and productive:

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; it also traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse.

(*Power* 120)

The power enacted under the sign of literacy is also productive as much as restrictive. The act of inscription, the knowledge that is produced by the discourse on literacy, is both produced by and productive of a power that sustains our interest, our belief that the relation to the text, this enclosure of the subject within a membrane that both renders her/him readable to the world and allows him/her to read the world, is a substance of power. It renders one subject to control, manipulation, measurement, therapeutic intervention; but also makes one the subject of one's own inscriptions, interventions, retrogression and progress.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault made use of the concept of power-knowledge to designate both an "eternal" relation (for no field of knowledge escapes power, just as no form of power is without a corresponding organisation of knowledge) and an intimate and modern binding of the concrete procedures of power (the regulation of time and motion, disciplinary and reformatory techniques, establishment of control through visibilities). Power is not to be located in official pronouncements: rather, it is dispersed within the social body. In speaking of "discipline," Foucault notes that it cannot be thought of as the possession of a state apparatus, or indeed any stable setting. His analysis of this key term informs the present study of pedagogical power and exemplifies the conceptual utility of power in resolving the antinomy between the sayable and the visible.

"Discipline" may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus. It is, rather, a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of

instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a “physics” or an anatomy of power, a technology (*Discipline* 215). “Discipline” is an array of techniques that aims to control the movements of the body, trained motion, volition and overall patterns of behaviour, fixed individuals into places, organised their traversal of institutional spaces; in short, it constitutes Foucault’s catalogue of the modern repertoire of power, and of its rationalities. At this level of analysis, the imperceptible gap between power and knowledge, which had been treated in Foucault’s early work as a communication of surfaces, takes the shape of a mutual conditioning:

Taken one by one, most of these techniques have a long history behind them. But what was new, in the eighteenth century, was that, by being combined and generalised, they attained a level at which the formation of knowledge and the increase of power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process. At this point, the disciplines crossed the “technological” threshold. First the hospital, then the school, then, later, the workshop were not simply “reordered” by the disciplines; they became, thanks to them, apparatuses such that any mechanism of objectification could give rise in them to possible branches of knowledge; it was this link, proper to the technological systems, that made possible within the disciplinary element the formation of clinical medicine, psychiatry, child psychology, educational psychology, the rationalisation of labour. It is a double process, then; an epistemological “thaw” through a refinement of power relations; a multiplication of the effects of power through the formation and accumulation of new forms of knowledge. (*Discipline* 218)

The most immediately relevant form of power-knowledge for this thesis is the assembly, from the eighteenth century, of what Foucault calls “the disciplines,” a set of “techniques for the ordering of human multiplicities” (*Discipline* 218).

While “discipline” is not to be confused with an institutional site or a particular state apparatus, disciplinary techniques emerge from a number of sites, including the school, and operate, in relation to multiplicities, “a tactics of power that fulfils three criteria” (*Discipline* 218): they operate power while minimising the economic and

political costs; they intensify the effects of power to their maximum; and they “link this ‘economic’ growth of power with the output of the apparatuses (educational, military, industrial or medical) within which it is exercised” (*Discipline* 218). The “historical conjuncture” in which these techniques spread throughout the social body is composed of two main processes: a rise in the itinerant population, which the disciplines served to fix and to order; and an extension of production, which was dealt with by installing discipline *within* production:

the disciplines have to bring into play the power relations, not above but inside the very texture of the multiplicity, as discreetly as possible, as well articulated on the other functions of these multiplicities and also in the least expensive way possible: to this correspond anonymous instruments of power, coextensive with the multiplicity that they regiment, such as hierarchical surveillance, continuous registration, perpetual assessment and classification. (*Discipline* 220)

Just as production was the site for disciplinary techniques in the eighteenth century, literacy forms a process, a natural goal and a set of imperatives through which, or alongside which, various disciplinary schemes operate. It is the standard against which they are measured and the site of an anatomical study of efficiency. Like production, literacy permits both the consolidation of certain techniques within particular institutions and at the same time allows for their social extension, and frees up the disciplinary modalities according to the sites it encounters (cf. *Discipline* 211). Where the panoptic and the carceral effected a “diagram,” a way for power to extend and adapt itself to different sites according to a general abstract model, literacy extends to new spaces of intervention and appraisal and opens up a new field of concern, study and planning, a new possibility for the composition, disaggregation and control of multiplicities.

This is not to say that “discipline” exhausts the operations of literacy: power-knowledge comes in more than one form. Foucault has expanded on a range of practices, ways of doing things, modes of the dispersal of power. In *The Will to Knowledge* he connects the discourse of sex with a whole range of practices connected with control of the birth rate and the population, a power situated at the level of human beings insofar as

they are subject to biological regularities. This form of power, operating on the basis of an “anatomy-politics of the individual body” and a “bio-politics of the species” also traverses the subject insofar as s/he is defined as a labouring being, measurable in the capacities and competences related to the production of wealth. Finally, and crucially, this thesis follows Foucault’s lead in tracing the operations of power upon the subject, one who emerges in the discourse of literacy as the subject of inscription, in charting power as it seizes him/her as a speaking subject, makes of language a truth and a destiny, and performs a multitude of humble operations upon this textual being. Life, labour and language are the three empiricities of the human sciences mentioned by Foucault, and the practice of power that operates at the surface of the discourse of literacy makes use of all three.²²

In combining and arraying these three empiricities, however, literacy does not act merely as the vector for a diagram, as the vehicle for the spread of a topo-sensitive disciplinary miasma. While it is true that thinking a site under the sign of literacy involves a disciplinary reconfiguration, it is not sufficient to characterise the operations of literacy – as an experience, process, knowledge regime – in its relations to the general social space. This is because, at the same time that a space, a body or a group is reorganised as a site of literacy, it becomes a model – and a remodelling – of a general condition of representation, of a series of divisions structured by the separation between the text and the world, the “inside” space that represents the space outside, the possibility that haunts the actual world. Literacy reorders the world of production, taking representation in general as the condition for producing the world, whether as future utopia or as a set of knowledges that prepare one to work in the real world. It reorders space simultaneously as a representation and travesty of the world, as encyclopedia and utopia. Literacy permits the extension of a heterotopia of deviance and normalisation, a kind of place which while connecting with all other social emplacements, at the same time operates as a closed-off recreation, inversion, critique and site of regeneration of the world (“Different Spaces” 183).

²² James D. Marshall (“Foucault and Neo-Liberalism” 45-60) coins the term “busno-power” to articulate a putatively recent mutation of power-knowledge, where the values and imperatives of the world of business are built into the curriculum as normative values.

While the diagrammatic extension of panoptic power may be one form of heterotopia, the extended pedagogical space that literacy organises bears a crucial difference in the way it relates to, represents, contests and reverses “the world” by regulating, at a very general level, the interface, the ever-present membrane between the world and the self constituted through the text. Literacy as pedagogical heterotopia organises and relates a group of institutional sites, practices, and forms of knowledge and control that emerged in the nineteenth century in something like their current form, and disperses this structured space of power-knowledge as a complex, mobile and modifiable set, configurable to a variety of scales, groupings and levels of generality. What swarms with literacy is not merely a set of techniques, a general space or a physics of power, but a general problematic of representation, to which disciplinary techniques are applied.

Marking Out Differences: Other Foucaultian studies of Literacy and Education

The genealogical analysis undertaken in this thesis is different in important respects to the understanding and use of Foucault in other Foucaultian studies in related fields. There is an extensive literature on literacy and education which uses Foucault, or certain parts and interpretations of Foucault’s works. In this section the work of several scholars is discussed, taken as representative of certain ways of appropriating Foucault. Rather than subject them to a disqualification, the thesis charts the distance and the specific trajectory it takes in relation to these works. In the persistence of characteristic objects, concepts and themes, these works are also shown to be part of the discourse of literacy or at least to share its major presuppositions. If this thesis is unable to escape such a determination, it aims nonetheless to inhabit a different area of the discourse.

The work on education and literacy utilising Foucault may be distinguished and categorised according to the connections it draws between Foucault’s work and the works of others, by the political or epistemic project upon which it embarks, by the selection of Foucault’s texts used, by the field of application, by the target of its criticism, and by its status with regard to Foucault’s project. In the first series, one should distinguish between the “twinning” of Foucault with some other figure (Max Weber, Pierre Bourdieu, Jacques Lacan, Judith Butler, Valentin Voloshinov) and the situation of Foucault within a pool of

authorities (postmodernists, poststructuralists) sharing with him, more or less, the same contours (a general scepticism of essences, a suspicion of text-power relationships, a hostility to the rational founding subject).²³ Further, such work may use Foucault's "twin" as a corrective, as a supplement, as confirmation or as a resituation and reinscription of Foucault's ideas in the field of education and literacy.

The authors dealt with below are considered as exemplary instances of particular uses of Foucault. Their work is important in bringing questions of power, exclusion, representation and the constitution of subjectivities into education and literacy. It is at the margins, at the points at which they take certain culturally constituted entities for granted even while claiming to historicise them, that they are interrogated. Not infrequently the educational field is resituated in a sociological analysis of the construction of knowledge and the distribution of power through representation, or on the political terrain of representation. The intention here is not to demonstrate that the use of Foucaultian ideas is incorrect or misguided, but rather to question the cost at which the pairing of Foucault with other critical theorists, or his inclusion in a postmodern interrogative tradition, is brought about. In certain ways that are important for the present work, Foucault's ideas are despecified in the works discussed here, at the price not only of misrepresenting his fundamental ethical and intellectual project, but also of reifying what should be cautiously questioned.

This thesis assumes that work on literacy using Foucault is itself part, and not outside of, the literacy discourse. Further, it is important to show exactly the difference between this thesis and the work of other theorists, to show how they do or do not relate to this thesis. The section on Valerie Walkerdine, whose work does not directly address literacy, serves a special purpose in showing the persistence and effects of textualising

²³ Sometimes this pooling is a long litany of attitudinal equivalences, as in Ira Shor's equivocations of critical literacy:

Critical literacy, then, is an attitude towards history, as Kenneth Burke (1984) might have said, or a dream of a new society against the power now in power, as Paulo Freire proposed (Shor and Freire, 1987), or an insurrection of subjugated knowledges, in the ideas of Michel Foucault (1980), or a counter-hegemonic structure of feeling, as Raymond Williams (1977) theorised, or a multicultural resistance invented on the borders of crossing identities, as Gloria Anzaldúa (1990) imagined, or language used against fitting unexceptionably into the status quo, as Adrienne Rich (1979) declared. ("Critical Literacy")

pedagogy somewhat beyond the limits of literacy discourse. The texts presented here are assumed to be broadly representative of different traditions, even though they are dealt with in detail as individual texts. They represent several features of literacy discourse that can also be found in non-Foucaultian work, and they also represent certain theoretical and strategic options within the discourse. The works discussed here are by Robert Veel and Caroline Coffin, Valerie Walkerdine, Allan Luke, and Ian Hunter. There are several themes, tropes, and terms that run throughout the critique: the transcendental subject, pedagogical desire and textual subjectivities. The thesis takes certain points of distance with each author. With Veel and Coffin, the pedagogical desire for reform and recognition of subjugated subjectivities results in the reification of the text as demand. Walkerdine's work assumes a universal mechanics of the sign and the project and presence of a transcendental subject, and, although it is ostensibly concerned with matters other than literacy, it repeats the general relations required by the discourse. Luke shifts the text to a "meta" level and assumes that the text produces subjectivity, thereby eliding its function and constitution within power mechanisms. Finally, Hunter replaces the transcendental subject of textuality with the universal subject of deportment.

This discussion operates, then, as a critique rather than as a list of authorities. However, it does not claim a transcendent position here: this thesis is implicated in the discursive relations within which it operates. It does not speak beyond these thinkers, but seeks to locate the horizon of what can be said and thought about literacy; it seeks the edges of discourse in order to indicate a region from which thought may speak. The analysis of these theorists establishes the specific ways in which this thesis diverges from Foucaultian work on literacy and education, in terms of method, object and orientation. In seeking out the self-evidences assumed by other authors it establishes the possibility of tracing the construction and lineage of certain persistent themes, objects, desires and concepts, rather than disqualifying them *a priori* as unwarranted. By drawing attention to the discursive construction of these elements, however, it does present them as doubtful and open to interrogation. In particular, the thesis establishes its specific difference by providing a Foucaultian account of the ways in which these assumed elements are involved in nationalised power-knowledge.

The combination of a Foucaultian perspective and the literacy discourse is evident in a chapter by Robert Veel and Caroline Coffin, “Learning to Think Like an Historian: The Language of Secondary School History,” in *Literacy in Society* (Hasan and Williams). The discursive arrangement of pedagogical desire operates here to align the demands reified in the text with the recognition of subjugated literacies, echoing the *Curriculum Framework’s* arrangement of literacies as a progression from “oral” to “critical” textual uses.²⁴ Veel and Coffin report on research conducted by the Disadvantaged Schools Program in Sydney, analysing the linguistic features of history texts and the development of types of “consciousness” implied by these features (193). Taking four exemplary passages, the researchers break down each of them into generic structure, register and lexicogrammatical features (201-05), which categories are further subdivided. Having analysed the texts, and concluded that they enact a progression of thought from a concrete and linguistically simple “oral” style, through “grand narrative” to an abstract, persuasive and specialised style of argument, they signal their concerns for a “critical orientation” to historical texts through “shared knowledge about language between teachers and students, and the explicit use of this shared knowledge to deconstruct and learn to write historical texts” (224). It is useful to examine this closely, to look at the function Foucault has here, to discern the operation of educational imperatives, and the systematic dependence on notions of text, language and literacy at work here.

Veel and Coffin cite two works by Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Will to Knowledge*. In the text itself, Foucault is invoked in a criticism of the New South Wales *History 7-10* syllabus, and of Australian school syllabi in general. They argue that the *History 7-10* syllabus is deficient in a number of ways: its outcomes are very broad and rely on each school to devise its own program (195); it lacks “specific reading and writing outcomes, making it very difficult for teachers to determine what meanings and what modes of expression will be most valued” (195-96); and it allows implicit norms of assessment, which result in exclusion. The criteria for assessment in history education, Veel and Coffin argue, are primarily linguistic, and failing to specify such criteria is a way of perpetuating inequality:

²⁴ Further examples of such literacy hierarchies are Hasan, Luke et al. (“Genres”) and Cope and Kalantzis.

The invisibility of linguistic criteria often has the effect of marginalising those students (and teachers) who cannot read the implicit messages in the syllabus and cannot “naturally” develop the reading and writing abilities expected by the syllabus. . . . The consequences of this invisibility will be worse for socio-economically disadvantaged students, since they are less likely to have access to privileged meanings from sources outside school, and are therefore less likely to “read between the lines” and determine what is expected of them in school assessment. (196)

Foucault is specifically brought in at the description of another shortcoming of the syllabus, its failure “to contextualise itself sufficiently with regard to competing philosophies about the nature of historical knowledge and competing views about teaching and learning history” (196). It is not enough to note that Foucault is used here as the sign of alternatives, particularly poststructuralist alternatives, to “‘grand narrative’ conceptions of history” (196), nor to point out that what is given of “the Foucaultian conception of history” (197) is here inaccurate. Foucault functions here as the *challenge* of the alternative, both philosophical and pedagogical, to “dominant discourses” (224). His name authorises the decentring of a unitary master narrative, the introduction of a form of history which is situated neither in a traditional procession of causes nor in a proliferation of views, but rather within the linguistic structure of a teachable text in the transitional space of the school.

It is important to emphasise this. The discourse of literacy, whatever authorities it draws upon, is invested with a pedagogical desire to code learning within language and within its exemplary manifestation, the text. That is not to say that any one person desires to do this, or that the desire to create freer, happier and more powerful subjects is a subordinate one, but rather that a pedagogical formation of desire offers itself within the discursive field as the way to realise programs, to establish a mode of operation, to fix what is wrong. Thus Veel and Coffin recommend, as a way of eliminating disadvantage in history education, the explicit teaching of “knowledge about language,” a “functional *metalanguage*” (225). “Shared knowledge about language” (226) and the “critical orientation” (226) it engenders is an epiphanous experience of cognitive liberation, a

recognition of the workings of social power within language, and at the same time the pedagogical production of historians through their subjection to language:

By teaching about *how* discourses are constructed through choices in the resources of the linguistic system, one is not only ensuring that students have access to socially powerful meanings and practice at making these meanings, but also changing the way students view these meanings. By this we mean a simultaneous understanding that powerful meanings, while often being powerful for very good reasons, are in no way “natural” meanings – they are constructed by particular groups of people for particular reasons. Just as these meanings have been constructed, so too they can be deconstructed and reconstructed for new purposes. A critical orientation to the language of history is not just about making students effective readers and writers of history; it is also about making them into good historians. (227)

It is certainly not from a judgment of their work as wrong that this thesis distances itself from Veel’s and Coffin’s program and from similar enterprises. In terms of describing the power-knowledge field at work in literacy discourse, however, the project of rearranging the space of schooling as a strategic intervention for social justice is itself part of the distribution that produces the ambiguous power-effects at work in pedagogy and education policy: the universality of schooling makes the difficulties involved worth the effort in a broad attempt to change the world into a fairer one, and the student into a more empathetic, power-sensitive, world-transforming agent. It is necessary to take some distance from this discourse, to question its instruments, to investigate the substances it has recourse to, to interrogate the truth it speaks in the name of relativising truth.

Veel and Coffin provide a background to their research, the *Write It Right* project in the Disadvantaged Schools Program. Over the course of this project, there emerged a “protocol” of linking and explicitude designed, by recourse to the analysis of language structures in texts, to render the acquisition of valued styles of thought transparent and accessible to all students (and no doubt also to all teachers). It is within this protocol that the relationships between educational institutions, governmental bodies, texts, students, language and outcomes are made most explicit, in a language of protocol, learning

design, and program-making. It is the relation that research establishes with the demands of schooling, with a power that does not produce what it seeks (it produces inequalities rather than outcomes), that invests the statements of such research with their special position, with their call for effectiveness and change. It is from the protocol that the call to explicit language instruction approaches an institutional, programming addressee.

The protocol, quoted in full, is as follows:

1. Analyse the range of written genres encountered by students in their *reading* practices and required of students in their *writing* practices. A detailed consideration of both reading and writing practices is needed to build a picture of the learning demands of a subject. In the *Write It Right* project, about 4,500 texts written by students in a range of school disciplines (English, Geography, History and Science) were collected and analysed for their generic structure and a range of indexical lexicogrammatic features. Of these about 1,000 texts were in the area of history. In order to analyse student reading practices and access to any “model” texts for writing, a range of textbooks and other classroom materials were also collected and examined.
2. Locate the genres in relation to the syllabus, outcome statements, public examinations, school programs, school assessment and classroom practice. As well, broader academic and public debates about the nature and role of disciplinary knowledge, and of the pedagogical practices surrounding the use of a written text, need to be taken into account.
3. Analyse register shifts (field, tenor, mode) in genres across subject area. Link these to broad aims and rationales in syllabuses.
4. Analyse lexicogrammatical shifts in genres across subject area. Link these to specific learning outcomes in syllabi. (194-95)

Texts are here assigned the status of a collective sign of school demands, as the cumulative, statistical, linguistic pattern for the assessed performance of knowledge, as the expression of reading and writing practices required by schools and school subjects.

Language is taken to be the total set from which texts select certain features to express in a composite, ideal way the knowledge that is to be acquired and practised in school. The researchers speak from a world made through texts manifesting the powers of language, a world that exists outside of power and is drawn into it by texts. It is imperative for students to learn a shared knowledge of language if they are to participate as powerful actors in this textualised world. It is also imperative that certain transcriptions are performed, that links are established, between this knowledge – and performance – of texts and the various sites of assessment and definition.

Within these practices of statistical recording, linking and knowledge-sharing, the text assumes the peculiar status it has in the discourse on literacy; that of a truth which embodies a knowledge necessary for the school to be coded as a transitional space, a space not only reorganising the deficiencies of students into the competencies of adults, but also operating as the truth through which the world is rendered knowable, changeable and reformable. But it is also in these practices, and far more directly, that students are assessed and separated into successes and failures, mapped onto explicit codings of power and performance, separated into those who can think in the appropriate ways and those who cannot or will not. The protocols of research are precisely designed to increase the school's power to produce the appropriate subjects, to produce subjects of a language which lies in an ideal space behind its textual realisation. To operate a Foucaultian inversion, it is language, that ideal and mute origin of texts, that secures the propriety of all those practices by which we constitute the experience of literacy. It is by referring the operation of texts to language that the question of power, of the many sites and practices to which reading and writing are subjected, is elided, reified, made inevitable and shifted from its immediate point of application to the process of transition, to the problem of the world outside the school, with its linguistic distribution of power, opportunity and recognition.

The work of Valerie Walkerdine represents another theoretical attitude altogether. She engages with Foucault's analysis of power and sexuality within the several dispersed sites: the developmental child, the knowledges produced by mathematical assessment and

developmental psychology,²⁵ the counter-knowledges displayed by (working-class, female) children themselves, and particularly the articulation between the authoritative veridicality of development and the subaltern knowledges of sexualisation, oedipalisation and embourgeoisement of the developing child. She provides a valuable argument about the genealogy of developmental knowledge and argues, as does this thesis, that children's fiction, with its pretensions to representing the "natural" language of children, was an important component of the emergence of a national child (*Schoolgirl Fictions* 25). These lines will be pursued later in this thesis, but for the present her work is examined for its universalisation of a quasi-Lacanian "sign" and its recourse to a transcendental subject, and thus its participation in several general relations at work in the literacy discourse.

While Walkerdine's work, which is concerned with mathematics pedagogy and girl subjectivities, is not strictly part of the discourse on literacy, it mobilises many of the critical and technical disciplines concerned with developmental pedagogy. As a result, her theoretico-historical account of the formation of the pedagogised child overlaps to a significant degree with the domain covered by the literacy discourse. She provides a strong critique, moreover, of the institutions and knowledges involved in constructing the developmental child of schooling. Although her work does not fall within established disciplinary bounds, her multidisciplinary is itself paradigmatic, in that it outlines the sources and the uses made of them for a proper "post" theoretical view of the schooling of reading and writing. Walkerdine's deployment of Foucault is twofold: she is concerned with such a reading in terms of psychoanalytic categories nuanced by a historical Foucaultian argument, while her more specific work concerns itself with mathematics and the constitution of "reason" in the disciplinary regime of schooling.

Walkerdine thus provides both a general and a special case of a larger discourse involved with the critical interrogation of education. Her work does not belong to a discipline: she is already distanced from an "origin" or a training in developmental psychology, since she has set out to make an end of it, to critique its foundations and its social power. This critical and interstitial position manifests important relations of

²⁵ Walkerdine is associated, in particular, with the (Foucaultian/Lacanian) historicisation of the psychoanalytically disciplined child of education. Other prominent work in this area includes that of Caroline Steedman (*Strange Dislocations*) and Deborah Tyler.

transcription, since the “post” discourse, the combination of Lacan, Freud, Foucault and various other thinkers, is paradigmatic of “post,” and is transcribed, altered to function in the particular ways according to its discursive place. Such critical discourse on education, articulating critical social theory with educational concerns, is absorbed into the circuits of the discourse of literacy. Critical discourse on education, in its proximity to literacy discourse, offers up certain strategies and orientations for the latter to absorb and adapt. Walkerdine’s work is crucial as an intermediary node in the transcription of broader critical discourses into the discourse of literacy. In its claims to speak for marginal and silenced subjects, postmodern theorising on the constitution of educated subjects demands a textualisation of pedagogy, a textualisation through which the discourse of literacy acquires some of its wider legitimacy. Moreover, critical concepts such as the split psychoanalytic subject and the unmarked masculine subject are made available to textualising strategies of power. It is thus necessary to interrogate these concepts and their application as they are made appropriable by the literacy dispositif.

Walkerdine’s work is exemplary in that it obeys a number of rules followed in the literacy discourse. First, a distance is drawn between the practitioner of critique and the tools she uses for critique, by delineating a brief outline of “‘post’ theorising” (Walkerdine, “Beyond Developmentalism” 451). Second, a set of proper targets is identified: the patriarchal phallogocentric imaginary, the colonial, and so on. Third, an iconoclastic attitude is maintained, underwritten by the idea that things will be better if we see them in a new way by recombining “post” works and the order of the unconscious to see what is really going on. Fourth, and this is where she differs a great deal from literacy theorists, her work engages in the denunciation of a totality, of this order of things, of the patriarchal symbolic order that makes girl subjectivities impossible. These features play an important part in conditioning the transcribability of “post” into literacy discourse, in (re)aligning post with pedagogy.²⁶

Walkerdine’s work differs fundamentally from the present thesis in several respects which make it impossible to use as an authority here, but it permits a better definition of the project of this thesis. First, she embarks on the difficult project of negotiating a

²⁶ Walkerdine is transcribed into literacy discourse by Cormack, Comber and Kamler, and Calkwell, among others.

theoretical account between Foucault, (post-) Lacan (particularly the reworking by Urwin) and her own account of gendered schooling. Second, she assumes the symbolic presence of a privileged subject (one who is, nonetheless, “impossible” for working-class children and girls generally). Third, while she is interested in the operation of texts in the constitution of phantasy and symbolic identities across a number of sites, this thesis focuses on the constitution of the text (in all its possible forms) as the site *par excellence* of the veridical regime of literacy. Fourth, her work often slides without distinction from genealogical and discourse-analytic arguments about forms of knowledge and domination to Lacanian arguments about symbolic identity, sexuality and desire which situate subject-formation within the mute structural mechanisms of a mal/functioning bourgeois norm.

Although this thesis agrees that schooling is gendered (and ethnicised, heterosexualised, nationalised and classed), the recognition and investigation of such processes, and in particular the concern about the role of texts in organising and legitimating forms of exclusion, suggests that normalisation is practised not on the model of an ambivalent oedipal construction but rather within a grid of observation. Thus, where Walkerdine sees the systematic construction of failure for girls and its explanation in a phallogocentric symbolic economy, she focuses only on the “dominant” mode of judgment underlying the lived experience of subjectivity, and not on the proliferation of studies and remedies for inequality and the determination to discover and redress the causes of inequality (and even to interrogate the historical specificity of “equality”) within education systems. The desiring positions available in literacy discourse are not exhausted by those operating on unconscious, embodied levels: indeed, desires for the finding, diagnosis and remediation of problems are distributed along its entire extent.

Further, Walkerdine argues that “developmental psychology universalises the masculine and European, such that peripheral subjects are rendered pathological and abnormal” (Walkerdine “Beyond Developmentalism” 451). What is relevant to the project of the present thesis is the identification of a subject invisibly present within a form of knowledge, as part of a discourse that constantly problematises its knowledge. While it is true that Walkerdine’s suspicion is directed at developmental psychology in its relation to mathematics pedagogy, this deciphering of inequalities and exclusions occurs

also in literacy discourse on a regular basis. For a Foucaultian analysis, such deciphering is neither false nor true, but is rather an available move in establishing modes of problematisation. It is also the exact operation of the Cartesian, Western, rational, self-founding subject, one that is more an artefact of the critical discourse than the direct production of authoritative knowledges, that needs to be discovered, rather than assumed, in this thesis.

Another problematic feature of Walkerdine's research for the project of this thesis is her tendency to move from Foucaultian lines to Lacanian. While this shifting and combination generates a cogent critical discourse within a feminist deconstructionist tradition, it significantly inflects the operation of Foucaultian analysis. While she argues that knowledges are historically constituted, that the "truth" of "woman" as deficient in reason is constituted through the very practices set up to test that proposition, Walkerdine relies on a certain concept of the sign which subtly rewrites a Foucaultian understanding of discourse into a binarising machine of self and Other, "man" and "woman." Thus, while Foucault distinguishes very clearly between, on the one hand, the statement and its correlative field and, on the other, the relation of signifier and signified, Walkerdine redefines discursive relations as semiotic and Lacanian:

the "real" of a child is not something which can be known outside those practices in which its subjectivity is constituted. The signified forms a sign only out of fusion with the signifier. The signifier exists as a relation within a discourse. The material can be known as a relation only within a discursive practice. To say, therefore, that "the child" is a signifier means that it must be united with a signified. Particular children therefore both become children – but also present behaviours to be read – which may be normal or pathological. (Walkerdine, *Schoolgirl Fictions* 139)

This sign, as both statement and semiotic coupling, closes off the complex field of correlations that Foucault sought to stress by giving the statement, as signifier, a destiny. That is, the manifold relations between objects, speakers, concepts, themes, power and knowledge that characterise a field, a set of discursive and operating spaces that raise certain problems, impose certain ways of seeing, knowing and acting. In reducing the

statement to the sign, Walkerdine invokes a pedagogical image of the child as readable sign, an image generated through the relations of schooling. Abstracting the textualised child from its conditions of appearance, moreover, obscures any attempt at a historical analysis.

Walkerdine is somewhere inside the discourse of pedagogical social relations, which literacy discourse touches on, where the questioning of the foundation of authoritative knowledges has increased alongside the proliferation of scientific disciplines in the study of the child. In order to conduct her critique, she must separate off a veridical discourse of description, of the psychoanalytic/semiotic nature which stands in the place of real effectivity, from the parsimonious denial of ambivalence and difficulty characteristic of program and protocol. Foucault is therefore used as one of a number of strategic operators, as the authority for a counter-history of child psychology, as the producer of the epistemic scandal (in his claim that a discourse constructs its objects and does not reveal them), and as the historicising anchor of the psychoanalytic. Walkerdine thus constructs a discourse of struggle, articulating the Foucaultian history of power with a Lacanian reading of gender identities and a post-structuralist diagnosis of mathematics pedagogy as a site of struggle between “man” and “woman”:

within current school mathematics practices, certain fantasies, fears and desires invest “man” with omnipotent control of a calculable universe, which at the same time covers a desperate fear of and desire for the Other, “woman.” “Woman” becomes the repository of all the dangers displaced from the child, itself “father” to the man. As I have argued, the necessity to prove the mathematical inferiority of girls is motivated not by a certainty but by a terror of loss. In all these respects, I have wanted to suggest a story in which these very fantasies, fears, desires become the forces that produce the actual effectivity of the construction of fact, of current discursive practices in which these fantasies are played out and in actual positions in such practices which, since they can be proved to exist, literally have power over the lives of girls and boys, as in Foucault’s power/knowledge couple.
(*Schoolgirl Fictions* 139)

There may well be a symbolic figure of “man” within educational discourse, but its centrality, efficacy and status are evident only given Walkerdine’s theoretical commitments. The procedure of psychoanalytic interpretation, however much it is steadied by a post-structuralist meta-language of signs and signifying chains, is a deciphering of the familial “structure” within social space. In educational discourse it is part of a larger set of practices relating the familial to the pedagogical, as in the relations of correlation (e.g., the economic class of the family predicts the child’s achievement), articulation (programs of cooperation and correction, home instruction, family counselling) and division (removal of the child from the family’s pernicious influence, the contest of authority between school and family knowledge, the reluctance of the family to consult the teacher about the child). Walkerdine’s theoretical moves are effective in problematising and complicating the certainties of education; the function and the status of the “‘post’ theorising” done in education, however, assumes a character that is peculiar to the sites it deals with, to the types of “effectivity” it enables.

There are a number of ways in which this thesis differs fundamentally from Walkerdine’s work. It attempts to provide elements of a counter-history, using the notion of the *dispositif*. The thesis does not treat literacy, or the developmental psychology which plays a part in its structure, as Walkerdine does, “in terms of what postmodernists have called ‘grand metanarratives of science,’ large, universal stories whose central character is ‘the child’ and in which key aspects of the plot involve development, reasoning, cognition and so forth” (Walkerdine, “Beyond Developmentalism” 451-2). Each component has, on the contrary, and despite whatever pretensions it may have for itself, a particular set of possible values, positions and possibilities. To reduce such a play of multiple forces and processes to a psychoanalytic and semiotic struggle is as much symptomatic of the discourse as critical. Walkerdine’s exemplary work is also typical, in its eclectic appropriation of poststructuralist and Lacanian feminist work (here Althusser, Foucault, Lacan and Lacanian reworkings like Urwin’s), in its desire to recognise the real oppression of children in the contradictions immanent to socialisation. This involves, at the very least, a psychoanalytic subject desiring and negotiating syntheses. At the level of discourse, this desire to locate the real, to seek the invisible pain of that which is denied, is the positive feature of the criticism of schooling. Rather than project a mechanism of

denial or model the impossible subjects that schooling constitutes, or chart the oscillation of desires between symbolic positions, this thesis examines the desire that produces this search for tenable identities, a desire made available in the social-therapeutic space of schooling. The difficult space that structures the visibility of student identities *accommodates* a call to articulation and recognition. A Foucaultian analysis *sans* Lacan locates such desires within the *dispositif*, as a constructed and functional absence and as a way of knowing and acting within the disciplinary space of schooling.

Walkerdine focuses, moreover, on the problem of developmental psychology in its relation to mathematics education and gendered schooling. Where her work ends is in the agonising recognition of impossibilities: the impossibility of “speaking for” the other (Walkerdine, *Schoolgirl Fictions* 195), the impossibility for a girl of both being a student and becoming a woman, and the impossible fiction of a conflict-free classroom (Walkerdine, *Schoolgirl Fictions* 29-60). Insofar as her work deals with texts, it is concerned with the particular subfield of the pedagogy of desire, with the constitution of desiring gendered subjects through text, and with the production of a counter-narrative of difficult truths against the neatness of the school’s accounts. Concluding a chapter on the role of fantasy in girls’ comics, she outlines this field of concern, wherein, again, Foucault and psychoanalysis are brought together to account for the other of education:

there is a complex and important relationship between theories and practices which produce truth and identities, and the contradictory, multiple positioning of the little girls. I have examined one example of a practice: the fantasy of girls’ comics. We might also look at the practices of schooling which produce positions for girls and claim to know the truth of such girls as singular beings: with personalities, intelligence, and so on. (Walkerdine, *Schoolgirl Fictions* 103)

The subsequent exhortation is a call to write desire differently in feminist fictions, to examine and appropriate this desire for feminist subjects, for “if current fictions produce such powerful effects, such potent fantasies, we too must work on the production of other possible dreams and fantasies” (105). The text is the locus of operation for the transitive period of childhood, the site where a search for the true nature of this

production is sought and found. Even at this slight remove from literacy discourse, however, Walkerdine's statements are something quite different. Where the discovery and practice of "relevance," "readability" and the engagement of children in a better form of subjectivity-production (as representers of the social, as negotiating subjects) is for the purpose of constructing the appropriate literacy in the one discourse, writing desire better is part of a mapping of overlaid and contradictory identity-constructions within a project of better and more sensitive schooling, in the other.

The difference between the type of critical project embodied in Walkerdine's work and the deployment of critical social theory in literacy discourse is, however, easily collapsed when the former is put to use in literacy studies. To take an example, Nola Alloway, Peter Freebody, Pam Gilbert and Sandy Muspratt (*Boys, Literacy and Schooling*) use critical social concepts, including Walkerdine's accounts of school subjectivities, in designing interventions which utilise school space for the production of "expanded repertoires" of literate practices and literate selves. In this program, critical theories of gender as performance are mobilised to secure the productive interrelation between selves, texts and school. The insight that gender and self are performed yield a program of diversifying the connections between self and the performance of literacy:

teachers attempted to expand repertoires for presenting the self by, for example:

- reconfiguring classroom literacy as active and embodied;
- capitalising on choice and personal experience; and
- focusing on boys' sense of self. (Alloway, et al. 3)

Using the critical understanding that masculinities are produced through the construction of modes of relating yields a program to engender a "repertoire for relating":

teachers attempted to expand repertoires for relating by positioning boys as:

- "learners" in literacy classrooms; and
- "class participants" in literacy classrooms. (Alloway, et al. 3)

Finally, the program introduced the text as the surface of the world into the classroom, connecting the school with a mediated outside of sites and formations by means of "a repertoire for engaging with and negotiating the culture."

a repertoire for engaging with and negotiating the culture. This entails looking beyond standard school to literacy-related materials from other cultural sites and formations, including contemporary commercial youth culture, integrating a wide range of modes of expression (oral, written, electronic, musical, visual, and so on), and cross-cultural or imagined (for example, fantasy) settings. For boys it also entails negotiating the hyper-masculine world, along with what it means to be male in such a world, and the meanings and ways of being constructed through such a world.

As detailed in Chapter 6, teachers attempted to expand repertoires for engaging cultures by focusing on, for example:

- the “real” and everyday;
- popular culture materials;
- electronic technologies; and
- multimedia and multimodal work. (Alloway, et al. 3)

Concepts used in the critical examination of the relations of schooling are themselves transcribable into, and instrumental in, the everyday implementation of the textualised discipline of literacy. Whereas Walkerdine is concerned with rewriting desire and with analysing the construction of gendered schooled subjectivities, this thesis is concerned rather with the specific instrumentalisation of critical social knowledges, among others, in the literacy dispositif. The difference between work such as Walkerdine’s and that of this thesis concerns the objects investigated: analysis of the dispositif requires a specific complex of techniques and concepts. The use of Walkerdine’s work within a pedagogised space of literacy research and implementation does not, however, mean that a kind of blind repression is happening, but rather that the productivity of this power-knowledge relies upon the enlistment of critical desires and that the general relations of the discourse perform a constant transcription at its borders.

Again, the tiny but crucial difference that separates literacy discourse from Walkerdine’s critical account of schooling needs to be acknowledged. It is with this difference in mind, a subtle but crucial difference, that the thesis addresses the work of several literacy theorists who seek to engineer a better literate subjectivity, and who

foreground Foucaultian theoretical concepts in their efforts. This gap between “post” theoretical critiques and their critical-pedagogical deployments in literacy discourse is the difference between a call to write desire differently and a programmatic textualisation of student and world in a general intensification of power-relations.

Foucaultian works like that of Allan Luke seek to establish a true nature of the text within a meta-level,²⁷ which functions as a description of the power and identity-effects of language, of all the social interests and efforts to control and define that constitute an immanent politics of language as a representation of the world and an insertion and distribution of subjects within the world:

Providing students with theoretically and historically grounded frameworks from which to approach cultural and textual constructs of identity gives students the discourse analytic tools with which to interrogate the sociocultural and historical contingencies of difference, exclusion, and marginalisation. (Luke, *Social Construction* 47)

In this, the school is both a textual construction of the world and a space where it is imperative to double the texts of the world outside, a space where reflection of the right kind will prepare students for that world from which this space is removed. Thus Luke calls for students to be taught to interrogate the textual universe of the school itself,

from basal readers to science, geography or history texts in order that students question the politics of constructs such as “science,” “progress,” “History,” “discovery,” “populations,” “society and the individual,” and so forth. (47)

It is by demonstrating the truth of language in all its multiple significance, its timeliness, its constructedness, in its complicity with power, that literacy discourse constructs a knowledge that may be measured and evaluated in its probable or traceable effects; it is in the recognition of language as the substance of truth, being and action that a student is constituted as the subject of a pedagogical practice s/he performs on him/herself and undergoes; and it is from the revelation of language that the school achieves its essential spatial purpose of representing the world while withdrawing it. If

²⁷ See also Green (“Re-righting;” *Insistence*).

the Foucaultian scholars of literacy achieve the most radical account of language and power, this account is written in the interest of a greater efficiency; where the truth of being is higher, where it has nowhere further to go, where truth functions most invisibly.

Unlike Luke, this thesis does not take the text as the site of the production of truth, subjectivity and power, but rather the knowledge of the text as a component of the power that subjects the student to textuality, as the *Curriculum Framework* analysis indicates. Luke stresses the tactical limits of genre education in its assumptions of power residing within text types. His instructional design and curriculum, however, are concerned with creating an assessment regime that gives the educational authorities greater knowledge, that ascertains the proper nature of the individual (by finding her/his context, by generating the right pedagogical forms from a number of co-present alternatives and their combinations) and adjusts itself to ensure that individual's potential, in terms of measures that conform as closely as possible to the "needs" of the individual him/herself. Governmentality is at work here: if Luke is at odds with proposed new measures of achievement, it is because these are misleading and would replace the existing composite methods, the latter providing a more comprehensive picture and better informing the choice about interventions at tactical (individual) and strategic (policy) levels.

Literacy discourse is described by Luke as in the middle of a momentous struggle, at least in terms of defining what gets taught, how, what consequences should be made to follow, and what kind of life students get taught *for*. Yet what recurs again and again in literacy education is the advocacy of a subjection that is at once the recognition that one's being is constructed through language, a pedagogy in which students chart their own progress with a language about language, a production of oneself as a narrative and a portfolio, and a goal to develop the powers of language within the student as the substance proper to the student. This dilemma is as much real as it is the product of a historical mode of being in a dispositif: Luke's argument elides the specificity of literacy discourse by aligning the discourse's injunction to produce, map and discipline developmental-linguistic subjectivities with a broader project of social justice. As the *Curriculum Framework* shows, this concern to do justice to excluded subjectivities is readily transcribed into a power that accommodates and disciplines linguistic difference. Rather than merely perpetuate and reflect existing divisions, the literacy discourse invents

a strategic recombination, incorporating critical metalinguistic awareness into a modality of power.

Other studies use Foucault to reduce the emergence of educational rationality to the rise of the prestigious historical personality of the liberal academic. Unlike Ian Hunter and Geoff Stokes, this thesis does not assume that what dominates the “University Arts Faculty” is a prestigious persona that determines thinking about education in the arts, this persona being at odds with a rational bureaucratic one. Hunter and Stokes, in *Accounting for the Humanities*, use Foucault to further a Weberian argument about the personalities cultivated in certain institutional settings. An analysis of Hunter’s work shows that, while many of their individual findings are very valuable, such studies rely upon an untenable circular argument.

In *Accounting for the Humanities* and *Rethinking the School*, Hunter argues that the ethical domain of educational administration is hermetically sealed, secluded from the influence of claims which, by virtue of this fact, are external to it. This claim is sustained by another claim – given more or less apodeictic status – that a historical ethical comportment is the *unfounded* basis of action in any modern form of life. The circularity of Hunter’s argument is clear. First, he asserts that there are separate, mutually unintelligible ethical comportments not amenable to criticism. Second, he reads the documentary record only in the light of this assumption. Third, he states that the documentary record proves that the history of humanities education involves separate and mutually unintelligible ethical comportments. Hunter is not especially blameworthy here, since studies purporting to be critical are by and large done in this way, as he shows in his rather limited analysis of “principled” critiques in *Rethinking the School*. Where he differs from most contemporary “critical” studies is in proclaiming his own circular argument as representing the undeniable historical truth of education.

Hunter introduces the main themes of *Accounting for the Humanities* by contrasting its theoretical commitments with those of more traditional studies. He quotes “a recent book on the role of the state in the development of mass education,” by Andy Greene, where class interests are used to explain and describe educational developments. Hunter uses this example to discredit Marxist studies of education as presumptuous distortions.

According to Hunter, Greene misrepresents the contempt of a certain nineteenth-century factory inspector for workers' children as "typical" (xi). Hunter notes that Greene "claims that [class] interest led to a narrow utilitarian view of education and a pedagogy based on discipline, rote learning and the inculcation of subaltern moral virtues" (xi). Greene is thus, Hunter contends, arguing that "economic position" determined the different interests in education held by the classes involved. Similarly, Greene is depicted as heroicising the Chartists and William Lovett in particular. Hunter is using Greene in two ways: as an introduction to and discrediting of Marxist theorists, and as an introduction to and discrediting of all "principled" critiques and histories of modern mass education. While *Accounting for the Humanities* makes no mention of "unprincipled" postmodernist work, Foucaultian historians *are* mentioned, and credited with coming "closest to the mark" historically.

There are a number of methodological issues on which this thesis disagrees with Hunter's work. In dismissing "principled" histories, he is not only constituting the field of critical educational thought in a fairly narrow and typifying way, he is also proposing a "correct" analysis of and response to the historical, theoretical and practical problems of state education. The Marxists and the liberal critics, he argues, have been blinded by historically formed ideals which they have mistaken as eternal, immutable and achievable. These theorists, he contends, have been suffering from a severe illusion. In order to establish his alternative as definitive, Hunter brings attention to a previously unnoticed but apparently pivotal clue which clarifies the true meaning of the history of Western mass education. The culprit, the key explanatory term, for this history is neither class nor the state, but something else passed over for being too vulgar by the idealist: it was the specific improvised technical-pastoral configuration of the state educational bureaucracy.

In securing this conclusion, Hunter's strategy is to concentrate on carefully selected evidence to the exclusion of much that is relevant. Thus, his initial ploy is to quote the Chartist leader William Lovett on the topic of the playground. "At the very heart of Lovett's plan for a democratic and emancipatory working-class school," writes Hunter, "lay a highly distinctive image of the playground." He then quotes Lovett's description:

While much moral instruction may be conveyed in the school-room, the playground will be found the best place for *moral training*; where all [the children's] faculties will be active, and when their dispositions and feelings will all be displayed in a different manner than when they are in the school-room, where silence, order and discipline should prevail. But when in the playground, the teacher should incite them to amusement and activity, in order to develop their characters . . . (Lovett 49, qtd. in Hunter, "Personality" xii)

He notes that this quotation is troublesome not only for its insistence on "silence, order and discipline" in the schoolroom, but also in arranging a complex form of power in the playground. This is presented as a particularly symptomatic quotation, yielding a substantial insight into Lovett's agenda. Hunter proceeds to juxtapose it with Kay-Shuttleworth's admiring testimony on the use of playgrounds in David Stow's schools:

A playground is in fact the principal scene of the real life of children . . . the arena on which their true character and dispositions are exhibited; and where, free and unconstrained, they can hop and jump about, swing, or play at tig, ball, or marbles . . . Amidst this busy scene, the trainer must be present, not to check but to encourage youthful gaiety. All is free as air, and subject only to a moral observation of any particular delinquency, the review of which is reserved for the school gallery, and taken up on the children's return there, and pictured out as a moral training lesson . . .

A monitor or a janitor won't do as a substitute for the sovereign authority of the master, which all acknowledge, and whose condescension, in taking a game or swing with them, is felt as a kindness and a privilege, and who, in consequence, is enabled to guide them by a moral, rather than by a physical influence. (Kay-Shuttleworth 79, qtd. in Hunter, "Personality" xiii)

The "unavoidable and striking" similarities here, Hunter suggests, indicate that political and economic differences, as well as imputed progressive and repressive characters, are belied by a basic similarity in all state educational discourse, which must be attributed to the specific tools available for intervention at the time. Hunter claims that

“the learning environment overseen by its pastoral teacher . . . was indeed the model for the state’s intervention for popular education. It has, however, proved surprisingly impervious to modern theoretical analysis” (xiii-xiv). In other words, this is the truth (or the central and most important thing) that has thus far been ignored because researchers have sought to confirm *a priori* convictions. Hunter thus implicitly denies that the theoretical concerns one brings to an inquiry have no inconsiderable part in the evaluation of what is central or important. It would certainly be presumptuous to eliminate class interest, economics and politics from the list of factors in the history of education as somehow obscuring the really important thing, namely the pastoral bureaucracy in the playground. This is not to say that Hunter’s contention is worthless or false, but that proclaiming the discovery of the essential truth (or even the most important part of it) involves a set of extremely complex considerations about importance, relevance, function, structure, field, level and so on.

In asking about importance and relevance, one asks a question relative to a whole set of conceptual definitions, limitations of scope, admissibility of evidence, types and value of data, similarity to descriptions of current situations, allocations of resource and status, and paradigmatic, phrasal and propositional arrangements. Thus one might ask if Hunter is describing something that is productive in the current educational setting (that is, whether it informs or obscures such current concerns as privatisation). Investigating function, one might evaluate the discursive elements he has isolated to see exactly how they have acted in the various mutations of educational thought (this would allow one to define and delimit new fields). If one is asking questions about levels, it is apparent that Hunter’s discovery is situated in particular strata of educational practice, and in the field of its discourse, and at the level of particular enunciative events (books on education by “experts” is a possible description). One might observe that Lovett and Kay-Shuttleworth had cultivated different personae and audiences, that the effects and meanings of similar utterances underwent entirely different regimes of interpretation in their respective constituencies and underwent significant mutation at different levels of life (for teachers, for workers, for trainees, for men and women, in community programmes, in opposition to other groups). That people may have acted for control or determination of education *as a class* or that class identification may well have affected pedagogical practice are

contentions that are not impaired by the “unavoidable and striking” similarities adduced. Nor are these quotations enough to prove that the pastoral teacher’s techniques of sympathetic observation were even *discursively* important.

Even if he does not disprove competing contentions, it is incumbent upon Hunter to demonstrate that this “statement” and its attendant conditions of possibility are crucial in the history of mass education. Similarities alone do not fulfil this requirement, although his work is important in having opened up new avenues of inquiry. The problem is the notion of levels of operation. Recognising that they do not, and cannot, investigate all parts of the historical record, practitioners of a historical discipline set up a general object to investigate and generate several derivative objects. These objects are more or less fictional in that they are made up and maintained as discursive constructs, but they are also in some ways related to a reality that precedes them and which they recognise as authoritative and corrective. Thus, in finding that Kay-Shuttleworth promoted playgrounds, one is not able to say the contrary (unless a contravening rule, such as the interpretation of irony, allows). Practitioners usually have a concept of both what they study in general and what they investigate in particular. Moreover, they spend some time defining the effects of their objects and of their findings on, if not the “thing itself,” then on the rules of investigation. This entails reflection on how the parts of a discipline fit together, asking whether a particular finding supersedes another, modifies it, or leaves it unaffected. Instead of addressing these questions, Hunter conducts his inquiry on two related levels. His positive project arises from the search for a genealogy of state-educational reason. This is an investigation into a restricted and theoretically guided set of discursive elements (which may or may not accurately represent a larger body) and a historical assay into the wider forces leading towards state education. His negative project is to demonstrate that “principled position” histories are wrong, and poorly founded. He argues that historical fact is against both Marxist and liberal historians, and that “principled” critiques and investigations fail to recognise their origin in, and debt to, state schooling.

Hunter’s retheorising of the history of mass education employs a selection from the theoretical and methodological outlooks of Foucault and Weber. However, his “genealogical” approach to the concept of culture and the development of education

diverges somewhat from the actual critical methodologies of these authors. Hunter brings a new interpretive frame and a new principle of selection to educational documents. That he presents this principle as an exhaustive representation of the rationality and practice of educational administration, however, has very little justification, either in Foucaultian epistemology or in school documents concerning the management of students. His mode of research and the claims he supports with it diverge from Foucault's comparatively modest claim to be identifying levels of practice and thought which had crucial mutative functions in the surviving record.

Hunter also makes certain claims about the nature of historical change that are unsupportable within a Foucaultian problematic. He argues that, since there are separate ethical compartments, one cannot influence another. Yet he also claims that modern educational practice developed out of two distinct practices and their corresponding ethical personae. Like all circular arguments, Hunter's is both difficult to prove and hard to refute. If one adduces evidence of educational management not in keeping with his model (Paolo Freire, Pestalozzi, Montessori, and various contemporary educators), this shows (in his interpretation) only that the practice in question was not in accordance with the "real" or "true" practice, or that it was caused by a confusion on the part of the educators. In presenting a view of the state of education that precludes "principled positions," Hunter's thesis amounts to a narrow delimitation of the "realistic" options for change and improvement.

From this genealogical account, moreover, Hunter draws a moral: one should work with the bureaucratic apparatus in assigning to each person a place in discourse by virtue of their disciplinary qualifications. Thus, in pursuit of a reasonable future for the teaching of English, Hunter draws implications from his genealogy for how English teachers should view and conduct themselves. Since the modern school was a pastoral-bureaucratic venture from the beginning, the "principled" dualisms that inform it are nothing more than the universalising projection of the prestigious humanities teacher's compartment. "We" should thus "step back from the dominant critique of state schooling," which

depends on a series of principled oppositions between the emancipation of persons and the interests of the state, between personal development and social skilling, between critical and vocational education. (Hunter, "After English" 324-25)

The "oppositional critique" of state schooling that remains committed to these binaries fails to realise that

the modern school emerged as a purpose-built environment in which personal inwardness was transmitted as a desirable social skill; in which personal development was tied to the state's interest in disciplining and modernising chaotic populations; and in which the teacher supervised his or her charges with both the solicitous care of the pastor and the impersonal expertise of the bureaucrat. (Hunter, "After English" 325)

What Hunter advocates is the separation of pedagogy from the amateurism of the English teacher, and specifically "a postpersonalist ethics pedagogy" ("After English" 332). The problem with English is that it has always been an "amalgam of introspective ethics . . . and literary rhetoric" ("After English" 329). This has been compounded by a later development in language teaching where "all uses of language are pictured as texts" and "all human activities . . . are also given a questionable linguistic unity through their nomination as genres" ("After English" 329). For Hunter, this has two consequences: "the language user transcends all historical conditions . . . and is transformed into . . . the subject of consciousness," and the confluence of inward ethics and vague genre instruction makes pedagogy impractically ill-defined (330). The solution is to design technical rhetoric courses and a separate course in civics, thereby ridding the pedagogical space of inefficiencies (332).

Though often accurate and compelling, Hunter's characterisation of nineteenth-century mass schooling suffers from some shortcomings both in analysis and interpretation. Hunter imposes a disciplinary morality upon the teacher, one that segregates knowledge according to its proper representatives within a space of functional divisions. He identifies the pastoral as a tradition deriving from the emergence of compulsory schooling, and as an inefficient aspect of its operation. He replaces the

transcendental subject of textuality with a self-disciplining “ethical comportment” which should be properly compartmentalised. One normative regime thus replaces another: he asks “us” to *intensify* the disciplinary power of the school. In doing so, he ignores the possibility that a textualisation of space enables the school to function, and constitutes the form of its power, and the fact that pedagogy has changed since the nineteenth century. With each reiteration of binaries, with each redrawing of oppositions, a new arrangement of the old terms comes into view, and forces are arranged in a different way.

Hunter’s projection of school space onto a comportment, and subsequent critique of teaching as a problem of (the teacher’s) ethical self-formation, cuts short the possibility of examining school space as more than the conjunction of new statistical techniques with a transcendent textual subject. The convergence of an art of government and a liberal arts pedagogy centred on notions of culture, rather than forming a blind spot in the efficacy of and the self-analysis of the other, is a key event in the mutation of state power. The productive interweaving of these elements and others creates a rich space of representation and removal, of alternating scales of perception, recording, concern and intervention. The nineteenth century constructs a dynamic, topologically complex space of forces and locations, a space which nationalises the school and schools the nation, a space of continuous expansion and problematisation.

For this thesis the correctness of one or another historical position is secondary to the deployment of these positions within the literacy discourse and the power-knowledge relations it inscribes. The discourse’s readiness to call for the intensification of pedagogical power is the general problem addressed by this thesis, especially where this intensification promises something better this time round, while at the same time reinstating a relationship of truth and power between subject and language, between student and literacy. In failing to problematise the relation between the discursive horizon of thought and a general space of schooling, Foucaultian instances of the discourse on literacy fail to recognise their own constitution and effectivity within the power-knowledge coupling of the pedagogical state.

In the chapters to follow, this thesis traces the outlines of this *dispositif*, examines the relations between this discursive figure and this functioning of power, follows the

abstract outline of this machine which constitutes one of the horizons of what is capable of being said, and seen, today. It re-reads a selection of texts, mainly from the nineteenth century, and constructs an account of the convergence of elements – problem populations, national projects, techniques of control, spatial arrangements and normalising knowledges – that haunt the knowledges, practices and experiences of literacy. The space of the school is the pre-eminent site organising these elements and proliferating its concepts, techniques and spaces throughout the social field. Chapter Five looks at how literacy operates in a complex space, a pedagogical heterotopia, constructing the student, the nation, public discourse, and language as visible substances and establishing modes of intervention.

5: The Spaces of Visibility

This chapter discusses the effect of schooling as part of a particular set of cultural parameters structuring the experience, use and understanding of the text in the discourse of literacy, arguing that the school constitutes a certain type of place, not exactly physical or ideal but practical and conceptual. The chapter outlines Foucault's concept of heterotopia and then proceeds to deploy it as a model for understanding literacy and schooling as practices and cultural forms which, while connected to political and social processes, are not reducible to them. The model is used first in an analysis of contemporary statements in the discourse of literacy – those dealing in a summary and marginal way with public discourse, national and international identities and institutions as the foundation for knowledges of literacy – because they are invocations of an established and ongoing construction of a pedagogical and textualising distribution of spaces generative of literacy as a self-evident experience. Rather than presenting a spontaneous “isness” in which literacy simply appears, these descriptions of public space generate a space in which literacy emerges as both public and schooled, both governmental and inevitable. Because this insistent re/creation of a space with a governmental addressee, the nation-state as relevant unit, with development and language as signs of an economic and cultural imperative, is a reconfiguration of older, specifically nineteenth-century spaces, the chapter then analyses the earlier construction of the school as a therapeutic and clinical space optimising the instruction and treatment of the child as physiological sequence while at the same time serving the productive demands of the state. It examines the ways in which the nineteenth century produced disciplinary pedagogical spaces that rendered visible and manipulable the developing student, the text and language as pedagogical and developmental instruments, and articulated the school with a “world” understood as the pressures of modernisation and national development.

Treating literacy as thus co-determined with the school in its mode of being not only avoids the reification of literacy as an autonomous social force but also makes it possible to approach the question of why literacy has become visible, obvious and true in this discourse. Moreover, it permits one to precisely delineate literacy as part of mode of

power, demonstrating that literacy constitutes a mechanism of projecting the general relations of the school onto other sites.

Following its analysis of the construction of schooled spaces and subjects, the chapter examines the special knowledges that emerged with the nationalising of social space in the nineteenth century, taking the Inspectorate's observation of Welsh Sunday Schools as paradigmatic of how these knowledges invalidated marginal languages and groups by relating them to the economic and cultural demands of national progress. The nineteenth-century pedagogical heterotopia, a complex and specific distribution, directly informs the therapeutic, textualised and organically sequenced forms in which power is exercised over students through school, as well as the forms of knowledge and description that inform and structure this power. The situating of the text between school and demanding world generates a series of available discursive positions, including the liberation of the subject through language. Drawing attention to this persistent yet mutative arrangement of spaces completes the characterisation of the literacy dispositif and locates a moment in which the national language and the text of schooling simultaneously emerge.

Foucault's Spaces: The School as Heterotopia

The complex set of relations established between school and world is part of the generative matrix of literacy discourse and of the governmental textualisation of existence encoded and enacted by it. Foucault's concept of heterotopias is useful in this context because the discursively and practically generated space of schooling that realises these relations necessitates a specific set of concepts relating to spaces and an explanation of the paradoxical function of a space which is simultaneously both open to all other emplacements and also operates on the basis of exclusion and enclosure.

The complex space of interrelations operated through national schooling requires a conceptual schema capable of discerning the often paradoxical functions and processes enacted in the literacy dispositif. The spatial complexity of this dispositif was made particularly clear in the analysis of the *Curriculum Framework*, disclosing an isomorphism between the spatial division of the school and the internal divisions of the literate subject. In order to map the emergence of the spatial order which engenders these

effects, and to complete the thesis' charting of the literacy dispositif it is necessary to turn to Foucault's work on space, and specifically to his work on heterotopias. In a lecture presented to the Architectural Studies Circle in 1967, Foucault outlined a project and a concern which is central to his work: the historical construction of spaces. He characterises space as a central obsession of twentieth-century knowledge and proceeds to elaborate on heterotopias, a concept he had already introduced, in a faltering and incomplete way, in *The Order of Things*, and which had been present but unspoken in *Madness and Civilisation* (it plays a fundamental part, also, in *Discipline and Punish* and *The Birth of the Clinic*).¹ Having proposed a general history of emplacements (ways of organising space, both within discourse and without), he declares:

But what interests me among all these emplacements are certain ones that have the curious property of being connected to all the other emplacements, but in such a way that they suspend, neutralise, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected, or represented by them. ("Different Spaces" 178)

These spaces he designates as either utopias or heterotopias. Utopias are unreal places maintaining "a general relation of direct or inverse analogy with the real space of society" (178). Heterotopias, on the other hand, are real places

that are designed into the very institution of society, which are all sorts of actually realised utopias in which the real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested, and reversed, sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are actually localisable. (178)

He proposes six principles for the description of heterotopias: they are present in all societies; existing heterotopias can be made to function in new ways; they can, in a single

¹ In both of *The Order of Things* and *Birth of the Clinic* Foucault's remarks concerning space are prefatory. In *The Order of Things*, even though he is primarily dealing with formations of knowledge, Foucault makes it clear that heterotopias are as much discursive as they are physical places. Utopias, while unreal, "open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical" (xvii). Heterotopias, on the other hand, destroy "the apparent syntax [allowing] words and things . . . to 'hold together'" (xvii). In the preface to *The Birth of the Clinic* is quoted in Chapter Four, above. Various sites in *Discipline and Punish* are clearly given heterotopic descriptions, including shipyards, schools, barracks, scaffolds and prisons.

space, “juxtapose several emplacements that are incompatible” (181): they are “connected with temporal discontinuities” (182); they “presuppose a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at the same time” (183); and, finally, “they have a function in relation to the remaining space” (184), either in denouncing “all real emplacements” or in creating “a different real space as perfect, meticulous, as well-arranged as ours is disorganised, badly arranged, and muddled” (184). Schooling, as both a discursive construct and a real set of places, as a heterotopia, may be seen as a ubiquitous pedagogised space operating in literacy discourse, and traced to nineteenth-century problematisations of school space. The school emerges as a space in which the disparate elements necessary for the concept of literacy to take place – both discursively and as an experience – are brought together, made visible, and related to each other.

Foucault divides the utopia in general into the utopia of fiction and dream (his sense of “utopia”) and the utopia realised, the heterotopia, necessarily a hetero-place, a place of difference from the world of relations to which it refers and which it in fact suspends, neutralises or reverses. The school operates as such a space, as a travesty, as an ideal representation, and as an inversion of the world. The world is to be found entirely represented within its walls; the world is both the necessary experience for education and the experience it is necessary not to have in school. It is within a generative space between the school and the world that literacy belongs in all its problems and findings, in the relations it establishes between the system of language and its realisation in internally represented rules and within a practice of inducing the literacy event, arranging the experience, organising a space of appearance, training the separation and analysis of performance elements, relating those elements to the world, to a totality of relations, in different ways, according as they are designated, reflected or represented.

Separation from the world is the condition for the demand of the world to be formulable and enforceable. Without this removal and articulation the “world” (or rather a fiction of the world) operates as a particular site, as an individual career, as demands which are here and now and for a particular purpose, never in terms of a preparation for the world in general (though, of course, such removal and articulation have a moral or instrumental relation to the demands of other institutions). Moreover, while every

emplacement makes it possible to claim that one is learning the rules of the world, it is only in school that this function is recognised as necessary, as either lacking or too full (teaching critical attitudes does not guarantee participation in power;² reproducing the demands of corporate life reproduces inequitable social relations).³ It is only with school that this is recognised as a requisite function, because the school, far from being the site *par excellence* of social reproduction, is the site of the reproduction of the social as representation.⁴

Space(s) in the Contemporary Discourse of Literacy

That a heterotopia is continuously constructed from a mixture of national planning, education provision and utopian dreaming is a notion expressed by contemporary curriculum planners themselves. For example, the articulation between utopias and the literacy curriculum is the subject of a keynote address by Ken Boston at the Curriculum Corporation's sixth National Conference, held in 1999. Boston argues that throughout Australian history a relationship has persisted between the popularity of utopian fiction, nation-building legislation and educational reform incorporating new technologies in response to the new information economy. He argues that a tradition of nationalist cyber-utopianism has secured, and will secure in future, a national pedagogical space:

we now need a strategy for sharing curriculum materials and delivery by means of a national grid, based on a partnership between the Commonwealth, States and Territories to provide a national and globally competitive digital curriculum platform for all Australian schools.

² Thompson, conceding that "it does not appear that revolution is just around the corner," calls for the classroom to be converted into a theatre of difference and exclusion, and thus a theatre of the world it excludes, with performance pedagogy, that is, a series of role-playing scenarios where the lessons students receive from this experience (about exclusion and disempowerment) are prompted and prepared by the radical educator.

³ For this argument, see Stuckey (*Violence*); Marshall ("Educational Research;" "Neo-Liberalism;" "Mode of Information") and Hamilton ("Peddling;" "Fordism").

⁴ Thus the paradoxical research literature which, while it shows the efficacy and even superiority of non-school activities in fostering literacy, nonetheless insists on using such data to provide for better instruction within school. See Hull and Schulz for a review of this literature. Heath is important here for bringing to this ethnography of communication a pedagogical imperative.

The notion that space and literacy are codetermining, whether this is connected with an (inter)national space, a classroom or a scriptorium, is a common feature of the contemporary discourse of literacy. Illich, for example, argues that “lay literacy,” that is, the web of meanings and experiences that are constructed by a literate environment, acts as both a cipher and a central characteristic of European societies since the fifth century BCE (Illich 35). Apart from insisting, with Parry and his elaborators, on the break between oral and literate cultures, Illich contends that Europe’s relationship to literacy has produced a series of unique “mental spaces,” which he also describes as “pedagogical space.” Each epoch has an

effect that the visible text [has] at that moment on a web of other concepts that, in their formation, are dependent on the alphabet. I point to such notions as self, conscience, memory, possessive description, and identity.

The “urgency” of Illich’s plea for research arises from the threat to this inherited space by the “cybernetic mind,” a different experience of space, possibly unaccompanied by a deep self (45; see also Illich and Sanders, *ABC*). The articulation of spaces, indeed the modeling of thought and experience through a literate space, is persistently invoked in the discourse, informing its hopes and fears.

These highly idealised notions of “space” – a national utopia and a spatialised literate mentality – are accompanied by more literal, more concrete analyses of schooled space. Bruce Smith, for instance, contends that the liberal classroom of the nineteenth century rendered “state control the most rational and reasonable way to organise the provision of Australian education” (73). The classroom constituted a new kind of space, producing experts and disqualifying others as a consequence of its own workings, rather than simply reflecting and enacting political interests (Smith 73). The liberal classroom was not, however, an isolated location, but rather formed a node in a larger network and occupied a pre-eminent position in the making of a national space peopled by national

subjects speaking a national language. The liberal classroom and the school have a heterotopic relation to the spaces that surround them.⁵

Heterotopias in the Discourse of Literacy

On a more systematic discursive level, a heterotopic distribution of schooled spaces operates implicitly within the contemporary discourse of literacy. The school orders this distribution as the organised space of the visibility of literacy. Two examples are analysed here as representative of the discourse: David Barton's statements about the ubiquity of literacy and a discussion of literacy debates by Green, Luke and Hodgens. Within the discourse as a whole literacy is constituted as discourse, as legitimate current concern and as a real set of processes and practices by virtue of being a staple of public debate and a shared memory which turns out to be heterogeneous and incompatible. Contemporary representations of literacy's ubiquity acknowledge a constructed "everywhere," a social space thoroughly pedagogised by way of a national language and disciplined through the text. Literacy constitutes a space – and schooling as a space – which is at the same time the emplacement of all statements about literacy and the place of their logical noncompossibility. The space of schooling renders literacy multiple and contradictory, undefinable and yet always subject to new definitions (as use) and new investigation (as the material and cognitive basis for uses). The space that unifies and organises literacy (rendering it obvious and intelligible) also produces the multiple literacies that preclude a unified concept of literacy. As will be explained in what follows, this contemporary heterotopia, along with many of its difficulties, promises and ambivalences, is related to certain features of the school as it figured in the creation of

⁵ Since heterotopic relations do not directly imply a relation of similarity, this argument neither endorses nor refutes claims that the spatial ordering of curriculum is a direct mapping of knowledge. An example is David Hamilton's enthusiastic recount of his discovery that rhetorical categories of place are analogous, and may be precursors, of modern didactics:

I began to recognise that the content, order, organisation and delivery of a lesson is [sic] analogous to the content, order, organisation and delivery of an argument. Moreover, I realised that preachers, teachers and court-room lawyers are homologous occupations since, respectively, they deliver sermons, lessons, and defenses. (Hamilton, "Dialectic")

Whatever the case, it is certain that such an analogy could only be recognised in this way very recently.

national spaces and subjects and the emergence of a national language in the nineteenth century.

The current self-evidence of literacy is the result of a complex historical construction of the nation around the school, the pedagogical subject, and the language and text that emerged from them. The heterotopic relations realised by the school unite the national space as a complex of pedagogical and developmental sites regulated by reified linguistic performance, that is, by literacy. This interrelation of spaces, however, is also characterised as a knowledge that is always insufficiently disseminated because of the closing of the pedagogical heterotopia to all real emplacements. This space regulates a series of historical relations between therapeutic knowledge of children, the control of language and mobile populations, and the relationship between schooling, national language and the subjection of national subjects. When literacy theorists define literacy as a contested concept, then, they fail to point out either its relative stability or the historical arrangement of spatial and conceptual elements that secures its function as a central concern of power today. That is to say, the relationship of literacy to power involves more than access, identity and subjectivity; the *form* of that power, in creating a bond between state and subject through language, is also at issue.

Literacy discourse always locates literacy, not only in a number of sites, but also in a common space which it pervades. The relationship between the social and economic world surrounding the school and the pedagogical space of schooling runs through discussions of literacy, this relational space being consistently deployed and redefined. Typical is the construction of the public debate on literacy by Bill Green, John Hodgins and Allan Luke in *Debating Literacy in Australia: A Documentary History 1945-1994*. After briefly recognising the extreme recentness of “literacy” as a topic of public debate, they tackle what would seem to be the simple problem of defining what has been spoken of. Their first step is to recognise that it is an empty term, a repository for assumptions, a site of battle:

What is literacy? Across these documents we find it referred to as “skill,” “competence,” “morality,” “tradition,” “heritage,” “knowledge” and so forth. What is interesting is that all of these terms are empty sets for

contemporary social and cultural norms and values. The picture that emerges is that of “literacy” as a continually contested and unfinished concept, an empty canvas where anxieties and aspirations from the popular imagination and public morality are drawn. (“Introduction”)

The appeal of the term, they argue, is that “everybody is an expert on literacy: parents, teachers, politicians, journalists and media ‘experts’ and, of course, students themselves.” They argue that literacy is assumed to be a common experience, because of the experience of schooling. It is the common coin, or at least the simulation of it, because everyone undergoes the process which, it is assumed, is designed to create literacy. But there is more at work in such discussions. Literacy debates occur within a public sphere, through a series of sites (“public forums, from talk-back radio shows to school parent meetings”), and between a set of persons (“parents, teachers, politicians, journalists and media ‘experts’ and, of course, students themselves”). Above all, what gives literacy its fascinating power over “everyone” is that it is “an important cultural touchstone: a point of shared cultural practice and experience.” In the face of change, the school secures a universal experience: “in the midst of dynamic social change and cultural diversity, the experiences of schooling and ‘becoming literate’ are shared social events.” This account may be also, however, read in a different way, with “literacy” not merely something that all have in common: it is by virtue of schooling that “literacy” becomes a recognised substance of experience.

At the back of these statements is a confusion of tongues, groups and interests making up a society, a culture, a nation. Green, Hodgens and Luke continue:

But people have dramatically different memories of becoming literate. Depending on the time and place of their schooling, these range across innumerable versions of the 3R's and the “basics” to grammar school literary education, from religious training to bilingual education, from phonics teaching to creative writing instruction, from memories of corporal punishment and rote learning to open classrooms. These remembrances of literacy past, filtered through years of life history and experience, are easily

turned into claims about how reading and writing *should* be taught, about what teachers and schools *should* do. (“Introduction”)

What is presented here is a *surface of emergence*. Schooling and public debate produce not only normative models but also the outlines of a discursive object. Before a scholarly discourse can be put into play and before reading and writing can become the object of knowledge, this object must emerge in the social space as a problem, as an answer, as a recognised entity, as the traversal of a space that is specific and isolated and at the same time public, common and coextensive with the society. If there is a prehistory of literacy, it is in here, in a public space which has already seized it, which examines and debates it, which forms a popular and shifting concern about it. Literacy is, in the first place, the effect of certain social relations, primarily those concerning school and teaching. It is also the result of a debate about “us,” about the nation and the future, about the nature of children and learning, and about the purposes and effects of reading and writing. As a rhetorical topos, literacy straddles the intimate, the personal and anecdotal, the common, the mystical, the national and the public. If there is a “literate society,”⁶ it is first one which concerns itself with its literacy, and through literacy argues about its character and its destiny:

This reliance on personal memory and local experience is part of what makes debating and discussing what we should be doing with literacy education so difficult. For what at first glance appears to be a cultural touchstone and shared experience, turns out to be a collection of diverse and conflicting experiences. Since the first compulsory State literacy education in the 1400s, one of the persistent beliefs about literacy education has been that it could be the “great leveller,” “equaliser” and unifier. In fact, there is ample historical evidence that literacy education has served very diverse social, political and economic purposes since that time. In many school systems, the unequal distribution of kinds and levels of literate practice and

⁶ See Reeves for an exemplary history of the emergence of the “literate society” in Western Australia. In addition to researching instructional practices and extension of schooling, Reeves points to “environmental print” as evidence of the increasingly “literate” character of social relations throughout the nineteenth century.

skill are used to include *and* exclude students from credentials and, ultimately, occupational and life outcomes. (“Introduction”)

Insofar as it is a public and official obsession, literacy becomes a thing that needs to be understood, a fact of universal interest and debate and a problem for scholarly understanding. The “public,” that is, “everyone,” including the reader, is drawn into this arena of debate and contention. The universal space of public debate, moreover, is discursively connected to the school by a series of moves: the debate is confounded with the nation-state and finally collapsed into a debate about the school and schooling. David Barton, in *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*, similarly, and, again, paradigmatically, uses public space to establish the relevance and ubiquity of literacy. He begins by noting the space of literacy’s emergence as a problem in public debate, a problem which is “everywhere:” “In public debate everywhere there is perceived to be a crisis in education, and the topic of reading and writing is at the centre of the discussion” (1).

The literacy crisis is, insofar as it appears in an individual book, a mere rhetorical commonplace, a way of interesting the reading public. When this topos of public debate is present in a great many books, however, it ceases to be merely a rhetorical device. It is, rather, an acknowledgement of the one common surface from which literacy becomes a “shimmering,”⁷ that is, a vague content – or multiplicity of contents, contexts, meanings, situations, problems and tensions – with a very specific function. Constructing literacy as the object of public debate assures, before any theory is present, that there *is* such a thing as literacy.⁸ There is such a thing, regardless of the theoretical accounts which, in fact, diminish any formal kernel into a contingent itinerary. Literacy is visible and sayable “everywhere.” This is a structured ubiquity, and its features decisively inform the object that emerges from it.

Where is the “everywhere” of which literacy discourse speaks as the site of literacy’s obviousness? The space in which literacy appears is not an abstract open space

⁷ Deleuze (*Foucault* 74) coins this term on the basis of a careful reading of Foucault.

⁸ Illich gives a concise formulation of the operational space of literacy in his discussion of the “literate mind”: it is “a space that is uniform in its characteristics but diverse in all the distortions and transformations these permit” (43). The enumeration of public sites of debate can be read as an expression of a space that literacy emerges from and modifies.

but one structured around sites of national concern. “Everywhere” is “[i]n schools, in the community and in political debate” (Barton 1). This is not the “literacy in everyday life” that Barton designates as his starting-point. “Everywhere” is where literacy becomes a set of relevant social concerns, rather than an operative, analytically and empirically reconstructed category. The first of these concerns is one relating to the role of education as a social good or service: “More than one hundred years after the introduction of compulsory schooling we do not have an educational system which turns out happy, well-educated people” (Barton 1). A sense not only of failure, but also of a distinct mission, is present here. A social goal unites the historical and political “we.” When making this complaint, this claim of failure, Barton is speaking for “countries like Britain and the United States.” There is a European transcendental subject⁹ at work, a “we” for which one speaks, in the name of a democratic, advanced, and communal dream.

There is a common and current process, added to this failure, which makes an intervention into the “literacy debate” somehow vital. Not only is educational provision inadequate as it stands, but “pressures are coming from governments and elsewhere for education to account for what it achieves, and there are new demands from rapidly changing technologies. This is happening throughout industrialised countries” (Barton 1-2). The positions from which one sees such issues as development, the North/South divide, and so on, are clearly governmental, established at the levels of quantitative social science, population and production surveys, mass literacy testing and a range of analyses which estimate the overall size of production and the overall per-capita production/consumption of a population. Barton is neither arguing for this view of humanity, nor has he come to some kind of compromise whereby the committed social/cultural missionary must strategically choose his topos, in order to wield some

⁹ Of course such a subject, while functioning in these texts, is all but explicitly disallowed, transferred as it is upon national necessities and the need to respect the true being of language. Hence, Leong and Randhawa frame the puzzle of literacy between the philosophical tradition and a human imperative to develop linguistic consciousness (v). Similarly, Allan Luke (“Getting Over Method” 3) defines the question of literacies as “about the kinds of literate cultures [students are] likely to encounter and how we would have them design and redesign those cultures and their texts.” The mission, and the subjectivity, also includes critical literacy experts, such as Nicolas Faraclas, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Naz Rassool, working simultaneously within and against Western-dominated institutions of global governance.

influence on the state and on the international education planning bodies.¹⁰ Rather, what is operating here is an assumption about the nation as the relevant unit when arguing the relevance, urgency and extent of literacy.

The developing countries are the counterpart to this Western concern, and the basis for an elaboration of the policy appeal: “in developing countries there is a realisation that literacy rates are not increasing in the ways optimistically predicted twenty years ago; cries for universal literacy by the year 2000 are heard less often. In many countries the concern for money being spent on education is falling” (Barton 2). The view here, the gaze, is not one from within a community, nor is it even what might be called a governmental gaze, but rather supra-governmental. Barton speaks here as a “world citizen,” as an adviser to the United Nations, to UNESCO and its various programs.¹¹ Further, the reference to “many countries” leaves it unclear whether he is writing of “developing” countries or countries in general, but whichever it is, there are a number of prerequisite views on education operating in this statement. First, education is to be paid for and provided, or at least supervised, by the state. Second, the natural unit, though merely an artefact of measurement practices and the assumption of state responsibility, is the nation state – the “country” – when it comes to assessing the state of education, whether it is entering a crisis and whether it is being provided.¹²

The discourse of literacy requires a public space in which a crisis of literacy – regarding its nature, extent, powers and uses – establishes literacy as an object concern and contestation. Barton is paradigmatic, then, in staging the literacy crisis, or at least the crisis in education, as a set of public conflicts, changes, debates and pressures from the concatenation of which an insistent questioning results:

Competing views of what education is for are being made more explicit.

People may disagree about the nature of “the crisis” but there is public unease about what is going on. The purpose of schools and education has

¹⁰ For a statement of this ethos, see Goodson (“Interview”), where he formulates a model of power as “mediated surrender by subordinate groups” (4).

¹¹ See, for example, Wagner et al., where Barton, though not himself a contributor, is a much cited source.

¹² It should be readily admitted that this is an artefact of the current mechanisms of evaluation and comparison. However, it is also clear that it is an inescapable artefact, and a deep determinant of many frames of discussion and concepts in the discourse.

often been taken for granted. More and more it is now being called into question. Questions about reading and writing turn up in a wide range of places: in discussions about falling standards in education; in calls for Plain English in documents; the requirements for a trained workforce; the effects of new technologies on our lives; the need for adult literacy provision. (2)

Barton is writing in 1994, long after the purpose of schooling and education was brought into question, long after its purpose became suspect and seen as the function of a reproduction of social inequality and as the result of compromises among interests, goals, institutions, forms of reasoning and social structures. Presenting these questions in this way presupposes a unitary social space, a bewildering “us” which calls us to account, calls us to answer its questions. The literacy theorist has to answer to this assemblage, has to respond to this set of questions, on his/her own account.

Barton thus places his discourse within a constitutive national, governmental and public space. The theorist’s position as authority arises directly from this insistent uncertainty concerning language, instruction and policy. From this mass of questions about education, language, technology and bureaucracy, Barton shifts to the public discussion about literacy, or, on a deeper level, to the assumptions about literacy which inform the clamour:

All sorts of people talk about literacy and make assumptions about it, both within education and beyond it. The business manager bemoans the lack of literacy skills in the work force. The politician wants to eradicate the scourge of illiteracy. The radical educator attempts to empower and liberate people. The literary critic sorts the good writers from the bad writers. The teacher diagnoses reading difficulties and prescribes a program to solve them. The preschool teacher watches literacy emerge. These people all have powerful definitions of what literacy is. They have different theories of literacy, different ideas of “the problem” and what should be done about it. (2)

These are sites where empirical problems are related to discourses on literacy, sites where the use of a notion of literacy is involved in relations of power, control, intervention, the general form of social relations and the formation of cultural identities.

Barton is claiming for literacy a unique mediating position: this is why the task of producing and disseminating a properly understood, power-sensitive definition of it is essential for the discourse. The discourse – Barton is typical here – thus draws a relationship between itself and the uncertainties and concerns in public space. This particular configuration, involving an ignorant public, social power and a mysterious yet ubiquitous object of discussion, ensures the importance of the discourse.

A writer presenting critical models of literacy is situated outside of the public debate, and outside the agencies that inform public debate and operationalise a proper and more judicious understanding:

While there have been radical changes in how reading and writing are taught in schools, these new views of reading and writing have failed so far to reach the public and to be understood by the media; those in schools and colleges have not yet succeeded in getting public support for changing and improving the teaching of reading and writing; public understanding of literacy issues is not very sophisticated; there is widespread ignorance about language, and the most simplistic approaches are latched on to. (Barton 2)

The specific persons applying the “powerful definitions of what literacy is” are replaced by a dual body: the public/media ensemble, on the one hand, and those in “schools and colleges,” presumably the researchers who are making changes and improvements in the teaching of reading and writing.¹³ The battle for better understanding is here intensified and brought into the narrow confines of schooling. A series of semi-equivalences appears: reading and writing; literacy issues; language. These are either part of a complex arrangement of distinct elements or a collection of synonymous terms all standing for each other. The sphere of conflict is a complex articulation and a political one: “those in schools and colleges” require public support for changes and improvements in teaching, but the public must first be made to understand the nature of what is being taught (“reading and writing” and “language”) and the nature of learning (“literacy issues”). The imperative for researchers is also related to the danger of ignorance and the simplistic approaches it permits. Barton implies – and again he is

¹³ Teachers occupy an anomalous position here, alternating in their alignment with the public or the experts (see Covaleskie; Green, Lankshear and Snyder; McNeil; and Land).

typical of the discourse in doing so – that these erroneous approaches are enacted by misguided politicians and carried out by misdirected teachers. Here, in the conceptual battleground of the public sphere, is a field in which understanding is the answer, in which ignorance is the source of recalcitrance, abuse, inefficiency. In fact, the actual effects of ignorance are left silent, and we can only infer them from the opposition they are brought into with the “changing and improving” teaching methods, and from their being “simplistic” and based on the public’s “ignorance about language” and an “understanding of literacy issues” which “is not very sophisticated.”

The space of public controversy from which literacy emerges is again paired with an everyday experience of literacy. Barton introduces his conceptual chapter, where the model/metaphor of “ecology” is advocated as broad and precise enough to unify the field of literacy studies, with another, second introduction, that of “literacy in everyday life.” This is wholly different to literacy in the public sphere. Literacy is something one “encounters” when waking up in the morning, reading the newspaper and listening to the radio (a reading of a written document), and so on. The points to note, for Barton, are that everyone is affected by literacy practices, and that these practices differ markedly across cultures, classes, and any number of social placements (Barton 3).

It is not a set of common themes or a logical space that organises and secures the scattered arguments, models, policies and techniques through which literacy circulates: literacy is nothing more than one of the “empty sets” to which it is attached, a cipher for contemporary norms and values. As the above examples show, it is the underlying space of experiences laid down in memory that renders this term intelligible and yet allows it to flit between sites, reorder its signification, transcribe different social domains as instances of itself and act as the sign of a promise and a betrayal. This emptiness, however, disguises a malleability with a form; it obscures a set of characters and substances that are systematically formed by historical relations. Barton’s “everywhere” and the “remembrance of Literacy past” are ahistorical reifications, despite gestures at historicism which themselves reify “power” and “society.” The space invoked in forming the contemporary emptiness of literacy is engendered in a historical space hollowed out, and a network of positions generated, in the nineteenth century. This space arises from a historical background involving practices which have, since that time, continuously

formed and re-formed this persistent discursive formation, the circulation of power associated with it, and the spaces in which it appeared, the closed and open heterotopia which offers literacy everywhere, establishing its formal outlines, its relevant characters and the relations that define them. The discourse of literacy finds in this spatial network not only certain persistent themes but also a more fundamental historical groundwork. In the search for such a groundwork one must first turn to the space in which the subject of literacy was formed, the heterotopic disciplinary space which gave rise to knowledges concerning the developing child in measuring and training the child's life, labour and language. At the same time, this institution related the developing child to the nation-state.

Seguin: Therapeutic Space and the Developing Child

As became evident in analysing the *Curriculum Framework*, discourse of literacy inherits and perpetuates a model of childhood as a development ruled by a sequence of cumulative stages, which are both organic and cognitive. This object of knowledge was formed within a type of space and a project of control peculiar to the nineteenth century and still bears the marks of this first space of appearance. The developmental child first emerged not from the systematic study of normal children nor from their education but rather from the treatment – the simultaneous study, control and instruction – of abnormal children. In 1844, and in a revised form in 1866, Edward Seguin published *Idiocy and its Treatment by the Physiological Method*, a book concerning the treatment of idiocy by a regime of physiological training and education and a text central to the reform of instructional techniques in the nineteenth century and to the establishment of a relationship between spaces, bodies and knowledge that would later be essential for developmental child psychology. This treatment was primarily a therapeutic affair, dealing with children whose abnormality was severe and had become a burden on the normal population. At the same time, however, Seguin secured the value of his neurophysiological treatment in two ways: he constructed a site of substantial, incremental difference from which one can define the developmental course of the child,

and presented the treatment and study of these children as a service to the state and society.

By taking children from the places where they interfered with the normal course of events, where they cost their parents both in terms of their own needs and in terms of opportunities for productive work and income, Seguin could claim to serve society at large. Moreover, as some idiots could be taught to perform simple but valuable tasks, Seguin's hospital would be a means of transforming a social drain into a source of value. In operating a form of enclosure which at the same time also revealed the outer, normal, unenclosed world, Seguin's institution acted as a kind of model school space, setting out a heterotopic relation in which the abnormal space of instruction reveals the normal and natural course of development and in which the fundamental social relations are reconfigured as a knowledge of typical development and the pedagogical operation of body, space and language.

What is novel in Seguin's method is not the imposition of stages onto instruction: there are examples of this more than a century before. In fact, his treatment regime treats the human organism as much through stillnesses and silences as with stimulation and motion, where these tactical moves are related to a strategic knowledge of the developing individual. The distinctive element is the introduction of an absolute sequence of development dictated by the organism itself, imposing itself by its unchangeable resistance to external forces and by its progression from lower to higher stages of organisation and defining a sequence which must be undergone in order for the individual to become socially useful and valuable. Social use is an essential but subsidiary goal here: even if one does not become useful to the point of self-sufficiency, the nearer one approximates to this, the better and happier s/he will be, along with the immediate community and the society at large.

This is where knowledge, as it is manifested in the clinic or specialised hospital, becomes the site for the child to appear as the subject of three forms of knowledge sharing a common organisation: knowledges relating to life, labour and language. One sees first of all that life can be recorded in all the minutiae of its unfolding as the organic substructure prepares for the peripheral elaborations upon which full human complexity

depends, and one can observe the various behaviours of which this is a manifestation. With idiots – a group halting at every stage of organic development – one can assign a definite function for each organ and for each level of organisation. Thus a picture of normalcy is correlated with organic structure, and the child becomes a thing known in a certain correlative if not fully causal density. In short, the processes of *life* come to dominate a particular level of perception, and this is not only manifested in eugenics and developmental psychology but also, from a quiet beginning with such pioneers of “scientific education” as Montessori, in an elaborated knowledge of the developing child in the work of William T. Preyer and enters into the planning of compulsory educational systems.¹⁴ Life is here accompanied by two other terms which are fundamental to the establishment of the nineteenth-century episteme: labour and language. Together, these three categories directly invest the operation of Seguin’s hospital. The emergence of a modern national pedagogy is thus a specifically dated experiment, emerging from a reorganisation of knowledge and a modification of disciplinary techniques to suit that new knowledge.

For Foucault, the modern episteme in the human sciences is characterised by a fundamental reorganisation of the study of taxonomy, the analysis of wealth and general grammar into biology, political economics and philology. The shift becomes possible through a rearrangement of knowledge from the “Classical” episteme to the “Modern.” While the former episteme arrays objects of knowledge according to a homogeneous table of identities and differences announcing the possibility of a general ordering of all knowledge, the latter relates these three fields of knowledge (the “human sciences”) to a heterogeneous origin, to laws of succession and modification that come from a source external to the objects studied. At the same time, this shift provides for these “Modern” types of knowledge the condition of their possibility.

These three areas (life, labour and language) converge in Seguin’s work on the treatment of idiots, a text central to the reform of instructional techniques in the

¹⁴ Chadwick (9) cites Seguin as an authority, but it is through Preyer and Montessori that the general model of education as the scientific discovery of natural developmental stages is introduced into anglophone education systems. It is Montessori who adapts Seguin’s “method” to normal children, after successfully using it to teach “a number of idiots from the asylums both to read and to write so well” as to pass an examination at a school for normal children (38). See Goodson and Dowbiggin for a parallel history of psychiatry and schooling.

nineteenth century and to the establishment of a relationship between spaces, bodies and knowledge that would later be essential for developmental child psychology. In the regime of instruction and therapy Seguin developed one can also see the development and mutation of the techniques Foucault designates as “discipline.” Reading Seguin against the insights of *The Birth of the Clinic*, in addition, establishes the function of a visible space in which a form of perception is structured, showing how certain objects, the child of developmental psychology and its language, make their first uncertain appearance. Seguin’s clinic also marks the construction of a space that relates the developing individual, in a difficult and problematic way, to an image of the social totality, that is, to the state and the nation.¹⁵

Life

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault describes an epistemic break in the life sciences underlying the change from taxonomy to biology. The identity and difference between living beings, from Linnaeus to Lamarck, was established on the level of a visibility folded in on itself. One arranged beings according to morphological characters that defined their appearance in distinction to one another, according to the number of legs, the presence of fur, thickness of skin and so on. What all the taxonomic systems had in common was their arrangement in a space where a series of real beings was superimposed upon an ideal table, where in principle all characters faded into one another along lines of visible resemblance. While establishing a variety of differing orders, this table referred ultimately to a principle of order, to the possibility of arranging beings according to an ordering and representing function which required nothing but a surface visibility.

After Jussieu it was no longer possible to think this way, and with Cuvier, natural history was replaced with something approaching a biology. Cuvier arranged beings with reference to organic structure and function. Because many unlike organs performed the same basic functions (such as respiration, ingestion and reproduction) the criterion of

¹⁵ Foucault gives an analysis of Seguin as part of a genealogy of psychiatric power (*Psychiatric Power* 201-31). Thus, while his treatment agrees with this one on certain points, its argument furthers a different project. Pedagogy, in particular, is not historically interrogated but inserted as a modification of “moral treatment” (215) and as establishing “instinct” as a historical coordinate in psychology (222).

resemblance was no longer a visible one but related the knowledge of living things to the functions of their organs. Organs were recognised to be coexistent and interactive, to have a hierarchy, and to imply other organs and the whole shape of a living being by their presence. From this epistemic break emerged comparative anatomy, where the individual is dissected into organs, where the organs are compared to analogous organs rather than whole beings to one another. The organs themselves were distinguished into central and accessory parts, according to how important they were to survival. Lastly, there emerged an ontological division between living and non-living beings, which fixes a primary antagonism, and establishes a proximity, between the living and the dead:

Death besieges on all sides; furthermore, it threatens [the organism] also from within, for only the organism can die, and it is from the depths of their lives that death overtakes living beings. (*Order 277*)

Before and after life, passing into and out of the being through respiration and feeding, dead matter is the radically other that partakes of life and makes it possible.

Seguin sets out the brief history of attempts at treating idiots, with the success of the physiological method as its culmination. In doing so he develops a kind of mutual determination of the normal child and the idiot. Both, he writes, may be identical as infants: helpless, immobile and inarticulate. However, as they age, each day brings the idiot's affliction into clearer relief as the gulf between the normal and the afflicted grows. Neither the child nor the idiot is discovered against a blank slate or a background: rather, they both form the background to the other and are made determinate by the other. This is decades before Preyer "discovers" the development of the child, and certainly Seguin does not recover a complete model of normal childhood from his investigations. What Seguin produces is an image that draws out both the idiot and the model child as possible objects of knowledge, observation and medicalisation.

An infinitesimal interval, and a time for it to enlarge and take definite shape is the hollow where this knowledge resides. In surveying the symptomatology of idiots, Seguin remarks:

the majority of young idiots do not differ very sensibly from common babies; because the power of both may be expressed by the same verb,

they cannot. But tomorrow the well infant will use his hands, the idiot will allow his to hang in half flexion; the first will move his head at will, the second will toss it about; the look of the former penetrates every day farther than the domain of touch; that of the latter has no straight dart, and wanders from the inner to outer canthus; the one will sit erect on his spine, the other shall remain recumbent where left; the first will laugh in your face with a contagious will, the second shall not be moved into an intellectual or social expression by any provocation whatever. And each day carves more deeply the differential characters of both; not by making the idiot worse, unless from bad habits gotten by neglect, but by hourly progress of the other. (53)

This comparison with reference to a temporal origin allows the child and the idiot to enter a developmental history that is not only physiological but also psychological and educational. This is not, however, the only means Seguin uses for the identification and analysis of the infirmity he studies. He also develops a symptomatology concerned with distinguishing idiocy from the various types of infirmity that are confused with it because of a superficial resemblance. There is the *enfant arriéré*, the backward child, who is merely slow, while the idiot is arrested in development. There is the dement, or masturbator, who superficially resembles the idiot, but is marked by different somatic and behavioural symptoms, and whose essence is self-destruction, his “hope, gaiety, cheerfulness, friendship, love, future, all given up for the worship of one’s self, and of a few apparitions evoked by the mania of self-destruction; his tendency is toward early death, through imbecility or dementia” (Seguin 67).

There is also insanity, of two pronounced types: intellectual and moral. The intellectually insane is distinguished from the idiot by “a firm step, bright colours, a general richness of tissue,” an emotional impulsivity revealed by the ears and eyes, an incapacity of attention and an oscillation between mutism and loquacity (Seguin 68). The morally insane also appears healthy, but “his features are sharper, his look more shaded by the brow, his mind deeper, his intellectual culture easier, his moral propensities worse. He is jealous, cruel, unflinching, yielding to force only, losing nothing of his natural tendency to cruel sprightliness under a temporary pressure of authority” (Seguin 68).

Finally, there is the imbecile, whose degeneration is caused by a deficiency of nutrition in later life:

the same cause which leaves, at the outset of life, the idiot incapable, ignorant and innocent, leaves later, the imbecile self-confident, half-witted, and ready to receive moral impressions, satisfactory to his intense egotism.
(69)

What makes it necessary to distinguish between these types is their coexistence in the single space of the school for idiots and the dangers of treating them in the same way, coupled with the necessity, of course, of protecting them. “But if these children, uneducable in ordinary schools, and unprovided with special ones, must be, for a time at least, indiscriminately treated with idiots, this necessity does not justify their confusion with them, nor the social indifference” (Seguin 71).

For Seguin, there are four types of idiocy, when related to their aetiology: endemic, hereditary, parental, and accidental. The endemic form is connected with some forms of cretinism; the hereditary form occurs when cases of idiocy or insanity are known to occur in preceding or collateral generations; the parental form is referred to certain conditions of the mother and father; and the accidental is a result of vicissitudes of the organism after birth. It is not at all the causality that unifies the disease, but an invisible centre characterised by the dysfunction of an organic structure: “*Idiocy is a specific infirmity of the cranio-spinal axis produced by deficiency of nutrition in utero and neo-nati*” that relates to a “specific condition of the mind.” That is, it is related to deficiency in a particular function, nutrition.

All the causes of this deficiency are arranged and discussed. However, a great veil hangs over the first months of life:

But everything pertaining to conception, gestation, parturition, lactation, remains enshrouded behind the veil of Isis. If women would only speak, we should be able to call upon them in the name of science, a social protection they do not seem to need, nor care for in their present mutism; and we should soon be enabled to generalise from their individual

experience frankly told, the laws of anomalous creation in our race.

(Seguin 43)

The identification of idiocy follows the biological methods of Cuvier, as discussed by Foucault, which refer causality to organic structure, guided by the want of a vital function. The homogeneous space of identities and differences, here the space of the school, is cut up by a range of intellectual, behavioural, moral and anatomical marks, ranging from the colour of the skin to the convolutions of the brain. This space is cut up according to criteria of organic function. Moreover, idiocy is defined by the developmental stage of the organism at the time of the deficiency. It is in the organic depth of a line receding to an invisible functional nucleus that the idiot and the normal child find their co-determining intelligibility:¹⁶

Being given children whose condition prior to birth, in infancy, youth, and manhood is perfectly established; having studied the deficiencies and the disorders of their functions, their intellectual progress and physical development under a physiological training, our love for them and their fellows must follow them with scalpel and microscope beyond life, to mark the peculiarities of their organs as we have done of their functions. . . . That these exceptional children are better subjects, are in fact the only subjects fit for the study of the impending questions of anthropology, will be readily admitted; considering the relative sameness of the organs and of the functions in ordinary subjects . . . And on the other hand, considering that idiocy is not an accident like illness or insanity, but a condition of infirmity as settled as other permanent conditions of life; that it presents to our comparison all the elements of a *norma*, whether we analyse the

¹⁶ Of Seguin's concept of development, Foucault notes:

. . . development is common to everyone, but it is common more as a sort of optimum, as a rule of chronological succession with an ideal outcome. Development is therefore a kind of norm with reference to which one is situated . . . (*Psychiatric Power* 208)

He further argues that this implies a double normativity, one relating to adulthood (as completed development) and to childhood. Idiocy and retardation

will be situated by reference to two normative levels: the adult, representing the final stage, and other children, defining the average speed of development. (*Psychiatric Power* 209)

The argument here differs in emphasis: Seguin's idiots define normal childhood and optimum development even as they are thus defined.

functions, whether we observe the organs; this correlative status of the organs and functions in idiocy is at the same time so certain and so extreme that it affords unequalled data to the student of comparative biology. (Seguin 75-76)

William T. Preyer, who is credited as the father of developmental child psychology some fifteen years after the revised version of Seguin's book, has the benefit of the obverse side of this call to observation: his developmental psychology is full of descriptions of the early infant's organs such as the brain and the muscular and nervous systems, and they relate these organic states, point by point, to stages in the functional development of movement, perception, reasoning, will and language. He inherits the legacy of so many cadavers and patients, of so many trained and instructed souls.

Biology, then, operates in Seguin's text as a way of isolating the idiot for his pronounced organic and functional correspondences, on which one may base an anthropology. However, his is also an educational concern, an attempt to find the physiological techniques, based on an understanding of function and sequence of development, that will both expedite the development and maximise the capacity and obedience of all children. It is through this educational concern that Seguin approaches the second term in Foucault's trilogy: labour.

Labour

Foucault notes that, at the archaeological level, the analysis of wealth was displaced by political economy. This was because the essentially arbitrary mechanism of exchange value, through which commodities represented each other as equivalences, became subject to a source which was external to them. That source was labour, and it operated on the principle of toil and subsistence, the health and length of life, and the number and organisation of workers. Labour introduces a limitation and a history to economics, even if, with Ricardo, it grinds economics to a halt and reveals itself as the fundamental limitation of exchange, so that, at the end of economic change, at a point of final equilibrium, "man" comes face to face with his finitude, with the fundamental and limiting reality of his bodily existence (*Order* 379).

The physiological method trains idiots according to a harmony of three “vital expressions[:] activity, intelligence and will” (Seguin 83). These functions must at all times be trained in concert, avoiding any predominance. Idiocy confers on this method a necessity of training every aspect of the human organism that is necessary to perform labour:

Physiological education, including hygienic and moral training, restores the harmony of these functions in the young, as far as practicable, separating them abstractedly, to restore them practically in their unity. (Seguin 84)

The treatment of idiocy begins with prevention, from the conditions of conception to the regulation of pregnancy in its activities, excitements, the amount of air and food taken by the mother, and medical intervention in cases of preventable transmission by “correct[ing] disordered functions, . . . prevent[ing] steady impressions and sudden shocks” (Seguin, 85) onto the foetus. Nourishment and warmth must be maintained at the neo-natal stage, as must the quality of the mother’s milk. This is not simply because nutrition is essential to health but because the essential organs of the nervous system, which form an absolute condition for the growth of capabilities, are formed at this stage:

in early youth, and particularly at the time when the body of the new-born actually loses weight, caloric, and substance, if it takes nourishment, this is mostly applied to the consolidation and distinction of the two substances composing the encephalon. But if this nerve-food is not timely supplied to the infant, it becomes idiotic, epileptic, paralytic, or hydrocephalous, whatever may have been the cause of the deficiency of nutrition. (Seguin 87)

Next comes the “watching of the deficient abilities of the child, and particularly the distinction of their constitutional and external causes; many infants look like idiots, or bid fair to become such, who are only crippled by something or somebody, and many idiots continue for months their marmot-like life, who are thought only dull babies” (Seguin 87). The difference “may be established only by reference to the age appointed by nature for the evolution of each function. Among the first, extending the arm, opening the hand, grasping, is a series; looking turning the head upon the axis, raising the spine to the

sitting posture, is another; hearing voices, listening to catch sounds, reproducing them to amuse the organs of audition, is another of the endless groups of capabilities which spring up, one after another, and which are so long and vainly expected from idiots” (Seguin 87).

The mother is to be trained not only to “watch over the tardy coming of these functions” (Seguin 87), but also to prepare her child for treatment by instruction at home. Mere visits to the school will prepare the child for treatment. The treatment proper, even though it works upon the lines of disciplinary power analysed by Foucault, emphasises the limits of the organism, its fundamental needs and capacities. While details such as dress and food are arbitrarily prescribed and detailed, idiocy exerts its own force on the world of needs and transforms even the most elementary processes and actions, such as immobility, walking and hearing, into something that requires careful explication. Thus, with immobility:

If the immobility of the whole child cannot be enforced at once, we may seat him before us, half mastering his legs between our knees, concentrate all our attention upon the hands, and eventually upon the one most affected. To accomplish our object we put the quietest hand on the corresponding knee, whilst we load the delinquent hand with a heavy dumb-bell. Useless to say that he does not take hold of it and tries to disentangle his hand; but our fingers keep his so bound around the neck of the dumb-bell that he does not succeed. On the contrary, we take care to let the weight fall more on his hand than on ours; if he does not carry it, he supports it at least. Supporting the burden, the more he moves to remove it the more he feels it; and partly to escape the increase of the burden, partly by fatigue, his loaded hand becomes still: stillness was precisely our object. (Seguin, 104)

The arrangement of force against force, the minute organisation of bodily parts, the analysis and sequentialisation of movements are all features of disciplinary power. In particular, they are reminiscent of Foucault’s comments on the alteration of the human body under the regime of “political anatomy,” when “the disciplines became,” in the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “general formulas of domination” (*Discipline* 137).

Thus, he writes:

The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A “political anatomy,” which was also a “mechanics of power,” was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. . . . 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. (*Discipline* 138)

Furthermore, the entire sequence of instruction, which runs from the elements of motion to reading and writing and is paralleled by a moralising sequence, seems to follow what Foucault calls the imposition of disciplinary time:

It is this disciplinary time that was gradually imposed on pedagogical practice – specialising the time of training and detaching it from adult time, from the time of mastery; arranging different stages, separated from one another by graded examinations; drawing up programs, each of which must take place during a particular stage and which involves exercises of increasing difficulty; qualifying individuals according to the way in which they progress through this series. (*Discipline*, 159)

Or again:

The seriation of successive activities makes possible a whole investment of duration by power: the possibility of a detailed control and a regular intervention . . . in each moment of time; the possibility of characterising, and therefore using individuals according to the level in the series that they are moving through; the possibility of accumulating time and activity, of rediscovering them, totalised and useable in a final result, which is the ultimate capacity of the individual. (*Discipline* 162)

Seguin's institution was a purpose-built space combining and accumulating knowledge, control and capacity. It is a pedagogised space that prefigures, in many ways, the distributed pedagogical apparatus of today. This space is not merely the exemplification of the growth of "discipline;" it is also a new modulation of it. Certainly, the school for idiots exercises many of the techniques detailed by Foucault. No doubt there occurs in the school a microphysics of power, a segmentation of the body into useable parts and manipulable actions, an ordering of time, activities and visibilities for the moral regulation of a group and a distribution of individuals. While some qualifications can be made to Foucault's general scheme (partitioning, for instance, was never total, but oscillated between isolating and congregating individuals), the machinery of political anatomy is certainly present.

However, idiots were never expected to operate with speed and efficiency: rather, they had a specific relationship to normalcy and to function which made their training beneficent to humanity and to the state, for they revealed a training that was both thorough and moved along the lines of a progress of function. For idiots, their relationship to work was arranged so that, first, it would be carried out if it were either enjoyable or promoted development and, second, one might work for money if one had a particular proficiency, but relations of domination and exploitation, particularly when affecting the health, would make it preferable for the idiot to remain protected by the state. Moreover, absolute refusal to work was an organic threshold which, when determined as irremediable, was no longer subject to political anatomy. In any case, the treatment of idiots does not aim to make idiots work. If it augments labour, it is another's labour, not that of the idiot.¹⁷ The idiot is expected to succeed only up to a low level, and to show by this failure of completion an outline of human finitude.

It is true that work will preserve the idiot from "the horrors of idiocy," but this is always as less than normal:

True, idiots have been improved, educated, and even cured . . . more than thirty percent have been taught to conform to social and moral law [and so on] . . . but this success, honorable as it is, constitutes only one of the objects

¹⁷ That is to say, their incarceration enables the labour of their parents (Foucault, *Psychiatric Power* 213) and their study underpins the training of normal children.

to be attained as the honest return due to society for the generous support afforded to those who took charge of the new establishments (Seguin 74-75). Now, everything is ready for the triple work of improving idiots, of studying human nature from its lowest to its highest manifestations; and of testing on idiots the true physiological means of elevating mankind by education. (Seguin 77)

The idiot thus forms the limit of discipline and the condition of possibility of establishing it on a new basis, that of the medicalised organism rather than the politico-anatomical body.

The developmental child produced as the object and intervention of this disciplinary space affects and limits the operation of discipline itself. The seriation of activities and the imposition of disciplinary time undergo a fundamental reorganisation in Seguin's institution. The gradation of stages can no longer be organised according to a continuous, indefinitely divisible succession. The idiot-normal couple forms the contours which it must follow. There is a natural succession of stages which lead to each other by a number of specific modes of articulation. At the same time as the natural developmental series has been a matter of dispute, it has also formed the bedrock for educational debate since Seguin, and particularly since Preyer. Discipline has been replaced by therapeutic control, by the processes of determining an organic sequence through observation and reporting and constructing techniques to optimise the rate of development.

As a consequence, the organic sequence cannot be, in the first instance, referred to the will of the trainer, but must carefully articulate the functions with each other, lest the primary functions fail to generate secondary or later ones. Thus Seguin discusses the labour of the hand as follows:

The hand displaces and combines objects by prehension: it acts on the surfaces as in polishing, drying, etc., by handling; it acts on the substances proper, as in carving, cutting, hammering, piercing, by aggression. . . The practice of training idiots will show what distance separates these works, what capacities each kind of labour requires; and particularly how the slow

and difficult introduction of the child into the class of aggressive works will develop in him steadiness, will, and power . . . (Seguin 117)

These principles emerge despite the techniques of moral instruction used by Seguin and his assumption that the sequence could be determined beforehand. Like labour with regard to political economy, the developmental sequence is an external source for the possibility of “scientific” schooling, confronting the latter with the limitations immanent to it.

The asylum at times based its very functioning on labour, with all the moral charm that comes with labour, by retaining only those who, having secured entry and stayed for a period, are productive enough to keep the institution going, and free of the taint of charity. Thus, the trustees of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind treat pupils on the model of a commercial contract:

After the first year . . . , an account current will be opened with each pupil; he will be charged with the actual cost of his board . . . and he will be credited with the amount paid for him by the state, or by his friends; also with his earning over one dollar per week will be his own. By the third year it will be known whether his earnings will more than pay the actual cost of his board Those who prove unable to retain their own livelihood will not be retained; as it is not desirable to convert the establishment into an almshouse, or to retain any but working bees in the hive. Those who by physical or mental disability are disqualified from work, are thereby disqualified from being members of an industrious community; and they can be better provided for in establishments fitted for the infirm. (Dickens, *American Notes* 79)

Language

Combining this morality of labour with a disciplinary regime and a biology of the organism, Seguin’s treatment represents a pivotal break in a longer therapeutic tradition and a crucial event in the formation of educational knowledge. The knowledge of the child’s organic development, separated into stages and connected to the service of society – both as knowledge of the child

and as the production of labour – shifted the practice, scale and goals of education fundamentally. When combined with these breaks, Seguin’s use and definition of language as a faculty establishes a new object for pedagogy. Language is used in Seguin’s disciplinary space as the audible evidence of interior and abstract representation. Seguin’s distinction between language as a faculty of understanding and speech as mere function encodes language within an interrogative power-knowledge apparatus that still serves as a general model for schooling. The elaborate “understandings” coded into literacy in the *Curriculum Framework*, in a wide range of policy documents and across the discourse as a whole, derive from the prior insertion of “language” into this ordered therapeutic space of instruction.

Foucault argues that, at the division between the “Classical” and “Modern” ages, a transformation occurred in the study of language from general grammar to philology. Whereas general grammar treated language as a representation of thought, and thus as essentially discursive, philology found in the internal laws of languages the principle of their difference and affiliation. Thus, language ceased to be a representation of representation and began to acquire its own singular and enigmatic being. For the first time, language became an object of science rather than the more or less efficacious vehicle of knowledge. It was at this time, also, that language became the expression of a national soul, that it was seen to come from below, from the great anonymous mass rather than an elite. Language ceased to indicate the level of a civilisation by the transparency with which it communicated thought, and became an anonymous, involuntary change, wholly unrelated to thought, but residing in the form of feeling and the mode of life specific to a nation.

Seguin’s comments on the speech of idiots dramatise the use of careful interrogation to diagnose speech and illustrate the emergence of a model of language as the organised ability to exchange ideas that resided in individuals. The subject of the interrogation is accordingly diagnosed with regard to the invisible organic faculty for language revealed in his/her speech. This diagnostic relation is accompanied by a pedagogical gaze: the subject succeeds or fails insofar as the speech corresponds to the expectations of the trained examiner. Idiots, Seguin maintains, are capable of using words

– some possess speech – but without instruction they lack a *faculty* of language. He writes:

Some idiots are deprived of speech, that is to say, do not pronounce a word. Some, speaking a few words more or less connected in sentences, have yet no language; for the word language conveys with it the meaning the interchange of ideas. In this acceptation, language does not belong to idiots before they are educated, nor to those who are but imperfectly so, and, consequently, they have a speech more or less limited, but no language: strictly speaking, speech represents the function, language the faculty. (Seguin, 62)

Perhaps this description of language as a faculty is a loose use of terminology, or perhaps it is a precise expression of what language came to be in the nineteenth century – a distinct power of the mind quite separate from reason, and also from speech. What is novel is not the distinction between mere speech and language, a distinction which was common in the grammatical works of the preceding century. What is new here is the normalising status of language; its possession by a normal person, the non-idiot. Seguin points to a discovery of this faculty within the normal child in the gradual moving division of the idiot and other children, in the constantly widening yet infinitesimal comparison made possible by the space of difference in which an observation, an identification of salient features, of both pathological and normal symptoms, takes place.

Seguin (374-376) clarifies what he means by limited speech by recounting his exchange with an untreated cretin or idiot named Julien:

S.- Do you recognise me?

J.- Yes.

S.- Where have you seen me?

J.- Yesterday.

S.- Yesterday, I was not yet arrived.

J.- Father has told me your name.

S.- Then you know my name, my little friend?

J.- M. Séguin.

S.- Well, do you recognise me; have you seen me before?

J.- Your name is M. Séguin (after a long effort); father told me so.

I insisted on this point without obtaining any other answer. I touched the subject of his progress, which he had heard so often spoken of that he was quite fond of listening to it.

S.- You now learn well, do you not?

J.- Yes, sir.

S.- What do you learn with the Curé?

J.- I will repeat some grammar to you.

S.- This morning, what have you learned?

J.- The catechism.

S.- The whole catechism?

J.- Shall I recite my catechism?

S.- No, my friend, but what is an article?

J.- (A little faster than when he speaks). The article is a little word which is placed before the noun; we have but one article, *le* for the masculine, *la* for the feminine.

S.- That is very well. Will you give me an example of a noun accompanied by an article?

J.- We have but one article, *le* . . .

S.- Can you tell me the name of a thing which you know, and which requires an article?

J.- I – do – not – know. (This is answered much more slowly than he has recited).

S.- At least you know an object which has a name, a substantive?

J.- I – do – not – know.

S.- But you know what a pronoun is?

J.- (Quite rapidly). The pronoun is a word which stands in the place of a noun.

The school for idiots is concerned with eliciting the performance of language, assembling its elements into a functional unity and recording and assessing the results. This language, which is seen in the school, is quite different to languages that occur in philology, the massive impersonal aggregations that define a people: this is a language that measures, at every stage of progress, a person. This language is also distinct from mere speech, since it requires an understanding mind and a concert of all the vital expressions: it is not speech as a surface, but a speech furrowed into the depths of the soul. The training of speech participates in a “double progress:” in the “grammaticism” of mechanical instruction and in the “natural speech” which proceeds from a spontaneity of the soul that conforms at the same time “exactly to theories of philology” (Seguin 159). Training, which sows, applies only to the speech; nature, which fecundates, rules the development of language:

For a long time we must be satisfied with this double progress, not always keeping pace with each other, of formal speech in the training, and informal language; later exercises and practice will tend to unite them. (Seguin 159)

With the work of Seguin, then, a new organisation is conferred upon the school, one which combines life, labour and language and produces a new knowledge. It gives us terms which educational thought has not yet escaped: a child defined by a deep organisation which instruction must respect if it is to succeed, a concern with productivity and labour, and a language defined as a faculty which speaks and understands.

Pedagogical Heterotopia

Tied up with its construction of “development,” Seguin’s institution maintains a heterotopic relationship with the world to which its therapy is ultimately addressed. Each part of the institution is devoted, in its architecture and furnishing, to eliciting a certain physiological process, to ordering space maximally for use and orderly separations, for practice and observation, forming at its borders not only a preparation for the world outside but also a representation and recreation of the world, reordered for instruction: weapons are arrayed not only for prehension and motor control, but for actual warfare if the patients are able (as two were) to engage in it (Seguin 262); farming is taught by degrees as play, exercise and instruction, culminating in the release of patients to farms, where “idiots are not exposed to crushing competition, but receive the concourse of the great Helper” (Seguin 264); collections for display are brought by the children and assembled “so that references and illustrations from them may be constantly at hand”(Seguin 259). Thus with object lessons:

The objects gathered with the express view of giving object-lessons, do not need to be always in sight; where they may be found, and in such order that the qualities by which they resemble one another, or differ, be apposed in their resting-places; so that it may suffice to present them as they stand there, to exhibit to the children the vividness of their properties. (Seguin 260)

The institution is a space of segregation and heterotopic reference: everything is reordered and represented, but also excluded: the normal human being and its development are seen through the study of idiocy, but the institution can only function to study idiocy if its patients are properly selected. Together with a representation of the world, the institution for idiots also creates a new object from its inmates, a living and modifiable body that is at the same time the representation of the disease that characterises it:

To constitute the broad and lower stratum of a normal institution for idiots, they and their congeners must accordingly be chosen in view of forming what we may be permitted to call an efficient body of incapacities. In this

body the life, though defective, circulates and may improve, because the children have been apposed with regard to the representation in the school of the many infirmities characteristic of idiocy. (Seguin 266)

The institution is a completely medicalised space, a place of scientific observation and constant experiment, requiring a central and general authority capable of directing the treatment of each patient according to a “character.” First comes an initial assessment, marking the beginning of the child’s career in the institution:

The child is weighed, measured in his diverse proportions; his capacity for endurance and activity is tested; his powers of intelligence and speech are ascertained; his will and habits delineated; a pen-and-ink portrait is drawn of his whole being, and kept together with his photograph, as witnesses to the point at which he began to be taught. (Seguin 282)

This is followed by a continuous supervision of the progress and direction of the treatment through a constant and global knowledge of the child:

Therefore the Superintendent must have an absolute knowledge of the children. Others may be more familiar either with their habits, capacities, or peculiarities; but none must know them so completely as himself. Then come what may, resistance, obstacles in the training, etc., he knows what to believe and who to distrust, and can truly superintend the work. The possession of the character of his pupils and of his subordinates is the store which supplies his capacity; out of it he draws his best resources for the accomplishment of his subsequent functions. (Seguin 282)

Underpinning the Superintendent’s functions is “active observation” (283), the intimate and timely knowledge of every student’s character and progress. By continually generating both knowledge and productive force, the institution produces a power-knowledge apparatus that is situated between the biological processes of life, the productive force of labour and the therapeutic power of language.¹⁸

¹⁸ On the therapeutic power of language see Seguin (227) for the types of command; also on books and exchange of staff as heterotopic-scientific-disciplinary device, see Seguin (289).

The space is ordered for the increase of productive force: the functioning of the institution is measured by its ability to generate knowledge about idiocy (Seguin 289) and by the level of productive activity of its patients. The productivity of the institution depends also upon a strict hierarchy and completeness of observation:

the use of scientific devices does not dispense the Superintendent from measuring also the vitality of the children by the physiological standard of their activity; to see whether they sleep, eat, play, study, labour with a healthy soundness, or show traces of languor or restlessness in what they do or refuse to do. If these two kinds of evidence coincide in their indications, they call for due hygienic interference and instant modifications in the training. Thus the Superintendent keeps his eye fixed upon the pupils, and his hand as if he were constantly feeling the pulse of the institution. (Seguin 287-88)

It is for labour and the activity that trains it that the Superintendent is concerned with diet, and it is from a medicalised knowledge of the developing child that a new fundamental basis for educational intervention, a new object of knowledge and power, is born:

the first struggle between the Superintendent and his pupil does not consist in showing him letters that he will not look at, but in generating by food and hygiene measures a given force to be spent and renovated in increasing ratio: *this* is the A, B, C. (Seguin 288)

Thus, Seguin's institution came to know and to discipline the idiot along the dimensions of its biological stages, its capacity to work and its understanding performance of language, and in doing so generated a knowledge of the normal child and its position within society at large. The institution's heterotopic relation to what was outside constituted a fundamental aspect, moreover, of its functioning. The national forms of schooling which arose throughout the nineteenth century were, like Seguin's institution, devoted to the immobilisation and discipline of a problem population. Ultimately, such institutions were formed under the sign of the nation state and utilised language as a mark for disqualifying the forms of life and disciplining the movements and knowledges of these populations. Their heterotopic relation to a social totality, their status as an image

and preparation of the outside world (and the nation as the spatial and linguistic reality of that world) was, even more than was the case with Seguin's therapeutic space, the very ground of their being.

Nation and School: Reordering Space and Language

While the school was constructed in the nineteenth century with a quasi-spatial and quasi-governmental relationship to the state, the nation-state itself was being reorganised spatially, ethnically and linguistically. The new nation-state organised populations towards production, segmenting national space into functional units. This new coordination of spaces and populations produced a series of problem populations. While the problem populations of the nineteenth century varied greatly, several concerns solidify around them. In particular, the relationships these populations developed towards language, ordered space and economic recording persist, in mutated but recognisable forms, within the discourse of literacy. Schooling, the interrogation of language and the traversal and enclosure of space were crucial to the reordering of spaces into national complexes. Discourses of development, civilisation and nationality within which these problem populations appear are re-invoked and inflected in contemporary literacy discourse.

The problem population is persistently defined, marked, charted and disciplined through its language. Contemporary literacy policy inherits this and modifies this formula. In the *Curriculum Framework*, functional literacy involves "the ability to control and understand the conventions of English that are valued and rewarded by society." The effect of this is the subordination of one set of student needs (use of non-standard English) to a greater need (learning to use Standard Australian English effectively). Hence, teaching in the English Learning Area involves "recognising, accepting, valuing and building on students' existing language competence" (*Curriculum Framework* 82). This existing competence provides a point at which positive knowledge can be generated, the student's state assessed and instruction enacted more appropriately and economically than if s/he were treated as a *tabula rasa*; an individualising technique

at the level both of knowledge (one is evaluated according to one's position between origin and destination) and of procedure (intervention appropriate to this position).

The connection between the institutional space and the state are, moreover, transmuted into the representation of the national language as the point at which language and social power coincide. Students “understand that many of the conventions of Standard Australian English are highly valued [and] following them is often rewarded” (*Curriculum Framework* 87). They understand that “departing from them may be used by some people to make negative judgments about [the offending students] or discriminate against them” (*Curriculum Framework* 87). This awareness ensures a particular general *direction* of student language development which is neither natural nor ascending, but must nonetheless be secured as part of an overall therapeutic strategy coordinating a national with a school space. The resulting strategy is a setting up of forces, a representation of deviation and its punishment. It is a description of the relations of power between the student and the society. Needless to say, this representation of power is a disappearing act: the school represents the operations of society regarding language only as an image of itself. Language is something the school fabricates for the benefit of linguistic deviants, and only insofar as a society has already codified this language and filtered its expressions into techniques of social preferment and censure.¹⁹

The discourse of literacy finds a series of echoes and counter-echoes in the nineteenth century, a network of positions, a cartography which is often surprisingly like our own. It was within concerns for the nation, within the construction of the national population, that the inability to read and write emerged as a symptom, as more than an educational or moral failing: it emerged as the sign of a great divide and of an anti-civilisation dwelling within the precincts of the metropolis. Indeed, it is in this concern

¹⁹ Foucault's analysis of Seguin focuses, indeed, on the “tautological” use of the school to confirm the diagnosis of idiocy and to lead to psychiatric medicalisation:

the psychiatric power at work here makes school power function as a sort of absolute reality in relation to which the idiot will be defined as an idiot, and, after making school power function as reality in this way, it will give that supplement of power which will enable school power to get a hold of the general rule of treatment for idiots within the asylum. (*Psychiatric Power* 219)

This is thus the obverse of Foucault's analysis: while the school's function is “tautological” with respect to the medicalisation of idiots, it is “redundant” in relation to society. In both cases, it practices a founding act in the guise of a repetition: it fabricates what is already “known” through a disciplinary regime.

for recording the population, and, through recording, making it available for training and national strength, that one encounters the illiterate populations of the nineteenth century.

Henry Mayhew, in *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851), introduces his subject not with a discussion of poverty, laziness or ignorance, but in terms of an ethnographic classification of the world's population into wanderers, settlers and the "mediate variety, partaking of the attributes of both":

almost every tribe of people who have submitted themselves to social laws, recognising the rights of property and reciprocal social duties, and thus acquiring wealth and forming themselves into a respectable caste, are surrounded by hordes of vagabonds and outcasts from their own community. Such are the Bushmen and *Sonquas* of the Hottentot race – the term "*sonqua*" meaning literally *pauper*. But a similar condition in society produces similar results in regard to other races; and the Kafirs have their Bushmen as well as the Hottentots – these are called *Fingoes* – a word signifying wanderers, beggars, or outcasts. The Lappes seem to have borne a somewhat similar relation to the Finns; that is to say, they appear to have been a wild and predatory tribe who sought the desert like the Arabian Bedouins, while the Finns cultivated the soil like the industrious Fellahs. (Mayhew 1)

There are two distinct races of men, but this does not correspond to a divide between civilised and barbarous countries. Rather, their coexistence is as close as possible to a universal fact. Mayhew summarises the ethnographic findings thus:

Here, then, we have a series of facts of the utmost social importance. (1) There are two distinct races of men, viz.: – the wandering and the civilised tribes; (2) to each of these tribes a different form of head is peculiar . . . ; (3) to each civilised tribe there is generally a wandering horde attached; (4) such wandering hordes have frequently a different language from the more civilised portion of the community, and that adopted with the intent of concealing their designs and exploits from them. (Mayhew 2)

Alongside the invention of race, nineteenth-century ethnography created a fruitful distinction, internal to a nation, between two characteristic ways of using space. Insofar

as the national space had come to be imagined through a vast range of mapping devices, the nomadic tribe was the antithesis of civilisation. There is a barbaric space and a nomadic life within the heart of civilisation. The scandal of nomadic lives, with their unofficial marriages, their nameless disappearances, the unassignable and uncontrollable spaces they move through rather than occupy, demands of the nation and of the agencies of recording their placement within the tables of political economy, their immobilisation and civilisation. This intolerable existence calls for an end to all that passes outside the recording mechanisms of the state. Among the many mobilities and deceptions of such lives, deep in the kernel of their secrecy, lies a hidden speech, a fugitive language designed for lies and obscurity.²⁰

The figure recurs throughout the nineteenth-century educational literature of reform, with some variations, but always with the general outline of a barbarian within civilisation, of a child, soon to be a citizen, without a place secured by the discipline. Thus, in his 1868 article, *National Elementary Education*, Edwin Chadwick quotes the schoolmaster Simon Laurie with approval:

He [the schoolmaster] has a plastic work to do; the work of molding the untutored nature of peasant and city boyhood into a shapely form. Nor will anyone regard this as an exaggeration of the teacher's office who has had opportunities of contrasting the uncombed, untamed young barbarian of civilisation, distinguished for his loose and insolent carriage, his lawless manner, licentious speech, and vagrant eye, with the same child, sitting on the school bench, well habited and clean, his manner subdued into fitness with the moral order around him, his tongue under a sense of law, his countenance with awakening thought, his very body seeming to be invested with reason. (13)

²⁰ For a detailed description of the nomads in Victorian England and the problems they posed for the emerging state apparatus, see Chesney. A similar problematisation occurs in the early imposition of school attendance in Australia: see Connell and Irving (190-91) for a discussion of the connection between "larrikinism," working-class mobilisation and the emerging educational state. Letters to the Western Australian Colonial Secretary are suffused with a concern about the truancy and intractability of children, as detailed in Chapter Six.

Bound up with the moral teleology is a complex and volatile rhetoric of civilisation, motion and stillness, license and lawfulness, nomadism and settlement. Language is one among a list of signs distinguishing the two races within the nation.²¹

By the 1970s, the terms had shifted somewhat, but the problem remained the backward peoples marked by their relation to space, and this time also marked by the difference of illiteracy:

The illiterate peasant is generally characterised in terms of his inability to read and write This definition [is] inadequate for distinguishing him from the literate. The latter moves fast and far in a world inundated by the written word, images, drawings, sketches, diagrams, posters, film, television . . . to an accompaniment of increasingly symbolic noises . . . which [underscore] the written or represented element. The assaults on eye and ear permanently modify the action of the literate, operate in depth on his sensations and impregnate his sensibility. (UNESCO, *Functional Literacy* 7)

The distinction between literate and illiterate is intersected and supplemented by a discussion of space; the relationship between the literate and illiterate person has still to do with their traversal of space.

The literate peasant, despite greater mobility, inhabits a well-defined “spatial structure” (UNESCO, *Functional Literacy* 7). It is the creation of a new type of (national) space that marks the power of the literate and defines the space of illiterate peasants as empty. If a literate space, acting upon both the perceptions and powers of the literate, is the full space of modernity, the space of the illiterate is slow and vapid:

The illiterate peasant moves around much less, and seldom rapidly; he lives in a fairly ill-defined spatial structure and in an environment generally devoid of man-made symbols, whether graphic or acoustic. This non-technicised environment does little to modify his sensations and sensibility, or else does it less rapidly. (UNESCO, *Functional Literacy* 7)

²¹ The invention of two tribe/races within a nation was by no means confined to European countries. The spread throughout Africa of the “Hamitic hypothesis” as a political is well documented, and has had a lasting toll; see Eltringham.

“Literacy training,” UNESCO writes, “aims at promoting man’s adjustment to change so that he may become both the agent and the object of development” (*Functional Literacy* 9). In this case, the development in question was a combination of industrialisation and scientific agricultural reform. UNESCO had, by the time this document was written (1973) abandoned basic education and what it calls traditional literacy training, in preference for functional literacy. The document opposes functional to traditional literacy in a clear dichotomy:

| Traditional Literacy | Functional Literacy |
|---|--|
| <i>Isolated, separate, end in itself</i> | <i>Group context</i> |
| <i>Sufficient command of reading/writing mechanisms</i> | <i>Related to a given environment</i> |
| <i>Access to printed word</i> | <i>For development</i> |
| <i>Diffuse and non-intensive</i> | <i>Geared to collective/individual needs</i> |
| <i>Standardised, centralised basis</i> | <i>Writing and training integrated</i> |

Functional literacy is here used in training for industry, but this training, in a Third World context “demands not only the acquisition of skills or know-how, but also a recasting of the modes of being and functioning” (UNESCO, *Functional Literacy* 11). It is a matter of changing traditional habits: flexible work times must be replaced by punctuality; traditional agriculture must be rendered more productive by scientific understanding, and so on. The whole network of social relations must be reordered. At the same time that the national and international agencies set out to help the underprivileged, they delegitimised the knowledges of the problem group and doubled the dispossession carried out by a world bent on “development.”

Development, changing social and economic contexts, competitive pressures, globalisation and a range of other terms, become the surface of a world outside, defined and confronted by educational authorities and literacy theorists alike. This world acts to define the problem group, as dispossessed, deficient, or both. With few exceptions, the

tissue upon which this world appears is the nation, defined either internally as the operation of forces that define its real historical character, or externally as the net pressures that act upon its borders. This world permits the characterisation of the dispossessed in a wider context, conferring upon them an objective, or at least a systemic, status.

The problem population is made visible by recourse to discourses of development, civilisation and the nation. Identifying the physiological sequence of development generated a child as the object of scientific and medicalised intervention. Invoking an ethnographic space of measurement and space identified an intractable, nomadic population. The nation-state combined the functions of this dual mapping most effectively, however, in the establishment of an inspectorate and within the site of the school. It was in the reform of schools that the national project could most effectively impose itself, instituting the discipline of renegade populations. The discourse of inspection had, however, to negotiate this project from the beginning, to rewrite the imposition of national discipline as a pedagogical service. The example analysed here, the inspection of Welsh schools in the middle of the nineteenth century, is a fairly typical manifestation of this remaking of needs – linguistic, personal and communal – by the self-consciously developing nation. This articulation of needs with demands has remained an essential component of literacy discourse, and the school has remained the heterotopic site where the nation becomes the visible and distributable object, and the tractable social territory, of intervention.

In 1846, Ralph Robert Wheeler Lingen examined, with his assistants, all the larger schools and educational establishments in Wales. They were instructed by the Secretary to the Committee of Council on Education, James Kay-Shuttleworth, “to direct an inquiry to be made into the state of education in the principality of Wales, especially into the means afforded to the labouring classes of acquiring a knowledge of the English language” (*Commission on the State of Education in Wales* iii). The inquiry was to be minute and exact, reporting the legal position of each school, the room size, the state of its apparatus, the number of children (both as recorded and as actually attending), the organisation and methods involved, the books used and the languages taught, “whether in each case in the grammar or not,” the expenses incurred, the number of teachers, their

salaries and position in public life, and attendant economic considerations such as “whether they have a house rent-free, a garden rent-free, fuel, or other emoluments” (iii-iv). Apart from this general injunction that attention be paid to minutiae, four themes predominate in these instructions: the relationship between Welsh and English languages; the role of the Sunday schools as popular religious establishments; the assembly of statistical tables; and the certification of masters and teachers (iv).

The Welsh language was a particular problem in the areas where Lingen visited, because it isolated the Welsh from power and status: “[m]y district exhibits the phenomenon of a particular language isolating the mass from the upper portion of society” (2). Whether in agriculture or in mining and smelting, the Welshman is always confined to the bottom of society:

In the country, the farmers are very small holders, in intelligence and capital nowise distinguished from labourers. In the works, the Welsh workman never finds his way into the office. . . . Equally in his new, as in his old, home, his language keeps him under the hatches, being one in which he can neither acquire nor communicate the necessary information. It is a language of old-fashioned agriculture, of theology, and of simple rustic life, while all the world about him is English. (2-3)

This knowledge is derived no doubt in part from the comparative grammars that had been written and from the Viconian tradition of tying languages to a form of society and a level of historical development, but also from the progress of the industrial society into which the Welsh were not well integrated, and because of which they suffered the status of an anachronism. The Welsh language was dead not because it did not have a living tradition but because the state could define the life proper to the nation through its complicity with an existing domination and its rewriting of the imposition of national demands as the pressure of necessity.

Welsh was not characterised as a pure deficiency: Lingen recognised the extreme elaboration of its performance in matters of divinity. He ascribes this achievement to the isolation of Welsh mental faculties:

Cut off from, or limited to a purely material agency in, the practical world, his mental faculties, so far as they are not engrossed by the hardships of rustic, or the intemperance of manufacturing, life, have hitherto been exerted almost exclusively upon theological ideas. (3)

It is in this theological activity that the Sunday-school finds its strength and foundation. This “completely unaided” Welsh popular institution revolves around the learning and discussion of the Bible by the whole community as equals:

Thus, there is everything about such institutions which can recommend them to the popular taste. They gratify that gregarious sociability which animates the Welsh towards each other. They present the charms of office to those who, on all other occasions, are subject; and of distinction to those who have no other chance of distinguishing themselves. The topics current in them are those of the most general interest; and are treated in a mode partly didactic, partly polemical, partly rhetorical, and most universally appreciated. Finally, every man, woman, and child feels comfortably at home in them. It is all among neighbours and equals. Whatever ignorance is shown there, whatever mistakes are made, whatever strange speculations are started, there are no superiors to smile and open their eyes. Common habits of thought pervade all. They are intelligible or excusable to one another. Hence, every one that has got anything to say is under no restraint from saying it. (4)

The peculiarity of this practice and the fact that it is only tangential to the state’s definition of and aims in education are not lost upon Lingen: “Whatever such Sunday-schools may be as places of instruction, they are real fields of mental activity”(4). Lingen goes beyond the mere categorisation of instruction by describing both the content of Sunday-school teaching and its social and ritual functions. What is being taught is the reading of the Scriptures (the proficiency of which varies with the school in question); it is recited and remembered according to “Verses, Chapters and Pwncau . . . [that is] point[s] of doctrine, printed in question and answer, with Scripture proofs” (4). Pwncau are printed by each denomination for itself, and learning forms the basis of a spatial ritual:

Each class learns its own part only. As soon as it is well committed to heart, the school makes a sort of triumphal procession to other chapels, very often to churches, to repeat publicly what they have thus learned. The mode of recitation is a species of chant, taken up in parts, and at the end joined in by all. (4)

Sunday-school learning thus has a twofold social function: as open, convergent public debate and as the interiorised prelude to a performance of recitation. This all tends, however, to isolate the Welsh in their own world of theological riches, material poverty, superstition and the consolation of the mastery of one's own tongue which attaches them to it:

The Welshman . . . possesses a mastery over his own language far beyond that which the Englishman of the same degree possesses over his. A certain power of elocution (viz. to pray "doniol," as it is called, *i.e.*, in a gifted manner), is so universal in his class that to be without it is a sort of stigma. Hence, in speaking English, he has at once to forego the conscious power of displaying certain talents whereon he piques himself, and to exhibit himself under that peculiar form of inability which most offends his self-esteem. (7)

Language forms the first seizure of power for the state in the name of life and the nation. The language of the minority is rendered at once inadequate, perverse, a punishment to its user, the cause of unconscious crowd stupidity and superstitious, useless beliefs. Welsh not only directs the mind to theological matters but forms the basis of perverse mass action. Lingen relates the religious enthusiasm of Welsh to the Rebecca riots and "the Chartist outbreak" (6). Shortly afterwards, he judges the Welsh language incapable of conveying secular matters and, because of the uses it favours, as radically deficient:

The Welsh language thus maintained in its ground, and the peculiar moral atmosphere which, under the shadow of it, surrounds the population, appear to be so far correlative conditions, that all attempts to employ the former as the vehicle of other conceptions than those which accord with the latter seem doomed to failure. (7)

The problem of Welsh is not so much that it is used within an isolated, albeit coherent and satisfying practice, nor that it occasionally leads to bizarre crowd behaviour, but that it creates a popular character that can in no way be integrated into national life as it is embodied by business, transport, and industry. The changes in social relations brought about by production, which the representative of the state claims to see, claim upon him a beneficent and enabling intervention, both for the good of these forces and for the good of the Welsh in adapting to them. To this end, the Welsh language is bound for extinction and English is to replace it as the mother tongue. But if this is to occur, the existing language and its modes of transmission must be made use of. Lingen calls up images of a multifarious network of popular instruction, an organism for which a foreign language is alien. The school, if it is to take up the task of changing the language, and through this the ideas of the Welsh, is faced with the problem of the profound cultural gulf between the mother tongue and the imposed language of instruction, that is, with the political problem of *translating* the population:

Through no other medium than a common language can ideas become common. It is impossible to open formal sluice-gates for them from one language to another. Their circulation requires a network of pores too minute for analysis, too numerous for special provision. Without this network, the ideas come into an alien atmosphere in which they are lifeless.

(7)

The native language must become the means of its own extinction:

Nor can an old cherished language be *taught down* in schools: for so long as the children are familiar with none other, they must be educated to a considerable extent through the medium of it, even though to supersede it be the most important part of their education. (7)

Contemporary literacy workers are familiar with this problem: the language forms favoured by a group do not correspond to, or have not the same form as, “powerful” forms in the society at large. In 1970, Frederick Williams, prefacing a collection of papers on the connection between language and poverty, situates the same problem within a dual commitment to sociolinguistic field studies and studies of pedagogy

(Williams, *Poverty* vi). Once again, the investigation of language practices must become a meticulous map of differences and instruction be made more effective by using the minor language as an entry into the standard language, the language of opportunity and power. Williams cautions researchers against confusing language differences with deficiencies, which he puts down to “careless interpretation of standardised tests” and “bias on the part of researchers and their techniques” (v).

One must appreciate and record the difference proper to every language practice, if this injustice is to be overcome. But in acting to promote a more benign knowledge, one is always acting in concert with the state agencies, with a governmental civilising mission which has barely mastered the rhetoric of inclusion. Indeed, the analytical distinction between deficiency and difference corresponds to and legitimates a difference and division in instructional programs. “Children with true deficiencies of language require quite different programs from those whose language mainly differs from that of the mainstream society” (Williams, *Poverty* v-vi). The children who are merely different themselves require programs tailored to the specific character of their difference, whether it is “bilingualism, dialect differences” or “radically different uses of language” (vi).

The conjunction between field studies and educational instrumentalities is an inevitable relation since, even if the state is not directly involved in the education, it is involved in the measuring of school success and accreditation of schools and teachers. In addition, that ineluctable phantom, the nation, resurfaces to decide what is a laudable goal, to what realities it should conform, and, finally, what the relationship between margin and centre must be:

It is a reasonable and desirable goal that all children in the United States are able to function linguistically in standard English in addition to whatever language or dialect they have learned in their homes. The reasons for this point are simple and practical – the language of our educational institutions (including its literature), and the language required for most better-paying occupations in this country, is standard English. But it is important that standard English be developed parallel, or be built upon, the home language, rather than at the expense of it. (Williams, *Poverty* vi)

The development which situated itself at the site of the body, helped by the trained eye and the restraining hand of the instructor, is accompanied by the development, both natural and compulsory, of a backward people resisting the forces of modernity, forces which are bound to change the very environment in which old languages find their home and sense. The school fights a battle for modernity, written as the battle to help the poor to develop. This mode of transcription has positioned the researcher as the mediator between the forces of the nation (the state and the market) and the interests of the problem population:

Still less, out of school, can the language of lessons make head against the language of life. But schools are every day standing less alone in this contest. Along the chief lines of road, from the better counties, from the influx of the English, or English-speaking labourers, into the iron and coal-fields, in short from every point of contact with modern activity, the English tongue keeps spreading, in some places rapidly, but sensibly in all.

Railroads, and the fuller development of the great mineral beds, are on the eve of multiplying these points of contact. (*Commission on the State of Education in Wales 7*)

What renders the new education legitimate and truthful is the change of the world it both reflects and fights for:

Schools are not called forth to impart in a foreign, or engraft upon the ancient, tongue a factitious education conceived under another set of circumstances . . . but to convey in a language, which is already in process of becoming the mother-tongue of the country, such instruction as may put the people on a level with that position which is offered to them by the course of events. If such instruction contrasts in any points with the tendency of old ideas, such contrast will have its reflex and its justification in the visible change of surrounding circumstances. (7)

The real language, insofar as it differs from the generalised national language, is the object of intervention precisely because of this interval of difference. It is because it shares the characteristics of a language with the standard speech that it is valued,

promoted and utilised. An empirical knowledge is obtained by ascertaining the real language abilities of students, and this in turn enables the school to transform its students, to modify their language through their existing language, into that demanded by the nation. While there are at least three theoretical and political options here, they nonetheless arise from within the same discursive and political location of the mediation between the world – whether as mainstream society, modern forces, or a nebulous field of rewards and punishments – and the problem population: the Welsh, children, and others whose deviance can be identified as linguistic.

As the instance of the Welsh Sunday schools exemplifies, the problem populations included linguistic deviance within their symptomatology, and their difference implied a national language devoid of the opacity, evasiveness and backwardness of the marginal groups. The national language was coupled with the national space to create an ineluctable demand, an urgent need, within the space of the school, thus reformulating the heterotopic conjunction of school and world. However, the model of a purified, transparent and national language of interiority, discipline and understanding itself arises not from national space *per se* but from the central pedagogical-disciplinary site of the school. The language demanded and invoked by the nation itself emerged as a visible, self-evident thing within the ordered, heterotopic space of the classroom. There, under a careful regime of visibility and somatic/spatial control, the material devices of instruction formed the experience of language that invests the concepts under which literacy discourse understands it today.²²

Making Language Appear in the School

The nation has, as agencies of demand and definition, a number of technologies for representing its demands, and it would seem that the definition of the language comes from a number of modern dictionaries, business surveys, and so on. The notion of a national language, however, is unassignable and diffuse: does it proceed from an agglomeration of public debates, newspaper articles, national rituals, pronouncements, fictions, performances and small acts of exemplification and instantiation? There is nothing about the mythology of nation-states which makes a standard national language a

²² Hence Durkheim's contention that the classroom's primary function is to instill a morality of discipline is inaccurate: the knowledge imparted directly invests pedagogical discipline.

necessary consequence. The points of contact spreading a language of modernity did not suffice to create a standard language, but, rather, aided the ongoing project of schools in imparting models of progress and language onto the backward peoples. It requires a wholly other space, structured and properly, concentratedly national and universal, to make this language appear, quite literally, to hang in the air above its subjects. The classroom is the pre-eminent space for the emergence of this experience of language.

Language, as it is experienced within the school, is deliberately constructed from the beginning as a real entity standing above and before the community, in a crude metaphysics of spatial order. The contention that the notions of language and text begin with writing is true, but these notions do not derive from the pre-logical relationship between speech and writing, nor from the long mutation of texts in their organisation of graphical space, but, rather, from a recent form of enclosure and visibility, the national classroom, where language is made manifest as a visible object and is felt, embodied and enacted through techniques of copying, reciting and correcting.

The regulation of this language and its appearance is evident in manuals of nineteenth century schooling, of which A. B. Orlebar's is exemplary. Shortly after working as an Inspector of National Schools in Victoria, Orlebar, in a textbook setting out the arrangement of slates, pupils and text in a classroom, set out a physics, not only of lines of sight, but also of light, correction and passage. He arranged the relations between the model, the rows of desks, the number of children, light and shadow, the eye, distance, size and the guiding line:

In schools where the formation of large classes is practicable, the children should be arranged in parallel rows; not less than ten in a row and not more than fifteen; and each row being three feet apart, from one similar line to another. The model should be hung on a wall before them in as bright a light as possible, and the children's eyes should be in the shade, to obtain the best effect. With such arrangements, from 100 to 150 children may be taught collectively; for the lines being $\frac{5}{16}$ of an inch thick, can be seen distinctly by an ordinary eye at a distance of forty feet. The eye is further assisted by

contrast of color, the guiding lines being vermilion, and the letters black on a white ground. (Orlebar, qtd. in Austin and Selleck 91)

The model, a particle of text, perhaps a single character, was ordered according to the conditions of visibility in a collective, physical space, noting possible obstructions and distortion:

It must be suspended so high that the children in the remote rows may see the model well over the heads of those before them; but not higher, otherwise there will be too much vertical foreshortening. (Orlebar, qtd. in Austin and Selleck 92)

Not yet a text, this model, combining sight, orthographic propriety and piecemeal correction under the teacher's supervision, established within an ordered, communal space an object that was both handed down to be reproduced and commented upon in its visual self-evidence. It was not only this spectacular materialisation of language that formed the basis of the experience of a national language. To be sure, the languages had already been separated and historicised as the gradual elaboration of spontaneous speech peculiar to a people or to a civilisation,²³ and a tradition was taking shape in comparative linguistics which would ultimately biologise and racialise the language group in terms of a territory.²⁴ These developments were important also in situating language as the elaboration of an individual consciousness, as the mark of the free activity of a soul endowed with a "mental individuality" (Humboldt, *passim*). However, this experience of the classroom constitutes the appearance of a national and pedagogical language, of language as a common possession, as a faculty to which we accede through training, as a problematic of definition, imposition and power, and as a material entity.

This is an epochal event in the experience of language; this cutting up of space to form a proper writing procedure, this setting up, along with the silence, immobility and attention of students, a model where language, and also the structure for knowing it, may appear. Literacy studies, while not wholly ignoring it, do not recognise this effectuation of immobility and making-visible of language, this disciplinary and ostensive technique,

²³ Herder, Humboldt and Schlegel are obvious and influential examples here.

²⁴ A notorious instance is the work of Friedrich Ratzel. On the nineteenth century's racialisation of language, see Evans (27-41). On the nineteenth-century "discovery" of language, see Pedersen.

as a necessary condition for the appearance of textual language and for the emergence of the figure of the textualised student. But classroom technique is built upon this model, relies upon a restricted grammar for the revelation of language, imprinting it upon the child as the bearer of a reproduction, as a knower of her/his own power of it, as an agent regularly replicating it both to a certain level of perfection and, having trained his/her gaze to see its lines, as a critical subject of this language, the world it purports to represent and the power that is claimed for it.

As the dialogue between Seguin and the “mere speech” of the cretin Julien demonstrates, the act of interrogating a child was passing beyond the mere elicitation of mimicry: the recital of the catechism was interrupted by a tabulated knowledge of grammar and by a conscious reorganisation of the text into a relation with everyday life. Practices like the Welsh *pwncau* could no longer stand as authentic knowledge: the mere memorisation and repetition of a text could no longer serve as a sign of language. Moreover, an unschooled tongue was apt, as Mayhew points out, to resist telling the truth. In both cases, what is violated is the regulated function of language as representation. In Julien’s case, the recitation disguised a real want of development in understanding, and understanding, in the depths of the mind, is a recognition that names can stand for general concepts which can be recognised as tokens or instances of the concept, by a combination of memory, analysis and association. Preyer, thus, points out the futility of rote memorisation, which “we require a child to do . . . when he learns phrases and vocables the meaning of which he does not understand,” on the grounds that it does not develop the understanding (132).

This interrogation of the understanding is already present in the British Inspectors’ Reports, whose method of questioning passes from catechism to the demand for other textual operations, and thus, by way of the text, by way of a knowledge of it, to a questioning that will diagnose and prescribe remedies and reforms. Moreover, the text coexists with an array of concerns and evaluations. Prescriptions for pronunciation and reproduction inform the interrogation regarding the geography and political constitution of the country and the events of the Bible, and enable a judgment on the development of the children, already marked by their reading and their answers, as the index not only of their own intelligence but also of the method, quality, training and class of the teacher

and of the physical adequacy of the school space itself. To take a representative example, David Lewis, assistant to Lingen, reports his inspection of the Cwmduday Day School:

the room was so dark that the few children whom I heard read were obliged to go to the door, and open it, to have sufficient light. They read the 16th chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, all of them in a wretched manner. . . . The master did not question them, nor correct them when reading, though I heard several false pronunciations. The following answers were made to my questions: Had heard of Jesus Christ; he was the son of God; *thought* he had come on earth; he came to save sinners; he was crucified by the Jews; *thought* he was he was now in heaven Knew the name of the parish, county, and country in which they lived. Had heard of the Queen; she lived somewhere near London. $6 \times 7 = 42$; $9 \times 8 = 49$; $3 \times 7 = 21$; $33 - 16 = 17$; $19 + 17 = 36$. (*Commission on the State of Education in Wales* 165)

A delicate set of relations, still detectable and operative in the *Curriculum Framework*, is established between the school and teacher, the text and the world, where the child, in its response to examination, is the sign of all of these as well as of itself. This intimate and complex set of locating and symptom-reading practices enacted by the inspector instantiate and record these relations at a national level: in the form of vignettes and statistical tables, in the form of problems related to norms (how are the uninstructed teachers to assemble reliable statistical data, what are the physical and temporal conditions of proper schooling) and in a relation from text to performance to text. This act of recording and judging generates the form of knowledge which, in its reliance upon the text as the stable mediator between heterogeneous spaces (the school and its instructional space, the child and its cognitive, spatial and economic attributes, the nation and its population), constitutes an important part of the experience and the visible surface of literacy, both as national concern and common end. It is this form of knowledge, this language and text, and this nationalised network of emplacements, that are invoked, deployed and instrumentalised in the *Curriculum Framework*.

In conjunction with the appearance of language in the classroom, a national space was represented in which the mastery of the national language was interrogated and

performed. It involved an imposing conjunction of elements: a roving inspectorate, questioning teachers and children to ascertain both the success of the individual school and the growth of the nation towards civilisation; a concern to immobilise the vagrant classes, the petty traders, itinerant labourers, foreigners, aborigines, linguistic minorities, and to measure their value and their cost to the nation; a massive redrawing of all economic and cultural activity into the rise of one incorporated whole, supervised by government; a transcription of the population as the health of a single organism; a comparison and competition with other countries using the same or comparable measures; a problematisation of local systems, rendering them accountable; the imposition of a single examination, of mass-testing; the construction of the child as an object to be known in its proper mode and stages of development, and to be made according to these same modes; a problematisation of instruction at every stage, in terms of the character, training, pecuniary incentives and powers of observation of teachers; a call for parents to share in the scientific and pedagogical observation of children; a multiple construction of the child into a typical healthy child, a backward or arrested child, a culturally anomalous and a spatially errant child. The child, the school, the teacher, the language they perform, the spaces they traverse, the patterns, values, and speed of their work in the national language, were all to be transcribed into the great table of the nation.

While many of these processes occurred prior to the nineteenth century, their acceleration, enabled by the project of the psycho-physiological study of the child as it spread out from the mothers of idiots to all parents, was due to the advent of a recordable and testable language and to the new evidentiary status of children's language as the sign of their development and the material basis for correction of, and insight into, consciousness. Moreover, a concern with the child's freedom or with the emancipation of a social class cannot of itself account for a later, more recent discourse on literacy. These options were available from the start as arguments and emphases, resurfacing with a certain regularity, from Froebel to W. T. Harris in the case of the child's self-activity, and from Owen to the Mechanics' Institutes in the case of the subjugated classes. That emancipation may be won through metalinguistic awareness reifies the function of the

textualising dyad of school and government, reinstating language, as it is traced around the text, as the substance of power.²⁵

Literacy, in its extension to new and diverse sites, reactivates these relations and adapts them to new exigencies, including liberatory ones. But it retains, in its proliferation and mutation, a certain architecture, a way of resurrecting the same questions, a structure that identifies and reifies it as what is needed. This minimal set of relations repeats the call to government, the ordering of space according to a need for a certain form of subjection and an awareness of that subjection. Power, need, text, context and progress order this space and introduce the imperative for, as well as the bare outlines of, an intervention. The pedagogical heterotopia converts all places to itself while retaining an ideal form outside of all real spaces. The coordinates established by this heterotopia operate insistently within the discourse, from policy documents to critical studies, extending a pedagogising and textualising of existence. It is this process that this thesis seeks to make evident and, finally, to interrupt. Hence, Chapter Six takes up and interrogates a narrative of critical and liberatory literacy by inserting a questioning and difficult history of the margins of language, the nation-state, governmentality, text, self and the national, developmental subject of literacy.

²⁵ Indeed, W. T. Harris (*General Government*) already articulated educational development with national government. See also Stewart.

6: Handbooks, Histories and Fictions

Critical histories of literacy produce a smooth narrative of literacy and power, one which, while offering a liberatory program of instruction leaves untouched the bases of power in the literacy dispositif. Hence, this chapter undertakes a “counter memory” or “history of the present” interrupting this smooth historical narrative and making visible the stakes of constructing a past in the image of current knowledges of literacy. Because the discourse coordinates heterogeneous knowledges, this alternative history uses a variety of sources: children’s fiction, histories, surveys, inspector’s reports and handbooks for teachers. Two children’s books, *Pinocchio* and *The Neverending Story*, demonstrate a dramatic change in the relation between school text and world between the nineteenth-century and in contemporary fiction. In the light of this discontinuity, a representative history of literacy given in a “critical literacy” handbook for teachers is given a close analysis. The historical narratives produced by such handbooks instruct teachers in what to hold as true about literacy. The basic historical mechanism and the fundamental deception of such enchiridial fictions is the drawing of a line of essential continuity between the reading and writing of the past and the literacy practices of the present.¹ In response to this, the chapter constructs genealogical relations of descent between today’s literacy and ostensibly unlike things, suggesting a connection between new modes of governmentality and the control of language encoded into literacy and textuality.² Additionally, this “history of the present” emphasises a discontinuity, focusing on the sudden emergence of literacy in policy in the latter twentieth century. It draws upon Foucault’s genealogy of sexuality to argue that, like liberatory discourses of sex, critical-liberatory discourses on literacy and the text are related to mutating strategies of power. In accounting for the complexity of literacy’s functions in establishing a relation of truth between the student and the powers that construct her/him, as well as a

¹ This chapter does *not* address the more populist handbooks for parents, such as Fleisch’s *Why Johnny Can’t Read*. It should be noted, however, that all these books operate on common, but distributed, discursive ground.

² Bernardette Baker offers a similar critical history of compulsory schooling in the US, arguing that the exclusion of disabled and special children, along with traditions of enclosure, formed “both ‘external’ conditions of possibility for public schooling’s emergence and ‘internal’ effects that emerged through the experiences of confinement” (6).

relation between the state's long-standing imperatives (of measurable achievement and constant examination) and the truth of language that operates within literacy discourse, this genealogy further explicates the extraordinarily complex yet mundane transcriptions in the *Curriculum Framework*.

Two Very Different Text(book)s

The instructive difference between nineteenth-century and contemporary encounters with texts is demonstrated by two figures: the texts held by Pinocchio and Bastian Balthasar Bux. *Pinocchio* and *The Neverending Story* are both books written for children; they are both concerned with the relation between text, school and world, and therefore exemplary pedagogising texts. However, the relations between these three terms are radically shifted: whereas the world enjoys primacy over text and school in the former, the text and its association with the school encompass and threaten to envelop the world in the latter.

In *Pinocchio*, Lorenzini tells the story of a piece of wood which, despite the author's best efforts,³ is destined to become human. It can be read as an allegory of the transforming power of education for a newly free people. Its very first lines remove the king from fairy tales and open a space for the charm of common things:

How it happened that Mastro Cherry, carpenter, found a piece of wood that wept and laughed like a child

Centuries ago there lived--

“A king!” my little readers will say immediately.

No, children, you are mistaken. Once upon a time there was a piece of wood. It was not an expensive piece of wood. Far from it. Just a common block of firewood, one of those thick, solid logs that are put on the fire in winter to make cold rooms cozy and warm. (Collodi 1)

³ In the serialised version the story finishes with Pinocchio's hanging in Chapter 15.

Pinocchio's adventures, like those of the Italian people, move him from one cruel master to the next, from one dangerous ruse to another, but finally he graduates from being a natural resource (to be used and consumed) to becoming a real boy (the national subject, with his loyalties and duties). What is interesting in this pedagogical national tale is that the spelling-book and the school are absent from the adventure: Pinocchio exchanges the book for a ticket to the Marionette Theatre (Collodi 39). The story entirely eludes the school while making the world perform an instructional function: Pinocchio learns to tell the truth, to save his maker, to listen to good counsel, and to treasure the comforts of home. The discourse of the world completely absorbs the text and evades the school.⁴ Pinocchio is born in the nightmare of a fairy tale, from which he emerges – as if educated into being – a real boy.

Things are quite different in Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*. While the school is the unreached destination in *Pinocchio*, it is the point of departure in Ende's novel. The text and the reader, doubled in the figure of Bastian, huddle above the school in the attic: the text avoids the world. But here, the world disappears in a play of desire: above the dour knowledge imparted in the classroom, the text hovers as an infinite language without borders, as an *other* world glimpsed in a dirty mirror, as a glittering ruse threatening to trap the reader forever in its endless length if he should, by wishing one too many wishes, lose all desire and forget his identity. Another language, undisciplined and fantastic, lies just out of reach, in an infinite region where desire and madness struggle for the soul. The text and the school, then, form a fleeting territorial coincidence, each containing their own worlds. But the text threatens to engulf the world and to replace it with a hallucination. Hence, Bastian must in the end return to school and family: like Pinocchio, he is changed, he "matures" by living in the *fabula*, but the threat posed by the land of Fantastica is that the text will swallow him, in a space that is both boundless and nowhere.

⁴ For the use of *Pinocchio* for the purposes of "didactic moralism" in the US context, see Morrissey and Wunderlich.

Though there are many more aspects to this tale, making it ambiguous and difficult, the antagonism between school and world is clearly a fundamental one.⁵ Beyond the text, the real world threatens the boundless confabulation of the text and its revival by the reader because it destroys the *fabula*, imposing “the Nothing” which destroys Fantastica and its creatures, turning them into “lies” (Ende 133). The reason why *The Neverending Story* is set above the school is clear, then: it attempts to reconstruct an ideal pedagogical space where the text is a *fabula* restored in its enchantments of desire, horror and terror, rather than involved in the dreary lessons Bastian hears going on below him. The threat to the alliance between human beings and the infinite literary landscape is precisely the school, which binds the text at the edges and assigns it a (de)finite status, converting it into a mechanism of discipline. However, it could just as easily be that the text’s efficacy is its ubiquity, that control has found a mobile and shifting membrane, an ever-present substance in which one finds oneself, without hope of discerning the boundaries to a space outside.⁶

The relevant passage that forms the cosmology of the book and the world is the dying assurance of the werewolf Gmork, who tells Atreyu that once he has passed into the Nothing he will become a “lie.” Fantastica is dying because humans have ceased to believe it exists, turning more of its creatures into “living corpses” (Ende 151), into lies for the use of “the manipulators;” as a result, people believe less in it and more of it dies, spreading more lies again:

“If humans believe Fantastica doesn’t exist, [said Gmork,] they won’t get the idea of visiting your country. And as long as they don’t know you creatures of Fantastica as you really are, the manipulators do what they like with them.” (Ende 152)

⁵ Among these is its genre: it takes elements of children’s fantasies (but curious fantasies - the Nothing is reminiscent of Madeleine L’Engle, for instance, while the infinite fold of the other life draws most clearly from C. S. Lewis’ Narnia stories); it reinstates a Borgesian endlessness to language; and it forms what Foucault calls a library:

a site that is nowhere, since it gathers all the books of the past in this impossible “volume” whose murmuring will be shelved among so many others, before all the others (“Language to Infinity” 100-01).

⁶ Deleuze (“Postscript”) uses the computer as the sign of post-disciplinary “societies of control,” an argument that can be extended to the extension of literacy and text, as a general means of evaluation, into various sites.

Lies are the “instrument” by which humans are controlled, because they live on beliefs (Ende 152). Beyond the ideological level of a political fable distinguishing fantasy from ideology, Ende inscribes a functional ontology, a distinction between the living corpse of the lie and the creature of *Fantastica* as it really is. Two living worlds coincide and communicate but retain their separate natures. Once *Fantasticans* enter into the real world, they cease to be *Fantastican* and a part of the domain is replaced by a negative scotoma, “the Nothing.” In the real world, they become instruments of control and destruction. Gmork says of Atreyu:

“When your turn comes to jump into the Nothing, you too will be a nameless servant of power, with no will of your own. Who knows what use they will make of you? Maybe you’ll help them persuade people to buy things they don’t need, or hate things they know nothing about, or hold beliefs that make them easy to handle or doubt the truths that might save them. Yes, you little *Fantastican*, big things will be done in the human world with your help, wars started, empires founded” (Ende, 152)

This might easily be interpreted as manifesting the pastoral, introspective “principled position” mentioned by Hunter,⁷ opposing as it does the freedom and authenticity of true fantasy against the cynical lies of the manipulators. This simple opposition, however, is complicated by the absence of a pastoral guide (indeed, Bastian is avoiding *schooling* in reading this text, and the text is his alibi for absence) and by the meeting surfaces of *Fantastica* and reality, each modifying the other’s state of health: “[Bastian] *now realised that not only was Fantastica sick, but the human world was as well*” (Ende 153; emphasis in original). The text and the world may coincide, but *fabula* and reality can never be the same thing. Just as the world threatens to empty the tale of the powers of its strangeness, the story threatens to turn into lies and to corrupt the world. Ende warns of a dead world and empty lies because the text and the world, poles in a circuit of infinite renewal, threaten to merge.

⁷ See Chapter Four, above.

A Handbook on Texts, Power and History

There is a gap between these two tales, between the world that could summon up a tale and realise it and the text that threatens to engulf both world and story. What has happened between the times of these two tales can no doubt be largely traced, but it may be traced in a number of ways. The pedagogical text, representing the truth of language and the discipline of schooling, has escaped the school under the name of literacy. This new text bears both the promise of social inclusion and the threat of absorption into the discipline enacted through texts. What made possible this mobilisation of such a text was a combination of calls for standardised assessment and attempts at recognition and inclusion.⁸ Within the literacy discourse, the difference between these two texts is minimised, since literacy and the text are treated as entities which, though subject to different uses, persist over time. The caesura is transformed into a line of continuity and takes the form of a law of variation.

Allan Luke's short handbook *The Social Construction of Literacy in the Primary School*, presents an argument from a position claiming authority over the interpretation of the historical evidence and functions as an "enchiridion" for teachers. Such narratives supplement the official policy documents by providing literacy with a set of socio-historical meanings and a socio-political motivation. They produce a distance from which teachers may both interrogate the uses and status of literacy and renew and reform their literacy instruction. Beyond this, they pedagogise historical and political thought. Luke's historical treatment of literacy runs:

Since the Protestant Reformation, schools have been charged with the selection and framing of practices, texts and contexts thought to be worth teaching. The evolution of alphabetic literacy in the 4th century BCE in Greece was predated by various writing systems in the Middle East and Asia. Since their inception, writing systems have been used for the storing, recovery, critique and analysis of various knowledges, quite literally as memory aids for keeping kinship, agricultural, legal and literary/historical records. The movement from oral to literate cultures was far more gradual

⁸ Graham and Slee offer a thorough Foucaultian interrogation of the concept and practice of "inclusion" in contemporary Australian education.

and less dramatic than many earlier accounts would have us believe, spanning centuries (Graff 1987). The transitions from written to oral cultures is evidenced in hybrid literary genres – in conventional forms of written poetry which are extensions of spoken genres (e.g. epic, lyric poetry), and in forms of speech which are strongly influenced by written genres (e.g. the lecture, the political speech). (*Social Construction* 9)

This history is not only worn thin and smooth (the date for Greek alphabetic literacy either relies on a special definition or is plainly wrong) but it is involved in a form of address that has its own peculiar circumstances and personae. In this booklet Luke assumes the position of an expert writing in an auxiliary, but also somewhat subversive, relation to state schooling. He is involved in two parallel modes of address, telling teachers both what they should hold true about literacy instruction, and also what questions they should ask of it and what practices they should pursue. It is not an historical argument: that is presented as already established. Here it is recapitulated, inaccurately and hurriedly, but also precisely in terms of this application. Thus, it is not important to be right about the date of the phonetic alphabet's invention, but it is necessary to outline a certain argument, namely, that literacy makes possible certain institutions and therefore plays a role in the regulation of power.

Luke follows this historical sketch with a lengthy interpretation, one which it is clearly important for teachers to remember, which it is imperative for them to understand if they are to problematise their teaching and transform it, continuously, into the proper form of power. The interpretation stresses the role of the alphabet in social institutions and the control of populations, via literacy, by elite groups. This historical argument, though short, continues for several closely-typed pages, and serves as the foundation for the understanding of contemporary schools being advocated. I follow this argument here, taking care to chart the function of such a history in an argument and exhortation concerned with schooling.

For Luke, literacy enables the historical development of certain social institutions: from commercial and agricultural enterprises to religious establishments, from the emergence of disciplines of analytical sciences to new means of

government surveillance and monitoring of the populace, from the development of new and hybrid genres of literature to the mass dissemination of “how to” manuals and popular texts. (*Social Construction* 9)

Luke is arguing, in fact, that literacy is far more than the condition of possibility of some institutions: it makes possible certain social practices, forms of knowledge, modes of power and types of narrative. Luke streamlines the historical narrative to tell the story of literacy as a technology of social exclusion, for

Throughout its early evolution, literacy as a technology of social development and control remained in the hands of a patriarchal elite To be literate was to have access to and control of dominant patriarchal knowledges and cultures. (*Social Construction* 9-10)

The selection here is produced with an eye to correcting the teacher’s perspective, to abolishing the utopian hopes conjured up by the “literacy myth.” Teachers should know that literacy is a “‘double edged’ sword,” both including and excluding, liberating and controlling. Luke sets up this knowledge as an ethical moment, a moment of choice, discernment and evaluation:

What is needed is a sustained, informed reevaluation of the place and potential of literacies in Australian life and work, not the expectation of educational, social and economic panaceas. Many of the current claims and controversies over literacy which teachers must address are premised on assumptions about the social consequences of literacy for students, communities and nations. (11)

Luke draws some general conclusions: that literacy is defined by its social uses, that there are a variety of literacies, that these are introduced through “literacy events” in communities, homes and schools in the interaction between child and text (24), that “schooling [is] responsible for constructing and shaping for students the potential functions and uses of literacy” (43), that children should be taught a critical understanding of the way texts work (42), and that it is up to teachers and the community

at large to design social futures by constructing literacies appropriate to the demands of a future communication-saturated society.

It is at the price of despecifying the historical, of writing it under a specific and teleological sign, that one can write thus about schooled literacy and the claims made concerning it. It is difficult to argue against any of Luke's conclusions because what lies at the very core of the argument is the figure of literacy, a figure that rewrites history as the tale of itself and enters into every social act and space. Luke's argument, which is a distillation of other historical arguments, tells us not only what one should conclude about the historical evidence and what one should do on the basis of it, but also writes a history secured by the ontological guarantee of what it seeks. The presence of text and writing automatically *means* that literacy, in some form, is operating.

But the sign of literacy operates with a strange fluidity, organising historical and social spaces into pedagogical ones, *pedagogising* the space of thought in which such arguments are made. It is this power of literacy to cover over, to enter into and convert practices into versions of itself that is the symptom of its function within a pedagogising regime. It is this that constitutes, not its relative eternity as a variable, but its absolute modernity, its timely situation within modern forms of power. It is necessary to ask what history of literacy can resist, finally, the call to form the ethical moment of choice and the imperative to hail educators as those responsible for constructing the future. Such a history would take the mode of being of literacy and the practices of schooling, as well as their conjunction, as very recent things formed by the conjunctures of concepts and techniques, of placings, practices and forms of perception that are discontinuous by virtue of the fragility of their interrelations. It would thus deny the name of literacy to much that bears it today. Such a history would deprive the present of the right to rename the past so easily.⁹

⁹ This is intended in the way Michael S. Roth characterises the "history of the present" in *Discipline and Punish*:

The genealogy of the present form of the prison is a criticism of this form because it undermines the claims of the ideology of the prison to being concerned with eternal problems, and because it uncovers the prison's links with practices it seemed to have left behind. (Roth 43)

A Foucaultian History of Literacy

As a counterpart to the historical enchainment of the discourse of literacy, then, another handbook may be offered, another sparse set of landmarks, in the form of a critical history that writes power into literacy in a different way. The enduring struggle between an educational state (now figured as the globalising neo-liberal nation-state)¹⁰ and the subjects it excludes (variously defined by class, race, gender or sexuality and subsumed under a rubric of difference) has, in the discourse of literacy, a descent from the nineteenth century. Hygiene and lighting, the norms of the hospital, a disciplinary structuring of space and the deployment of the teacher's authoritative gaze and voice, were elements adopted and codified by the schools. In addition, a concern runs through the nineteenth century to fix populations in space, to regulate their speech, to create a transparent relation between the reader and what he/she says about, and within, the text. Since the nineteenth century, the regulation of language in organised spaces has constituted the marked substance for the practices of government. Language has become the variable that both grades and includes subjects, making each subject visible and composable upon a table of abilities; the governable totality of the nation (and a world of nations) has become a tractable image of progress. Concurrently, language becomes visible as difference as well as deficiency, modifying and intensifying governmental operations. What emerges is an imbrication, much like that delineated in *The Will to Knowledge*, between dreams of popular liberation and a form of bio-power operating on the body's production of language.

To literacy may be applied Foucault's argument concerning sex, namely, that rather than being repressed under a prudish Victorian regime, and rather than being the key to "our" liberation, "sex" is a form of knowledge that developed from the techniques of power that deployed it as truth. Foucault's critical history reconstructs the discourse on sex as multiplying and proliferating, in a complex mechanism of excitation and incitement (Foucault, *Knowledge* 48). Drawing the discourse on sex into a relation with the production of truth, Foucault sees the novelty of "sex" in the West's last few centuries

¹⁰ See Gur-Ze'ev (288) for a statement of the challenges facing "any courageous attempt to re-articulate counter-education and resist the violent logic of capitalism, and not solely its violences that become visible." See also Kenway, Pusey, Porter, et al., Seddon and Green ("Re'right'ing").

as the result of “too much rather than not enough discourse, in any case an interference between two modes of production of truth: procedures of confession, and scientific discursivity” (64-65). A similar relationship between language and truth emerges in the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century, language both constituted the truth of particular nationalities and enabled a complex redeployment of speech. First, with the spread of mass schooling, a utopian representation of language and nation as coincident was made possible: children would be part of a spectacle of unity staged for themselves. As a consequence, their language was both rendered more “ordinary” and “representative” (middle-class) and more tightly controlled. Second, the creation, from the eighteenth century, of national tongues, generated an ethnographic totality of mankind, returning a map, and a fantasy of race, to the colonising countries (the vignette standing for this here is Mayhew’s *London Labour and the London Poor*). Third, a whole set of languages became both the objects of study and the site of eradication, but this was haunted by a desire to “represent” the subject whose language was removed, most notably in collections of folklore, and in literature. Fourth, language became the locus for a continuous and extensive pedagogisation of spaces and bodies, from the very small (the child) to the very large (the nation).

In attempting to account for the manifold objectives, means, persons and groups involved in the deployment of sex in bio-politics, Foucault begins with “four specific mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex” – “a hysterisation of women’s bodies,” a pedagogisation of children’s sex,” “a socialisation of procreative behaviour,” and “a psychiatrisation of perverse pleasure” (*Knowledge* 104-05). Similarly, the nineteenth-century deployment of language involves several specific mechanisms: a developmental biologisation of speech, a symptomatology of subaltern languages,¹¹ a pedagogising subjectivation of children’s language, and an economic moralisation of enclosure. This nineteenth-century form mutates into a cultural ontology of language practices subordinated to a centre, a distribution of developmental types and speeds, a textualising pedagogy of language and a mobile and continuous enclosure by language itself.

¹¹ See Wardle (9-10).

In the final chapter of *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault positions the concern with sexuality within the historical practice of governmentality, and specifically within the form of bio-power. Whereas until the seventeenth century the sovereign's "power of life and death" was exercised as the power to kill the subject or refrain from killing, and corresponded to a right of seizure (*Knowledge* 136), modern regimes, based on "government" rather than "sovereignty," sought to seize and control the forces of life and the anatomical possibilities of human beings, exerting "a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them" (136).¹² An array of techniques for managing, measuring and regulating the forces of life, and a set of political technologies for disciplining the body and rendering it efficient, form the basis of Foucault's argument about "the importance assumed by sex as a political issue" (145). Among the many historical changes in the form of power in Western countries, he writes of the "growing importance assumed by the action of the norm, at the expense of the juridical system of the law" (144). A normalising power "has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchise . . ." (144). Once this relation to life became a part of political techniques, however, it was subject to reversals:

What was demanded and what served as an objective was life, understood as the basic needs, man's concrete essence, the realisation of his potential, a plenitude of the possible. Whether or not it was Utopia that was wanted was of little importance; what we have seen has been a real process of struggle; life as a political object was in a sense taken at face value and turned back against the system that was bent on controlling it. (145)

Literacy belongs within this general expansion of bio-power, of a set of knowledges and practices which produced language as a political object by applying a power of observation, regulation, and normalisation to the school, the teacher, the student and the text. Beyond Foucault's historicising of the body, in the elaboration of a science of language and the mind,¹³ there is a supplementary history of the techniques of power, more or less subtle, geared towards the making of productive individuals:

¹² See also Mayo.

¹³ See Tolchinsky for a typical latter-day example.

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 labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection (in which need is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated and used); the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body. This subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence and ideology; it can also be direct, physical, pitting force against force, bearing on material elements, and yet without involving violence; it can be calculated, organised, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use neither of weapons nor of terror and yet remain of a physical order. That is to say, there may be “knowledge” of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them: this knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of the body. (*Discipline and Punish* 25-6)

Literacy constitutes a knowledge arising from this political investment of the body, from a whole series of image-repertoires, from a battery of problems to do with the control of meaning that arose in the last two centuries, from ways of transforming certain problem populations, from new functional sites where language became a tactical device of truth and power. In addition, literacy is a very recent concept, insofar as it is constituted within certain minimal discursive relationships between agencies, types of person, forms of knowledge, subjection and governance. These conditions constitute a specific arrangement of relations between certain objects (text, language, student, school), surfaces of emergence (the demanding, changing world), points of diffraction (phonics or whole language;¹⁴ basic skills or critical literacies; standardised testing or a culturally sensitive typology of language use) and a type of subjectivation (the recognition and elaboration of language as the substance of the developing self).

¹⁴ This opposition arises from a previous distinction between synthetic and analytic techniques in reading instruction: see Sully (195-6).

Literacy is a form of power that generates a proliferation of problematising knowledges, one that defines itself as the politics of instruction and secures its right to represent society in a managed contestation. The role of the state is essential to this, not as the univocal imposer of curricula but as the arbiter, as the site of compromise and contest, between ever-reconstituted interests, groups and definitions. It should be noted, of course, that the state ends up inscribing a preference for certain interests, but it should also be recognised that the state keeps the contest open, allows all voices at least a token hearing, a transcription into the terms of reference, into policy documents. This political dimension is a correlate of the reconfiguration of language and text within schooling, bridging the interval between the two texts mentioned above. The power engendered by this reconfiguration enjoins one to maintain the student and the text in a mutual relation of elaboration. The school acquired its own particular invention, the secular school textbook. No such book exists or existed outside of the school, and although the same material artefact may persist across social space, and may even be read in different places, only the organised space of instruction and interpretation, only the school, permits it to exist in its particular and distinguishing relations to interpretation, assessment, and the hierarchical distribution of literate abilities and understandings. The textbook, “language” and the school are important elements in the pedagogisation of social space.¹⁵ The pedagogical text, which represented both the truth of language and the evidence of discipline, has since been generalised: it has escaped the confines of the school under the name of literacy. Having one’s literacy defined and included carries with it the pleasure of recognition and the hope of integration, but it also carries with it the threat of absorption into the ubiquitous disciplinary mechanism of the text.¹⁶

In the nineteenth century, the rule of force in schools was replaced by a careful rearticulation of space, signals and language. It is no accident, then, that punishment, long associated with an encounter with the Word, should in the nineteenth century become unified with an instruction in language: the ABC, grammar, phonology, tone, spelling,

¹⁵ Kaplan extends this category to hypertexts, as do several policy documents (see Lo Bianco and Freebody) and other works on critical literacy (see Hayes; Taylor; Mikulecky; Kirkley).

¹⁶ From this point of view, the political economy of the text book and its cultural politics (see Apple; De Castell, Luke and Luke) are subsidiary issues. Studies of the ideology of children’s books (see Dixon) similarly assume their pedagogical function as textbooks. An early example of the conversion of texts to textbooks is Adler.

writing and elocution are the disciplines for a proper disposition of the body and the instilling of good habits. The language of the school acquired a technology of moralisation as it replaced physical punishment as the most direct means of control. Thus, an 1873 manual of school discipline instructs teachers not to raise the voice in anger, not to strike a child, not to use such “wrongful and injurious” punishments as locking the child in a closet, or enforcing “unnatural and long-continued attitudes of restraint,” since these “are all a resort to mere physical force, instead of moral incentives, and involve no appeal to a sense of honor or duty in a child” (New York Board of Education 4-5). The problem with the methods of force is that they enforce physical rather than moral habits, they undermine the teacher’s authority, and do not result in real obedience (5). The art of discipline is defined by a prohibition against violence, and involves a complex of signals and automatic responses, a modulation of the voice combined with a coding of authority into the space of instruction.

The training of the senses in the work of Seguin had as its basis the intellectualisation of every modality, but here the body is disciplined by language and space: language in the instructing voice and in the tasks of reading and writing, space in the arrangement and ordering of pupils and in the arrangement of visible authority. The teacher must be a master of lines of sight and the use of the voice as a signal:

In directing the various movements required of the pupils, care should be taken never to touch them. The teacher should take such a position before the class as will command the eye of every pupil, and thence direct by the voice, or by a signal. Pupils must be habituated to the impression that the teacher will give his commands but once, and that they must be obeyed at once. (New York Board of Education 5)

While such practices are no longer the norm today they retain an important role, for it was through them that the alliance of language and space, far from being a textual peculiarity, was established as the model of power for the school. Much of this general model still persists in manuals of classroom discipline, with an emphasis on fostering a cooperative and supportive environment. However, the nineteenth century writers were clear in relating this technology of language and space to the maintenance of an

efficacious power relationship. The teacher's authority and the student's submission were ensured by a careful use of the voice which, however disapproving, must never be harsh, since anger and resentment destroy authority:

On the contrary, the language used, and the tones of the voice, should always express a feeling of sympathy with the child. This is the way to win the youthful mind, and to bend the will, through the affections; a different course will antagonise it, and prevent all real submission, securing only a temporary semblance of obedience. (New York Board of Education 5)

This is a long way from the discourse of literacy as it stands today, yet it provides a polemical model, a line of descent that marks the school's knowledge of language as deeply imbued in the disciplining of children. A disciplinary use of language within the school has initiated the catoptrics in which an image of language as discipline was born. In its relationship with a given text and the teacher's authoritative knowledge of it, the performance of the student is a sign leading, in its imperfections, to an image, never complete but always gestured at, of the language as a set of proprieties. It is possible to establish both a line of descent for the forms of government, control, regulation, assessment, and correction, and a locus of recent establishment and invention of this particular "language." Language is the "system," neither wholly invisible nor wholly manifest, through which a text selects its particular form. Language is moreover modified by practices which have their own systems of approval, codes of ethics, distribution of cultural rewards, and "logics." Language instruction and the teaching of language can be said to arise from a single, recently assembled ordering space.¹⁷ This accounts, in a genealogical way, for the success of the teaching of national languages: the class forms the real locus of a national representation, as a set of individuals arrayed according to the one authority, subject to the same knowledge, engaging in work that, fundamentally, unites them in the common task of submitting and learning.

Alongside the model of language as a system of regulations, if not somewhat earlier, emerged the textual spectacle of language displayed in the classroom. It is with

¹⁷ This accords with and somewhat extends Deleuze and Guattari's contention (*Thousand Plateaus* 75-6) that language orders: here language (as both ordering and ordered) is itself the corollary of a disciplinary space.

the Lancaster schools that the book became the common property of all, coterminous with the walls of the classroom, and an ideal possession beyond its material manifestations. Lancaster seized upon the new economies realised by the factory, converting its internal space into the inside of a book, always open and in use:

It will be remembered, that the usual mode of teaching requires every boy to have a book: yet, each boy can only read or spell one lesson at a time, in that book [I]f a spelling book contains twenty or thirty different lessons, and it were possible for thirty scholars to read the thirty lessons in that book, it would be equivalent to thirty books for its utility. To effect this, it is desirable the whole of the book should be printed three times larger than the common size type, which would make it equal in size and cost to three common spelling books, value from eight-pence to a shilling each. Again, it should be printed with only one page to a leaf, which would again double the price, and make it equivalent in bulk, and cost to five or six common books; its different parts should then be pasted on pasteboard, and suspended by a string, to a nail in the wall, or other convenient place: one pasteboard should contain the alphabet; others, words and syllables of from two to six letters. The reading lessons gradually rising from words of one syllable, in the same manner, till they come to words of five or six letters, or more, preparatory to the Testament lessons. (Lancaster 50)

By the twentieth century, the curriculum had elaborated a complex and political distribution of language, not only over the space of the classroom, but throughout the territory to which its students belonged. “English” was divided not only into grammar and composition, but also into the history of English, and it was ramified by racial/national history and geography,¹⁸ as Lingen had previously wished for the Welsh. By removing children from their locality, an “abstract” experience of the nation, and of the national language, was made possible. It is this language, with its continuous judgements of competence, with its insistence on the presence and attention of the pupil, and with its confessional revelations of character, that re-emerges in the space of

¹⁸ See Willis and Central Board of Education.

innumerable literacies, innumerable rule-bound systems that, formalisable as a set of rules, can be employed in a power of naming, representing, marking and instructing, a power that rewards by its total and individualising inclusion.

On a completely different scale, a state recording apparatus emerged, a technology for collecting the barest data of the ability to read and write, for assembling a table which, at one glance, could act as an image of the nation, of its progress and reversals. The census, which had been in existence for some time, now joined the examination to provide “reliable” literacy rates, and attendance reports determined, under the threat of a school closure, how many students were in their appointed places. In Britain and Australia this was done at the price of universal compulsion, of paying “Compulsory Officers” and police, to arrest or report vagrant children, to punish their parents. In a letter (dated November 6 1888) to the Secretary of the Central Board of Education, Charles Barclay Kidson, Secretary of the Perth District Board of Education, performs and represents the supervisory and disciplinary hierarchy thus:

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the District Board of Education has directed me to draw your attention to a family of the name of Campbell, living in the most deplorable state of poverty, in Howlett’s Cottages, Roe Street. Owing to the laziness of the father, a worthless drunkard and well-known to the Police, the children, six or seven in number, are nearly destitute of clothing. The District Board are given to understand that these children never attend a School.

The District Board suggests that the children should be removed from the custody of the parents, and that they should be placed at the Orphanage.

The “present method of punishing,” Kidson’s letter continues, is insufficient, and he suggests that an “Industrial School should be instituted.”

An apparatus of enforcement and obligation accompanied the introduction of compulsory universal education, making use of existing institutions to punish, correct

and, above all, to enclose the child. The Industrial Schools Act (1874) divided truants into criminal and non-criminal. While the former were surrendered to parents or guardians, the latter could be sentenced to five years of imprisonment or penal servitude. The Western Australian Commissioner of Police (in a letter to the Colonial Secretary of 1st July 1887) explains the benefits of Police legislation:

The 19th Section of the Police Act 25 Vic. No. 15. on the subject of vagrancy will enable the Police in many cases to bring these waifs and strays under the notice of the Magistrates, and if in those cases the children be handed over to an “Industrial Institution” the public will be great gainers except with reference to the money charges – But even on this head, computed on the principle of profit and loss, the balances will be to the public; because in such an Institution the children cannot steal, and may possibly have good principles instilled into them.

In addition to these coercive measures, a technology of retention had of necessity been developed. The old regulation of the teacher’s manner, the Christian schools’ use of emulation, “Love” and the sympathetic voice was industrialised and put to work in “controlling and directing the influence lads have over each other” (Lancaster 34), and later embedded within the teacher’s language, as both the instrument of discipline and the matter to be learned. But this is insufficient in accounting for the specific power of the educational state’s control of space and the self. What supplements and perfects these measures is a relation of the student to her/himself as composed of a substance that belongs to the space and naturally requires education. J. J. Findlay points out that, for nineteenth century education, the creation of a self that required instruction was a central event:

the reaction in the child’s inner self to the interest taken by adults in his welfare is a capital feature in the entire story of nineteenth-century education.
(Findlay 148)

Indeed, this event was both epochal and personal, as Adams implies:

The becoming aware of the self as a being to be educated is as clear and definite an event – albeit of much more importance – as the becoming aware of the existence of the platypus. (Adams 73)

It has been argued that a long struggle brought about the secularisation of the curriculum, and that literacy is the perennially contested terrain that we have inherited from the English-speaking working classes, or even the working class of Europe.¹⁹ And yet mass schooling was conceived as both a Christianising and an industrialising project. If, for instance, the Welsh poor were not exactly unchristian, their piety was taught at the expense of the demands of the modern world, their vibrant popular forms were irrelevant to a world that, for the education official, made demands on the forms and uses of their knowledge. A number of borrowings occurred between the educational authorities of the countries of Europe in the nineteenth century, building upon a foundation of graded discipline in the three R's and the catechism. At the same time, a number of popular institutions were gradually invalidated, such as the hedge school, the dame school and the Sunday schools, by applying a set of new criteria alien to them. The school adopted the norms of the hospital in hygiene and lighting, as well as in the authority of the teacher's gaze. Most clear of all, a concern runs through the nineteenth century to fix the student in space, to regulate her/his speech, to create a transparent relation between the reader and what he/she says about, and within, the text.

A history of literacy as power-knowledge is also a history of exclusions, divisions and limitations. In forming the proper school, a network of educational authorities emerged, defining the proper school as a place of light, hygiene and authority, of a language and a curriculum designed for the new times faced by the modern industrialising nation. A nation had not only to be unified under the sign of a single language, but its members also had to be fixed in space, for their productivity and capacities to be known. It was under these conditions that a dual process occurred: a scandal concerning the itinerant and unaccountable mode of existence of the poor and criminal classes, and a morality attached to recording and recognising the language, trajectories and economic output of this population. In this sense, Mayhew and Binney

¹⁹ See Vincent (*Popular Culture* passim).

stand as the counterpart to Seguin, Itard and Montessori: along with the scientific project of discovering the processes specific to childhood and exploiting them in instruction and discipline emerged a concern to render in writing the real speech and economic existence of the unaccountable populations. This knowledge, with its philological collections of folk-tales and adages, was disingenuous in its lamentations on the imminent disappearance of such cultures: it was part of the process of rendering them improper and unviable. The problem of exclusion was the counterpart of a state demand for inclusion, for greater efficiencies in national production. Writing, both as the recording of these populations and the discipline that came to be expected of them, was thus part of a disciplinary process of enclosure and partitioning.²⁰

With a great many variations, schools (Parish, Sunday, Dame, hedge and Charity schools) came to represent the scandalous practice of partisan indoctrination of religious and political kinds, once the state came to inspect and evaluate them. An institution for criticising and disqualifying schools was arranged, enumerating the faults of the smaller and now unqualified institutions. Among the many criteria for judging poor schools inadequate, the failure to teach reading and writing (or even speaking, in the national language) took its place alongside political sedition and disease.²¹ Frequently in the English Sunday Schools of the early nineteenth century, the program was in fact to instill a terror of sin, and writing was often actively discouraged.²² We can see the criteria of a good school in Lingen's rhetorical questions regarding a good school:

Is light essential, and that the scholars should be under the control of the master's eye? . . . Is ventilation essential to health, and space to discipline and method? . . . Is it at any rate desirable to be protected from the weather?

(Commission on the State of Education in Wales 15-17)

Schools in all their variety came to be disciplined by an inspectorate, which insisted upon the meeting of certain basic criteria derived from concerns for discipline, health and enclosure. The need for light calls upon a long iconography of reason, but this time it is structured in a new way. The hierarchy of gazes depends upon a complete illumination of

²⁰ See Foucault (*Discipline* 141-43).

²¹ See Vincent (*Mass Literacy* 27) and Walkerdine ("Developmentalism").

²² See E. P. Thompson (414-5) and Raymond Williams (135-6).

its objects: the master's authority consists in seeing and controlling, ideally in an incorporeal way, the pupils in his care; the pupil's mastery relies upon the clear light in which s/he sees the objects of a future mastery, on the clear "light" of exposition and instruction, on the light that renders books legible and things visible; discipline and method require a space ordered by a light that permits the authoritative gaze.

This history of the school does not of itself constitute a genealogy of the practices of literacy. One must draw lines of descent from various, often heterogeneous sources. The school itself was the space of a convergence: it was not only a place of representation but also the laboratory of certain forms of ordering and administrative and operational assessment. Individual instruction became mass instruction through certain techniques and through the functional reordering of the class space, and became more efficient through the division of students into classes and grades. Moreover, in the operationalisation of literacy discourse, the problem of representing the world and its forces is brought into close articulation with the psychological development of the reader, so that the figure of understanding has certain landmarks within the student him/herself.

State intervention in education was formulated as a problem not of the general population but of the specific populations: of the poor, the mentally deficient, the working classes, the freed slaves, and various ethnic groups. The problem of the poor was constituted as a problem of fertility and death, and of the relation between fertility and food supply.²³ The mass schooling of the nineteenth century focussed its efforts at reform and control upon the children of the poor. What made the schooling of the poor inevitable and practicable underwent a series of modifications. The child in the nineteenth century was primarily the object of a charity enthralled by the theology of work, an object thought reformable by the imposition of an arbitrary environment, subject to techniques of punishment imported from the prison reforms. The child constituted a social danger, not only in terms of criminality and pauperism, but also with regard to the desire to locate and fix it, to render it productive for, and of, the society. Schooling was part of a larger project of the spatial anxieties that surrounded the category of the poor: the promiscuous mingling of bodies and the spread of disease; the secretive and furtive parasitism of

²³ See Mitchell Dean's *The Constitution of Poverty* for a Foucaultian history of Poor Law repeal in the 1830s.

begging and theft; their illegitimate marriages avoiding the official duties and a place in the parish register; their unknown contribution to the national economy; the unknown provenance of their children; their lack of Christian knowledge; their improper and often exclusive language; entire lives lived without the cognizance of the authorities, a scandal of ignorance for the state and the society.

Thus, there arose a whole range of Christian philanthropic efforts (the Sunday and Charity schools, certainly, but also the “child abduction” societies like the Children’s Friend Society).²⁴ What made these efforts cogent and intelligible was not the idea of an autonomous childhood endowed with certain rights but childhood as the site of battle between a poor, opportunistic and nomadic class – tactical in its use of spaces and categories invented by others – and a disciplined, utopian, investing and reforming class – or, more precisely, groups who set up these distinctions and this scandal and acted upon them. This battle involved transportation and extralegal punishment (modeled on techniques current for prisoners), but at the same time it attempted an alignment of this refractory class with the demands made on it by society (industrial urban society or colonial society) and by God. The poor must be fixed in space and given legal identities, skills and capacities and a trained habit of work; and they must know enough Scripture for salvation. They must therefore also have a properly educational childhood.

Poverty, and the childhood of poverty, were distributed across a number of sites and non-sites, places where they become visible and also places specifically constructed for their disappearance, which are sometimes the very same places under a new order of description. Children appear in prisons, workhouses, factories, and schools (Charity, Sunday etc.). In the early nineteenth century, there was a reaction against the instruction of the poor in Mechanics’ Colleges, and even for Methodist schools and hedge schools: for a great many men of the elite, these were hotbeds of Jacobinism and revolution. Over time they would be slowly destroyed with accreditation, inspection, the funding of assisted schools, and the institution of a standard syllabus, but at this time a focus on children, associated as they already were with reproduction and an anxiety about their sex and their death, about the salvation of their souls, was underwritten by a further anxiety

²⁴ See Blackburn for a detailed history of the Children’s Friend Society.

concerning their delocalisation. It is not true to say, as Noelene Reeves (53) does, that education in England was concerned with the reproduction, and the colonies with the establishment, of a social order: both sites were producing a fundamentally new object, the population as a disciplined and moralised body of workers, and both set their sights primarily on reforming the “rising generation.” If the children of deported prisoners received religious instruction through reading tuition and the catechism in the colonies, it is because they were considered part of the same population, the children of the poor, who were subject to virtually the same regime in England, Wales and Scotland.

The desire for a knowledge of the poor had been stimulated in the reading public through melodramas and novels. Hugh Cunningham identifies three discourses in the mid-nineteenth century concerning street-children: a religious discourse of rescue, a “professional” discourse of limiting juvenile delinquency, and a literature of “child-watching” (Cunningham 101-02). A central moment of this literature is Henry Mayhew’s *London Labour and the London Poor*, where children of the street are assembled as part of a statistical and ethnographic study. In this work, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, the problem of poverty was formulated in terms of a division between a settled, thrifty and civilised race and a mobile, deceiving, and uncivilised one.

Insofar as speech and language are concerned, the poor and criminal alike speak cobbled-together languages belonging to another race, a language of travellers:

The language spoken by this rambling class is peculiar in its construction: it consists of an odd medley of cockneyfied English, rude provincialisms, and a large proportion of the slang commonly used by gypsies and other “travellers,” in conveying their ideas to those whom they wish to purchase their commodities. (Mayhew 479)

In his calculation of the numbers of each of his sub-populations and their respective exchanges, Mayhew repeatedly invokes the imperative of ascertaining these numbers. Such knowledge, however, is rendered impossible because of the mobility of the poor:

The number of children out daily in the streets of London, employed in the various occupations I have named, together with others which may possibly have been overlooked – including those who beg without offering any

article for sale – those who will work as light porters, as errand boys and the like, for chance passengers, has been variously calculated; probably nothing like exactitude can be hoped for, much less expected, in such a speculation, for when a government census has been so frequently found to fail in correctness of detail, it appears highly improbable that the number of those so uncertain in their places of resort and so migratory in their habits, can be ascertained with anything like a definite amount of certainty by a private individual. (Mayhew 479)

It is only by way of the records found at the places of detention that Mayhew, and his readers, may come to an approximation. A desire to know and record confronts the poor nomadic race in nineteenth century Europe, and detention, enclosure, punishment, moralisation through work and Bible reading, is the correlate of this knowledge:

Taking the returns of accommodation afforded to these children in the casual wards of workhouses, refuges for the destitute and homeless poor; of the mendicity and other societies of a similar description, and those of our hospitals and gaols, -- and these sources of information upon this subject can alone be confidently relied upon, -- and then taking into the calculation the additional numbers, who pass the night in the variety of ways I have already enumerated, I think it will be found that the number of boys and girls selling in the streets of this city, and often dependent upon their own exertions for the commonest necessities of life, may be estimated at some thousands, but nearer 10,000 than 20,000. (Mayhew 479-80)

It was not a desire to immobilise the poor child that determined the insertion of this child into a relation of pedagogy, but a desire to control its movement and to know it in its totality in order to save it, body and soul. For this reason there was an increase of disciplinary measures, long before they became enforced by law, on condition that the child be both poor and a vagrant: children were abducted by their saviours, who sought to transplant them into new gardens of labour and thrift, and by their punishers, who would give them order and discipline. Their destinations varied – from the homes of the charitable rich who would take them as servants to the Ragged Schools – but the issue at

stake remained the right of seizure and the moral authority of their benefactors over the right of their parents to dispose of them as they pleased, and over the children's right, so severely circumscribed by their poverty, to decide their actions for themselves. It is not surprising, then, that a consistent theme in educational plans is to establish, beyond the influence of parents, a utopia of perfect justice and self-discipline, a miniature society in which teachers could mould the character of the next generation, away from the vicious influence of their cruel and ignorant parents. This is the rhetoric that pervades the establishment both of schools and of education systems. It is clearly at work in the first plans of the state education systems.

Slowly, with the rise of the inspectorate, the Christianising mission became progressively subordinated to the problems of space and time in the accountancy of results, and more "governmental" concerns over hygiene, conduct, attendance, self-discipline and work took precedence. One can see this in calls for "half-time" schooling and other proposals to make instruction more efficient, in the emergence of factory schools, in the calls for better lighting and ventilation, and in the institution of examinations and attendance rolls. It is not that a Christian education was no longer considered necessary, but that other, autonomous factors began to play a far more important part. Predominant was the relation between school results and the economy, where costs had to be established relative to results, where funding was directly related to measurements of effectiveness. Two models of discipline and work came to be related in the single space: the system of rewards and punishments administered in prisons, and the system of observation and maximum efficiency practiced by the factory.

The ability to read and write formed part of all these regimes, in different but related forms. In the prison and the bark, it formed part of the moralising routine, where reading was instituted and imagined in a way modeled upon the reformatory practice of solitary confinement, where the crude soul was forced to both encounter its own guilt, and in the Bible or a suitably religious text, such as the Common Prayer Book. It is significant that at this time tattoos were being made by prisoners as pictographic autobiographies, as counter-texts, as a "body" to resist these practices on the "soul," as a memory that could not be erased or denied. A text and a space of confinement, a set of daily routines arranged around a timetable, were certainly common elements here; in both

school and prison one sees the assumption of a legitimate power to punish, and the technical association of the text with a possible reinsertion of the individual into society and an actual disciplining of the soul.

The soul was not only disciplined by the silent act of reflection: the text became the basis, within the school, of a regular practice, derived from the catechism, of inspection. A kind of jealous appropriation of the story of the self occurs, with regard to the proper codes (the proper national and transparent language, a legitimate, disciplined and moralised orthography, a moral grammar and a grammar of morality – no shouting or avoiding the interview, silence and volubility at the proper times, letters rather than hieroglyphs), with regard to the medium (the book and speech, perhaps the diary, but not the body: inscription rather than incision) and to a propriety of affect (a calm speech, a reflective tone: the speech act is a representation involving distance from the *representand*, not an action or an assault), and lastly the proper frame for truth. The Gospels and the Prayer Book were the medium and template for an introspective reform through which one may read one's life and judge it. As a corollary, other frames and languages are removed from this solitary reflection upon the self: the events and passions of one's own life, the argot of one's company, secret signs of recognition, the desire of emulation, love of distinction and the intemperate and superstitious worship of saints. C.A. Browning, a medical officer in charge of teaching prisoners on transport ships to read, imparts the succinct formula: "read, mark, understand, believe and obey your Bibles" (Browning, *Address to Prisoners* 14; qtd. in Reeves 65).

It may be claimed that a resemblance between the treatment of children and prisoners is accidental, that both penal regimes and educational ones had an accidental connection in the especially Christian (or Christianising) attitudes of the reformers involved. To argue this is to miss the reformatory character of both institutions, to imagine the function of their spaces as negative and punitive on the one hand and instructive on the other. Where the text enters the functioning of such spaces is not only in the rolls of attendance or the report of good behaviour: it is encountered, as the singular Word which is true, which lives in the heart of the believer and is renewed every day. Such a Word goes far beyond, and is far more equivocal and volatile than, the pious

textbooks that also appeared, advising both prisoner and poor child to be “contented with his station” (Trimmer, *The Servant’s Friend*, qtd. in Goldstrom 23).

Through the second half of the nineteenth century, the child is given the peculiar status of a being endowed with its own mentality, a specific organic development, a way of life and rights proper to it alone. While the role of language is given special prominence here by many authors, it is in the sense of a larger description of the child coming into the joys of representing, and thereby knowing, the world outside. Hence, what tends to stand in the place of the normal child is the experience of an other, of the idiot, the deaf and blind child, children evacuated of a history, of any social antagonism, or indeed of any rights. Coupled with this organic non-child that gives one basis for seeing the regular course of development of the normal child is the Mignon-child: a child acrobat with a body testifying to its parents’ cruelty, a poor street-seller who has assumed the cares and disposition of a woman at the age of eight, an image of concern, an insistent call for intervention, a figure in poetry and melodrama.²⁵ Indeed, with the emergence of this proper language and place, a number of figures, both literary and sociological, appear. Mayhew, typical of Victorian “child-watchers,” devoted intense attention to the figure of the little girl who is both far too old for her age and far too innocent. This figure reappears, doubled, in Dickens’ *Little Dorrit*: Little Dorrit is far too small, having been malnourished as a child, and Maggy, who is far too large, is mesmerised by the access she has to tales and text, to the shop-front bills and to the fairy tales in which, by a slight displacement, Little Dorrit reveals herself.²⁶ The idiot child is parodic and tragic, entranced by a text that she will never master. A child deprived of all senses (Laura, at the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind) also appears in Dickens’ work, as a network of ironies and pangs – she does not know her mother is standing next to her, she cannot see the beautiful scenery – and a series of poignant joys – she can read block words, she is a transparent representation of her own character and feelings, and she is fond of making things for her doll. Forever doomed to childhood, Laura is the therapeutic counterpart to the solicitous pity and untrammelled voyeurism of “child-

²⁵ See Steedman (99) and Cunningham (123-5).

²⁶ See Dickens (*Little Dorrit* 434-35). By way of reference to a “Fairy Tale,” Dorrit is enmeshed in a multiple interrogation. Her response, and escape, is via a conspicuous speech dysfunction; she compulsively repeats “No,” “thank you,” and “O no” (435).

watching” (Dickens, *American Notes* 79-90). It is the blind child who performs the most solicitous role:

They all clamoured, as we entered, to the assistant-master, who accompanied us, “Look at me, Mr. Hart! Please, Mr. Hart, look at me!” evincing, I thought, even in this, an anxiety peculiar to this condition, that their little feats of agility should be *seen*. (*American Notes* 91)

The child constructed by the child-watchers imposes observation as a duty and calls out for recognition by authorities. On the other hand, the secretive classes of the city produce a language of danger and subterfuge: there is a proliferation of secret, rude, and dangerous tongues, languages of the downtrodden that have their own separate origin in the dark. In his long digression on argot, Hugo alternates between describing it as original, as a monstrous corruption of French, as a language of secrets and as a source of literature:

Argot is the language of the dark.

Thought is aroused in its gloomiest depths, social philosophy is excited to its most poignant meditations, before this enigmatic dialect which is at once withered and rebellious. Here is chastisement visible. Each syllable has a branded look. The words of the common language here appear as if wrinkled and shriveled under the red-hot iron of the executioner. Some seem still smoking. A phrase affects you like the branded shoulder of a robber suddenly laid bare. Ideas almost refuse to be expressed by these substantive condemned of justice. Its metaphor is sometimes so shameless that we feel it has worn the iron collar. (667)

This language of menace and low power, along with the secret languages of street-sellers, was being erased and disqualified. This reticence about language as power is at the heart of literacy discourse: it licenses the teacher’s authority with a moralising and disciplining meta-language. Also disqualified by pedagogy is the language that does not exactly correspond with the text. The discipline of reading in schools gave birth to a new relation to the text, and to the imposition of an old figure of natural correspondence upon the act of reading. It is within this site that the correspondence of the text to speech

becomes a problem of discipline and correction, and what had seemed a natural act of reading was redefined.

Nor was this the only time that the rights of the language of the text were asserted over the rights of the language of the reader. Daniel Defoe's account of a "dexterous dunce" in a Somersetshire school deserves quoting, to show that the relation between text and language was by no means settled in the eighteenth century, and that the univocity of reading was the effect of a discipline schools did not universally impose until later. Visiting this country school, which was taught by a relative of his, Defoe sat in on a reading performed by one of the pupils:

Coming into the school, I observed one of the lowest scholars was reading his lesson to the usher, which lesson, it seems, was a chapter in the Bible. So I sat down by the master till the boy had read out his chapter. I observed the boy read a little oddly in the tone of the country, which made me the more attentive, because on inquiry I found that the words were the same and the orthography the same as in all our Bibles. I observed also the boy read it out with his eyes still on the book and his head (like a mere boy) moving from side to side as the lines reached cross the columns of the book. His lesson was in the Canticles, v. 3 of chap. v. The words these:- "I have put off my coat. How shall I put it on? I have washed my feet. How shall I defile them?"

The boy read thus, with his eyes, as I say, full on the text. "Chav a doffed my cooat, how shall I don't? Chav a washed my veet, how shall I moil 'em?"

How the dexterous dunce could form his mouth to express so readily the words (which stood right printed in the book) in his country jargon, I could not but admire. (*A Tour* 219, qtd. in Fox 62)

One is faced, then, with a long concatenation and separation of different practices, institutions and forms of rule. One is also faced with the loss and adoption of a series of goals; for the catechism, while surviving in a certain formal manner, was also converted to the purposes of examination, and the competitive relation between pupils was

dispersed into a range of divisions and tabulations, into normalising and individualising practices. It is arguable, also, that “conduct” has changed into the self-discipline of the “on-task,” self-directed, autonomous learner. Beyond this, however, conduct has become a discipline that responds to the continuous and differentiated mapping of linguistic spaces through “context.”

Among these lines of descent and mutation, what seems to be a very recent difference is the discovery of literacy as an autonomous line of psychologico-technical development. The capacity to read and to write became an object of intervention and a sign of minimal learning achievement in the nineteenth century, within a morality of knowledge and work. In the middle of the century, with the work of Seguin, there emerged a relation of “love” for the child insofar as the child underwent the stages of learning and taught the pedagogue the truth about itself and about the proper means of instruction. Unlike the solicitude for the salvation and dignity of the soul that runs from Comenius to Pestalozzi, this love is articulated upon the limbs of the body, and finds as its principle of observation and intervention not the mind but the organism, as a thinking, working, speaking, living being.

Literacy discourse assumes the space of schooling as both utopian and dystopian, as both an ideal service of constructing the perfect society – whether as a reproduction of good forms of authority, the perpetuation or strengthening of a Christian ethos, or as a progressive or transformative agency – and as a signal failure, as a site to fix, to reinvent in its methods and materials. The school is an organised space of revelation in a number of ways. In that it arrays and assesses students, the school creates at least a threefold visibility: as the object of the school’s primary division of space, the student is defined in being within the school; in the arrangement of pupils into classes, students are arrayed in a physical space and separated from the students of other classes and grades; in the accumulation of a documentary and assessment case-history, the student exists as an individual trajectory and as an element in a table. The table of results is also commonly published, that is, rendered up to the public as more or less equivocal evidence of the school’s success in helping its students in the transition into further education and into the world of work. “Payment” is certainly “by results,” though both results and payment are distributed and varied according to the agencies and criteria involved.

Schooling, as an enclosure from and disclosure of the world, must have a representation or, better, a sample of the world for which it is a deferral and preparation. The text is a multiplicity of layers when it is used as a representation. Not only are the outlines of its structure the outlines of the world's demands (genre theory says as much), but the textbook is the basis for a performance of interpretation, which is itself a text functioning as evidence, as symptom, as the occasion for correction within a larger course of treatment. The text is two-way: one sees in it the stage of development, the interruptions, hesitations, inadequacies and competences of the student, but also in the class, ethnic and gender assumptions of the world – as dominant ideology, as prestigious genres, as preferred ways of talking, reading and being around the text. The text is the very instrument of the school's power of instruction, of the teacher's power to intervene. This power is almost always in need of an alibi, of evidence, since every mark can be unfair, subjective, subject to another interpretation. The mode of being of discipline has moved into the text, from at least the nineteenth century, when punishment ceased, in theory, to be corporeal. The gentle teacher is armed with the text as evidence, is disguised and revealed as the loving guide to the truths of language. The text is the body of evidence, the visible sign of the truths of language. "Representation" is thus the sign of the school's enclosure of language, of its meticulously regulated and localised monopoly on the powers of language.

There is an important absence so far in this account, which concerns the advent of standardised national literacy testing. In one sense, it is a completely extraneous practice, somehow bursting onto the scene as a new imperative, closely following the birth of a range of voluntary associations and pressure groups. This technical discourse, using standardised tests, questionnaires and statistical techniques, produces a table of national literacy achievement, not because that is the most accurate way to represent literacy, intelligence or educational attainment, but because it best suits the instrumentalities of national policymaking.²⁷ This whole series of documents is designed for the state, for the Department and all the official agencies. In fact, it is produced by these agencies for themselves and for each other. Thus, the first Australia-wide literacy survey was requested of the Australian Council for Educational Research by the House of

²⁷ See Kearins, Mensh and Mensh, and de Lemos.

Representatives Select Committee on Specific Learning Disorders, and was to be read by the State Directors-General and Directors of Education who had approved the study (Keeves and Bourke, *Literacy and Numeracy* 1).

This intra-governmental mode of address was at least initially prevalent, but the “specialist” audience of directors, committees and political representatives, as well as researchers, was of necessity extended to the teachers through the principals. There were two main factors involved in this spread of the technical literature. On the one hand there is the legacy of the payment by results system, which has never really left Western education, and remains a point of antagonism between researchers and teachers. On the other hand there is the beginning of an attempt to generate a univocal system of reporting, as both instrument and representation, and to integrate teachers into this system by training them as assessors and reporters in the language of experts, which has become another point of contention, and another contest for authority. Whereas the earlier Inspectorate judged the school (in terms of attendance, hygiene standards, light and the effectiveness of instruction) and either maintained or closed it, the survey and testing researchers studied the (non-)emergence of a predefined psycholinguistic set within a population, sought to discover the appropriate sites of intervention, and to reorganise teaching accordingly. It was thus important for researchers to win the assent of teachers, both as to the object studied and the means of realising it. In establishing the reality of the object, researchers invoked a world in which literacy is both an impersonal demand and the means to serve the needs of all persons subject to that demand.

The 1976 study of literacy and numeracy by Keeves and Bourke, involving the Australia-wide testing of students for specific skills and capacities, sets down as its justification the picture of a political, social and economic world for which literacy has become a concern, a goal, a demand and a term of political definition and manipulation. The world of which so many reports and studies speak, and which so many policy documents reproduce as the source of “demand,” is constructed here, much like the world of modernity invoked by the British Inspectorate. The first source of the concern for literacy is international: “Across the world, in recent years, there has been a growing concern for the achievement of literacy” (Keeves and Bourke, *Literacy and Numeracy* 4). While UNESCO has long concentrated on literacy for developing countries, the concern

for literacy has been revived in Britain and the United States, “within the developed countries, where it has commonly been assumed that the highest possible levels of literacy have existed” (4). It is with the introduction of the world and its concern, and with the concept of “minimum standards of competence for life in a modern, democratic, industrial society” (4) that literacy arrives in its present form in the Western countries.²⁸

UNESCO had already formulated a definition of functional literacy (distinct from both basic literacy and literacy proper), and it is the “portability” of that concept, its dependence on a social realisation of its form, that allows Keeves and Bourke to use it. They quote UNESCO’s definition and cite it as the problematic basis for their assessment instruments (6). The relevant definition (UNESCO 1965) reads:

A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community, and whose attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic make it possible for him to continue to use those skills towards his own and the community’s development and for active participation in the life of his country. (qtd. in Keeves and Bourke, *Literacy and Numeracy* 6)

The point here is not that the quest to find the truth of literacy is corrupted by a preliminary assumption that the proper object of investigation is an assumed set of basic skills necessary for social survival in a “modern, democratic, industrial society.” The point is not whether there are such basics, or even what they are. At the discursive level what is significant is that literacy, in being defined as the necessary set of textual skills within a particular social regime, also opens up the discursive desire for a “social order,” a desire for a world that exerts a pressure upon a society, which in turn demands of its population a particular yield, and, alongside this, a whole set of discourses about literacy said to arise from certain groups; especially “stakeholders,” “peak bodies,” and all the other unities that serve to simplify and render manageable a murmur which is not always saying much about either literacy or education.

²⁸ In Britain the relevant study is the Bullock Report (Dept. of Education and Science 1975).

With the 1970s one sees research which threatens to reactivate the old English model of “payment by results” tied to a newer US model of bureaucratic control through the measurement of objectives, a combination of the summative and formative forms of assessment.²⁹ The reconfiguration of literacy as a concern for “developed” countries coincides with, and is immanent to, the technicisation of teacher perception. The problem of teacher assessment has ever been the teacher: teachers must be made to agree with the technical descriptions, and these descriptions will thereafter become true, since their objectivity lies in their production from more than one site. What this tradition of testing accomplished, then, was a new, precise and repeatable language of description, which would render teachers more useful to the state’s expert authorities, which would confirm the objectivity and verifiability of literacy by establishing a language proper to its description. In the early work of the 1970s, the statistical data often relied on teacher judgement and reporting: teachers, principals and even State Directors of Education would fail or refuse to report, or would report inexpert opinions,³⁰ so that data were often unreliable, that is, did not all arise from the same set of perceptual and descriptive codes.

Several imperatives, already operating in educational research institutions, are evident in this report: results must be comparable and portable across systems, and at the same time must be submitted to multiple regression to yield correlations between achievement and an array of possible factors, such as retention rates, gender, social class, ethnic background, school system and state or region. In addition to this comparative, external form of objectivity, literacy and numeracy were to carry with them an *internal* objectivity, a relation between achievement and a stated basic minimum. Literacy, along with numeracy, was to become a key variable in a national mapping project, designed to locate in space the various factors which led to functional *illiteracy*. Low literacy levels were to be correlated with a variety of factors, each of them constituting a specific learning disability:

There is, nevertheless, an awareness, stemming from a variety of sources, that some children in Australia, because of specific learning problems and social, economic, ethnic, geographic, cultural or linguistic disabilities, may be failing

²⁹ See Hamilton (*Curriculum Evaluation* 111-16).

³⁰ See Keeves and Lietz for a short history of the Australian context.

to achieve an adequate level of competence in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy before they leave school at the end of the period of compulsory schooling. (Keeves and Bourke, *Literacy and Numeracy* 4)

Moreover, the competences were to be as specifically defined, and as univocally produced by the test questions as possible. Where this was impossible, the appearance of objectivity was secured by aligning the “impression of level of performance” with “an approximately normal distribution of marks” (Keeves and Bourke, *Literacy and Numeracy* 70).

Teachers, however, remained a problem for this regime, since they constituted the fundamental instrument, even before the testing, for the assessment, and yet were also the partial viewer with only a small part of the landscape in view, and often, as this work continued, the target of intervention as a result of this survey work, very often a punitive intervention (the withdrawal of funds, the “self-criticism” style of school reform, the intensification of outcomes demands, restructuring on a business model). A quite short history, always full of distrust, concerns the attempts of the educational research authorities to give their gaze, accurate and objective, to the teachers. ACER’s *National Literacy Survey* (1997) attempted to solve the problem by training teachers to make “valid” measures:

Data from the Survey represents much more than a snapshot of student achievement: by integrating the assessment processes with classroom learning programs over a six week period of time, each participating teacher was able to allocate about eight hours to the assessment of his or her students, resulting in a valid estimate of each student’s achievement. Finally, a fruitful investigation was made of the relationship between students’ achievements on common tasks administered under timed conditions and students’ achievements on classroom tasks where students had opportunities to review, revise and edit their work. (Forster and Masters iii)

The univocalisation of teacher and test is accomplished by means of a co-emplacement. The extension of the term representation is precisely used: one represents by showing, pointing to, but also by assuming the place of that which is represented. The

representational metaphysics do not end there – by being in the same place, by occupying this metamorphic, assimilative time, the teacher and the test begin to assume the same schema of perception, they begin to assume the same institutional and recording identity, slipping only slightly at the edges (and this slip itself is a call to further merging). Representing here means not only to take the place of, but also, by virtue of the place one occupies, to be the thing itself.

What is represented here is a certain product, a specific, dated performance, but this is merely the problem it is essential to have in mind before this entire project is started. The problem of representation is not merely that it is an imprint, a surface artefact of an encounter. The object itself here is its own representer, its own scandal of interpretation. The problem is that the object disagrees because it is not yet the object it must become. One might extrapolate a tendency in such a solution to the problem of representation, one that will approach the ideal of a perfect coincidence, of a perfect identity between reporter and reported, sustained by a univocal schema of construction and interpretation.³¹

The fact that teachers were mobilised nationally to perform and perceive the performance of their students by a top-down fiat implies a massive effort of codification from a powerful group of experts to a group of easily-controlled executors. This is done through a set of technical knowledges that are non-reversible: a teacher's disagreement about the criteria and language of description will not be heeded, while a failure to implement and use them will be corrected. The coincidence of reporter and reported, of local and central knowledges, is thus not a relation of mere correspondence, but one of imposition and erasure. At the same time that the teacher is erased, the student is both erased and constituted through multiple correlations: her or his performance is explained as the issue of the various factors that define her/him as a linguistic being. Language is thus both explained as a social effect and as a thing in the abstract, divorced from its constituting relations, arranged along a single scale of universal competence. The condition of this univocity is erasure.

³¹ This emphasis on the control of teacher assessment, or its subordination to standardised testing and published results, is widespread: for the English “cutting edge” policies of disciplining literacy assessment and teaching, see Goodwyn. The National Literacy Survey is possibly unique in creating a standardised test to make teacher assessment into both a superfluous echo and a necessary confirmation.

It is important to note that literacy research, in order to come to a definition of its object, had to derive it from a characterisation of the social, political and economic world and the demands that issue from it. Literacy obtains its objectivity from this world, which is both the pretext for bringing the concept into being and the obverse side of its proper definition: literacy is what the world wants, the absence of which it will punish. It is with this assumption, that literacy is a cultural demand and something to be supplied for a culture by schools, that other constructions of literacy begin. Literacy is no longer an absolute universal but a dependent variable with a universal name: if literacies are culturally constructed, and if they form different subjects, with different powers and modes of action, then teachers and education planners are implicitly always designing the social subjects they would like to create. Policy makers are not faced with the awful realisation that they are exercising a kind of power to form persons, positions, and ways of being, since this is what they do *anyway*. The question for educators is not, then, how to evacuate power from the classroom and allow the real student to emerge in her self-activity and with the teacher's attentiveness. That course would only lead to frustration and the reproduction of unequal distribution of cultural and social capital and a resulting inequality in power. Hence, Allan Luke asks: "What kinds of social power and cultural knowledge should be constructed in literacy education?" (*Social Construction* 44). Luke situates the literacy worker and planner at the same level: they are both subject to the inevitable realisation that, as the people responsible for conferring and constructing literacy, they are involved in a fundamental sorting and selection:

Whether we like it or not, literacy is tied up with the distribution and division of knowledge and power. For teachers, the matter at hand is who gets what kinds of literacy from schooling. (44)

But this is already the result of a form of subjection and, as the *Curriculum Framework* demonstrates, it occurs at the state policy level, where even the most careful and power-conscious analysis can become part of a subjection it shares with other agents of the discourse, where the most critical of literacies is also the most effective form of tying up a subjection to language in a recognition of the truth of one's language; where the progressive "metacognitive" levels in fact enforce, beyond any particular ideology of development, the practice of a developing, self-regarding subject of educational

discipline. This call to linguistic subjection has both a general framework and a plurality of detailed, codified methods of instrumentalisation. In its generality it emerges as a set of arguments for according to language the status, first, of the absolute prerequisite for learning, economic success, and authentic modes of being, and second, of the formal system, the substance and the matter in which all development occurs.

To take an early general example of this subjectivation, Doughty and Thornton, in *Language Study, the Teacher and the Learner* (1973), argue the need for awareness of language structures implicitly present in everyday practice as the basis of all learning.³² It is because of the obviousness of language that it must be studied:

It is precisely the commonplace and the familiar in our use of language for living which is in most need of exploration, if we are to understand how we use language to learn. We need to be able to create a climate of opinion in which no teacher would be willing to accept that his everyday familiarity with language, as a competent native speaker, was sufficient *in itself* to provide him, as a teacher, with what he needs to know about its nature and function.

(23)

All teachers must come to recognise that language must be questioned and analysed as a linguistic object, that is, in terms of its “nature and function,” especially as a means to learning.

Language is presented as the absolute precondition, not only for learning, but also for being human. Language is the medium with which one obtains an essential relationship to oneself, to the world, and to others:

I have focused attention upon the fact that man is a problem-solving animal whose integrity as an individual sentient self depends upon his continuing ability to make sense of his world and to form relationships with other similarly individual sentient selves. His ability to do either of these things is profoundly affected by his capacity to language. (43)

³² This orientation was adopted in early Australian work in critical language education through the work of Halliday (*Halliday*; “Literacy”).

Language informs the powers of the human being through an exclusive access, if not to the truth, then to the means by which truth is mediated:

Values, capabilities and habits are transmitted through language, moreover, and it is these values, capabilities and habits, which guide him [i.e. “man”] in his interpretation of the world and his relationship with others, because they provide him with his only models for judging what is and is not the case. (43)

In doing this, language is the instrument of the culture whose values it has “built into” it (43); a culture, with all its “categories, attitudes and assumptions” (43) manifests itself in language in the action of providing an access to truth. A study of language, an awareness of its workings within learning, aims to render these values, this cultural mind, explicit, and thereby to liberate the student and the teacher from the constraints of any particular pre-established cultural universe. This may be part of a general liberation, but the immediate goal, by situating the teacher and student at the level of language, is to impart the habits of a changing, post-industrial world:

So we are faced with the inescapable fact that man’s major means for making sense of his world has built into its elements and structure a bias towards interpreting experience in terms of a pre-existing set of categories, attitudes and assumptions. Should he live in a world subject to continuous social and cultural change, therefore, this bias must act as a continuous check upon his attempts to make sense of the new, because it will always make it easier for him to language the new in terms of what he found appropriate for languaging the old. (43-44)

Students and teachers are to ascend above the plane of their constitution in language; they are to conceive of themselves as abstract linguistic beings, to recognise their own constitution and substance in language, to see themselves and their world anew, as the workings of language. To language oneself, to language the world, is to inhabit a region apart from any determination, all the better to meet the demands of a changing world.

A hierarchy of instruction levels operates here, running from the basal reading programs to the teaching of critical literacies, and each level makes either a claim to

superiority or (as is more common now) to complementarity. In either case, the argument is not simply for greater justice, but for a greater discipline, and an intensification of language activity. Thus, one of the goals of language study is to present what amounts to an inflection of the statistical dream of locating the factors of language production in the service of this activity itself:

To show what personal, cultural, social and linguistic factors brought into the learning situation by teacher and learner do most to determine the climate for language activity. (Doughty and Thornton 69)

It is in the imperative to language that one can locate the complaint that basal readers privilege technical skills to the detriment of meaning; meaning itself is the sign of the subjection to language in its most successful, most complete form.

Literacy discourse is a discourse of abstraction, of taking away the moorings of the real and floating it upon the sea of a changeable language. The progressive discourse of critical literacy and meta-cognition is the counterpart, in its mode of subjection, of the statistical discourse of objectivity. Whereas the one looks to bind the student in the inescapable fact of linguistic constitution, the other seeks to remove all the constituent and complicating factors, to render the student as the function of language alone. The rhetoric of liberation through literacy is most audible not where the student recognises the arbitrariness and interestedness of language, texts and narratives, but at the point where the subject may form her/himself to meet the demands of this changing world. If statistics and critical literacy studies present themselves as antithetical discourses, and the acquisition of mechanical skills is opposed to the autonomous search for meanings, it is because these oppositions are corollaries within a single disciplinary regime. The *Curriculum Framework* embodies the convergence of the various disciplinary and political orientations in literacy discourse into a seamless implementation by the state of an inescapable subjection to language.

Literacy, in its present form at least, is a very recent invention. In fact, it does not become a central term in Western education systems until the 1970s, and in Australian education not until 1975, when it is framed within a concern for the measurement of poverty and as a correlative of it. Even those works which play a role in the emergence of

literacy in scholarly discourse (Parry, Lord, Havelock) are only taken up later as problematic authorities within a new discourse with an educational set of applications, desires and roles. The older technical literature on reading acquisition is now challenged and supplemented not only by a new awareness of the connections between dialect, literacy, power and social chances, but also by a reinvigorated statistical control, a standardised testing on an unprecedented scale and in new levels of detail. A whole new operation of knowledge and power emerges, this time arising from the other as nation. The nation becomes a sort of macro-pupil, in competition with other national cohorts:

The need to target standards in this way has been given priority in the light of research findings from comparisons of reading attainment in different countries. The most recent research of this kind involved assessing the reading attainment of a nationally representative sample of 1,817 nine year olds (Y4) in England and Wales. The test was the same as that used in a survey of 27 other countries in 1991 and includes narrative, expository (factual) and “document” material (charts, tables, graphs, lists, etc.). This research has indicated that Britain is generally out-performed by countries like Finland, France and New Zealand. (Beard 9)

At the same time, the focus on language moves away from what was essentially an imposition of grammar-school snobbery, and an emphasis, no doubt drawn from the nationalisms of decolonising movements, is placed on language as the key to identity, existence, authenticity³³ and truth. No longer is the student to learn an imposed language, whether it is the best that has been said and thought or not: the language closest to truth, and best for authentic subjectivity, is that which is in actual use. The interval between the pupil and the substance of discipline is made almost invisible: the language as the real and effective substance of communication, as a living historical entity, becomes the medium in which one not only sees oneself, but in which one makes oneself.

In the support they lend to the literacy dispositif, critical histories of literacy pose the specific danger of a smooth and continuous narrative that elides the mutation in modes of power with which literacy is directly involved. Within this textualising regime

³³ See, for example, Green, Lankshear and Snyder. For a radical use of this notion, see Bennholdt-Thomsen et al.

literacy is not simply access: it is everywhere the sign of a careful dispossession of space from the body. Literacy is not a key to freedom: it is the visible surface of a mode of control, encoding the body within a continuous disciplinary space. “Illiteracy” is the first move of a complex dispossession and training of meta-docile, textualised bodies; “illiteracy” and its synonyms presuppose the constitution of literate spaces. “Illiteracy” and the various forms of textual and linguistic aberration are thus also refusals and flights from a regime. The inclusion of certain marginalised textual subjects - always in relation to a centre - constitutes an incorporation of the speaking body into the productive mechanism of the nation-state.

This counter memory resituates the history and the interpretation of literacy furnished by Luke within a disciplinary apparatus. In writing about literacy as a dimension through which social power is distributed, Luke’s exemplary history ignores how a power-sensitive concept of literacy emerges as both reason and vehicle for a new and continuous mode of power. The recognition of prestigious language modes is primarily a gesture of initiation and a securing of subjection. The hope of liberation, though distant and unclear, is strategically related to the operation of power as a continuous mechanism operating within defined topo-sensitive regimes but without clear limits to its extension. Literacy always follows a mass dispossession by the nation state and accompanies an investment of subjects with a disciplining knowledge. Presenting literacy as always unevenly distributed disguises the concept’s revolutionary form, its continuous dislocations and constant reimposition of demands. It is not merely the selection of texts or their connection with political-economic systems which encodes power relations through literacy instruction; the textualisation of space through schooling constitutes a disciplinary spatial network.

Luke’s historical interpretation also ignores the strategic power-effects of literacy as a way of mimicking a virtual, discriminatory social order under the sign of inclusion and access. Literacy encodes a set of appropriate practices within a range of strategic dimensions from the individual’s competence to the economic competition among nations. Literacy *socialises* the school’s distribution of worth. Whereas IQ and other cognitive tests could always be questioned as a formalised and pseudo-scientific discrimination, literacy derives its legitimacy from the accurate mapping and replication

of social power and its unequal distribution. Critical literacy is the extreme expression of the insertion of its meta-docile subject into a total regime of textual competence. The literacy dispositif is the continuation and intensification of *bio-power*, seizing the body through its production and performance of language. What lies at the very foundation of literacy is a recent restriction of language to the text, which the extension of “text” to all social sites confirms rather than annuls.

Literacy is a concept custom-made for imposing virtual images of the social order upon performed language, and for justifying both linguistic normalisation and a continuously discriminative network of social discipline. The danger presented by this invisibility makes it imperative to interrupt and interrogate the smooth historical narrative presented by critical literacy theorists and educators. The only sufficient disruption is one which recasts the nature of literacy and illiteracy, one which causes the discourse to pause, to question itself. Interrogating the discourse’s textualised, schooled and nationalised subject de-nationalises the text, de-pedagogises the schooled subject, and opens a space where language and subject may enjoy, if not freedom, then a language and a body temporarily capable of mewling, crouched on the floor of one’s room, wandering in the subtle folds of one’s thought, and awakening one’s brother with laughter.

Conclusion

Deleuze and Guattari argue that if desire is repressed it is because every position of desire, no matter how small, is capable of calling into question the established order of a society (*Anti-Oedipus* xxvi). It is not the intention here to close down the desires that literacy discourse enacts but to “molecularise” them, to free them of any idea that they necessarily imply a complex, require a proper set of procedures, or belong to one place rather than another. The desire to extend and empower through literacy and the recognition of other literacies bears certain dangers with it, along with its strategic possibilities. It was a “non-linguistic” assemblage, a small and ephemeral movement and combination, a meow, that set off this thesis and made literacy appear as a mobile ordering and a continuous working of pedagogical power. Perhaps it was capable of calling the social order into question as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, but it was necessary also to move through these questions carefully, to see where the ordering is at work.

This thesis introduced the topic of literacy with a paradoxical incident, a biographical detail which at first sight bore little relation to schooling, power or language. It showed that in some way schooling and literacy insert themselves into a machinery of social production and into the production of everyday concerns and processes, that literacy enters into our most material and non-linguistic moments through a teleological division of time and space, a pedagogisation which is at the same time a textualisation of existence. The concern for literacy makes development and “writing it down” inseparable constituents of the path of the individual toward accomplishment. Literacy is not merely a cultural concern or a reflection of social relations: it is an element structuring the very interstices of our lives.

It has taken some time and labour to discover, in a certain way, what is meant by a gliding meow. That the thesis began with the question of what such an act could mean,

and with the laughter that made it possible, was not accidental. From this laughter emerged a tentative outline of literacy as a discourse. It is in the most innocuous places that literacy establishes itself, conferring identity to the practice it grows upon. Even the practice of listing in the discourse, drawing attention to the establishing of a noumenal literacy, of a *definiendum* which is nonetheless there, does more than summarise the research and the wide diversity of opinions and uses of literacy. Within such ordinary functions, listing confers upon literacy an ontological guarantee. Such an assertion obviously flies in the face of a de-foundational discourse, but this is the consequence of such listing: it gives literacy a place and a reason to appear as a concept, attached to and lending coherence to a series of objects. The very confusion of the discourse, the danger literacy represents in being used as a way to exclude people from participation, coupled with its promise to effect more equitable social relations, impels more to be said and studied about its nature.

The calling into question of the social (and spatial) order facilitated through literacy had to be directed and mobilised. The mapping of the organising space that first appeared as an intimation needed a supplement, a detailed articulation of its elements. Thus the thesis analysed the transcription of literacy discourse into a state pedagogy in the *Curriculum Framework*. It noted how the central elements of literacy discourse – text, world and student – are arranged in a way that intensifies the power of the pedagogical relations inscribed in policy documents. Literacy discourse, in this application, does not liberate: it articulates the student with the text and the regulations governing their meeting. This is a form of inductive or regulated confirmation by the teacher and student of “understandings” of language. It is within this place of operation that literacy attains an unchallenged power in setting the boundaries of the self, in defining its substance, and in charting the acts, the understandings and the uses in which it is manifested.

Literacy is part of a discursive formation that is autonomous with regard to the disciplines of which it forms an intersection. Also, it is a formation paralleling the power of schooling and one that legitimates and institutes it as, if not natural, then as that which is proper to the student. Furthermore, the knowledge constituted in such a discourse is involved in, and readily renders itself transcribable into, a governmentality, a project

which insists on finding the nature or the proper functions of each segment of the population in order to develop the power inherent in these properties and thus to increase the power of “government.” This is particularly evident in the inflection of three themes of governmentality in literacy discourse: life (as development), language (as literacy and the knowledge and abilities that are consequent to it) and labour (as the world of work and the demands it places on language).

The insufficiency of the discourse in providing an account of itself and its effects are due to this governmentality – here taking the form of pedagogisation – which literacy discourse effects rather than, as it claims, represents. The forms of circularity characterising the historical, epistemological and political dimensions in literacy discourse arise from the presumptive ontological guarantee of literacy (the idea that, whatever it is, it must exist) and from a model of language and text that arise within a historical pedagogical practice where language of a specific kind emerged as both object and instrument of discipline. To write literacy into the historical archive, historians had to assume that what is presented as a variety of definitions, uses and relations is a species of literacy, despite all appearances to the contrary. History is used to cleanse literacy of contemporary misunderstandings, but only on the assumption that literacy forms an intelligible ahistorical essence.

In dealing with literacy as a set of epistemological problems, this thesis discussed the rewriting of the world, via Derrida, as text by the knowledges of literacy. As an experience deriving from a particular social practice literacy is knowable, but that knowledge cannot be generalised to other practices, even if they are categorically similar. The space of visibility in which an object called literacy emerges is both the only means by which one can know literacy and, at the same time, a guarantee that this same literacy does not operate elsewhere. Thus, the literacy discourse is marked by the fatal relations that also lie at its foundations: its object is also its ground, both its limit and its origin. The political dimension of the discourse likewise operates a system of undecidable alternatives in the political aspects of literacy discourse, where representation of marginalised groups also entails their normalisation, the recognition of a dominant language and the social relations associated with it.

The unity of the discourse can be seen in its parallelisms across disciplines, and in the circularities and undecidable problems that it concerns itself with. In historical studies, the problem of using the category of literacy to select historical data is illegitimate as history, but necessary to the discourse. Moreover, it results in an address to a transcendental subject of history, even where this is explicitly denied. Even the most critical histories, anchored and instigated by the category they seek to challenge (literacy), retain the language of the powerful mythology they challenge (terms such as progress, increase, true and false literacies). Analysing the literacy discourse as a set of transversal statements reveals that the history of literacy is a paradoxical enterprise in terms of representing a real entity but intelligible as the construction of a social reality. The discourse is structured by possible strategies of definition and argument, which are themselves undecidable. These dispersals are part of the one discursive formation.

The space of this pedagogised language became a general one in the nineteenth century, located in a number of sites along with the school – in prisons, transport ships, hospitals and mental institutions. At the same time as mass schooling institutes a series of techniques for measuring, managing and instructing the population, it also constructs a space within which language, nation and discipline are spatially interrelated and visible. The endless commentary on education and literacy was made possible by the invention of these interrelations; it is not the mere combination of confused half-memories and nationalism. In establishing literacy as a recognised substance, the public space of contention came *before* the pedagogical space of instruction, and both of these spaces bore the sign of language united with the production of a disciplined national population.

In charting the doubles of literacy, its power to write itself into social space, and its various functions as sign of the spaces and processes of power, it has been necessary to use an arsenal of Foucaultian concepts. To capture as exactly as possible the way power is deployed through language as a mode of pedagogical discipline, the thesis examined the relationship between discourse (as a combination and grappling of the visible with the sayable) and the power that discourse works with, the constitution of power-knowledge, the history of disciplinary techniques, governmentality and bio-power, the construction of an emanative spatial regime, the function of schooling and, in a modified way, of the text.

The thesis also discussed some of the works on literacy and education that make use of Foucault, and although it draws much of value from them, it finds them very much a part of the discourse, with the same set of objects, problems and speaking positions. It is this set of relations that the study has sought to uncover, not to analyse ideology or to participate in the pedagogy of subjection to language. It is not that the present work is outside this discourse, but rather that it required a different critical deployment of this same discursive field.

This navigation and mapping of literacy as discourse and substance of power has resulted in a narrative with some surprising reversals. The undetermined nature of literacy, its status as *definiendum*, rather than undermining the authority of the discourse, effects a mobility of the disciplinary mechanisms operationalised through the notion of the text. Literacy discourse negotiates a constant reinscription of the relations between three major terms – the student, the text, and the world – in a neverending disciplining of language as the indispensable truth of being. The capture of literacy discourse in the *Curriculum Framework* is by no means the final word: it is a strategic reorganisation in a continuing deployment.

The thesis elaborated the notion of a space of visibility, and characterised literacy as a knowledge dependent on the pedagogical organisation of space. This space is dominated by the figure and the practice of schooling, which generates a threefold knowledge of the student as a developing and language-using being destined for employment. Further, the thesis tied literacy to a nineteenth-century project of mapping social space, a project that delineates two races and two languages, which divisions are later reactivated by international literacy projects and contemporary policies.

Drawing on the example of the Welsh Sunday-schools under the British Inspectorate, the thesis showed that the normalising of language results from a discursive and political situation, and is made possible by linguistic knowledge, rather than a simple cancellation of non-standard languages. It argued that the notion of a national language is a product of the organisation of pedagogical space in the nineteenth century. While schooling made this language visible, the medicalisation of idiots formed the possibility of knowing the

child as a developing being and of a pedagogy that traced and intensified a real curve of learning and growth rather than imposing arbitrary stages of instruction based purely on institutional preferences. Moreover, a “world” is rendered visible, marking certain languages and language practices as retrograde. The student, the text, and the world appear in a systematic interrelation in the pedagogical spaces of the nineteenth century.

The knowledge of literacy derives from an earlier project of recording, locating and immobilising problem populations, and in constituting a national population as the object of government. The notion that emancipation may be won through metalinguistic awareness “reifies” the function of the textualising dyad of school and government, reinstating language, as it is traced around the text, performed by the student and corrected by the school, as the substance of power.

This is not to say that literacy discourse, in public or private, is merely the repetition of formulas and relations set down a century ago. The nineteenth century has no discourse on literacy, nor did it foresee one. A discourse of literacy arose only in the twentieth century: if literacy discourse systematically constructs its objects, then the objects of which literacy is the unifying concept do not exist before the twentieth century.

Differences in the cultural position and constitution of “reading and writing” are rewritten as different practices in literacy by the imposition of this term onto the historical archive. Further, the call for the recognition of “other” literacies, whether they be of different cultures, classes, or places, does not of itself constitute a liberatory orientation. In all its relations literacy corresponds to the extension of pedagogy into the world in the form of the text. Literacy discourse constitutes literacy as a need, as a reason for the expansion of mechanisms of recording, of bringing cultures, classes and places into a single, if variegated, model of language. When seen from an archaeological and genealogical perspective, this discourse may be characterised in terms of the way it disperses knowledge within a correlative field and as an element in a mode of power. This thesis has been concerned, then, with what this mode of power consists in, with the concepts, spaces and practices of which it is composed. It is not concerned with the nature of language or learning, nor with the nature of schooling, outside their discursive and political effects.

The thesis shifts the discourse, showing that it is possible to provide a counter-narrative focussing on the historical constitution of the knowledges and power connected to the discourse on literacy. The final chapter countered the history and interpretation given in a handbook of advice because, for a variety of reasons, teachers are addressed as both the centre of operation in this discourse and as an obstacle to good pedagogy. It argued that the concerns for literacy are far more determined by historical antecedents than the discourse suggests. Taking Foucault's notion of *bio-power*, it described the emergence of a disciplinary use of language – and its avatar the text – as a mobile assemblage for the general distribution of disciplinary norms. Literacy enables the desire to extend this discipline to the whole social field: the danger becomes, then, one of conceiving of literacy as exclusion. This desire for the extension of textuality is not an ideology or an institutional imperative: it is a form of power operating directly within the permanently undefined “concept” of literacy itself.

This is not to say that literacy is “bad” or “good,” but rather that it should not be confused with a second nature, or conceived of as a right. It is a historically constituted complex of forces, a key component in making certain sorts of human beings, and a way of deploying, in ever-widening fields, the discipline of the text. Each of these operations and their correlates come into question at different moments, and are rearranged in strategic ways. The intention of this thesis has been to intensify that questioning and render explicit and problematic a historical and strategic complex, the relation to language that insists on the “recognition” of literacies and regulates the relation between the student, the text and the world.

Bibliography

- Adams, J. *The Evolution of Educational Theory*. New York: Macmillan, 1912.
- Adler, Felix. *The Moral Instruction of Children*. International Education Ser. 21. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1892.
- Adler, Mortimer. *How to Read a Book*. Angus and Robertson: Sydney, 1940.
- Aikenhead, Glen S. "Scientific Literacy and the Twenty-First Century." Leong and Randhawa, 212-20.
- Alloway, Nola, Peter Freebody, Pam Gilbert, and Sandy Muspratt. *Boys, Literacy and Schooling: Expanding the Repertoires of Practice*. Canberra: DEST, 2002.
- American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: 4th Edition*. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994.
- American Youth Policy Forum. "Teaching the New Basic Skills: Linking Schools, the Economy and Education Reform. February 28, 1997 -- A Forum Brief." Jan 2004 <<http://www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/1997/fb022897.htm>>.
- Apple, Michael W. "The Culture and Commerce of the Textbook." *The Politics of the Textbook*. Ed. Michael W. Apple and Linda K. Christian-Smith. New York and London: Routledge, 1991, 22-40.
- Arnold, Matthew. *Culture and Anarchy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1960.
- Austin, A. G., and R. J. W. Selleck, eds. *The Australian Government School, 1830-1914: Select Documents with Commentary*. Carlton, Vic.: Pitman, 1975.
- Bailey, Charles James. *On the Yin and Yang Nature of Language*. Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1982.
- Baker, Bernardette. "The Functional Liminality of Not-Dead-Yet-Students, or, How Public Schooling Became Compulsory: A Glancing History." *Rethinking History* 8.1 (2004): 5-49.

- Ball, Stephen J., ed. *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Bannatyne, Alexander. *Language, Reading and Learning Disabilities: Psychology, Neuropsychology, Diagnosis and Remediation*. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1971.
- Barton, David. *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*. Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1994.
- Batten, Margaret, Tracey Frigo, Paul Hughes, and Natascha McNamara. *Enhancing English Literacy Skills in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students: A Review of the Literature and Case Studies in Primary Schools*. ACER Research Monograph number 54. ACER, Melbourne, 1998.
- Beard, Roger. *National Literacy Strategy: Review of Research and Other Related Evidence*. London: DfEE, 1999.
- Belfiore, Mary Ellen, Tracy A. Defoe, Sue Folinsbee, Judy Hunter, and Nancy S. Jackson. *Reading Work: Literacies in the New Workplace*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.
- Bellack, Arno A., H. M. Kliebard, R.T. Hyman, and F. R. Smith, Jr. *The Language of the Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1966.
- Black, Stephen. "Whose Economic Well-being? A Challenge to Dominant Discourses on the Relationship Between Literacy/Numeracy Skills and (Un)Employment." *Literacy and Numeracy Studies* 13 (2004): 7-17.
- Blackburn, Geoff. *The Children's Friend Society: Juvenile Emigrants to Western Australia, South Africa and Canada 1834-1842*. Northbridge, Western Australia: Access, 1993.
- Bloom, Benjamin S., ed. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Book 1, Cognitive Domain*. New York: Longman, 1956.
- Bloom, B., J. Hastings, and G. Madaus. *Handbook of Formative and Summative Evaluation of*

- Student Learning*. New York : McGraw Hill, 1971.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. *Borges: A Reader: A Selection from the Writings of Jose Luis Borges*. Ed. Emir Rodriguez and Alastair Reid. New York: Dutton, 1981.
- Boston, Ken. "Modern Times and the Australian Curriculum: Keynote address to the Curriculum Corporation 6th National Conference." 6-7 May 1999. Curriculum Corporation. 7 Jan 2007
<<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/nationalgoals/boston.htm>>.
- Brabazon, Tara. "Thinking Pop Literacies, or Why John Howard Should Read More." *Australian Library Journal* 55 (2006): 285-300.
- Breen, M., C. Barratt-Pugh, B. Derewianka, H. House, C. Hudson, T. Lumley, and M. Rohl. *Profiling ESL Children: How Teachers Interpret and Use National and State Assessment Frameworks*. Vols 1-3. Canberra: DEETYA, 1997.
- Brehony, K.J. "Working at Play or Playing at Work? A Froebelian Paradox Re-examined." 16 Feb 2004 Roehampton University. 25 Jan 2005
<<http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/staff/Kevin%20j.brehony/docs/inaugural%20.pdf>>.
- Brindley, G. "Competency-based Assessment in Second Language Programs: Some Issues and Questions." *Language Assessment in Action*. Ed. Brindley, G. Sydney: Macquarie U P, 1995.
- Bugarski, Ranko. "Graphic Relativity and Linguistic Constructs." Scholes et al. 1-18.
- Calkwell, Gail. "Globalisation and the Reconstruction of the Literate Child." *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* 1.1 (2002): 79-93.
- Canberra Mathematical Association. *Circuit*. Dec 1999.
- Central Board of Education. *Elementary Education*. Perth: Education Department, Western Australia, 1888.
- Chadwick, Edwin. "National Elementary Education." Edwin Chadwick. *Nineteenth-Century Social Reform*. 1868. London: Routledge, 1997, 3-36.

- Chesney, Kellow. *The Victorian Underworld*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.
- Cipolla, Carlo M. *Literacy and Development in the West*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.
- Clanchy, M. T. *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066-1807*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1979.
- Cole, Michael, and Sylvia Scribner. *The Psychology of Literacy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1981.
- Collodi, Carlo. *Pinocchio: The Tale of a Puppet*. Carlo Collodi. Trans. M. A. Murray and G. Tassinari. London: S. M. Dent & Sons, 1951. Trans. of *Storia di un burattino*. 1882.
- Comber, B., and B. Kamler. "Critical Literacies: Politicising the Language Classroom." *Interpretations* 30.1 (1997): 30-53.
- Comenius, Johann Amos. *Orbis Pictus: A Facsimile of the First English Edition of 1659*. Intro. John E. Sadler. London: Oxford UP, 1968.
- Commissioner of Police, Perth. Remarks to Colonial Secretary. 1 Jul 1887. Colonial Secretary's Office Records. State Records Office, Western Australia.
- Commonwealth of Australia. Australian Education Council. *The Hobart Declaration on Schooling*. April 1989.
- . Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. *DETYA Annual Report 1995-96*. Canberra: AGPS, 1996.
- . ---. *Post-Compulsory Education Review Position Paper*. Canberra: AGPS, 2000.
- . MCEETYA. *National Report on Schooling in Australia*. Canberra: MCEETYA, 2000.
- . ---. *Joint Statement on Education and Training in the Information Economy 2005*. Canberra: MCEETYA, 2005.
- Connell, R. W., and T. H. Irving. *Class Structure in Australian History: Documents, Narrative and Argument*. Longman Cheshire: Melbourne, 1980.

- Cope, Bill, and Mary Kalantzis, eds. *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Cormack, P. "Literacy Research and the Uses of History: Studying Literacy, Schooling and Young People in New Times." *Australian Educational Researcher* 25. 3. (1998): 23-36.
- Covaleskie, John. "Power Goes to School: Teachers, Students, and Discipline." *Philosophy of Education Yearbook* (1993): Philosophy of Education Society, U of Illinois. 12 Dec 2004 <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/93_docs/COVALESK.HTM>.
- Cressy, David. *Literacy and the Social Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.
- Cunningham. *Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood Since the Seventeenth Century*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
- Curriculum Council of Western Australia. *Draft Curriculum Framework for Kindegarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia*. Osborne Park, Western Australia: Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 1997.
- Curriculum Council of Western Australia. *Curriculum Framework for Kindegarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia*. Osborne Park, Western Australia: Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 1998.
- Curtis, Bruce. *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871*. Barcombe: Falmer Press, 1988.
- . *True Government by choice men? Inspection, Education, and State Formation in Canada West*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- . "Foucault on Governmentality and Population." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 27.4 (2002): 505-33.
- De Castell, Suzanne, Allan Luke, and Carmen Luke. *Language, Authority and Criticism: Readings on the School Textbook*. London: The Falmer Press, 1989.
- De Castell, Suzanne, Allan Luke, and Kieran Egan. *Literacy, Society and Schooling: A Reader*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.

- Defoe, Daniel. *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*. 1724-6. 2 vols. Ed. G. D. H. Cole. London: Dent, 1927.
- De Lemos, Marion. "Conceptual Development in Aboriginal Children: Implications for Aboriginal Education." *Aborigines and Education*. Ed. C. M. Tatz and S. S. Dunn. Sun Books: Melbourne: Sun Books, 1969.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Foucault*. Trans. and ed. Sean Hand. London: Athlone, 1988.
- . "What is a *Dispositif*?" Trans. and ed. Timothy J. Armstrong. *Foucault: Philosopher*. New York: Routledge, 1992. 159-68.
- . "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *October* 59 (1992): 3-7.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. Pref. Michel Foucault. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983.
- . *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987.
- . *What is Philosophy?* Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.
- Denny, J. Peter. "Rational Thought in Oral Culture and Literate Decontextualisation." Olson and Torrance 66-89.
- Depaepe, Marc. "Demythologising the Educational Past: An Endless Task in History of Education." *Historical Studies in Education* 9.2 (1997): 208-23.
- . "How Should the History of Education Be Written? Some Reflections about the Nature of the Discipline from the Perspective of the Reception of Our Work." *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 23.5 (2004): 333-45.
- . "A Comparative History of Educational Sciences: The Comparability of the Incomparable?" *European Educational Research Journal* 1.1 (2002): 118-22.

- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.
- Dickens, Charles. *American Notes for General Circulation*. 1842. London: Penguin, 1986.
- . *Little Dorrit*. 1855-57. London: Penguin, 1985.
- Dixon, Bob. *Catching Them Young 1: Sex, Race and Class in Children's Fiction*. London: Pluto Press, 1977.
- Doughty, Peter, and Geoffrey Thornton. *Language Study, the Teacher and the Learner*. London: Arnold, 1973.
- Dronkers, Nina F. "The Pursuit of Brain-Language Relationships." *Brain and Language* 71 (2000): 59-61.
- Durkheim, Émile. *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education*. Trans. Everett K. Wilson and Herman Schnurer. New York: Free Press, 1961.
- Education and Health Standing Committee. *Changes to the Post Compulsory Curriculum in Western Australia*. Perth: Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Western Australia, June 2006.
- Education Department of Western Australia. *Outcomes and Standards Framework: English, Work Samples*. East Perth: Education Department of Western Australia, 1998.
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979.
- Eltis, K. *Focus on Learning: Report of the Review of Outcomes and Profiles in New South Wales Schooling*. Sydney: NSW Department of Training and Education, 1995.
- Eltringham, Nigel. "Invaders Who Have Stolen the Country." *Social Identities* 12 (2006): 425-46
- Ende, Michael. *The Neverending Story*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. London: Puffin, 1985. Trans. of *Die Unendliche Geschichte*. 1979.

- Evans, Richard J. *The Coming of the Third Reich*. London: Allen Lane, 2003.
- Faraclas, Nicholas. "Critical Literacy and Control in the New World Order." Muspratt, Luke and Freebody, 1997: 141-72.
- Bennholdt-Thomsen, Veronika, Claudia von Wehrhof, Claudia von and Nicholas Faraclas, eds. *There is an Alternative: Subsistence and Worldwide Resistance to Corporate Globalization*. New York: Zed Books, 2001.
- Farrell, Lesley. "Reconstructing Sally: Narratives and Counter Narratives around Work, Education and Workplace Restructure." *Studies in Literacy and Numeracy: An International Journal in the Education of Adults* 9 (1999): 5-27.
- . "The 'New Word Order': Workplace Education and the Textual Practice of Globalisation." *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 9.1 (2001): 57-75.
- Ferguson, Adam. *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*. 1767. Ed. Fania Oz-Salzberger. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.
- Findlay, J. J. *The Children of England: A Contribution to Social History and to Education*. London: Methuen, 1923.
- Fleischer Feldman, Carol. "Oral Metalanguage." Olson and Torrance 47-65.
- Flesch, Rudolph. *Why Johnny Can't Read: And What You Can Do About It*. New York: Harper and Row, 1955.
- Forster, Margaret, and Geoff N. Masters, eds. *Mapping Literacy Achievement: Results of the 1996 School English Literacy Survey*. Camberwell, Vic: ACER, 1997.
- Foucault, Michel. *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. Ed. James Faubion. Trans. Robert Hurley et al. *Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984*. Vol. 2. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000.
- . *The Archaeology of Knowledge: The Discourse on Language*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

- . *Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Random House, 1994.
- . *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon, 1977.
- . *Mental Illness and Psychology*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
- . *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Vintage-Random House, 1988.
- . *The Order of Things: And Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1970.
- . *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Writings 1977 – 1984*. Ed. and intro. Lawrence D. Kritzman. New York and London: Routledge, 1988.
- . *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the College de France, 1973-1974*. Ed. Jacques Lagrange. Trans. Graham Burchell. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- . *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. London: Penguin, 1990.
- . *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. Trans. Robert Hurley et al. *Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984*. Vol. 1. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000.
- . *Power*. Ed. James D. Faubion. Trans. Robert Hurley et al. *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*. Vol. 3. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000.
- . “On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress.” Foucault, *Ethics*. 253-280.
- . “Polemics, Politics, and Problematisations: An Interview with Michel Foucault.” Foucault, *Ethics*. 111-119.
- . “Different Spaces.” Foucault, *Aesthetics*. 175-85.
- . “Interview with Michel Foucault.” Foucault, *Power*. 239-97.

- . "Language to Infinity." Foucault, *Aesthetics*. 89-101.
- . "Rituals of Exclusion." Trans. J. Johnston. *Foucault Live: Interviews, 1966-84*. Ed. S. Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e), 1989.
- Fox, Adam. *Oral and Literate Culture in England: 1500-1700*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Gane, Mike, ed. *Towards a Critique of Foucault*. London: Routledge, 1986.
- Gee, James Paul. "Meanings in Discourses: Coordinating and Being Coordinated." Muspratt, Luke and Freebody 273-302.
- . "The Narrativisation of Experience in the Oral Style." Mitchell and Weiler, eds. 77-101.
- Gee, James Paul, Glynda Hull, and Colin Lankshear. *The New Work Order: Behind the Language of the New Capitalism*. St Leonards New South Wales: Allen and Unwin, 1996.
- Ginsburg, Carlo. "Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes." Eds. Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok. *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1983, 81-118.
- Goldstrom, J. M. *Education: Elementary Education 1780-1900*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972.
- Goodman, Paul. *Compulsory Miseducation*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.
- Goodson, Ivor F. "Interview with Ivor F. Goodson." *Re-Open* 1. 1 (2000): 20 Sept. 2003
<<http://www.edca.cqu.edu.au/lit/re-open/papers/interview.PDF>>.
- Goodson, Ivor, and Ian Dowbiggin. "Docile Bodies: Commonalities in the History of Psychiatry and Schooling." Ball 105-29.
- Goodwyn, Andrew. "A Framework for English? Or a Vehicle for Literacy? English Teaching in England in the Age of the Strategy." *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* 3.3 (2004): 16-28.
- Goody, Jack. *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1977.

- -, ed. *Literacy in Traditional Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1968.
- Goody, Jack, and Ian Watt. "The Consequences of Literacy" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 5 (1963): 302-45.
- Grace, George W. "Ethnolinguistic Notes Series 4." *Ethnolinguistic Notes*. 16 Apr 2003 University of Hawaii. 28 June 2005. <<http://www2.hawaii.edu/~grace/>>.
- . "The Assumption that Language Consists of Languages." 17 Nov 1998. University of Hawaii. 22 Feb. 2001 <<http://www2.hawaii.edu/~grace/langue.html>>.
- Graff, Harvey J. *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth-century City*. New York, San Francisco and London: Academic Press, 1979.
- . *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and contradictions in Western Culture and Society*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1987.
- . "The Persisting Power and Costs of the Literacy Myth: A Comment on Literacy, Economy and Society: Results of the First International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)." *Working Papers on Literacy*. 1995. The Centre for Literacy of Quebec. Apr. 2001. <<http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/publications/working/contents.htm>>.
- Graham, Linda J. "Schooling and 'Disorderly' Objects: Doing Discourse Analysis Using Foucault." *Australian Association for Research in Education 2005 Annual Conference*. Comp. and Ed. Peter L. Jeffery. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology P, 2006.
- Graham, Linda J. and Roger Slee. "Inclusion?" *Australian Association for Research in Education 2005 Annual Conference*. Comp. and Ed. Peter L. Jeffery. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology P, 2006.
- Gray, Clarence Truman. *Deficiencies in Reading Ability: Their Diagnosis and Remedies*. Boston, New York, Chicago: D. C. Heath and Co., 1922.
- Great Britain. *Commission on the State of Education in Wales: Reports of the Commissioners on the State of Education in Wales, with Appendix*. 1847. Vol. 1. Shannon, Ireland: Irish UP, 1969.

- . Dept. for Education and Employment. *The National Literacy Strategy: Literacy Training Pack*. London: DfEE, 1998.
- . Dept. of Education and Science. *A Language for Life (The Bullock Report)*. London: HMSO, 1975.
- . ---. *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of the English Language (The Kingman Report)*. London: HMSO. 1988
- Green, Bill. "Curriculum, Literacy and the State: Re 'right'-ing English?" *Curriculum Studies* 7. 3 (1999): 385-407.
- , ed. *The Insistence of the Letter: Literacy Studies and Curriculum Theorising*. London: Falmer Press, 1993.
- Green, Bill, John Hodgens, and Allan Luke. *Debating Literacy in Australia: A Documentary History, 1945 - 1994*. Vol. 1. Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Australian Literacy Federation, 1994.
- Green, Bill, and Catherine Beavis, eds. *Teaching the English Subjects: Essays on English Curriculum History and Australian Schooling*. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin UP, 1996.
- Green, Bill, Colin Lankshear and Ilana Snyder. *Teachers and Technoliteracy: Managing Literacy, Technology and Learning in Schools*. St Leonards, New South Wales: Allen and Unwin, 2000.
- Gur-Ze'ev, Ilan. "Challenging the Deception of Leftist Emancipatory Education." *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 9. 2 (2001): 279-88.
- Halliday, M. A. K. *Halliday: System and Function in Language*. Ed. G. R. Kress. London: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- . "Literacy and Linguistics: A Functional Perspective." Hasan and Williams 339-76.
- Hamilton, David. *Curriculum Evaluation*. London: Open Books, 1976.
- . *Towards a Theory of Schooling*. London: Falmer, 1989.

- . "Peddling Feel-good Fictions." *Forum* 38.2 (1996): 54-56.
- . "Fordism by Fiat." 1996. University of Liverpool. Jan 2005
<www.liv.ac.uk/education/staff/dh/bera96.html>.
- . "From Dialectic to Didactic." *Paradigm* 2.5 (2002): 15 Mar. 2003
<http://www.pedag.umu.se/personal/hamilton_d/D&D011119.pdf>.
- Hamilton, David, Michael G. Long, George Morgan, and Malcolm J. Rosier. *Beyond the Numbers Game: A Reader in Educational Evaluation*. London: Macmillan, 1977.
- Harris, Roy. *Signs of Writing*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Harris, William T. *The General Government and Public Education Throughout the Country*. Syracuse, NY: C. W. Bardeen, 1890.
- Harris, William V. *Ancient Literacy*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989.
- Hasan, Ruqaiya. "Literacy, Everyday Talk and Society." Hasan and Williams 377-424.
- Hasan, Ruqaiyah and, Geoff Williams, eds. *Literacy in Society*. Applied Linguistics and Language Study Ser. London: Longman, 1996.
- Havelock, Eric. *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1981.
- . *Preface to Plato*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1963.
- . "The Oral-literate Equation: A Formula for the Modern Mind." Olson and Torrance 11-27.
- Hayes, Cynthia. "prosthetic_rhetorics@writing.loss.technology" *Literacy Theory in the Age of the Internet*. Ed. Todd Taylor and Irene Ward. New York and Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia UP, 1998. 79-92
- Heath, Shirley Brice. *Ways with Words*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.
- Herder, Johann Gottfried. *J.G. Herder: Philosophical Writings*. Trans. and ed. M. N. Forster. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.

- Hissock, M. "Neural Substrate of Cognition and Literacy: Biology as Wish Fulfillment?"
Leong and Randhawa 33-54.
- Hoskin, Keith. "Foucault Under Examination: The Crypto-Educationalist Unmasked." Ball 29-53.
- Hugo, Victor. *Les Miserables*. 1862. 2 vols. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1994.
- Hull, G., and K. Schultz. "Literacy and Learning Out of School: A Review of Theory and Research." *Review of Educational Research* 71 (2001): 575–611.
- Humboldt, Wilhelm von. *On Language: On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species*. Trans. Peter Heath. Ed. Michael Losonsky. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.
- Hunter, Ian, et al. *Accounting for the Humanities: The Language of Culture and the Logic of Government*. Brisbane: Griffith UP, 1991.
- Hunter, Ian. "Personality as a Vocation: The Political Rationality of the Humanities." Hunter et al. 7-66.
- . *Rethinking the School: Subjectivity, Bureaucracy, Criticism*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1994.
- . "After English: Toward a Less Critical English." Muspratt, Luke and Freebody 315-314.
- Hutchins, Robert Maynard. *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education*. Great Books of the Modern World 1. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952.
- Illich, Ivan. "A Plea for Research on Lay Literacy". Olson and Torrance 28-46.
- Illich, Ivan and, Barry Sanders. *ABC: The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind*. London and New York: Marion Boyars, 1988.
- Innis, Harold Adams. *The Bias of Communication*. 1951. Intro. Marshall McLuhan. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1964.

- Jones, Stan. "Ending the Myth of the 'Literacy Myth.'" 1995. Centre for Literacy of Quebec. Apr. 2001 <<http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/publications/working/contents.htm>>.
- Jose, Jim. "Sex Education, the Family and the State in Early Twentieth Century South Australia." *History of Education Review* 27.1 (1998): 33-52.
- Kaestle, Carl F., Helen Damon-Moore, Lawrence C. Stedman, K. Tinsley and William Vance Trollinger, Jr. *Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading Since 1880*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1991.
- Kaplan, Nancy. "Politexts, Hypertexts, and Other Cultural Formations in the Late Age of Print." *Computer-Mediated Communication Magazine* 2. 3 (1995): 20 Sept. 2003 <<http://sunsite.unc.edu/cmc/mag/1995/mar/toc.html>>.
- Kearins, J. M. "Cultural elements in testing: The test, the tester, and the tested." Davis, G., ed. *Ethnicity and Cognitive Assessment: Australian Perspectives*. Darwin: DIT Press, 1988.
- Keeves, John P. and S. F. Bourke. *Literacy and Numeracy in Australian Schools*. Australian Studies in School Performance. Vol. 1. ERDC Report 8. Canberra: AGPS, 1976.
- . *The Mastery of Literacy and Numeracy: Final Report*. Australian Studies in School Performance Volume 3. Canberra: AGPS, 1977.
- Keeves, John P., and G. N. Masters, eds. *Advances in Measurement in Educational Research and Assessment*. New York: Pergamon, 1999.
- Keeves, John P., and Pietra Lietz. "The Contribution of IEA Research to Australian Education." *Reflections on Educational Achievement*. Eds. Wilfried Bos and Rainer H. Lehmann. New York: Waxmann, 1995. 137-58.
- Kenway, Jane. "Education and the Right's Discursive Politics: Private versus State Schooling." Ball 167-206.
- Kidson, Charles Barclay. Letter to the District Board of Education, Perth. 6 Nov 1888. Ms. 118/88. Colonial Secretary's Office Records. State Records Office, Western Australia.
- Knobel, Michele, and Colin Lankshear. "Critical Cyberliteracies: What Young People Can

- Teach Us About Reading and Writing the World.” *Desecuentros* 4.1 (2004): 49-72.
- Kögler, Hans Herbert. *The Power of Dialogue: Critical Hermeneutics After Gadamer and Foucault*. Trans. Paul Hendrickson. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996.
- Lancaster, Joseph. *Improvements in Education, As it Respects the Industrious Classes of the Community: Containing, Among Other Important Particulars, An Account of the Institution for the Education of One Thousand Poor Children, Borough Road, Southwark; and of the New System of Education On Which it is Conducted*. New York: Collins and Perkins, 1807.
- Land, Ray, ed. *Teachers Talking About the New Basics: Teachers’ Stories on Trialing the New Basics Framework, 2000-2003*. 2004. Assessment & New Basics Branch, Education Queensland. 13 Oct. 2008
<<http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/newbasics/pdfs/ttnba.pdf>>.
- Lemke, Thomas. “Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique.” *Rethinking Marxism* 14.3 (2002): 49-64.
- L’Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*. Harmondsworth: Kestrel, 1962.
- Leong, C.K., and B.S. Randhawa, eds. *Understanding Literacy and Cognition: Theory, Research and Application*. New York: Plenum Press, 1989.
- Levine, Kenneth. *The Social Context of Literacy*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986.
- Lewis, C. S. *The Chronicles of Narnia*. London: Collins, 2001.
- Lewis, Morris Michael. *The Importance of Illiteracy*. London: Harrap, 1953.
- Lo Bianco, Joseph and Peter Freebody. *Australian Literacies: Informing National Policy on Literacy Education*. Canberra: Language Australia, 1997.
- Lu, Min-Zhan. “Conflict and Struggle: The Enemies or Preconditions of Basic Writing?” *College English* 54.8 (1992): 887-913.
- Lukács, Georg. *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Trans. Rodney

- Livingstone. London: Merlin, 1971.
- Luke, Allan. "Genres of Power? Literacy Education and the Production of Capital." Hasan and Williams 308-338.
- . "Getting Over Method: Literacy Teaching as Work in New Times." *Language Arts* 75 (1997): 305-13.
- . *The Social Construction of Literacy in the Primary School*. Melbourne: Macmillan, 1994.
- Luke, Allan, and Peter Freebody. "Critical Literacy and the Question of Normativity: An Introduction." Muspratt, Luke and Freebody 1-18.
- Luke, A., G. Matters, P. Herschell, N. Grace, R. Barrett, and R. Land. *New Basics Project Technical Paper*. St. Lucia: Education Queensland, 2000.
- Luria, A. R. *Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundations*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1976.
- Marshall, James D. "Foucault and Educational Research." Ball 11-28.
- . "Foucault and Neo-Liberalism: Bio-Power and Busno-Power." *Philosophy of Education Yearbook*. 1995. Philosophy of Education Society, U of Illinois. 28 Oct. 2001 <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/95_docs/marshall.html>.
- . "Education in the Mode of Information: Some Educational Considerations." *Philosophy of Education Yearbook*. 1996. Philosophy of Education Society, U of Illinois. 10 Oct. 2007 <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/96_docs/marshall.html>.
- Mayhew, Henry. *London Labour and the London Poor: A Cyclopaedia of the Condition and Earnings of Those that Will Work, Those that Cannot Work, and Those that Will Not Work*. 1851. Vol. 1. Griffin, Bohn, and Company: 1861.
- Mayo, Cris. "Foucauldian Cautions on the Subject and the Educative Implications of Contingent Identity." *Philosophy of Education Yearbook* 1997. Philosophy of Education Society, U of Illinois. 10 Oct. 2007 <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eps/PES-Yearbook/97_docs/mayo.html>.

- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media*. New York: Signet Books, 1964.
- . *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962.
- McNeil, Linda M. *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge*. New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986.
- Mensh, Elaine, and Harry Mensh. *The IQ Mythology: Class, Race, Gender, and Inequality*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1991.
- Mignolo, Walter. *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonisation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.
- Mikulecky, L., and Kirkley, J.R. "Changing Workplaces, Changing Classes: The New Role of Technology in Workplace Literacy." *Handbook of Literacy and Technology: Transformations in a Post-typographic world*. Ed. Reinking, D., M. McKenna, L.D. Labbo, and R. Kieffer. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1998. 303-20.
- Mitchell, Candace, and Kathleen Weiler, eds. *Rewriting Literacy: Culture and the Discourse of the Other*. New York: Bergine Garvey, 1991.
- Montessori, Maria. *The Montessori Method: Scientific Pedagogy as Applied to Child Education in the "Children's Houses."* With Additions and Revisions by the Author. Trans. Anne Everett George. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1912.
- Moore, H. "Telling What is Real: Views in Assessing ESL Development." *Linguistics and Education* 8.2 (1996): 189-228.
- Morrissey, Thomas and Richard Wunderlich. *Pinocchio Goes Postmodern: Perils of a Puppet in the United States*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Muspratt, Sandy, Allan Luke, and Peter Freebody, eds. *Constructing Critical Literacies: Teaching and Learning Textual Practice*. St Leonards NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1997.
- New York Board of Education. *A Manual of Discipline and Instruction for the Use of the Teachers of the Primary and Grammar Schools Under the Charge of the Department of Public Instruction of the City of New York*. Issued by Authority of the Department. New

- York: Evening Post Steam Press, 1873.
- O'Farrell, Clare. *Foucault: Philosopher or Historian?* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989.
- . *Michel Foucault*. London: SAGE, 2005.
- Olkowski, Dorothea. "Nietzsche's Dice Throw: Tragedy, Nihilism, and the Body Without Organs." *Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy*. Eds. Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski. New York: Routledge, 1994. 119-140.
- Olson, David. *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.
- . "Literate thought." Leong and Randhawa 3-15.
- . "Literacy and Objectivity: The Rise of Modern Science." Olson and Torrance 149-64.
- Olson, David and Nancy Torrance, eds. *Literacy and Orality*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1991.
- Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologising of the Word*. London: Methuen, 1982.
- . *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1958.
- Orlebar, A. B. *Suggestions for the Use of Models for State Writing*. Melbourne, 1862.
- Parry, Milman. *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*. Ed. A. Parry. Oxford: Clarendon, 1971.
- . "The Traditional Epithet in Homer." 1928. Parry 1971. 1-190.
- . "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making I: Homer and Homeric Style." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 41 (1930): 73-147.
- Pedersen, Holger. *The Discovery of Language: Linguistic Science in the Nineteenth Century*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1962.
- Porter, P., J. Knight, and B. Lingard. "The Corporate Efficient State: Labor Restructuring for

- Better Schools in Western Australia.” Eds. B. Lingard, J. Knight and P. Porter. *Schooling Reform in Hard Times*. London: Falmer Press, 1993.
- Preyer, William T. *Mental Development in the Child*. Trans. H. W. Brown. International Education Ser. 24. New York: Appleton and Company, 1894.
- Priestley, Joseph. “An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life.” Ed. and intro. John A. Passmore. *Priestley’s Writings on Philosophy, Science and Politics*. New York and London: Collier, 1965. 285-304.
- Pusey, Michael. *Economic Rationalism in Canberra: The Nation-Building State Changes its Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.
- Randhawa, B. “From Literacy to Cognitive Science.” Leong and Randhawa 55-72.
- Rankin, Donald Hamilton. *The History of the Development of Education in Western Australia, 1829-1923*. Perth: Carrolls, 1926.
- Rassool, Naz. *Literacy for Sustainable Development in the Age of Information*. The Language and Education Library 14. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, 1999.
- Reeves, Noelene. “The Development of a Literate Society: A Case Study in Western Australia 1850-1910.” Diss. Murdoch U, 1993.
- Roth, Michael S. “Foucault’s ‘History of the Present.’ *History and Theory* 20.1 (1981): 32-46.
- Rothman, Sheldon. *Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy by Australian 14-year-olds, 1975-1998*. Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth 29. Camberwell, Victoria ACER, 1998.
- Sagan, Carl. *The Demon-haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*. London: Headline, 1996.
- Sampson, Geoffrey. *Making Sense*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980.
- Schlegel, Friedrich. *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Inder: Ein Beitrag zu Begründung der Altertumskunde*. 1808. E. F. K. Körner, ed. J. Peter Maher, trans. Sebastiano Timpanaro, intro. Amsterdams: Benjamin, 1977.

- Scholes, Robert J., et al. *Literacy and Language Analysis*. Ed. Robert Scholes. Hove and London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1993.
- Schonell, Fred J. *The Psychology of Reading*. 4th ed. Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966.
- Seddon, Terri. "Capacity Building: Beyond State and Market." *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 7.1 (1999): 35-53.
- Seguin, Edward. *Idiocy and Its Treatment by the Physiological Method*. 1866. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1971.
- Selleck, Richard, and Marjorie Theobald, eds. *Family, School and State in Australian History*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991.
- Sensenbaugh, Roger. "Multiplicities of Literacies." *Journal of Reading* 33 (1990): 562-3.
- Shor, Ira. "What is Critical Literacy?" *Journal for Pedagogy, Pluralism and Practice* 4.1 (1999): Lesley College. 25 Mar 2001 <<http://www.lesley.edu/journals/jppp/4/shor.html>>.
- Smith, Bruce. "William Wilkins's Saddle Bags: State Education and Local Control." Selleck and Theobald 66-90.
- Steedman, Caroline. *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995.
- Steiner, Claude, and Paul Perry. *Achieving Emotional Literacy: A Personal Program to Increase your Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Avon, 1979.
- Stewart, W. A. C. *Progressives and Radicals in English Education: 1750-1970*. Clifton, N. J.: A. M. Kelley, 1972.
- Stone, Lawrence, "Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900." *Past and Present* 42 (1969): 69-139.
- Street, Brian V. "Introduction: The New Literacy Studies." *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy*. Ed. Brian V. Street. Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture 23.

- Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1993.
- . "Literacy, Economy and Society: A Review." 1995. Centre for Literacy of Quebec. Apr 2001 <<http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/publications/working/contents.htm>>.
- Stuckey, J. Elspeth. *The Violence of Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991.
- Sully, James. *The Teacher's Handbook of Psychology*. New York: D. Appleton, 1897.
- Taylor, Eric, and Sami Timmi. "ADHD is Best Understood as a Cultural Construct." *British Journal of Psychiatry* 184.1 (2004): 8-9.
- Taylor, Todd "The Persistence of Authority." Taylor and Ward 109-21.
- Taylor, Todd, and Irene Ward, eds. *Literacy Theory in the Age of the Internet*. New York: Columbia UP, 1998.
- Thompson, Audrey. "What to Do While Waiting for the Revolution: Political Pragmatism and Performance Pedagogy." *Philosophy of Education Yearbook* 1997. Philosophy of Education Society, U of Illinois. 10 Oct. 2007 <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eps/PES-Yearbook/97_docs/thompson.html>.
- Thompson, E. P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Pelican, 1986.
- Tolchinsky, Liliana. "Early Writing Acquisition in Catalan and Israeli Communities." *Literacy Development in a Multilingual Context: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Eds. Aydin Yücesan Durgunoğlu and Ludo Verhoeven. London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998. 267-88.
- Tuman, M. C. *A Preface to Literacy: An Inquiry into Pedagogy, Practice, and Progress*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1987.
- Tyler, Deborah. "Making Better Children." *Child and Citizen: Genealogies of Schooling and Subjectivity*. Eds. Denise Meredyth and Deborah Tyler. Brisbane: Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Griffith U, 1993, 35-60.
- Tyler, Ralph W. *Basic Principles in Curriculum Instruction*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1949.
- UNESCO. *General Conference: First Session*. Paris: Unesco, 1947.

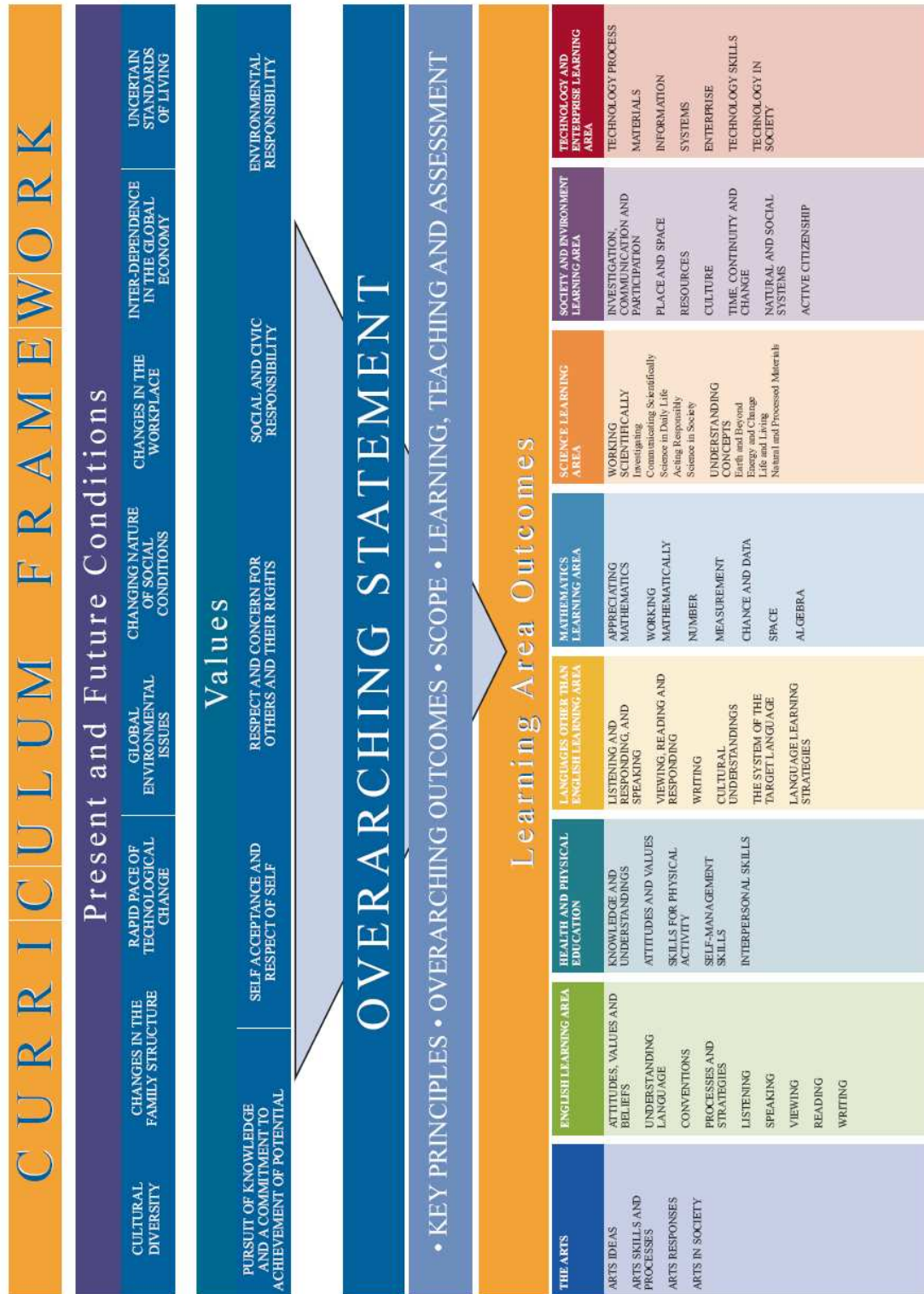
- . *Records of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: Third Session: Beirut 1948*. Vol. 2. Paris: Unesco, 1949.
- . 1973 *The Training of Functional Literacy Personnel: A Practical Guide: A Method of Training for Development*. Paris: Unesco, 1973.
- Veel, Robert, and Caroline Coffin. "Learning to Think Like a Historian: The Language of Secondary School History." Hasan and Williams 191-231.
- Vincent, David. *Literacy and Popular Culture in England, 1750-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- . *The Rise of Mass Literacy: Reading and Writing in Modern Europe*. Cambridge and Oxford: Polity, 2000.
- Wagner, Daniel A., R. L. Venezky, and Brian V. Street, eds. *Literacy: An International Handbook*. Oxford: Westview, 1999.
- Walkerdine, Valerie. *The Mastery of Reason: Cognitive Development and the Production of Rationality*. London: Routledge, 1988.
- . *Schoolgirl Fictions*. London: Verso, 1990.
- . "Beyond Developmentalism?" *Theory and Psychology* 3 (1993): 451-69.
- Wardle, David. *The Rise of the Schooled Society: The History of Formal Schooling in England*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.
- Watson, Glenice, and Greer Cavallaro Johnson. "Towards a Greater Understanding of Multiliteracies: A Multimodal Methodology for Capturing and Analysing Young People's Out-of School Computer Game Playing." *Doing the Public Good: Positioning Education Research*. Proc. of AARE Conf., Nov.-Dec. 2004. 2005. Griffith University. 12 Oct. 2008 <<http://www.aare.edu.au/04pap/abs04.htm>>.
- Williams, Frederick. *Language and Poverty: Perspectives on a Theme*. Chicago: Markham, 1970.

Williams, Raymond. *Communications*. 3rd ed. London: Penguin, 1976.

Willis, Ken "The Shaping of Secondary English in Western Australia: The Formative Years, 1890s-1915." Green and Beavis, 1996. 96-117.

Every reasonable effort has been made to acknowledge the owners of copyright material. I would be pleased to hear from any copyright owner who has been omitted or incorrectly acknowledged.

Appendices



Appendix A. Mapping the world. (*Curriculum Framework*, inside cover).

LEVEL 1

TASK - HOLIDAY ON THE MOON

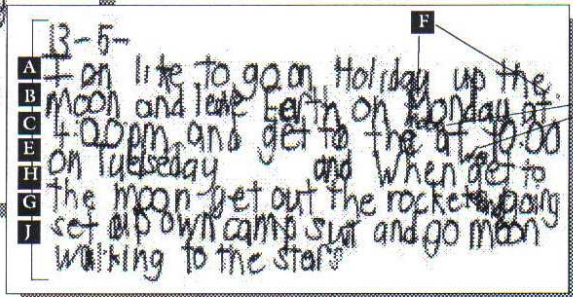
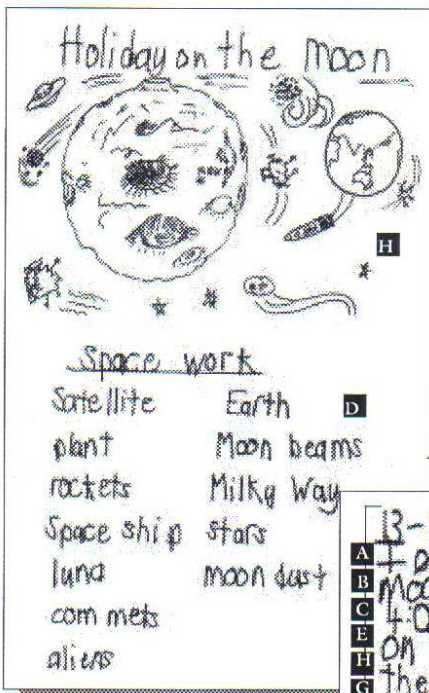
Students were studying the school-based module 2046, which examined life in 50 years' time. The following activity is a narrative about what it would be like to have a holiday on the moon in the year 2046.

BACKGROUND

The student is in Year 9 and has an intellectual disability and autism. Students brainstormed ideas about the solar system and the teacher blackboarded a list of keywords. Students talked about holidays in general - types of activities, equipment which would be taken, etc. Students viewed and discussed a stimulus picture of the earth and moon and copied words from the blackboard. Students and teacher developed a structured overview.

RELEVANT OUTCOMES

- W 1.2 Recognises that writing is used by people to convey meanings to others.
- W 1.3 Demonstrates an emerging awareness of how to use conventions with symbols or expressing ideas and information.
- W 1.4 Explores ways of representing ideas and information using written symbols.
- W 2.1 Writes brief imaginative and factual texts which include some related ideas about familiar topics.



SUMMARY COMMENT

The sample shows evidence of achievement at Level 1 and progress towards Level 2. The student relied heavily on the keywords generated by the class but was able to read his writing to the teacher.

The text demonstrates use of the following outcomes.

- (W 1.2) Student reads own text (C).
- (W 1.3) Uses known or copied words in writing (D).
Leaves spaces between words (E).
Experiments with punctuation marks (F).
Usually writes from left to right, top to bottom of page (G).
- (W 1.4) Uses the environment as a stimulus for writing (H).
Begins to use strategies to proofread work (I).
Asks teacher for help with writing (J).
- (W 2.1) Lists several items of information about a topic (A).
Describes two or more events in sequence (B).

English Learning Outcomes

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE</p> <p>1. Students understand that the way language is used varies according to context.</p> | <p>ATTITUDES, VALUES AND BELIEFS</p> <p>2. Students understand that language has an important effect on the ways in which they view themselves and the world in which they live.</p> | <p>CONVENTIONS</p> <p>3. Students use the conventions of Standard Australian English with understanding and critical awareness.</p> |
| <p>PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES</p> <p>4. Students select from a repertoire of processes and strategies by reflecting on their understanding of the way language works for a variety of purposes in a range of contexts.</p> | <p>LISTENING</p> <p>5. Students listen with purpose, understanding and critical awareness in a wide range of situations.</p> | <p>SPEAKING</p> <p>6. Students speak with purpose and effect in a wide range of contexts.</p> |
| <p>VIEWING</p> <p>7. Students view a wide range of visual texts with purpose, understanding and critical awareness.</p> | <p>READING</p> <p>8. Students read a wide range of texts with purpose, understanding and critical awareness.</p> | <p>WRITING</p> <p>9. Students write for a range of purposes and in a range of forms using conventions appropriate to audience, purpose and context.</p> |

