

REUBEN'S FALL: A RHIZOMATIC ANALYSIS OF MOMENTS OF  
DISOBEDIENCE IN KINDERGARTEN

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by

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serious project assumes a playful quality that further resonates with the purpose of the study itself—that of discerning the spiritual, democratic, moral, and joyful possibilities inherent in moments of children’s disobediences.

The intent of this research is to view with fresh eyes the ways that children negotiate the context, complexity, constraints and freedoms of kindergarten classrooms as represented through moments of disobedience. The careful synthesis of educational criticism and rhizomatic analysis in this study serves to simultaneously sharpen and blur the view on children’s moments of disobedience and to disrupt the typical line of understanding and response. In this way, the researcher seeks to complicate teachers’ roles and lives as they might join the ride on unexpected lines of flight. Perhaps, inspired by an event such as a moment of disobedience—one disrupted further by a rhizomatic twist—any teacher might become an ally in embracing the spirit and democracy of disobedience toward breaking through to new truths in kindergarten and beyond.

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You want acknowledgements??  
Alright. Here...*here's* your acknowledgements!!!

(I thought of one at the last minute.)

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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

*The moral universe rests on the breath of schoolchildren.*

~ Rabbi Yehuda Nisiah, c. 250 C.E.

### Background Narrative: Reuben's Fall

Reuben fell. My professional life defined itself eighteen years ago when Reuben fell on the hard school-linoleum floor outside my classroom door. I was a young(er) person and a more naïve teacher at the time, blithely enjoying my lively class of kindergartners, covertly noticing some of the more interesting children in the kindergarten class down the hall, and on that morning, fully engaged in minding the interactions of the children in my own classroom when I heard the hard smack and muffled grunt signaling Reuben's fall. When I went to the door to see what had happened to disturb the commonplace event of a silent, gender-based-double-lined trek connecting Mrs. Buttercup's kindergarten class to the restrooms at the end of the hall, I witnessed a significant event.

In the aftermath of Reuben's fall, Julian—one of those spirited, full-of-verve, curious, “bad” children whom I had coveted for my own classroom—had left his place in the back of the line to reach Reuben where he had fallen near the front of the boy's line and as I arrived at the door, was helping him off the floor, asking, “Reuben, are you okay?”

As the other children steadfastly maintained their places in their straight, silent boy and girl lines, Mrs. Buttercup shook her head, held up two fingers, and said to Julian: “That's two, Julian. You are out of line and you are talking. You're on the wall at recess.” Going “on the wall” is a common punishment in grade school. It means the child must spend all or part of recess standing against the wall of the school building watching the other children play. I

had observed that Julian, a lively child, spent most recesses “on the wall” for various infractions of the rules of order in his kindergarten classroom. A kindergartner falling down is not a rare event. Most of his or her classmates watching without response is also not a rare occurrence. And a child being reprimanded and/or punished for breaking a rule of order, regardless of the reason, is not at all an unusual event. I know this because I have been a participant of school as a pupil, teacher and observer for many years and have witnessed countless similar events before and since Reuben’s fall.

However, this moment was a critical one for me. I saw clearly that Julian’s actions were “good”—demonstrating care, empathy, courage, and kindness -- and yet, he was punished. For “good” is also defined by teachers and children in school as order, silence and stillness—in other words, compliance. In fact, *dictionary.reference.com* offers as their 18<sup>th</sup> listing for good: “well-behaved; obedient: a *good* child.” In this case, Julian had not complied with the school and classroom rules—*No talking* and *Stay in your place in line*—as he moved to help Reuben and inquire into his well-being. As witness to the event, I was struck by the concomitantly “good” and “bad” nature of Julian’s action.

This experience of the unexpected and cognitively chaotic counted as what Lozinsky and Collinson (1999) refer to as the “epistemological shudder” (and which Strong and Fuller (2000) describe as “alive moments”), an “affective response to an encounter with things *marvellous*. The term “marvellous” here makes reference to concepts of “difference,” “out of the ordinary,” and “unexpected” (in MacNaughton, 2005, p. 111); and the “epistemological shudder” occurs when one’s preferred representations do not allow one to make sense of

what is seen, heard or experienced and leads one to feel “uncomfortable, displaced, and in a sense almost paralysed, not knowing where to place this information” (Giugni, 2006, p. 101).

As a witness to this event, I “shuddered” as I experienced a “fragmentation of contextual understanding” (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 116) which has since led to a series of aporia as I “recall, rethink and retheorise” (p. 117) the event of Reuben’s fall. I wondered the effect on the children of seeing kindness so devalued. I wondered what the children thought of Julian’s act. While I did not ask at the time, I believe that most of the children, had they been asked if Julian was good, would have said “No. No, Julian isn’t good... he got out of line.” Or, “Julian is bad. He had to go on the wall.” For certainly, we learn from the cradle that goodness most closely approximates compliance; and if we didn’t learn it then, it will be a hard lesson in the schoolroom (McCadden, 1998; Miller, 1983/1990, 1990b; Trantino, 1972).

Upton Sinclair (1922) addressed such schoolroom lessons in *Goose Step: A Study in American Education*, a scathing account of the field of education, chronicling years of interviews and study of dozens of America’s institutions of higher education. Sinclair’s findings documented the vapidness of those involved in the highest of educational pursuits and exposed the narrow and often unethical attitudes and practices of administrators and faculty. Recognizing the naissance of this state of affairs, Sinclair began his report in this way:

Once upon a time there was a little boy; a little boy unusually eager, and curious about the world he lived in...Every morning this little boy's mother saw to his scrubbing, with special attention to his ears, both inside and back, and put a clean white collar on him, and packed his lunch-box with two sandwiches and a piece of cake and an apple, and

started him off to school.

The school was a vast building- or so it seemed to the little boy. It had stone staircases with iron railings, and big rooms with rows of little desks, blackboards, maps of Abraham Lincoln and Aurora driving her chariot. Everywhere you went in this school you formed in line and marched; you talked in chorus, everybody saying the same thing as nearly at the same instant as could be contrived. The little boy found that a delightful arrangement, for he liked other boys, and the more of them there were, the better. He kept step happily and sat with glee in the assembly room, and clapped when the others clapped, and laughed when they laughed....

The rest of the day the little boy sat in a crowded classroom, learning things. The first thing he learned was that you must be quiet...Another thing you learned was that you must raise your hand if you wanted to speak. Maybe these things were necessary, but the little boy did not learn why they were necessary; in school all you learned was that things were so...if you asked the reason for it, the teacher would be apt to answer in a way that caused the other little boys to laugh at you- something which is very painful...you had a sense of triumph over other little boys who were stupid. You enjoyed this triumph, because no one ever suggested to you that it was cruel to laugh at your weaker fellows. In fact, the system appeared to be designed to bring out your superiority, and to increase the humiliation of the others (Sinclair, 1922, p. 1-2).

Consider what Julian and his classmates might have learned from the event of Reuben's fall. They might have learned that such things as keeping silent and staying in line were "necessary," but not learn why they were so. The children in the lines may have learned

that they were “good” and so superior to Julian; would have confirmed that this lively child was “bad” and that each of them demonstrated their own goodness as they remained quiet and still even when confronted with Reuben’s need for care.

I wonder about the role of school in a child’s construction of his or her own sense of “goodness.” I wonder about the opportunities children have in the context of school to make real moral decisions regarding their own choices for “good” action, how they act on those and how their spiritual nature is represented in those decisions. I wonder if kindergartners are empowered to make decisions using their intellect for generous and generative purposes; or are their moral decisions based on coercion and habit? (J. Dewey, 1932, 1985; 1985; Garrison, 1997; Hawthorne & Henderson, 2000; J. Henderson, 2001b). I further wonder what we steal from children as we make them believe that being “good” excludes much of what is child-like, and as we communicate to children that their “childishness” is something to be derided and discarded. Devalued even while the playfulness, verve, and intense awareness of the child—the “complete abandon, and whole-hearted faith” (Quinn, 2001, p. 1) are the very qualities that many would align with those of the most spiritual of beings. Indeed, spirituality has been closely linked to a child's simplicity, sense of wonder and especially their joyful forays into ambiguity and uncertainty (i.e., Hay & Nye, 1998; Rollheiser, 1998). I wonder if this is what we have in mind when we teach children their “goodness” is contingent on their orderly obedience.

I am drawn to this work due to my deep interest and investment in children while troubling how they might reconcile their “child-spirit” self (Hart, 1999, 2003) with their “schooled-child” self in regard to their interactions with other children, adults and the

kindergarten environment. I wish to better understand children as they negotiate the context, complexity, constraints and freedoms of a kindergarten classroom as represented through acts of obedience and disobedience. I enter this work believing that as children confront the complexities of the very human “morality of ends” and the more cultural “morality of laws” (J. Dewey, 1929/1984; Zinn, 1968), their disobediences might be related to a spiritual awareness unique to children that allows them to disrupt the universe in ways that may lead to joy.

### Purpose of the Study

After initial reviews of the literature regarding compliance and disobedience regarding the behaviors of young children in school, I identified five lines of inquiry. The majority of writers, theorists, and researchers’ work in the area of classroom disobedience are directed toward the teacher and classroom—with the following categories of discussion:

1. Disobedience (and childhood itself) as a form of deficiency (developmental, moral/religious, social and behavioral) and/or as problems to be solved.
2. The need for a particular type of order and control in schools and the means of achieving child compliance—and, as a result, “a positive, productive classroom atmosphere conducive to learning” (Barbetta, Leong-Norona, & Bicard, 2005).
3. The teacher’s perspective and role in children’s moral and social behaviors, and the complexity of child compliance. Often discussed from a constructivist perspective in comparison to the more behaviorist approaches in the two prior categories, the goal here, however, is the same—to assert the authority of the teacher, but as a moral authority instead of a coercive one.

4. The political, philosophical and spiritual constraints of school morality. Within this category are researchers who study the state of school itself and writers who, on a more philosophical bent, write about the ideals of school(ing), matched against what they perceived as the state of school.
5. The value of dissent and non-compliance toward an authentic democratic good life, reflecting Ralph Waldo Emerson's caution: "...your goodness must have some edge to it-- else it is none" (1940, p. 149 in Goodman, 2001, p. 351).

Chapter II offers discussion regarding the findings and conclusions as helpful in gaining a fuller sense of school, schooling and the discourse on disobedience and compliance. While the first two categories of literature listed above provide many examples of discussions on children's disobedience—generally toward an authoritarian purpose—and while the writers in the final three categories raise moral, social, spiritual and ethical reasons for exploring further the moral complexity and ambiguity of schools—none of these discussions of disobedience offer opportunities to engage in the complexities and possibilities of the acts of the children as they disobey and comply in their kindergarten classrooms.

Given the compelling moral, social, spiritual and ethical motives for further exploration of the politics and philosophies underlying the constraints of school morality, this study seeks to provide particular insights into moments of disobedience through direct observations of kindergarten children as they acted on moral opportunities during the real time daily activities and routines of a kindergarten classroom.

Unique in the purpose of this particular study is that it does not focus on documenting

classroom management styles or on solving “problems” related to non-compliance; nor does it focus on the teacher’s perspective and actions in the classroom. Rather, the descriptions of observations made in real-time in a kindergarten classroom provide real-life moments of children’s disobedience and resistance; and further provide opportunities to explore connecting texts “that provide new entry points to ways of making sense of child observations” (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 133) toward critically challenging “compliance” (Leafgren, 2006) in a kindergarten classroom context. As the children translate the messages of kindergarten-ness into action through interactions with one another and the adults in the kindergarten classroom, they negotiate the conflicting “goodnesses” as described by Goodman and Lesnick (2001)<sup>1</sup> and as represented by the event of Reuben’s fall.

This study seeks to describe the potential of children’s classroom disobedience: potential not only in responding to others in caring, ethical ways, but also the potential in acting out the possibilities that a “spiritual” childhood provides. For it is in the fully present, wide-awake, spiritually awake, mindful, completely engaged with what-is-there, totally abandoned, eyes wide-open, deeply encountering nature of the spiritual child that such possibilities may be found (as described, for instance, in Buber, 1958/1970; Greene, 1981; Hanh, 1998; Hart, 1999; J. Henderson, 1999; D. Jardine, 1998; Kesson, 1999; J. Macdonald, 1974; Noddings, 1993; Purpel, 2001; M. Quinn, 2001; Steiner, 1995).

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<sup>1</sup> Although it goes without saying that we want our children to be caring, considerate, tactful and understanding of others, we also want them to be honest, strong-minded and bold. We want them to resist peer pressure as well as make compromises, to speak out against wrongdoing as well as to keep silent, to refuse to go along even at the cost of offending others. These two sets of educational objectives, however, are in tension. The caring child, not wanting to offend, will be watchful that his speech is kind, that his actions are obliging. The honourable child, standing by truth, will risk hurting, even alienating, another child or adult (Goodman & Lesnick, 2001, p. 350).

In this study, *qualitative inquiry* (Eisner, 1998) applied to school and teacher traditions and to observations of kindergarten children in the context of their kindergarten classroom will provide opportunities to orient “rhizomatic logic” to the readings of the children in order to “build complex and diverse pictures of ‘the child’, of ‘observation’ and of ‘research’[and will offer] a tool for critically reflecting on how meaning is produced through the choices we make about what we use to map” the readings of children’s texts (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 144-145).

This study provides a unique perspective on children’s negotiation of spiritual-moral opportunities in the schoolroom. “To know what schools are like... we need to be able to see what occurs in them, and we need to be able to tell others what we have seen in ways that are vivid and insightful” claimed Eisner (1998, p 5-6), for schools:

Have moods, and they too display scenes of high drama that those who make policy and those who seek to improve practice should know... The means through which such knowledge is made possible are the enlightened eye—the scene is seen—and the ability to craft text so that what the observer has experienced can be shared by those who were not there (p. 22, 30).

I do not claim an “enlightened eye.” I do not contend that my view is more sophisticated or more informed than others’ views. Rather, for the purpose of this study, I offer an “enquiring eye.” This research does not serve to answer questions or solve problems from a position of expertise or specialized knowledge, but instead serves to complicate understanding and so to open minds and hearts to possibilities in moments of disobedience in the context of a kindergarten classroom. The application of rhizomatic analysis to the

pictures/texts of the children “observed” allows for multiple meanings and literary, political, spiritual and social possibilities; the mapping of these *readings* “is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted, to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group or social formation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 12).

### Problem Statement and Questions

While this study looks carefully at children in school as they define themselves and act as kindergartners, maybe even as “good” kindergartners, it also works to acknowledge the complexity of each child. Each child comes to school, potentially, as son, daughter, t-ball player, pest, grandbaby, Pookie-Bear, fast runner, big sister, pizza-lover, drama queen, tough guy, choir singer, video game player, Sponge-Bob fan, little brother, chore doer, bed-wetter, ballerina, and/or hip-hopper. Each enters kindergarten each day after oversleeping or staying up all night; eating too much or too little; an argument with a sister or a kiss and hug from a dad; watching cartoons or listening to music; a wet, cold walk or a noisy bus-ride; a scrubbing “with special attention to the ears inside and back” or a roll out of bed and into yesterday’s clothes; and also pre-equipped with a five to six year history of cultural, emotional, familial, media, relational, experiential and spiritual influences.

In these ways, identities grow and shift rhizomatically. And so, ways of researching with children also need to be rhizomatic-- overlapping, multi-focal and shifting with time. Rhizoanalysis challenges the idea that one moment in a child's life may be “caused” by his/her stage of child development, his/her gender, his/her teacher or by what another child said or did. Scientific findings of research using the representational “tree logic” of cause

and effect are difficult to implement in education because humans in schools are embedded in complex and changing networks of being and social interaction. As each participant in every interaction has variable power to affect one other from day to day, and in the ordinary events of life, the generalizability of these educational research findings is greatly limited (Berliner, 2002; MacNaughton, 2003). The non-representational lateral logic of rhizoanalysis serves to create tensions related to “changeability, diversity, ‘noisiness’ (complexity)” and so highlights the complex and shifting links between, for instance, gender, cognition, class, race, culture, obedience and compliance as the links shoot into unpredictable ways into a particular moment in a child’s life (MacNaughton, 2003; Smith, 2003).

What all of the children involved in this study did share was this particular time in these two particular kindergarten classrooms. They were all engaged in working out who they were as their kindergarten selves; and they all faced on a daily basis interactions and opportunities in the kindergarten classrooms in which their moral lives were to be conjointly constructed and personally interpreted. Therefore, this particular study was designed to pursue understanding regarding the following three questions:

1. In what ways do kindergarten children disobey in the context of the kindergarten classroom?
2. In what ways are kindergartners’ moments of disobedience representations and enactments of something more than merely disobedience?
3. In what ways are kindergartners’ moments of disobedience opportunities for responding to others in caring, ethical ways and acting out the possibilities that a spiritual childhood provides (such as reverence, awe, wonder, reflection,

imagination and thoughtfulness (Greene, 2006; J. Miller, 2000; M. Quinn, 2001) and the sensitivities in: awareness sensing; mystery sensing, and value sensing (Hay and Nye, 1998)).

For each of the questions above, efforts were made to generate and interrogate texts of the child (via videotaped observations of the kindergarten classrooms) in order to seek surprises toward “disrupt[ing] the familiar and obvious” (MacNaughton, 2004) in what is known and so to form a new logic about what is happening in the text while building new understandings of its relationships to other texts. “Rhizomes are about mapping new or unknown lines and entry points, not tracing which records old lines or patterns” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 134-135). This research is an opportunity to “encounter to experience something we did not know before” which would allow true inquiry into “the humbling phenomena of difference and what might be” (Greene, 2001, p. 82).

#### Description and Discussion of Terms

The terms described here serve as a starting place to begin to consider the concepts represented by the language. I discuss here how each of the following terms are to be considered in the context of this study. By naming this section *Description and Discussion of Terms* rather than the traditional dissertational *Definition of Terms*, I deliberately contest the notion of defining via language.

As did Hwu (2004), I hope to lay out an interpretation of “ideas” in ways that are “unsayable,” “undecidable,” and “diagonal.” As Deleuze (1987, in Hwu, 2004) wrote:

Language has invented the dualism; therefore, we must pass through dualism because it is in language. In other words, to pass through dualisms is not to get rid of them, but

rather to fight against language, to invent ‘stammering’—AND... AND...AND... (p. 182).

The decision to stammer and stutter through the “terms” of this paper is fitting, because the intention of the work is to create uncertainty and space for each reader to make “subtle adjustments and re-adjustments” as the text “activates certain elements” in the reader’s experience and understanding and, in this way, meaning may emerge (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 10-12). In fact, this same stuttering and stammering in describing the terms within this dissertation reflects the method and intention of the work: to complicate the safe spaces of what we “know.” As Rorty (1986, in St. Pierre, 1997) posited:

We only know the world and ourselves under a description and perhaps *we just happened on that description*. If we entertain the possibility that all might not be what we have been led to believe—there might be worlds [and words] other than this (p. 176).

Thus, each of the following terms is purposely blurred and contested—within this work and beyond it. Representative of the complexity of the nature of terms is the question posed by Letts and Sears (1999), “How does [a term such as] ‘normal’ get defined through the curriculum, and how can we change what it means?” (p. 95). In broad strokes, how is *any* concept or value defined through the curriculum of School—and how might we challenge these definitions? In the spirit of the lateral logic of the rhizome and of queering the normality of “compliance,” the following descriptions of terms *are intended* to confound.

*Good/Goodness*

The use of the word good and/or goodness is represented here as contested and complex—as it must be for the purposes for which it is used in this study. While the word is defined in *The Reader's Digest Complete Oxford Word Finder* as that which indicates “competency, reliability, strength, thoroughness, expedience, freshness, worthiness, attractiveness, beneficial,” etc., I focused on the two aspects of goodness that relate to goodness as the compliant and obedient *good* (as in “good behavior”) and as a kind, caring, and empathetic *good* (as in the moral “good”). Goodness “...in man is not a mere passive quality, but the deliberate preference of right to wrong, the firm and persistent resistance of all moral evil, and the choosing and following of all moral good” (Romans 15:14, from *Easton's Bible Dictionary*).

Capra (1985) described the Zen-like paradox of “good and “bad.” He challenged the application of values to moments of interaction by naming them as “good” and “bad,” and suggested that we recognize the “truth” hidden in the paradoxical nature of good and bad that cannot be solved by logical reasoning, but instead is understood in terms of “a new awareness” (p. 36). I propose this “new awareness” may be approximated via the lateral “logic” that undergirds the method of analysis used in this research project: *rhizoanalysis*. Through the application of lateral logic, as opposed to a linear logic, one may learn to engage in a new awareness within particular moments of children acting for the good as far as good feels as opposed to the objective good which has been defined, instructed, and directed by others.

In abandoning the linear, vertical tree logic which separates the *concept* “good” from the *lived* “good,” Deleuze noted Nietzsche’s resistance to separations between the “world of appearance” and the “world of essence of reality” in flipping the “vertical axis of objective truth” sideways toward a “horizontal axis of values” (Deleuze, 1983; Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983; Nietzsche, 1966).

McCadden (1996) troubled the notion of the “good” child and the “good” kindergarten student as he compared moving from the profane to the sacred when entering a temple to the “portal rites” at the kindergarten door, “separating outside (child) behavior from inside (student) behavior and constructing the former as ‘bad’ within the context of the roles and responsibilities of ‘students’” (p. 27). In these schooled-notions of the good and the bad, children can find “goodness” in their own encounters with the world, but also in adult responses to actions. Vivian Paley, who has made a life’s work of seeking to transcend the adult perspective in her many books about young children, notes about Wally—the protagonist in her lovely book *Wally’s Stories*: “Before he goes home he’ll ask me if he was good. He has to tell his mother, and he is never sure” (Paley, 1981, p. 6).

“Goodness” is a highly conflicted term within this document and the nature of its conflict underlies much of the work of this study: the work of finding the goodness in being “bad” and the badness of being “good.”

#### *Obey/Obedience, Comply/Compliance*

Obedience and compliance imply doing what one is told, usually without evaluating the request, in order to bow to authority; to rules (stated and unstated); to potential rewards and punishments (direct and implied); and to tradition, in order to avoid disapproval, rejection,

abandonment or some other negative, hurtful or punitive outcome. The essence of obedience is that a person begins to view oneself as an instrument of another's wishes, and therefore no longer responsible for his own actions. This type of morality is often described in morality-laden terms (loyalty, duty, discipline) that not only refer to the "goodness" of the person but also to how well a subordinate fulfills his socially defined role (Bluestein, 2004; Milgram, 1974). Historians of religion have indicated a:

Persistence across time and space with which cultures insist on defining what is sacred and what is profane...what is beyond the boundaries of acceptable behavior, of a line between what is permissible and what is not...[often] speak[ing] to the essentially middle-class nature of organized religion which serves to legitimate and sustain mainstream American culture (Purpel, 1989, p. 74-75).

### *Disobedience*

In this study, I analyze moments of disobedience. Disobedience, in this work, describes an action or interaction that appears to disregard or defy structured expectations of a particular situation, place or person. For the purpose of this research, the classroom expectations might be explicitly stated (verbally or textually); or they might be implicitly expressed via the physical arrangement of school, by a variety of normalizing procedures and rituals, and/or by something as simple as a glance from another child. Determining moments of disobedience for this research required that I compare a child's action/interaction against what is expected or directed using a combination of cues.

For instance, in the case of Julian in the event of Reuben's fall described earlier, the most obvious cue of his disobedience was his teacher's response: "That's two, Julian..."

However, there were other indicators of Julian's disobedience. For instance, the behavior of the other children that indicated that there was a norm in place that Julian disregarded; my own knowledge of typical kindergarten expectations of "line" behavior as well as what I knew about that particular class's history of walking in the hall past my door; and having seen Julian and other children reprimanded and/or punished on prior occasions for similar infractions. Other information may have been available in regard to stated (written or verbal) school or classroom line rules, which may have been posted on walls, included in the school's handbook or discussed in class.

### *Resistance*

While resistance, here, is not used in the broadest of social justice themes as in the work of Giroux (1983a, 1983b) or Freire (1970), there is a relationship to those emancipatory works. Giroux(1983b) discussed the "hidden curriculum of public schools" as "located in a range of norms, decisions and social practices that tacitly structure school experience in the interest of social and class control" (p. 59), and represented resistance as "an oppositional act undertaken by those who wish to emancipate themselves from the structures of power that immobilize them" (p. 110-111).

In this study, the children's resistance, via moments of disobedience, push against the norms and practices that immobilize or "swaddle" them (Leafgren & Ambrose, 2005), but not intentionally for great social purpose. The resistance on this very small, local scale is, in Freire's (1970) terms, *a humanizing practice*. He wrote, "Humanization is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice and by their struggle to recover their lost

humanity” (p. 45). In this study, I considered that the children resisted the constraining structures of kindergarten because they have not “lost their humanity.”

### *Moral/Morality*

Dewey distinguished between customary and reflective morality. Customary morality issues “definite precepts, rules, definitive injunctions and prohibitions”; while reflective morality “grows out of conflict between ends, responsibilities, rights and duties” (in Gouinlock, 1994, p. 21-22). In this study, it was the children’s negotiation of customary and reflective moralities as they engaged in the moral opportunities within the kindergarten classroom that were documented in order to consider children’s understandings regarding the inherent complexity of moral situations. McCadden (1998), discussed the moral complexity of a kindergarten classroom in his book, *It’s Hard to be Good*, and described his understanding of morality as:

Socially constructed over time. Morality exists but there is no static morality. We, individually, collectively, and historically create, maintain and adhere to and modify it. Our individual understanding of a situation as moral is based on our experiences and our settled-upon understandings of what counts as moral... Yet as individual and collective social actors, what counts as moral to us is contingent on the roles we play in society (p. 13).

The child’s understanding of morality surely emerges in part from their spiritual nature and full engagement with the other. As Buber (1958/1970) has written, “Spirit is not in the I but between I and You... and solely by virtue of his power to relate that man is able to live in the spirit” (p. 89).

### *Spiritual/Spirituality*

Perhaps the most contested term in this list, spirituality signifies/is many things to many people. It carries historical, cultural, religious, social, emotional, relational, political, biological, and myriad other connections; and it intersects with each as a category of thinking, being and conceptualizing the world and the moments in it.

Hadot (1995) struggled with the term, *spiritual*, in his introduction to the “wisdom” exercises practiced by philosophers. He noted that the term is “a bit disconcerting” and out of fashion and described how he tried on other adjectives: “‘psychic,’ ‘moral,’ ‘ethical,’ ‘intellectual,’ ‘of thought,’ [and] ‘of the soul’” (p. 81)—but none captured the real dimensions of the exercises. In the case of this study, I do not describe “exercises” —however the *process* of considering the term, *spiritual*, was similar as I sought the term/idea/concept most representative of the studied moments in the children’s lives. I, too, tried “moral,” and “ethical”—as well as “spirited,” “soulful,” and “empathetic”—and while related, none captured the dimension as truly as does “spiritual.”

Strong and Fuller’s (2000) discussion of spirituality and the spiritual begins to approach the multi-faceted complexity of this “term.” They identified three general themes:

Connection with others, connection with the universe and spiritual space. Connection with others...being responsible as a human being...so that anything I do makes me a better person; better, you know, not with rules...but from being kind to others.

Connection with the universe was typified...as moving beyond the world as we know it...cause everything else with you is always tied to some part of us...emotionally, physically, psychologically...the spiritual connection or that spiritual part of us [and]

finally, ‘spiritual space’ referred to a context where thinking and feeling things of spiritual significance was possible (e.g., “I wasn’t sure of where I was but I could be comfortable there”) (np).

In their exploration of spiritual sensitivity in children, Hay and Nye (1998) developed three categories of sensitivity: awareness sensing; mystery sensing, and value sensing—all requiring a state of being fully present, wide-awake, spiritually awake, mindful, completely engaged with what-is-there, completely abandoned, eyes wide-opened, and deeply encountering (as has been discussed in, for instance, Buber, 1958/1970; Greene, 1981; Hanh, 1998; Hart, 1999, 2003; J. Henderson, 1999; D. Jardine, 1998; Kesson, 1999; J. Macdonald, 1974; Noddings, 1993; Purpel, 2001; M. Quinn, 2001; Steiner, 1995).

It is likely just as important to discuss what spirituality *is not* in this study. For the purpose of the discussions in this study, spirituality is not framed in the religious, the otherworldly, or the mystical. It is not God-talk, not transcendence, not a scientific measurement of a spiritual kind of development. Nor is it the kind of spirituality in which people become like angels—“pure spirits without bodies...From this point of view, spiritual life could be lived only by withdrawing from the world... one denies the body and earthly self—not like become” (Harris, 1989, p. 65).

Rather, the children’s spirituality in this work is evidenced by their grounded and intently sentient—even corporeal—engagement and deeply-encountering connection with the world. For instance, as I revised these pages, I was sitting on the banks of a tiny river under a train trestle. As I wrote, families stopped, stood by the edge of the river in front of me—and almost invariably, each child (every boy and most of the girls) would stoop to pick up a stone

to toss into the water. They stood and watched the splash and the ripples that they made, and then tossed some more. One boy stood gazing at the river; but as he bent to pick up a stone, his mother stopped him. “No, that’s dirty!” she said and took his hand. As she turned to walk away, the boy, still holding her hand, leaned away from her, scooped up a stone and quickly tossed it into the water. He was disobedient—perhaps even naughty; he may have gotten dirty; and he most certainly engaged in a sentient encounter with “other” as his fully present spiritual self. I saw all of these within this moment—one value not more true than the other.

In this study, spirituality is *not* considered transcendent in the sense that one becomes removed from (above) what is grounded and solid. Rather, spirituality is transcendent in the sense that it involves a way of being in the world where one is connected to other beings (which includes ones’ community, people, and “other parts of creation”), and allows one to move from inward to outward action and to seek that which lies beyond ourselves. In this vein, Phenix (1974, in Kimes-Myers, 1997) described “spirit” as the word that names the “property of limitless going beyond” (p. 13).

Exploring spirituality in this study was also *not* an exercise in pointing out which children were “spiritual” and which were not, nor was it a measure of how spiritual or spirited some children might be. Kimes-Myers (1997) quoted Phenix to explain:

It is phenomenologically not the case that some persons, called ‘religious’ or ‘spiritual’ types, experience [transcendence] and others do not...all human consciousness is rooted in transcendence’...When [children] are said to have ‘spirit’, this means that they express ‘perennial discontent and dissatisfaction with any and every finite

realization’ ... ‘Spirit’ is what allows [a child] to ‘giggle with delight’ as she pulls herself upright (p. 13).

“Spirit” is what allowed the rock to speak to the stream through the child; it’s what insists that arbitrarily-drawn boundaries designed to keep children apart do not keep them apart; and it’s what “begins with our cultivating the inner eye that sees everything capable of [becoming]” (Harris, 1989, p. 65).

Harris did not end her quote as I did. She wrote, “begins with our cultivating the inner eye that sees everything capable of *being God*.” I chose to use *most of* her words, because the idea of “cultivating the inner eye that sees everything...” speaks to what is apparent to me as I observe young children. “Becoming” is in what we are all engaged—and I believe children have not forgotten this; and, thus, when encountering the world spiritually, they “see” everything as potential for *becoming*, too. However, I left off “God” because another explanation of what spirituality is *not* in this particular research project is as a product of a higher power. However, Harris’s connections between spirituality and sensing/seeing characterizes well the ways children are spiritually in the world. Harris explained, “Initially, spirituality is seeing. This means not just looking but seeing what is actually there and entering the deep places and centers of things” (p. 65). As a similar notion of a grounded, sentient spirituality as a means to re-humanize education, Kathleen Kesson (2005) passionately declared:

So yes, let us bring all the power we can muster be it occult or political, to influence and inspire others to resist the dehumanization of education [and cautions w]e need not buy into supernatural ideas in order to engage with such discourses. We need only to

consider the notion that there is a self that is both more complex and more purposeful than a deterministic social construction theory can account for; that this self acts as an organizing center for and maker of meaning of experience; that this self experiences desire, which provides the momentum for human activity; and that desire is dynamically linked to inquiry as the foundation for authentic engagement with the world. This constellation of ideas forms, I believe, in the crux of the relationship between education and spirituality. If we were to take it seriously, we would of necessity, radically rethink the aims, structures, content, and processes of education, in order to make possible unfettered connections between the self, desire, purpose, intent, will, wonder, awe, imagination, creativity, and responsiveness to other selves—signifiers that are largely missing from the dominant techno/managerial/standard discourses (p. 43-44).

Kesson's discussion may lead one to consider ways in which to make "unfettered connections." Therefore, in looking closely and rhizomatically at moments of children's disobedience in the classroom, some texts laid against the observational texts are of a spiritual sort. As Kimes-Myers (1997) asserted, "assuredness, strength, and spiritedness can be discerned in children everywhere when it is not squelched, nullified, neglected, or in other ways repudiated or overlooked" (p. 3). Rendon (2007) also troubled the fleeting nature of our spiritual selves, writing that "the natural state of the human being is whole and connected and somewhere along the line, we're segmented—we break apart (mind, body, soul; into thought, feeling, joy...)" (np). While some aspects of schooling may squelch, nullify,

neglect, repudiate, and break apart the spiritual nature of children, in this particular study, the spiritual is *not* overlooked.

I contend that the spirituality present in all of us is more readily apparent in young children than in most adults. Perhaps because “somewhere along the line” (Rendon, 2007) hasn’t happened yet and the children haven’t “broken apart”; or perhaps because children’s worldly experience is connected to their senses and their desire to reach out as opposed to adults’ worldly experience of abstractions. As Jerome Berryman (1985, in Kimes-Myers, 1997) suggested, young children “live at the limit of their experiences most of the time” (p. 13), which is an artifact, I suggest, of their engrossment (Noddings, 2002) and intense awareness (Hay & Nye, 1998). As Hart (2006) wrote about children’s spirituality, it may “exist apart from adult rational and linguistic conceptions and from knowledge about religion. Although children may not be able to conceptualize a religious concept, their presence—their mode of being and knowing in the world—may be distinctly spiritual” (p. 164).

Children’s spirituality, as evidenced by their sensing, relating, caring, hoping, and deeply encountering actions and interactions, suggests a “way of being, way of knowing, and way of doing” as rooted in an ancient practice of “spiritual discipline” (Hadot, 1995, in Henderson & Slattery, 2007) or “spiritual praxis” (Shahjahan, 2007, np). If so, those who care for children might engage with children in “disciplined inquiry, dialogue and self-examination” (Henderson & Slattery, 2007) in a pedagogy of what Riyadh Shahjahan (2007) calls “audacious hope in action,” centering spirituality in curriculum, nurturing possibilities, “embodying the anti-oppressive pedagogy of interconnection” (np). Laura Rendon (in

progress) names this the *sentipensante*, a sensing/thinking pedagogy—educating for wholeness, social justice, rooted in ancient wisdom, and promoting nonduality, wholeness and completeness.

Becker (1994, in Kimes-Myers, 1997) named spirituality as a “code word for the depth dimension of human existence” (p. 257). In considering this dimension, especially in the human existence of young children, I, in this paper, discuss facets of spirituality that include:

1. Spirituality as sensing and sensuality (Corbett, 1991; Hay & Nye, 1998; Keleman, 1981; Pillow, 1997; Rendon, in progress; Tobin, 1997);
2. Spirituality grounded in social justice, as inspiring hope and affirming action (Hanh, 1990a; hooks, 1993; Shahjahan, 2007);
3. Spirituality that connotes a fully present, deeply encountering self (Greene, 1981; Hanh, 1998; Kimes-Myers, 1997; Noddings, 1993).

### *Spiritual/Moral/Civil Disobedience*

In considering the potential value of children’s acts of disobedience, some thought must be tendered to the spiritual-moral conflict that may have given rise to such acts. Zinn (1968) discussed civil disobedience as “the deliberate, discriminate, violation of law for a vital social purpose...its aim is always to close the gap between law and justice, as an infinite process in the development of democracy” (p. 119). And Linn (1989) discussed moral disobedience as what might be considered deviant behavior used as a coping strategy in the face of overwhelming moral dilemmas. Given the likely tension between the child-reflective morality and the institutional-customary morality, moments of disobedience may occur that are purposeful. For instance, when Reuben fell, Julian experienced his need for help and

comfort and – even while knowing the rule, even while knowing that breaking the rule would likely lead to punishment – chose to transgress the order of the line in order to go to his aid.

This is not only evidence of a nascent sort of civil disobedience, but bears weight as a disobedience of a moral and spiritual sort—as related to his engagement with an other.

*Democratic/Democracy*

According to Dewey (1985), each of us is best served by a democracy created to maximize the common good. He described democracy as follows:

Democracy is simultaneously a way of life, an ethical ideal, and a personal commitment. Specifically, it is a way of life in which individuals are presumed to be self-directing and able to pursue their own goals and projects. No society that maintains order through constant supervision and/or coercion can be rightly called democratic. Further, individual benefit and the common good are mutually enhancing in a democracy (p. 349).

In considering the future and the state of democracy, Counts (1932) claimed that democracy can only be the “intended offspring of the union of human reason, purpose and will” (p. 37), and reminded that democracy is not a political institution, but is a:

Sentiment with respect to the moral equality of men: it is an aspiration towards a society ...fashioned in harmony with an American democratic tradition [which would] combat all forces tending to produce social distinctions and classes, repress every form of privilege and economic parasitism; manifest a tender regard for the weak, the ignorant, and the unfortunate; place the heavier and more onerous burden on the backs of the strong; glory in every triumph of man in his timeless urge to express himself and

to make the world more habitable; exalt human labor of hand and brain as the creator of all wealth and culture; provide adequate material and spiritual rewards for every kind of socially useful work; strive for genuine equality of opportunity among all races, sects, and occupations; regard as paramount the abiding interests of the great masses of people; direct the powers of government to the elevation and the refinement of the life of the common man; transform or destroy all conventions, institutions and special groups inimical to the underlying principles of democracy; and finally be prepared as a last resort, in either the defense of or realization to this purpose, to follow the method of revolution (p. 37-38).

Or as Dewey would have said, a means “to maximize the common good.”

Dewey (1960) described a relationship between freedom and experienced resistance. He believed that people do not think about or go in search of freedom “unless they run during action against conditions that resist their original impulses” (p. 286). He did not go on to define freedom as the release of all such “original impulse” or to conceive education as an affair primarily of impulse. Rather, his concern was to encourage “free and informed choosing... ‘in the open air of public discussion and communication’ ...this, in turn, would happen only if persons were able to test their own capacities, to use their minds” (in Greene, 1988, p. 6). In this way, the moments of disobedience and resistance explored in this study are not exclusively moments of impulse or of merely naughtiness, but are those representative of the child’s spiritual nature from which “goodness” can be derived.

*Moral Swaddling/Spiritual Swaddling*

As adults wrap or bind babies in swaddling cloths, they do so for multiple purposes. One swaddles a baby to protect the infant and to keep it close. Women in many cultures carefully swaddle their infants in order to keep the child safe, secure and as close as possible, sharing warmth, breath and heartbeat. Swaddling in this manner allows the child to participate in the day-to-day doings of the mother – to observe what she does, and know/feel cared for in the most fundamental sense.

Swaddling is also a means to restrain and control the child. Mead (1951) described the swaddled Russian child: “Hands that were tightly bound inside the swaddling bands could not explore...experiencing but never touching the teeming, vivid, highly charged world around it, being in it, but not of it” (np).

In this study, the term *moral swaddling* (Leafgren & Ambrose, 2005) or *spiritual swaddling* is used to represent the constraints placed on children via “a range of norms, decisions and social practices” (Giroux, 1983b, p. 59), and adult dominance and pre-emptive school procedures and rules—constraints that not only protect the children from harm and offer security and predictability—but also, prohibit fully “vivid and highly charged” interactions with other children and their environment, and so interfere with children’s potential to act on spiritual-moral opportunities. Buber wrote extensively of the relational nature of the human spirit and cautioned that nurturing the spirit-self is not passive or restrained, but that the “human child...gains his world by seeing, listening, feeling, forming. It is in encounter that the creation reveals its formhood; it does not pour itself into senses that

are waiting but deigns to meet those *that are reaching out*” [emphasis mine] (Buber, 1958/1970, p. 76).

“Reaching out” implies the freedom to do so. Moral/spiritual swaddling operates in conflicted complexity. It is a metaphor used not to reduce uncertainty, but to complicate and so possibly enhance understanding.

### *Rhizoanalysis/Rhizomatic Analysis*

Rhizoanalysis builds from the philosophical and cultural theories of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987). In developing a comparison between a rhizome and a tree as a metaphor of the contrast between two forms of logic, they name the tree’s linear structure—from roots through the trunk, to the branches—as a metaphor of the fixed, determining and linear logic that explains things in terms of cause-and-effect relationships. In contrast, “the rhizome’s contrasting ‘lateral’ structure – a collection of mutually dependent ‘roots’ and ‘shoots’—is a metaphor of a dynamic, flexible and ‘lateral’ logic that encompasses change, complexity and heterogeneity” (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 120).

For the purpose of this study, the conceptual tools of rhizoanalysis, as will be described in Chapter III, allowed me to explore the nuances and politics of the texts constituted of kindergarten observations in order to create new texts. These newly constructed texts explore “how it means; how it connects with things ‘outside’ of it, such as its author, its reader and its literary and non-literary contexts; and by exploring how it organizes meanings and power through offshoots, overlaps, conquests and expansions” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

### Significance of the Study

In this study, I seek to present an appreciation for the messiness and disobedience of authentic and spiritual childhood—a difficult task when in the context of school and in the broader social realm, “goodness” has become defined/enacted as obedience and compliance often to the exclusion of empathy and advocacy among the children who “live” there. The study troubles school readiness as inevitably a part of a “normalizing practice which by its nature mistreats schoolchildren” (Foucault, 1988, p. 18), and suggests that school instead might offer the trusting and appreciative ambiance where children might create “spaces of dialogue...where they can take initiatives and uncover humanizing possibilities” (Greene, 1988, p. 13).

The study represents moments of disobedience in order to demonstrate that some of these “humanizing possibilities” may lie in conflict and moral decisions, even in forms of disobedience and challenge to authority. Purpel (2001) noted that we rarely read of “even an implied affirmation of the American tradition of revolutionary democracy as an expression of resistance to authoritarianism” (p. 93). This study seeks a view of the potential of goodness in “bad” behaviors—even while most of the moments of disobedience do not offer the clear vision of goodness that Julian’s rule-breaking did. In similar fashion, then, perhaps teachers and other adults who work with young children will be prompted to seek those possibilities—even when not so glaringly clear as when Julian helped Reuben up from the hard schoolroom floor.

In Hostetler's (2005) article, *What is "Good" Education Research?* he lamented the focus on the *methodological* "good" of educational research, sacrificing adequate attention to

the question of what good *comes from* educational policies and practices, how do they or how do they not contribute to “a robust and justifiable conception of human well-being.” Hostetler offered Nussbaum's vision metaphor: “The presumption is not that people err with regard to well-being because they are evil. We err because we overlook something, misperceive something. All of us have blind spots. But we can improve our vision” (p. 20).

This study is significant because in seeking to “improve our vision,” it might shine a fresh light on children’s spiritual-moral sensibilities and abilities -- especially as related to their spirit, their total presence in the moment and their willingness to engage in surprise and contradiction. As noted by Henderson and Kesson (2004):

Many of the ancient wisdom traditions value paradox and understand it as an important aspect of spiritual development. To dwell comfortably with contradictions, to rest content with not knowing, to move ahead, mindfully, in the face of chaos, confusion, and uncertainty is to be spiritually awake and wise like a fool (p. 48).

Ironically, the child who can embrace this foolish wisdom and wise foolishness is likely to be admonished to seek a more serious, ordered experience. By swaddling the children in our care with explicit and implicit demands, rules, structures and an imposed duty to be “good,” we inhibit their engagement in ambiguity and wonder and block their path of awareness and responsiveness.

This study is significant because it offers a reminder of the complexity of “goodness.” As teachers communicate to the children in their care that their positive regard is “conditional” (Rogers, 1980) and swaddle them so tightly in their moral practice that they are compelled to remain steadfastly still in an orderly line (as did the children in Mrs.

Buttercup's line) even as their friend falls and cries out—it appears that this complexity is being overlooked. While teachers may believe that demanding and coercing compliance is “for your own good,” Miller (1983/1990) argued that such practice can be described as “poisonous pedagogy.” Noddings (2002) explained that such pedagogy is:

Rigid and coercive; it seeks to substitute the will of the teacher for that of the student.

Throughout the process of ‘educating’, teachers guilty of poisonous pedagogy take a highly moralistic tone, insisting that what they are demanding is right and that coercion and cruelty, if they are used, are necessary ‘for the child's own good’ (p. 29).

This study is significant because it seeks to offer entry points into examining the “democratic good life” (which requires thoughtful and spiritual-moral disobedience) via moments of children’s compliance and non-compliance. Henderson (2001a) described the morality of democratic living as a *wisdom challenge*, and celebrated the idea of what Zen practitioners call the beginner’s mind, “which is truly open and fresh, willing to remain innocent and receptive to life, not attached to our knowledge. It is the willingness to be empty, and thus open to learning and growing” (Davidson, 1998, p. 36-37; in J. Henderson, 2001a, p. 19). These moments of entry invite an exploration of the freedom necessary in the school culture to allow children direct experience in the democratic way of living--as opposed to learning *about* it (i.e., J. Dewey, 1902; Eisner, 2002; Foucault, 1979; Miller, 1979/1990; Noddings, 2002). As Dewey (1916) famously noted, “A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 93).

This study is significant because, in the words of Howard Zinn (2005):

I [don't] want ...to prepare [children] to take their obedient and accustomed places in the world so that they [will] then teach...their children to take their obedient and accustomed places in the world and then the world [will] continue as it always has been because unless people become disobedient and unless people step out of line, the world continues in its old ways (np).

## CHAPTER II

### DISOBEDIENCE TEXTS AND CONTEXTUAL LITERATURE

*During air raid drills Miss Pearl stood at the front of the room with her arms folded across her vast breasts. 'When we go outside, children, you will line up nicely, even if there is an atomic bomb'*

(Wenner, 2004, p. 5)

When I visualize rhizoanalysis as a process, I see in front of me an expanse of soft, loamy soil containing the infinite number and variety of moments I might reap; I see my hand reaching through the loam to grasp a handful of humus-rich soil shot through with rhizomes. I peer at this handful of rich soil and realize that I could choose any shoot to follow and each would take me to different connections and each would tell a different story.

In the following, the soil is the moment of Reuben's fall and Julian's care—and the mapping of lines of flight as I reach my hand into that moment is one of the two functions of this chapter. Thus in the first section of this chapter, I enlist Reuben and Julian to frame a tale of disobedience and the possible texts that might disrupt our expected notions of disobedience. In the second portion of this chapter, I review a selection of background and contextual literature in the interest of setting the stage for this study of moments of children's disobedience.

This chapter is, by no means, an exhaustive review of the supporting literature for this work. Nor is it meant to offer one, for while an arbolic, tree-like account of this research of children's classroom disobedience would begin at the roots with a rationale and "the branches of theory and method would grow from the solid trunk of 'the literature' in order to feed the leaves, flowers and fruit of 'analysis, interpretation and conclusions'" (Clarke, 1994, p. 4), this study *purposely* follows a less linear path. So, with no tree-roots with which to begin and no trunk to carefully trace the way to the proper leaves and flowers, middle, how and where did I begin this task? As Derrida (1967/1974, in St. Pierre, 2002) explained:

We begin, ‘wherever we are,’ in the middle of whatever project we’re working on, in the middle of whatever seems so strange and squirrely that we avoid talking about it with someone, in the spaces where the old concepts break down and simply aren’t adequate to the task at hand (p. 419).

### Disobedience Texts: A Rhizoanalysis of Reuben’s Fall

The moment I heard Reuben fall is a fitting place to begin this work because it was that particular event that made irresistibly transparent the innate complexity of every moment of interaction. It has become nearly impossible since then to see any moment in a way that could be named as merely “good” or “bad” or by any name at all. It is, as Derrida would agree, the place to begin because it *is* where I am.

Because I was unbound in that moment from the responsibility of naming Julian’s act as “good” or “bad” and so required to react accordingly (remember, I was a witness, not the teacher in this case), I realized that I was free to see it as unnameable—or given the moment’s myriad possibilities—re-nameable.

As researcher, my role is free of conventions and customs of “the teacher.” I am unconstrained, and so compelled to follow the unpredictable, rhizomatic, meandering, decentralized, detachable, and reversible shoots of the “literature” and “rationale” and “analyses” in order to appear, disrupt, and “flower” (as in Clark, 1994) throughout this first section of Chapter II. As I place texts from other sources—historical, heroic, religious, etc—over, beside, and beneath the text describing the moment of Reuben’s fall, the connecting literature (related to spirituality, moral swaddling, dissidence, and the democracy of disobedience) unfolds.

*The Spirit and Wisdom of Childhood*

*'If a fool throws a stone into a water' goes an old saying 'even a hundred sages can't bring it back'...But an ingenuous child, who still thinks in pictures, might ask, 'Isn't the world full of stones- so why should a hundred clever people try so hard to get back this one? Why don't they look around? If they do, they might find all kinds of new treasures they can't see because they are so busy searching in vain in the water' (Miller, 1983/1990, p. 11).*

When Reuben fell, I heard it. Everyone there must have heard it. However, Julian *saw* it. Julian seemed to see everything. His engagement with the world was intense and sometimes inconvenient. In this case, however, his willingness/ability/choice to see, not only Reuben and his fall—but to see and be aware of Reuben's *need*—led him to kindness.

Hay and Nye (1998) discussed a spiritual awareness as a special kind of “attention” within a reflexive process—“being attentive to one’s attention or ‘being aware of one’s awareness’” (p. 65)—a meta-awareness, perhaps. Sherblom (1997) discussed this kind of moral awareness by raising points made by Iris Murdoch that draw attention to an essential connection between “attention” and morality, indicating that moral action:

Is not so much a matter of choice or values, but a matter of seeing the moral context clearly... that you can only choose within the world that you can perceive. This makes one's ability to perceive a foundational constraint on moral choice and a central aspect of moral experience...She describes moral experience in terms of seeing and knowing people and moral contexts. She illustrates how moral sensitivities develop from continuous attention to the moral aspects of experience (Murdoch, 1970/1985, in Sherblom, 1997).

This leads me to believe, then, that the spiritual awareness and sensibilities of Julian influenced his moral choices and actions—even when his choices could and did lead to

retribution from one who only understood those choices as disobedience.

One text telling a similar tale of awareness and action comes from the field of psychiatry via the important work, *Man's Search for Meaning*, written by neurologist/psychiatrist and existentialist, Victor Frankl. In exploring a “will to meaning,” Frankl (1984) recalled his experiences in a concentration camp. One story involved Frankl assisting another inmate:

At one time, we had to carry some long, heavy girders over icy tracks. If one man slipped, he endangered not only himself but all the others who carried the same girder. An old friend of mine had a congenitally dislocated hip. He was glad to be capable of working in spite of it, since the physically disabled were almost certainly sent to death when a selection took place. He limped over the track with an especially heavy girder, and seemed about to fall and drag the others with him. As yet, I was not carrying a girder so I jumped to his assistance without stopping to think. I was immediately hit on the back, rudely reprimanded and ordered to return to my place. A few minutes previously, the same guard who struck me had told us deprecatingly that we ‘pigs’ lacked the spirit of comradeship (p. 43).

Like Julian, Frankl stepped out of line and, like Julian, Frankl was punished for that transgression without reference to the cause of it. I also recognized another similarity in their choice—Frankl wrote, “I jumped to his assistance without stopping to think” and I understand Julian’s action to be the same. While I believe Julian “knew” he would likely be punished, I do not believe he weighed that possibility in his decision to act. I do not believe that either Frankl or Julian chose their action as an opposition of their particular regimes of

oppression. They saw another's need, perceived the moral context within that need, as described by Murdoch (1970/1985), and responded to it.

Literary texts play on the theme of acting on a moral context. H.G. Wells made a dire prediction regarding human progress in *The Time Machine* (1895/1986), as the time traveler enters a time 800,000 years in the future. The human race by this time has evolved in ways so separated from one another that there is no attention paid to another's need. Wells' time traveler told of his arrival to this time and of watching in horror as one female nearly drowned, while those who watched with slight interest offered no aid:

That day, too, I made a friend—of a sort. It happened that, as I was watching some of the little people bathing in a shallow, one of them was seized with cramp and began drifting downstream. The main current ran rather swiftly, but not too strongly for even a moderate swimmer. It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange deficiency in these creatures, when I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly crying little thing which was drowning before their eyes. When I realized this, I hurriedly slipped off my clothes, and, wading in at a point lower down, I caught the poor mite and drew her safe to land. A little rubbing of the limbs soon brought her round, and I had the satisfaction of seeing she was all right before I left her. I had got to such a low estimate of her kind that I did not expect any gratitude from her. In that, however, I was wrong (p. 53).

The time traveler goes on to tell of Weena's gratitude to him for her rescue. In this tale, there appeared no threat of punishment or even a sense of transgression from a particular order. However, the creatures sitting on the banks of the stream risked nothing, even wet clothing or a glimpse of concern, to offer help. It was as if they did not see. As if they could

not see what Julian would have seen.

To me, there is a parallel spirit among children and ancients. I have often commented on my sense of children's eyes and hearts—that they seem to be more open than adults' eyes and hearts; it may be their spiritual awareness that I sense. I feel that the ancient wisdom traditions share much with the joyful spirit of childhood. The child's "complete abandon and whole-hearted faith" (M. Quinn, 2001) allows her to act as sage, or as many mystic traditions would affirm: divine. In describing the "... necessity of becoming a small child again, of rediscovering spiritual childhood in order to reinstate the divine" Erny (1973), wrote:

Man, resuscitated at the end of initiations, having become a child again, must display in his behavior the traits of his new personality, in particular, 'ignorance.' In the face of mystery, and its obscurity, the mind is 'silly,' 'idiot,' like a 'blind hippopotamus'.... A second personality trait will be his playful and jocular character, the overflowing of the joy of his soul. Real knowledge engenders joy, turns its possessor into a child, and gives him freedom of spirit again and the wisdom of childhood.... To reach a state of childhood again is to become capable of melting oneself in the divine, of transforming oneself in it...Lao-Tseu [*sic*] used to say, 'Man must rediscover the heart of the little child to give himself peacefully to the Tao' (p. 86-89).

In a similar vein, Nietzsche, well-known for his deep suspicions regarding the motives underlying moralities and religion, was inspired by the spirit of the child to enter into issues of spirituality of faith in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883/1982):

What is the child but an image of faith? The child is the hope of the future, the fulfillment of the past and the blessing of the present...the child responds to the world,

to being-in-the-world, with a grand ‘amen’! The child is the pure affirmation of existence, the utterance of a sacred ‘yes’ to life, which is the substance of faith (p. 26).

Joseph Pearce in the Foreword of Hart’s (2003) *The Secret Spiritual World of Children* wondered if “the ‘child-spirit’ can be other than that of our ‘species-spirit’ as a whole since the child and its wondrous world embrace the whole of life from the beginning” (p. ix); and further wondered how renowned child developmentalists seem to have missed the child-spirit for so long. In contesting the notion of children’s incompleteness and immaturity, Hart (2003) explained that:

Developmental theorists typically tell us that children are self-centered and incapable of real empathy or compassion; they have not developed sufficiently to really put themselves in someone else's shoes. Indeed, children can be enormously selfish and self-centered, but they can also be deeply empathetic and compassionate. They do not have to wait until adulthood to act unselfishly, feel into another's pain or share their heart. Their openness allows them to experience deep interconnection with the world, and their compassion can arise very naturally. The capacities of separateness and connection, selfishness and compassion exist simultaneously (p. 69).

Julian lifted Reuben from the floor in the spirit of connectedness and compassion. He “reached out” to Reuben as he experienced Buber’s (1958/1970) “I-thou” encounter in engaging with Reuben’s need for help and care.

Kesson (2005) and Kimes-Myers (1997) explained “I-thou” through stories of children fully engaged with others (thous). Earthworms and bumblebees can be “thous.” In each story, a child came across something adults might view as mundane. As the little girl in Kimes-Myers’ (1997) story comes across some earthworms:

She felt invited...they squirmed, she loosened her grasp and looked more closely...taking an even closer look...Earthworms were the subject of her perception and there was a dialogue between the child and the worms. But her own feelings were also the subjects of her perception about her experience with earthworms and about being in her grandmother's garden with those of us who were also engaged in dialogue with her, each other, the world and with our own growing edges (p 23).

Kesson (2005) told of joining her young granddaughter, Anika, who has "...no appointments to keep" on a stroll through the neighborhood—a stroll which "involves prolonged moments of stillness." She describes Anika as "full of wonder, curiosity, and appreciation as she literally incorporates—takes into her bodymind—the world"—a world which includes lavender bushes to smell, bristly seedpods to explore with "tiny fingertips," shocking pink petunias, to rub "ever so gently" and black bumblebees at eye level with which to share the pleasure of black-eyed Susan's and lavender bushes (p. 43).

One can find many who similarly reference the spirited and spiritual nature of the child as they embrace the whole of life in freedom, joy, wisdom, hope, and playfulness joined together in the body and spirit of the child. Recall Hay and Nye's (1998) categories of spiritual sensitivity: awareness sensing; mystery sensing, and value sensing...all which require a state of being one might describe as being fully present, wide-awake, spiritually awake, mindful, completely engaged with what-is-there, completely abandoned, eyes wide-opened, and deeply encountering.

It is the qualities of sensitivity and mindfulness that speak to the "spiritual discipline" described by Hadot (1995). Ambrose (2005) referred to a kind of spiritual discipline applied by children as they engage with one another in classrooms as relational spirituality:

Thinking, feeling and acting [very much like the “way of being, way of knowing, and way of doing” of spiritual discipline] become spiritual when young children’s consideration for each other enables them to select paths for interacting that provide possibilities of classroom community that reflect ethical and moral judgment. What is right? What is fair? How can we determine how we will play, learn and “breathe” (from the Latin, *spiritus*, “of breathing, of the spirit”) together in this shared time and space? (p. 93).

As Shahjahan (2007) enjoined us, the spiritual path is not an “...individual path, but a communal one.” Children’s state of intense awareness and wide-awakeness engages them in what Kimes-Myers (1997) named a “spirituality of caring,” a fully present way of being, knowing and acting which includes a relational, dialogical connection in which things become other body subjects, rather than just objects of perception. Buber (1958/1970) referred to this as an “I-thou relationship” in contrast with an “I-it” relationship in which the other has no “subjectiveness” and exists only as an object.”

Hart (2004, in Ambrose, 2005) described Buber’s “between the I and you” as “a relational understanding of spirituality in which the spiritual is lived out at the intersection of our lives; in the ‘between’...as a ‘spirituality’ that develops between one and others communally” (p. 94). As Buber wrote, “Spirit is not in the I but between the I and you. It is not like the blood that circulates in you, but like the air in which you breathe” (1958/1970). Hart (2004) suggested that relationships developed in early childhood classrooms are in fact spiritual and that the “...air in which you breathe can become the community in which you share lived experiences” (in Ambrose, 2005, p. 94).

Chapter V will detail texts representing moments of disobedience and children as spirited-moral actors within the context of Hay and Nye's (1998) spiritual categories of awareness-, mystery- and value-sensing. For in considering each of these spiritual expressions, I believe that those of us who care for, watch over and learn from the child enjoy many opportunities to observe these instances of spiritual sensitivity—if we are willing.

To foreground those moments from the research, and to foreground the process of laying texts of the text of the moments of disobedience, the following sections describe lines of flight in re-theorizing, rethinking and reliving the moment of Reuben's fall. The connections and permutations of this particular moment include discussions related to moral and spiritual swaddling; dissent and dissonants; and the democratic nature of disobedience.

*Moral/Spiritual Swaddling: A Function of the Schoolroom*

*'Did we miss something? He wasn't a troublemaker. He didn't even talk in line.'*

A teacher discussing Elias, the seven-year-old boy who shot a little girl on the school playground in a television episode of Law and Order.

(DeNoon & Peterson, 2000).

*Now, Patty used to live with a two-way door  
In a little white house quite near us  
But she had too much fun in school all day  
And made the grown-ups nervous  
She talked in the library and sang in class  
Went four times to the toilet  
She ran through the halls and wouldn't play dolls  
And when we pledged to the flag, she'd spoil it.*

*So the teachers who love her had a meeting one day  
To try to find a cure  
They thought and talked and thought some more  
Till finally they were sure  
'Oh, Patty,' they said, 'you're an awfully sweet girl  
With lots of potential inside you.*

*But you have to know how far to go  
 So the grown-up world can abide you.  
 Now, the rules are listed on the walls,  
 So there's no need to repeat them,  
 We all agree, your parents and we,  
 That you just can't handle your freedom'*

(Morrison & Morrison, 1999, p. 8-10)

*Power comes when you make life predictable for people.*

(Howard Stevenson in Wong & Wong, 1998, p. 88 )

I imagine that I reach into the rich soil of the moment of Reuben's fall, and pull a shoot that led to a text of the children who stood in line: the ones who were "good." How did I know they were "good"? They didn't have to go "on the wall." They stayed in line. I did not ask them—but I wondered: did they see Reuben's fall, and so his need for care? I am sure they saw his fall. He was in front of the line, and it was a large, loud fall. But did they see his *need*?

When I spoke with pre-service early childhood teachers about this in later years, and asked them what Reuben may have thought/felt, many of them indicated that they believed he would have been embarrassed to have fallen down so largely and so loudly. They think everyone saw it. So, why did only Julian get out of line to offer his care? He was in the back of the line to begin with, so he was not the closest—others might have reached Reuben sooner. But no one moved. I call this swaddling. The children were wrapped so tightly in their commitment to the order of the line and blind obedience to the authority of the teacher that they did not fully see Reuben, and could not and did not reach out.

What follows are texts from film, psychiatry, anthropology and more to place next to the text of the children who remained in line. What the new texts do to the text of Reuben's

fall to blur the value of compliance is mapped on texts discussing moral and spiritual swaddling.

A good friend of mine is a consultant. He specializes in cognitive science as related to human behavior and interaction. He has worked mostly in Texas, Pennsylvania, Ohio and California. His clients are exclusively school systems and prisons. Some may think that it is coincidence that those two institutions share a need for his expertise—but not me. In one of my classes for pre-service teachers, *Guidance of Young Children*, I use the movie, *Instinct* (Turteltaub, 1999), set in a prison (and based on Quinn's (1992) pivotal text, *Ishmael*), to illustrate examples of constraint and surveillance which have parallels in the classroom. In one scene, the warden asked a guard if all are "sticking to the schedule," and the guard replied, "Same thing every day, sir." Foucault (1979) followed these parallel and intersecting lines in his discussions of prison and law and order, and in this case, the logic of structured labor (tasks):

It is a principle of order and regularity; through the demands it imposes, it conveys, imperceptibly, the forms of a rigorous power; it bends bodies to regular movements, it excludes agitation and distraction, it imposes hierarchy and a surveillance that are all the more accepted, and which will be inscribed all the more deeply in the behaviour of the convicts [students], in that they form part of its logic; with work 'the rule' is introduced into a prison [school], it reigns there without effort, without the use of any repressive and violent means. By occupying the convict [student], one gives him habits of order and obedience; one makes the idler that he was diligent and active...with time, he finds in the regular movements of the prison [school]... a certain remedy against the wanderings of his imagination (p. 242-243).

The wandering of the imagination—the unexpected—is, by all means, to be avoided in schools as well as in prisons. For, according to some classroom experts, students want a well-managed classroom even more than the teachers do, “...because a well-managed classroom gives students SECURITY. There are *no surprises* [emphasis mine], no yelling in a classroom where everyone, teacher and students, know what is happening. It comes from installing procedures and routines” (Wong & Wong, 1998, p. 85). This example of Wong’s extensive work in the field of classroom management is typical of the literature regarding obedience and disobedience in regard to the behaviors of young children in school, mostly focused on the need for order in schools and the means toward achieving child compliance

It appears that, in many schools, teachers seem to have joined in a consensus that the silencing, order and control of these spirited children will lead to greater success and proficiency. And yet, Keleman (1981) passionately decried this assumption regarding the academic benefits of controlling our children: “In the name of Knowledge, we dampen and channel aliveness... We cramp our children's bodies so that we can form their minds... learning becomes painful. Learning becomes a chore that requires discipline” (p. 28). Gatto (1992) called these disciplined chores “intellectual dependency”:

Good students wait for the teacher to tell them what to do. It is the most important lesson, that we must wait for other people, better trained than ourselves, to make the meanings of our lives...successful children do the thinking I assign them with a minimum of resistance and decent show of enthusiasm...Bad kids fight this, of course, even though they lack the concepts to know what they are fighting, struggling to make decisions for themselves...How will we allow that and survive as school teachers? Fortunately, there are tested procedures to break the will of those who resist (p. 8).

Sadly, resistance is rare. After decades of being intellectually, morally and spiritually swaddled—a state experienced from one’s earliest years— it is difficult to be aware of one’s constrained state. Most people have learned from childhood to feel it normal, expected, right to wear masks of compliance and obedience:

Orders are masks forced onto our existence from our earliest childhood until the day we die. That is why it so difficult to see through these masks or to remove them. Too many masks stuck to too many faces. As time passes, the masks become a straitjacket on our ability to create and live. These masks imprison our spirit. In time, we become what we surrender to. Or as Lucretius put it, ‘we do all that force forces us to do’ (Trantino, 2001, np).

Force or coercion does not need to be of the physical sort. The moral and spiritual swaddling of our children is not a literal wrapping of the limbs, and this, in fact, as Foucault alluded, is not necessary to constrain. In the name of “their own good” and in order to earn and keep the regard of their caregivers, children are admonished and driven to be “good,” to keep their hands to themselves, to mind their own, to stay on task, to be still—ultimately to disengage from the world that envelops them. As Trantino (2001) worried, “we feel it right to be masked”—to be swaddled, and when the swaddling is “habitual and embodied in social institutions, it seems the normal and natural state of affairs...[the] experience is so restricted that they are not conscious of restriction” (J. Dewey, 1937; in Gouinlock, 1994, p. 265).

Alice Miller (1983/1990, 1990, 2000) has written extensively about the cost of the suppression of the child as their caregivers pursue fulfillment of their own conscious and unconscious wishes. Joined by Noddings (2002) in detailing the damage wrought by

“poisonous pedagogy,” Miller described a rigid and coercive pedagogy embraced by many teachers who insist righteously that their demands are right and good for the child.

And if it does feel right, one must ask Noddings’ (2002) question: Can coercion be a sign of caring? Is the coercion and force employed to “handle” their children “indeed a manifestation of caring” (p. 29)? Perhaps in terms of socializing the child to what is expected of him/her, and in terms of leading the child into the safety of compliance (as in the security and control proffered the swaddled infant), this is so. But at what cost? Even when well intentioned by caring teachers, what are the unintended consequences? If as Buber claimed (in Noddings, 2003, p 174), “all actual life is encounter,” what are the consequences of wrapping the children in structures which inhibit the quantity and quality of their “encounter”? Just as the swaddled infant<sup>2</sup> is denied the opportunity to tactically and kinesthetically interact with her environment when so constrained, the child is similarly deprived of real association with the world, and so the opportunity to enact the freedom, joy, wisdom, silliness, hope, abandon, faith, beginnings, playfulness, verve, whole-hearted faith and intense awareness that are the hallmarks of the child-spirit.

### *The Dissidents*

*The fact is, Solomon,” he continued, as he roped the popcorn machine onto his cart, “to cause a little trouble now and then is maybe good for a man.*

~ Mr. Jerusalem (All Kinds Junk- Bought and Sold)

in Jean Merrill’s *The Pushcart War* (1965)

*How could we allow something like this without pumpin’ our fists?*

*Mosh*, (Eminem, 2004)

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<sup>2</sup> Recall that Mead (1951) described the swaddled infant: “Hands that were tightly bound inside the swaddling bands could not explore... experiencing but never touching the teeming, vivid, highly charged world around it, being in it, but *not of it*”

*Our prophets were right- we should shake our fists, plenty of times we should.  
Our rabbi told us once to 'learn how to shake your fists.' ... When should we  
shake our fists? At who[m]?*

(Coles, 1990, p. 251)

*Patty sat still and, to avoid their eyes,  
She lowered her little-girl head.  
But she heard their words and she felt their eyes  
And this is what she said,  
"I fold my socks and I eat my beets  
And on Saturday morning I change my sheets.  
I lace my shoes and wash my neck.  
And under my nails, there's not a speck.  
Even sparrows scream  
And rabbits hop  
And beavers chew trees when they need 'em.  
I don't mean to be rude: I want to be nice,  
But I'd like to hang on to my freedom.  
"I know you are smart and I know that you think  
You are doing what is best for me.  
But if freedom is handled just your way  
Then it's not my freedom or free"*

(Morrison & Morrison, 1999, p. 12)

Like Mr. Solomon in Jean Merrill's *The Pushcart War* (1965), Julian caused a little trouble now and then. Perhaps he didn't shake his fists. Like Toni Morrison's Patty, he was not rude; he was nice—and not defiant in a way that deliberately challenged his teacher or even the rules. He was, however, resistant—resistant to the structures that constrained his total presence and the rules that prohibited his full-interaction with “thou.” It is this resistance that makes Julian a dissident—one who dissents from the structured order, the order of the dominant—and so one who is always suspect.

The following are short tales of other child-dissidents—from history, from literature, from the Bible, from death row, and from a first-grade essay on triple-lined first-grade paper. Within each of these brief stories are rhizomatic connections to Julian's act of dissonance in

the hallway immediately outside the boy's bathroom and across from my classroom. Maybe in some of these texts there is a little "rude"-ness and a little bit of shaking of the fist. In all of them, are children seeking their freedom.

In his essay, *The Condition of My Condition*, Trantino (1972) described life in school in which the children "were being kept apart and we were keeping ourselves apart and we were all hurting like a motherfucker but no one was telling" (p. 23). However, listening closely enough, we realize that there are those who *do* tell. One function of this study is to attend to the voices of those who have become aware of the painful trauma resulting from the "poisonous pedagogy" (Miller, 1983/1990) of their childhood, and have found ways to call out. Here are texts of voices resisting the constraining nature of adult-child pedagogy; and in doing so, perhaps finding means to confront it. As the late James Macdonald (1995) avowed: freedom is our personal self-development project in life and the "only moral tenable goal" for education.

Fortunately for all of us, not all children come to compliance easily. Children can be aware of the injustice of authoritative impositions and rebel in their hearts and minds. From New Jersey's death row, Tommy Trantino wrote metaphorically of the cost of compliance in *Lock the Lock* (1972) using a six-year-old self to express the ache:

I was in prison long ago and it was the first grade and I have to take a shit and even when you have to take a shit the law says you must first raise your hand and ask the teacher for permission so I obeyer of the lore of the lamb am therefore busy raising my hand to the fuehrer who says yes Thomas what is it? And I Thomas say I have to take a - I mean may I go to the bathroom please? Didn't you go to the bathroom yesterday Thomas she says and I say yes ma'am Mrs. Parsley sir but I have to go again today but

she says NO and I say but Mrs. Parsley judge sir ma'am I gotta go make number two!  
Eh? she says and I say eh my goddamn ass I GOTTA TAKE A SHIT GODDAMIT and  
again she says NO but I go anyway except that it was not out but in my pants that is  
to say right in my corduroy knickers goddamn...In bed later that night I thought about  
getting a big kitchen knife and stabbing up this goddamn teacher who shit in my pants  
and made my mother wash it out but I said nah nah that is also against the lore of the  
lamb so I didn't do it but this kinda taught me something about prisons at a very  
early age lets see now I was about six years old at the time and yes I guess that  
even then I knew without cerebation that if one obeys and follows orders and adheres  
to all the rules and regulations of the lore of the lamb one is going to shit in one's pants  
and one's mother is going to have to clean up afterwards ya see? (p. 17).

From death row, first grade was remembered as a prison, a place where permission  
must be granted in order to use the bathroom and a place where shitting ones' pants is  
preferable to disturbing the order of the classroom. James Macdonald (in B. Macdonald,  
1995) suggested a consequence of School's basic assumption about students – that they “will  
do the wrong thing (what you do not want them to do) unless you make them do the right  
thing”—when he paraphrased Friedenbergs from his 1965 essay in *The Dignity of Youth and  
Other Atavisms*:

There is no difficulty in understanding why, under these conditions, a federal judge  
who, when he was in school, had needed a hall pass to go to the toilet until he was 17  
would not hesitate to refuse the issuance of a passport to an American citizen who was  
a member of the Communist Party (p. 38-39).

Another child who resented the constraints of first-grade and expressed his discontent was Tiger T. Tiger T. was a real first-grader whose mother shared his tale with members of her graduate education class. She shared his written assignment on first-grade handwriting paper. Her son began his paper in demonstrated defiance by using his preferred name “Tiger T,” a title he had been forbidden to use or answer to during the school year. His two-page, neatly printed response to his teacher’s assignment to write about what he would remember about first grade read as follows:

I will remember first grade because I’m sick and tired of it. When Mrs. M says crack, crack, crack, me gonna crack [*sic*] I’m glad she is retireing[*sic*]. But I hate J. because in reading group she will not leave alone. I didn’t get any corn dog. At next picnic you get me one or you dead meat [*sic*].

Tiger’s mother intercepted this assignment before he took it to school, and so his teacher will never read what Tiger *really* carried from his first grade experience. She will never realize he was “sick and tired” of – coercion via exclusion, withholding of privilege, intimidation, and invisibility. Instead she read a paper signed not “Tiger T” the forbidden name, but by the name on the boy’s school record, and while his mother did not share the revised version, one can imagine well the content which would be deemed appropriate to turn into The Teacher.

Herman Hesse (author of novels steeped in conflicted notions of body and mind, of orderly existences and chaotic worlds of sensuality, and of God, man and nature – novels such as *Demian*, *Steppenwolf*, and *Narcissus and Goldman*) struggled through a childhood of resistance and dissonance. Alice Miller (1983/1990) told the story of the difficulties of Hermann Hesse’s childhood, who:

Like so many gifted children, was so difficult for his parents to bear, not despite but because of his inner riches. Often a child's very gifts, his great intensity of feeling, depth of experience, curiosity, intelligence, quickness, and his ability to be critical- will confront his parents (and teachers) with conflicts that they have long sought to keep at bay with rules and regulations...all this can lead to the apparently paradoxical situation when parents who are proud of their gifted child and who even admire him are forced by their own distress to reject, suppress, or even punish what is best, because truest, in that child. Two of Hesse's mother's observations may illustrate how this work of destruction can be combined with loving care: 'Hermann is going to nursery school; his violent temperament causes us much distress' (when he was 3); and when he was 7: 'Things are going better with Hermann whose education causes us so much distress and trouble. From the 21st of January to the 5th of June, he lived wholly in the boys' house and only spent Sundays with us. He behaved well there but came home pale, thin and depressed. The effects are decidedly *good* and salutary. *He is much easier to manage now*' [emphasis mine] (p. 120-121).

While young Hermann finally caved in the face of his isolation and depression, others found ways to quietly resist, such as Kozol's (1967) young Stephen as evidenced in his weekly interactions with the Art Teacher. While serving as a substitute teacher in the Boston Public Schools early in his career, Kozol was moved to despair as he witnessed children who had resigned themselves to their invisibility and the lack of regard by nearly all who should have cared for them; but he also bore witness to the moments of great and slight defiance. He described Stephen's failure to quit as follows:

I think that much of his life, inwardly and outwardly, must have involved a steady and as it turned out, inwardly at least, a losing battle to survive. He battled for his existence and like many defenseless humans, he had to use whatever odd little weapons came to hand. Acting up in school was part of it. He was granted so little attention that he must have panicked repeatedly about the possibility that, with a few slight mistakes, he might simply stop existing or being seen at all. I imagine this is one reason why he seemed so often to invite or court a tongue-lashing or a whipping. Doing anything at all that would make a teacher mad at him, scream at him, strike at him, would also have been a kind of ratification, even if it was painful, that he was actually was there (Kozol, 1967, p. 5-6).

Stephen refused to be invisible.

Perhaps the ultimate dissident child derives from the Finnish epic, *Kalewala*, in which we find the theme of *l'enfant terrible* who from the third day is struggling so hard he gets the swaddling clothes loose then tears them and smashes his cradle. "Attempts are made to kill this baneful child, but no matter what death is prepared for him, whether through water or through fire, he overcomes it." In the Vogul epic songs, having become an orphan, the divine child appears as the "immortal avenger" (Erny, 1973, p. 83).

Miller (1983/1990) discussed the dissidents as:

Individuals who refuse to adapt to a totalitarian regime...not doing so out of a sense of duty or because of naïveté but because they cannot help but be true to themselves...[while] rejection, ostracism, loss of love and name calling will not fail to affect them; they will suffer as a result and will dread them, once they have found their authentic self, they will not want to lose it. And when they sense that something is

being demanded of them to which their whole being says no, they cannot do it. They simply cannot (p. 84-85).

Miller (2000) further offered the example of the Jesus Christ figure (our final dissident child) as reason to “relinquish destructive models and to mistrust the principle of obedience.” As she explained:

The figure of Jesus confounds all those principles of Poisonous Pedagogy still upheld by the Church, notably the use of punishment to make children obedient and the emotional blindness such treatment inevitably entails. Jesus was respected, admired, loved and protected, his parents saw themselves as his servants and it would never have occurred to them to lay a finger on him. Did that make him selfish, arrogant, covetous, high-handed or conceited? Quite the contrary. Jesus grew into a strong, aware, empathic and wise person able to experience and sustain strong emotions without being engulfed by them... We need children with open eyes and ears, children prepared to protest against injustice, stupidity and ignorance with arguments and constructive action. Jesus was able to do this when he was twelve years old and the scene in the temple demonstrates eloquently that he could refuse the obedience asked of him by his parents without hurting their feelings (np).

In these examples of the resistant child taken from the literature is a taste of the possibilities of disobedience. In resisting the tight constraints of order and the silencing of their unique voices, these children made space for themselves to be children and so, spirited, alive and ever aware. Perhaps in these keenly attuned ears, the disobedient child ever hears the sound of the *shofar* (ram's horn):

A sound like no other, at once a plaintive cry and a shrill demand for alert attention...[representing] the demand that we overcome our very human tendency to resignation and passivity in the face of life.... To live life with awareness means to see oneself and others possessing the power of choice—to refuse, to question, to posit alternatives—to what is presented to us as permanent and unalterable....Its enduring purpose is to awaken us from the tendency to ‘sleep walk’ through our lives (Shapiro, 2006, p. 23).

Unless the sound of the school bell drowns it out.

*Seeking the Good in Being “Bad”: The Democracy of Disobedience*

*Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice.*

(Thoreau, 1848/1966)

*Small things- the morning, perspective - can be lost in the bowels of the earth, in tunnels where trains convey bodies, human beings with purposes, human beings surviving.*

(Wenner, 2004, p. 3)

I worry about small things being lost. This research seeks to document and shine light on those small things that may be lost in the shuffle of order, control and achievement. Small things, especially the small joys inherent in mischief, silliness and surprise, can be easily misplaced in the larger order of things as the child becomes wrapped securely in the swaddling clothes of the rules, procedures and surveillance of the schoolroom.

While concern for the public schools continues to be “centered on control and compliance...[with] a perpetual pedagogy of surveillance” (Reynolds, 2004, p. 22), Dewey (in Gouinlock, 1994), suggested that:

The foundation of democracy is faith in the capacities of human nature; faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience” resisting the common “autocratic and authoritarian scheme of social action (which) rests on a belief that the needed intelligence is confined to a superior few, who... are endowed with the ability and right to control the conduct of others (p.266).

Realizing and trusting in these capacities may allow opportunities to further develop the moral and social intelligence necessary for democratic life and human well-being. If some of these “capacities of human nature” include the spiritual skills of awareness sensing, mystery sensing, and especially, value sensing (Hay and Nye, 1998), then the children in our adult care already have a head start on the democratic good life. However, nurturing these capacities and skills calls for making space for the freedom to practice them.

Some researchers (Kohlberg & Lickona, 1987; Piaget, 1995; Turiel, 2005) would claim that just as children construct and reconstruct their knowledge of the world as a result of interactions with the environment, morality is structured by concepts of harm, welfare and fairness and requires that one live and operate as moral agents within a democratic community. If one considers how this might play into the event of Reuben’s fall, one might wonder how—if given the chance—might the children in Julian’s class have pooled their collective intelligence and experience to reconcile the collision of the moralities of compassion and convention.

Within that moment of conflicting “goods,” there would have been opportunity to engage in concurrent considerations of compassion, focused on the well-being of others; and convention, which focuses on the adherence to social order and norms, via a framework of

Turiel's (2005) "qualitatively differing forms of social experience" in order to begin to take meaning from Reuben's fall and Julian's kindness.

Counts (1932) had predicted a harshening of our regard for one another in lamenting one of the great lacks in our schools:

Nothing really stirs us, unless it be that the bath water is cold, the toast burnt, or the elevator not running...we are moved by no great faiths; we are touched by no great passions. We can view a world order rushing rapidly towards collapse with no more concern than the outcome of a horse race; we can see injustice, crime and misery in their most terrible forms, all about us, and, if we are not directly affected, register the emotions of a scientist studying white rats in laboratory. And, in the name of freedom, objectivity, and the open mind, we would transmit this general attitude of futility to our children...this is a confession of complete moral and spiritual bankruptcy (p. 19-20).

Evidence that an "attitude of futility" is being passed on to children is often found in places where children are particularly "successful" and "good" according to adult standards of success and goodness. One such place was the site of 2004's National Spelling Bee. Unlike Reuben and Weena, a rescue was not in store for Akshay Buddiga. On the nationally televised (on ESPN) National Spelling Bee, Akshay, standing at the microphone during the finals, collapsed in a faint on the stage. While he managed in a short time to rise and even to spell *alopecoid* correctly, it was the response of the other children that was most striking.

Not one of the children who sat on stage—even those at whose feet Akshay fell-- rose or even started to rise to assist him. One girl looked down as Akshay lay—his leg touching the toe of her shoe. She carefully moved her foot from beneath him and crossing her ankles, placed her feet beneath her chair. The spellers watched, perhaps fearing disqualification if

they rose from their chair when it was not their turn to spell. Just as the citizens in H. G. Wells' future world and the children in Mrs. Buttercup's class maintained their places in the face of someone's need—so did the Scripps-Howard spellers. Can you spell *altruism*, boys and girls?

While generalizing about spelling bee competitions may be unwarranted, there appears a relationship of a sort among bee participation and dogmatic adherence to traditional and stringent cultural norms. It would not be a far reach to claim that these child-spellers were even more acculturated into the structured order of their event than were Mrs. Buttercup's children to their ordered line.

Young children are frequently exposed to others' emotions, as bystanders and as causes. With few exceptions, research on conditions associated with children's responses of aiding and comforting in these two kinds of circumstances has generally proceeded along two different conceptual paths, depending on whether the child is a bystander or a cause of distress. Children's aiding and comforting in situations in which they are bystanders has traditionally been considered in the framework of altruism....The core moral behavior is the child's sense of concern and responsibility for the welfare of others (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, 1979, p. 319).

These moments of exposure to "others' emotions" and needs are opportunities for children to respond to what they see and feel in the context of that moment. As Frankl (1984) wrote:

This is what being human is all about. We have to learn from his *sapientia cordis*, from the wisdom of his heart, that being human means being confronted continually with situations, each of which is at once a chance and a challenge, giving us a 'chance' to

fulfill ourselves by meeting the ‘challenge’ to fulfill its meaning. Each situation is a call, first to listen and then to respond (p. 71).

In the moment of Reuben’s fall, Julian listened and responded with an exhibition of care and what Zahn-Waxler, et al (1979) would call “altruism” toward his classmate. Just as Frankl and the time traveler did, Julian acted with care and concern even at the known risk of the consequences that would result from the disobedience necessary to respond to Reuben’s call. In considering Julian’s courage and kindness, I recall what I know of Julian—a boy who spent recesses on walls, and mornings in halls—and realized his non-compliance often seemed to be a result of his constantly engaged, fully-present and spirited nature. As I have read and learned more about the “child-spirit” (i.e., Hart, 2003), I have come to the conclusion that one of the reasons Julian so appealed to me—long before his act of heroism—was his spirited engagement with the world, his verve and curiosity and joy. I also believe that it was his attunement and relationship with the “other” (the “thou”) that may have allowed him to “see” Reuben the way he needed to be seen. I have grown to believe that if we look carefully we may see these qualities within the day to day actions and interactions of young children, and that many of these qualities may be present in the context of acts of disobedience.

What might be learned when engaged in and confronted with acts of non-compliance? Nucci (2005) indicated that it is “only by engaging in moral wrongs and experiencing the effects of such wrongs on others and on one’s self that genuine moral growth is possible” (p. xii)—echoing a similar argument (in Baumrind, 2005) that the development of competence and character in children requires the cultivation of the ability to responsibly dissent and accept unpleasant consequences, as well as to constructively comply with some authoritative

directives. However, beyond the benefits that these authors claim for conflicts and disobedience, this study seeks to look past the happy endings and re-direct the intentionality into the middle of the acts themselves, for as children live out the “constructive tension that is necessary for growth” (King, 1963, p. 67), they simultaneously live the spirit of the moment.

### *A Complicated Conversation*

Recently I visited a local artist—native Cherokee, Edwin George—and he showed me a tomahawk—the stone blade of which he had found in the forest and the carved wooden pipe that he had crafted himself. I admired the beautiful feel and look of his work and marveled over the smooth density of stone head of the tomahawk. And I said, “Wow, this really *would* hurt!” Edwin seemed surprised at my reaction and corrected me. “No,” he said, “It’s not to hurt. It is a symbol of peace.” He explained how the tomahawk had traditionally been used to represent peacemaking in Cherokee culture. A tomahawk would have been present during talks of war. If the talks went well, the pipe of the tomahawk would be smoked and passed as a symbol of peace, then taken out and buried. When I—raised on Roy Rogers and John Wayne and once owning *and wearing* a full Dale Evans cowgirl outfit in red (even the boots)—looked at the tomahawk, I saw a weapon. When Edwin looked at the tomahawk, he saw an opportunity for peace and resolve.

My vision was impaired, offering only an incomplete picture. I did not see the object fully and allowed myself to see it through a cloud of beliefs based on media, cultural ignorance, and assumption. Edwin’s understanding complicated my understanding. Conversations should be complicated—“extraordinarily” so. There must be room for complexities and multiple realities in “complicated conversation across and within culture,

class and place” (Pinar, 2004, p. 157).

In Butler’s (1998) work with children attending an “inner city” school, she was initially disturbed by what she perceived as the “fictitious” or “inconsistent” nature of the children's stories. However, she embraced the complicated conversations and began to interrogate her own investments in facts and consistency. She used her discomfort with these stories as a way to:

Enter into the realities of the children...[and] interpreted these inconsistencies as deriving from the contradictions embedded in their everyday realities, dominant media images and their parent's dichotomous admonitions about ‘bad’ behavior, which aimed to protect the children... all of which led the children to endless conundrums: Why were the police violent and unreasonable when the messages from TV kept saying the police are there for protection and safety? How come people who sell and use drugs are ‘bad’ when some of the people they love most in the world sell and use drugs? How come drugs are ‘bad’ when the money from them is what provides food and clothes? (p. 103, in Saukko, 2001, p. 88).

These contradictions do complicate things—but they also offer an opportunity to engage joyfully in paradox, as do the Taoists and Buddhists as they use *koans* to embrace rather than attempt to conceal contradiction. A *koan* is a story, question, or statement in Zen history and lore, generally inaccessible to rational understanding, yet that may be accessible to intuition. When Zen teachers warn *not to confuse the pointing finger with the moon*, they indicate that awakening is the desire — not the ability to interpret. They caution their students to the danger of confusing the interpretation of a koan with the realization of a koan.

Barone (2001) described a similar goal in educational inquiry:

In abandoning an obsessive quest for certain and total knowledge that transcends a fallible, human perspective, [we] opt for an epistemology of ambiguity that seeks out and celebrates meanings that are partial, tentative, incomplete, sometimes even contradictory, and originating from multiple vantage points. Such an epistemological stance seems appropriate to a project of educational inquiry whose role or purpose is the enhancement of meaning, rather than a reduction of uncertainty (p. 152-153).

This study seeks, in koan-like fashion, to display the complexity of each selected moment, exposing the paradoxical nature of goodness instead of concealing: “never separated- facing each other even though we have not met” (Capra, 1985, p.35).

*Breaking the Waves* (Asmussen, von Trier, & Pirie, 1996) is a wonderfully complex film that serves to disrupt our understanding of this particular paradox of “the good.” The film offers viewers a destabilizing experience in ambiguity as well as a model of how text can serve such a challenging role—a model for my own research proposed here. Makarushka (1998) discussed the film, and especially the character of Bess, exploring:

von Trier's meditation on competing notions of goodness and the cultural assumptions that inform them...[and] how Bess negotiates the moral landscape within which she lives as daughter, sister-in-law, member of a religious community, and wife. The church elders and Bess represent von Trier's vision of the two extremes of the contested notion of the ‘good’...For instance, where to be ‘good’ means not to make waves, not to destabilize the ‘natural’ order of things, not to express deeply felt emotions, not to experience pleasure, the character, Bess, is undeniably the ‘other’...her otherness is interpreted as a flaw, an emotional deficit.

[Makarushka takes on the Nietzschean/Deleuzian resistance to an objective good]: To

inquire whether Bess is a ‘good’ girl is misleading, if not misguided. It assumes an external reference against which all choices and behaviors can be measured and assessed. In the end, what matters is not whether Bess is a ‘good’ girl. Rather, her goodness matters: a goodness that allows for vulnerability, that takes risks, that crosses from the familiar to the unknown. If the ‘good’ is a static moral category that assumes compliance, goodness is dynamic, transgressing, and, therefore, dangerous (np).

The rich and rhizomatic analysis of moments of Bess’s goodness in the film begins to “get at” the complexity and beauty of the spirit of goodness—which is what I seek to express in the analysis of moments of children’s disobedience and goodness in this dissertation.

#### Contextual Literature: Disobedience

The purpose of the following discussions on disobedience in the context of school is to provide:

- an overview of categories of research and other writings related to disobedience;
- background information regarding the School setting—for in order to discuss disobedience—a disregarding or defiance of the structured expectations of a particular situation, place or person—a discussion of the background of those structured expectations is necessary;
- a sampling of examples of what is available for teachers and parents to read about discipline—and thus, some of what is included here in the contextual literature is not “research” per se, but instead, is the type of book or article a teacher would read who is, herself, wondering about “disobedience”—what would she likely be reading;
- and finally, an additional framework in order to discuss the significance and purpose of the study.

Later chapters (IV and VI) provide discussion of additional literature related to disobedience and kindergarten classrooms.

After initial reviews of the literature regarding disobedience concerning the behaviors of young children in school, I identified five lines of inquiry. The majority of authors focus on: (a) disobedience as deficiencies; (b) a need for order and control and how to achieve such order and control; (c) teacher perspective and role; (d) political, philosophical, and spiritual constraints of school morality; and (e) dissent and the democratic good life.

### *Disobedience as Deficiency*

In the field of classroom behavior, many researchers discuss forms of disobedience (and childhood itself) as deficiencies—developmental, moral/religious, social, behavioral, or of character – and as problems to be solved. Because there are so many ways in which children can be deficient, and because there are so many fields of study devoted to solving the problem of childhood, there is no shortage of research in this category of disobedience study (for instance, in Burnard, 1998; Colvin, Sugai, & Patching, 1993; Debruyn & Larson, 1984; Duke & Jones, 1984; Eisenberg & Hand, 1979; Everston & Harris, 1992 ; Freiberg, 1999; Kohlberg, 1981; McGoey, Prodan, & Condit, 2007; Piaget, 1932; Pittman, 1985; Turner & Watson, 1999; Wang, 1993; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004; Wheldall, 1992).

A glance at the literature offers many solutions for dealing with children's deficiencies in the classroom setting: time-out, notes home, pre-correction, and Discipline as an educational specialty emphasize solving the problem of “disruptive” and undeveloped children (Colvin, Sugai, & Patching, 1993; Duke & Jones, 1984; Eisenberg & Hand, 1979; McGoey, Prodan, & Condit, 2007; Turner & Watson, 1999), while others claim you can

change the classroom management paradigm, manage any classroom, develop children's behavior and "handle them all" (Debruyn & Larson, 1984; Freiberg, 1999), in spite of the children's many deficiencies.

In fact, Debruyn and Larson (1984) list 117 "deficiencies" in their book for teachers and parents: *You Can Handle Them All: A Discipline Model for Handling Over One Hundred Different Misbehaviors at School and at Home*. Suggestions are provided for "handling" the such problem children as "The Agitator," "The Crier" [there are two Criers, one "who claims foul" and the other "who sheds tears"], "The Influencer," "The Blabbermouth," "The Petty Rules Breaker," "The Procrastinator," "The Rebel," "The Repeater" "The Immature," "The Interrupter," "The Lazy," "The Dreamer," "The Sidetracker," "The Questioner," "The Snotty," "The Satisfied with Second Place," "The Pest," and "The Troublemaker," with the purpose of providing "step-by-step" approaches for changing them—for making them better at being "good" students.

For each of the 117 deficient characters, Debruyn and Larson offer a description. For instance, the description of The Questioner included the following:

Asks an abnormal number of questions...has his/her hand up in the air continually... asks questions even when he/she seems to know the answers... [having effects such as] "proceedings are interrupted...teacher and classmates are annoyed...time is stolen from other students because the questioner requires 'double instruction' ...teacher is diverted from following lesson plan...teacher may feel this student is attempting to 'trap' him or her (p. 227).

And another, The Influencer:

Has power to influence... delights in ‘trapping’ teacher or making schoolwork seem insignificant...may even make rules that conflict with classroom or school rules... encourages others to speak out, complain about an assignment, or refuse to comply with teacher requests [with effects such as] “teacher experiences an uneasy feeling in class...teacher is embarrassed...authority of teacher is undermined... teacher may become frustrated or angry...neither followers nor the influencer is learning...followers of the influencer as well as other students are distracted (p. 158).

The above descriptions of children imply that children are deficient in character and moral development. More and more schools have adopted (purchased) programs designed to “teach character to children. While Lickona (1997) ostensibly advocated caring relationships and moral feeling, he names good character as “virtues.” Virtues such as: “prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude” (p. 46)—virtues that can then be taught per week or month. He noted this example of a teacher who combined “high expectations and high support,” the kind of teacher who “believes every child can learn.” Lickona told of visiting the classroom of such a teacher and noting the list of classroom rules, “writ large and posted in the front. The first rule was ‘Always do your best in everything.’” On further examination of the room, he notes a sign on the wall reading “A PERSON WILL SELF-DESTRUCT WITHOUGH A GOAL.” And saw featured on the bulletin board the value of the month, “AMBITION, defined as ‘hard work directed toward a worthwhile goal’” (Lickona, 1997, p.55). This recalls a page on my calendar quoting President George W. Bush from a speech given in Santa Clara, California on May 1, 2002. He stated that the public education system in America “is one of the most important foundations of our democracy. After all, it is where

children from all over America learn to be responsible citizens, and learn to have the skills necessary to take advantage of our fantastic opportunistic society” (np).

Indeed, *if* the purpose of bringing all of our children together to learn and practice the highest ideals of our culture were to nurture ambition and to develop “opportunistic” skills, then the constraining structures that serve to keep children apart from one another (physically and emotionally) *would* serve that purpose.

However, Gay (1997), in response to Lickona’s body of work on character education, represented the relationship between multiculturalism and character education, and posed the question, “Honesty, truth and responsibility about what, when and for whom?” and also, simultaneously challenged President Bush’s statement, and Lickona’s body of work, noting that character education is often centered in “individual attributes and actions,” often neglecting the “social and collective” (p. 98).

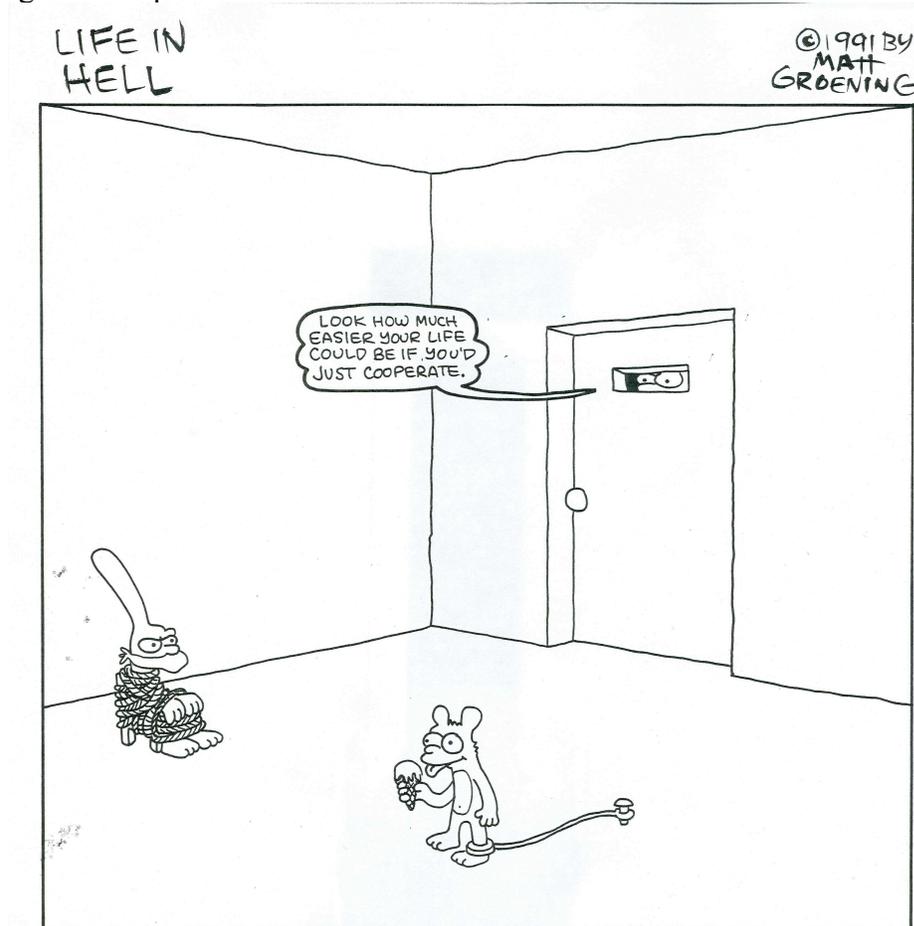
Also included in this group of authors and theorists are those who view children’s disobedience as a symptom of their early development, placing children at the lowest levels of moral and behavioral development (for instance, Kohlberg (1981), and Piaget (1932)). As Hart (2003) explained, “Developmental theorists typically tell us that children are self-centered and incapable of real empathy or compassion” (p. 69). Hart (1996) later noted that “Children have been generally seen as developmentally immature, without sufficient intellectual growth to manifest anything that might not be understood as meaningfully reflective and/or spiritual” (p. 164). Hart additionally noted that Wilber (1996) had described children’s ways of thinking and feeling as being merely “instinctual, impulsive, libidinous, id-ish, animal and apelike,” likely guided by Piaget’s 1968 stage model in which children are viewed as “largely incapable of meaningful reflection” (in Hart, 2006, p. 164). Considering

the combination of vast quantities of research naming and then seeking to squelch all of the problems children bring, it is no wonder that “The emphasis on children's social incompetence and irresponsibility means...children need to be brought to a state of socialibility through the continued surveillance and control of a *benevolent* authority” [emphasis mine] (Thomas, 2002, p. 91).

Duke & Jones (1984) noted that for decades, discipline writers have split between “theories” relying on punishment and those relying on “communication between teacher and student” (p. 27). However, neither “side” seems to be considering what the child is learning about authority, democracy, or her role in the larger culture; rather, both seem to seek merely to adjust the child to the classroom, coercively or by winning the child’s assent—which is also coercive, but less obviously so (see *Figure 1*).

In Figure 1, Groening’s cartoon (1997) illustrates cogently and comically the doubled nature of coercion: one overtly constrained with ropes and a gag; the other covertly constrained with the promise of a reward—and yet still tied and under surveillance. What is notable is that the ice cream serves to distract the character from its state. In complying, and so gaining reward, the character is privileged, and yet, concurrently, it is not any more free than the character so explicitly under-privileged.

## The “Privileging” of Compliancism



*Figure 1: The “Privileging” of Compliancism, (M. Groening, 1997, p. 34).*

Krieg (2006) in her paper about “unbelievable children,” found that when early childhood teachers discuss their students, any “difference” (as “constructed through processes of normalization”) is understood as a deficit. The teachers in her study discussed “children and families who did not ‘fit’ their ideas of what ‘should be’” (p. 11). These deficits—described as “very, very active,” and “aggressive” and ADHD-identified—are pedagogically addressed in order to make the children “different” from what they were (and so, better). Krieg noted that the teacher “sees ‘rescuing’ children from their abnormal levels of ‘activity’ and ‘aggression’ as an important aspect of her work” (p. 11).

These authors and theorists offer diverse conclusions and implications to teachers and parents—from Kohlberg’s “just community schools” and Piaget’s (1932) cooperative decision-making and problem-solving among children to the series of sanctions recommended by Burnard (1998) or Pittman’s (1985) quantification of a first-grade teacher’s management routines. In each of these conclusions, there is a quality of looking down at the children in this research as opposed to gazing/looking *at* and *with* them. Whether supporting “development” or coercing and coaxing certain behaviors—the implication in this work is that children must be “moved” from where they are to where they “should” be.

*A Need for Order and Control in Schools*

A significantly large body of research is devoted to discussing the need for order and control and the means toward achieving child obedience. While there is some overlap between this and the previous category—and many of these writers discuss children and their deficiencies—the focus here is on the school and the teacher and the importance of and means to attain/maintain an orderly, disciplined, well-managed, quiet, predictable, safe, and efficient classroom (to be found, for instance, in Dreikurs, 1982; F. Jones, 1978 ; McDaniel, 1994; Pittman, 1985; Rinne, 1997; Roffey & O’Reirdan, 2001; Rogovin, 2004; Schwartz, 1981; Tanner, 1980; Weiner, 1980; Wragg, 2001; Wynne & Ryan, 1993)

In the tradition of the Bentham (1787/1995) and his Panopticon—a “principle of construction applicable to any sort of establishment, in which persons of any description are to be kept under inspection; and in particular to penitentiary-houses, prisons, houses of industry, work-houses, poor-houses, lazarettos, manufactories, hospitals, mad-houses, and schools” (p. 29)—these researchers and authors who study various means of controlling

children generally base their inquiry on determining what structures and actions schools and teachers should undertake to best survey and normalize children and their behavior.

Much of this work explores the means by which teachers can, with efficiency and minimal effort, achieve total control over the children in their care, all while appearing just and fair.

As Dreikurs (1982) indicated in *Maintaining Sanity in the Classroom* (and we may easily surmise to whose sanity he refers), “It is autocratic to use force, but democratic to induce compliance” (p. 67). In the case of this category of the literature, the authors are not looking down at the child—but seem to not be looking at her at all—which may seem somewhat ironic given the panoptical notion of the work.

Rogovin (2004) described the importance of control via surveillance and the role scanning the room plays in enforcing the rules:

Rules must be enforced. The teacher is the enforcer when the children are not following the rules...Remember, you are trying to prevent inappropriate behavior and you are trying to implement and enforce the guidelines. My friend...always tells her student teachers to ‘Scan the room’. For her, that means her furniture is low enough so that, no matter where you are sitting or standing, you can see every child. It means that if you are working with one or two children, you look up occasionally and scan the room. The more the children have internalized the positive behavior, the more you can focus on the academic activities, and the less frequently you have to scan the room” (p. 19-20).

These writings communicate a kind of battle, telling of teachers “trapped” by the children as described by Debruyn in the previous section and of the insurrectors and “buddies who will teach you a lesson,” described here by Welker (1976), McDaniel (1994) and Gray (1976). The first author (Welker, 1976), states clearly in the abstract of his article, “The

author does not attempt to promote any educational philosophy; but, rather, stresses the need for classroom control in all environments” (p. 238), and then warns teachers to prepare for the worst:

Right from the beginning of the school year, be well-organized and prepared to teach on the first vibration of the late bell. Many novice teachers have been told by their supervisors—‘Don’t smile until after Christmas’. Of course, this is a bit crass; nonetheless, there is some wisdom to be found here. If you start with the attitude of being ‘buddy-buddy’ with your students, you may find that your buddies have decided to teach you a few of their lessons” (p. 239).

Some authors—many who have the ear of teachers in the classroom—argue against less authoritarian means of “managing the classroom” through not-so-veiled intimations of a chaotic, lawless society, noting that a teacher knows that “An orderly society is dependent upon students who have learned the rule of law, one of the major values in a democratic society” (McDaniel, 1994), and that:

From the moment he signs a contract the teacher shares with the public school a tacit obligation to society. In the main, we allow ourselves to be governed by duly elected persons and their representatives. This is the only way our society can function in an *orderly* way [emphasis mine]. It is not good, therefore, that our young people become adept at insurrection. The teacher who allows students to victimize him in his classroom indirectly encourages them to victimize the man at the newsstand, the stranger in the park and the cop on his beat (Gray, 1967, p. 1).

It is not unusual to read these dire notions of child-as-threat. Throughout the classroom management and discipline writings (as will be explored in Chapter IV), the relationship

between the children and their teachers is presented as an antagonistic one—one in which the teachers must predict and prevent any unexpected, unwanted, unordered act in order to win the battle and so, the war.

Toward this victory, there are dozens and dozens of books and articles (for instance, Canter & Canter, 1992; F. Jones, 1978 ; Roffey & O'Reirdan, 2001; Weiner, 1980; and Wong & Wong, 1998) that can be easily accessed by teachers online, at popular bookstores, in community libraries, on *Amazon*, *half.com*, and yard sales. In one of these (Rinne, 1997), on opening to the Table of Contents, we can see that there is help to be found in:

- Managing space, location and grouping;
- Managing non-verbal experiences;
- Managing time;
- Monitoring student attention
  - teacher eyes
  - teacher location
  - ‘withitness’
  - overlapping
- Controlling distractions and catastrophes;
- Giving encouragement and criticism;
- Controlling games students play;
- Training students in self-control; and
- Anticipating and planning

As Thomas (2002) warned, the role of school has become a “means of control and regulation of school children,” and a weak teacher (the “buddy,” the “victim”) might have

only “an inadequate and dangerous control of children whose social incompetence could lead to a threat to the social order” (p, 92). With the social order at stake—a social order dependent on children who know and unquestioningly follow the rules and laws—the conversation about what is possible among the people sharing a classroom becomes narrow indeed. In fact, school is nothing special is it? Wrote Bowd (1982) in defending the need for order and control in schools, “Schools, like businesses, church congregations, and trade union locals are social organizations. The behavior of their individual members is restricted and constrained by their rules and traditions” (p. 13).

There are several important lessons to be learned from this category of the literature: (a) teachers have easy and relatively varied access to books, journals and web links which promote and validate the ideal of the “order of the dominant”; (b) these readings provide a plethora of advice, techniques, and strategies to attain and maintain order in the classroom; (c) the discussions include not only “how-to’s,” but also stress that this order is vital to the society; and (d) an awareness of what teachers may be reading or discussing in their lounges, staff meetings and workshops may allow a means to create dissonance regarding both the method and the intent of this predominant literature in the field.

### *Teacher Perspective and Role*

Within the discussion of what occurs in classrooms related to disobedience and classroom management, some authors, theorists and researchers focus their inquiry on the teacher’s perspective and role in children’s moral and social behaviors and the complexity of child compliance. The group of writers (Buzzelli, 1993; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Hansen, 1995; Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993; Johnston & Buzzelli, 2002; McCadden, 1998; Noddings, 2002; Sheets, 1996; Solomon, Watson, & Battistich, 2001; Watson, 2003;

Weinstein et al., 2004) in this body of the literature differ from the prior two due to both the intent and the methods that categorize it. The focus is on collegial relationships between the children and their teacher rather than adversarial ones; and generally speaking, order and efficiency are not the first priorities in the discussion. At least ostensibly.

In this category of literature, the authors again focus on the teacher, but on her role and choices in relation to the children. For instance, in two studies (Sheets, 1996; Weinstein et al., 2004) looking carefully at teachers' actions in response to their regard for the students' cultural identity, the researchers found those teachers who demonstrated care and concern for the children as they are developed "caring classroom communities" because the children "were convinced those teachers cared for and believed in them" (in Weinstein, et al, p. 33). This discussion of the reciprocal integrated and negotiated relationship of the child and the teacher is representative of the work in this category of the literature. Also common in this work is the inclusion of discussion of the confounding effects of constraints on teacher-student relationships. For instance, Watson's (2003) research and work with a classroom teacher and her class using "developmental discipline" is based on the tenets of attachment theory which examines the effects of children's prior relationships on their ability to form new ones.

In further considering how to engage children in building and maintaining positive, productive relationships in the classroom, Buzzelli (1993) discussed two types of discourses that teachers use with children, univocal and dialogic, as having "moral implications for children's development and learning...one representing an epistilological world of knowledge acquired as bits of information and another epistemological world in which knowledge is constructed through 'social experiences.'" He compared the dogma of "being told" (a high-

priority in the previous sets of literature, and as explored further in Chapter IV), to “the rich possibilities of empathic thinking and responding to the internal sense of ‘right or wrong’” (Buzzelli, 1993, p. 383-385).

However, the structural constraints of school confound the relational basis of this work. While some teachers may recognize the value of caring relationships, they perceive their role as classroom managers as separate from and of higher priority to their role as *carer*. McCadden’s (1998) study detailed the impact of these conflicting roles, and discussed findings that as teachers struggle to balance their management role with their relational role, managing often becomes the way to care. On close examination, however, the “care” and the management are not easily distinguished, as, ultimately, the end goal of the “good relationship” is often toward gently coercing children to agree to comply, with little examination of what we are asking them to comply to. Even in this kinder, gentler space, the child here is considered here as the object of a teacher/child relationship, not as a subject of it.

#### *Political, Philosophical and Spiritual Constraints of School Morality*

The political, philosophical and spiritual constraints of school morality motivate the conversation in some circles—and this may be the space for the examination of what we are asking them to comply to. However, generally, these discussions take place in the field of curriculum and among academicians. Casual observation and extended associations with schools and teachers informs me that this literature rarely reaches the classroom. Those theorists and writers (for example, Ayers, 2001b; Foucault, 1988; Gatto, 1992; Greene, 1988; J. Henderson & Kesson, 1999; hooks, 1994; D. Jardine, 1998; D.; Jardine, Clifford, & Friesen, 2003; Kesson, 1999; Kohn, 1993/1999; B. Macdonald, 1995; Noddings, 1993;

Paley, 1999; Purpel, 2001; Slattery, 1995) who discuss the political, philosophical and spiritual constraints of the order of school typically engage in writing passionate texts with little “practical” notions to appeal to teachers and little in the way of “real research” to appeal to “scholars.” Even so, it is this literature that most appeals to me because I believe deeply that it is passion that moves us—more so than the careful rigor of research or the precise dogma of the method-writers.

I am particularly moved by Purpel (1989) as he lamented the limiting nature of the schoolroom when, “...indeed, the essence of education can be seen as critical, in that its purpose is to help us see, hear and experience the world more clearly, more completely, and with more understanding...creativity and imagination” (p. 26-27), all toward enabling us to re-make our world for the purpose of human freedom.

This lies in direct contrast against McDaniel’s (1994) provision for freedom via education. He set a series of prerequisites prior to engaging in seeing, hearing, and experiencing the world:

Once teachers are accepted by their students as leaders, as competent instructors, as firm-but-fair disciplinarians who establish clear rules and reasonable structure, then a basis for learning, and for *freedom within limits* exists [emphases mine]. Defiance, disruption, and ‘games students play’ become rarities rather than every-day, escalating, eroding misadventures. Then, and only then, can teachers begin refining and humanizing their techniques of discipline. Then, and only then, can teachers begin extending to students an opportunity for shared planning, for negotiating contracts, for full participation in rule setting and student courts. Then, and only then, can teachers begin the important and meaningful task of democratizing the classroom (p. 3-4).

As Toni Morrison phrased in her lovely poetry quoted at the head of this section, “But if freedom is handled just your way, then it's not my freedom or free.”

John Gatto, a winner of national teaching awards, wrote a book devoted to reviewing the lack of freedom in schools with earthy directness and with some righteous ire as well.

The following is one excerpt from his 1992 book, *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum Compulsory Schooling*:

Schools are intended to produce, through the application of formulas, formulaic human beings whose behavior can be predicted and controlled...to a very extent schools succeed in doing this, but...the products of schooling are, as I've said irrelevant. Well-schooled people are irrelevant. They can...push paper and talk on telephones or sit mindlessly before a flickering computer terminal, but as human beings they are useless...it is absurd and anti-life to be part of a system that compels you to sit in confinement with people of exactly the same age and social class. That system effectively cuts you off from the immense diversity of life and synergy of variety; indeed it cuts you off from your own past and future...it is absurd and anti-life to move from cell to cell at the sound of a gong for every day of your natural youth in an institution that allows you no privacy” (p. 27).

It is in this category of literature that the most committed advocacy for children—or the *idea* of children—can be found. Because of this, many of these sources are featured in Chapter VI and throughout the paper. However, the voice and view of real children is rare in this group of writers...so the role of this literature will be to provide the social structure and the *so what* of the research to come.

*Dissent and the Democratic Good Life*

Butchart (1995) overviewed the history of classroom management in his AESA Presidential Address, noting:

Since the fifties, disciplinary literature has fallen silent on the long-term social objectives of school discipline, stressing the immediate control of students. The emphasis has shifted from ends to means and strategies. Rather than developing philosophies of discipline linked to visions of a preferred social order, writers have developed systems and models whose only criterion for success is their short-term goal of classroom order. Many of the models rely heavily on behaviorism, attempting to deploy rewards and penalties effectively in the service of authoritarian control. Others attempt to be more constructivist and humane. Few develop any clear conception of democratic social life, either as a short-term goal or a long-term objective. Both the behaviorist and constructivist approaches attempt to reassert the authority of teachers (p. 179).

Butchart nailed it. In all of the lines of research and writings above—missing is any discussion of the fundamental relationship between what we do in schools, and what we claim is our most basic objective: democracy and freedom. As caring adults, are we asking what impact walking in lines for six years has on a child's willingness to walk other than the beaten-path? Are we asking the impact of relationships built on contingencies, rewards and punishments? Are we wondering the relationship between uncritical compliance and real democracy? Some are.

Discussion regarding the value of dissent and disobedience toward an authentic democratic good life involves researchers and writers (for instance, Ayers, 2005; Baumrind,

2005; Bluestein, 2004; Cannella, 1999; Chomsky, 2004; J. Dewey, 1932; Foucault, 1980a; Garrison, 1997; Goodman, 2001; Lightfoot, 2000; McCadden, 1996; Miller, 1979/1990; J. Miller, 2000; Nucci, 2005; Oser, 2005; Oser & Spychiger, 2004; Purpel, 1989; Zinn, 2001) who seek, in examining disobedience, to reflect Ralph Waldo Emerson's caution: "...your goodness must have some edge to it-- else it is none" (1940, p. 149 in Goodman, 2001, p. 351). Recall Dewey's words from Chapter I regarding democracy as:

...simultaneously a way of life, an ethical ideal, and a personal commitment.

Specifically, it is a way of life in which individuals are presumed to be self-directing and able to pursue their own goals and projects. No society that maintains order through constant supervision and/or coercion can be rightly called democratic (1985, p. 349).

I lay this against McDaniel's text which claimed that only as a result of supervision and coercion, then and only then, can a classroom even consider becoming "democratized."

Dewey (1960) also described a relationship between freedom and experienced resistance. He believed that people do not think about or go in search of freedom "unless they run during action against conditions that resist their original impulses" (p. 286); and so, it becomes vital that opportunities for conflict and error occur. This would conflict with the notions in the first few groups of researchers/writers, as much of the intent is to prevent and preempt such opportunities.

Nucci (2005) raised similar points in his discussion of moral development and character education. As described in other sections in this chapter, researchers/writers (Bennett, 1993; Kohlberg, Levine, & Hower, 1983; Lickona, 1991; Piaget, 1932; Wynne & Ryan, 1997) who promote moral education often present a picture of moral growth and

education that conforms to the general notion that children should get morally “better” as they develop and that moral education entails either a process of gradually building up of virtue through socialization into one’s cultural norms or movement toward a more adequate (better) form of moral reasoning. Nucci (2005) troubled this picture of moral improvement—a picture that “belies the role of resistance, conflict and contrarian elements in both the course of individual moral development and moral ‘progress’ at the societal level” (p. vii). Oser (2005) confirms Nucci’s notion as he noted the positive role of resisting via “engaging in moral wrongs and experiencing the effects of such wrongs on others as...the basis for genuine moral discourse” (p. vii).

In engaging in democracy, such discourse is necessary. As Martin Luther King (1963) wrote, “We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.” Conflict and tension can serve positive moral and democratic ends. As King elaborated, “I have earnestly worked and preached against violent tension, but there is a type of constructive tension that is necessary for growth...to create the kind of tension in society that will help men to rise” (p. 67). As disobediences work to create these certain kinds of “tensions,” Chapter VI will offer further discussion of this particular theme in the complexities inherent in moments of children’s disobedience.

While there is no shortage of research, authorship and sales in the area of “disobedience” in the classroom—especially related to how to beat it—there is comparatively little that engages in study of disobedience in its complexity, and even less that study the child’s choices and meaning-making rather than the teacher’s. While the content of the research and writings included in this chapter have and do inform our

understanding of discipline, school and, to a degree, disobedience—this study’s purpose is also to disrupt and destabilize what is dominant in the research and writings. In some cases, by sharing it—which is a focus of Chapter IV—and in others, by offering stories of children engaging with and in the “structured expectations” of the classroom. As Butchart (1995) suggested:

First, we need to extend our critique of classroom practice to embrace classroom discipline and management as the necessary groundwork toward articulating more ethically and politically defensible classroom practices. Second, we need to provide insight into disciplinary structures—that is, the structures, rituals, practices, and procedures that have become embedded in schools...that extend disciplinary power and...limit or constrain the intellectual and political aims of teaching” (p. 168).

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

*As kids, we were border crossers and had to learn to negotiate the power, violence, and cruelty of the dominant culture through our own lived histories, restricted languages, and narrow cultural experiences.*

(Giroux, 1996, p. 9)

*Negotiations sometimes last so long you don't know whether they're still part of the war or the beginning of peace. And philosophy's always caught between an anger with the way things are and the serenity it brings....Not being a power, philosophy can't battle with the powers that be, but it fights a war without battles, a guerrilla campaign against them. And it can't converse with them, it's got nothing to tell them, nothing to communicate, and can only negotiate. Since the powers aren't just external things, but permeate each of us, philosophy throws us all into constant negotiations with, and a guerrilla campaign against, ourselves.*

(Deleuze, 1995, frontpiece)

### Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapters, issues surrounding young children's disobedience in the context of the classroom have been the subject of much consternation, discussion and publication for decades. The bulk of this discussion has concerned combating—in ways proactive and reactive—the disobedient behaviors and promoting the compliant. A lesser share of the discussion has included themes exploring the constraints of school morality and the value of dissent and disobedience toward an authentic democratic good.

However, there is little in this discussion that includes the disobedient child herself or the close, careful looks at the moments of disobedience that might direct discussion toward the range of the possibilities inherent in those moments –possibilities that might serve to challenge what is assumed about children's compliance and disobedience. Obviously, there

have been close and careful looks at children's obedient and disobedient classroom behaviors. But these have been offered as means of categorizing, fixing and working with and around toward other ends; ends identified by Foucault (1979) as "notions of classification, and classification as a means to control efficiently" (p. 144). Even those studies that serve to describe the life of children in their classrooms (Jackson et al., 1993; McCadden, 1998; Mehan, 1979; Solomon et al., 2001) do so in order to understand what is in place in the classroom as a moral and intellectual space to act... not to disrupt.

However, the purpose of this particular study is to disrupt, queer and resist the assumed and known. As Greene (1991) advocated, we must refuse to function compliantly, "like Kafkaesque clerks" (p. 8). As well, Foucault believed what we hold to be true (known) about, for instance, child development or managing children within a classroom is "a fiction created through 'truth games' that express the politics of knowledge of the time and place" (in MacNaughton, 2005, p. 5).

Kathleen Kesson (2006) discussed this research project as a means to disrupt, wondering how might this study work to:

Jar us out of our taken-for-granted, socially conditioned assumptions about childhood, and insist that we take a much closer look at the forms of consciousness embodied in young people... and to apply these insights to our own lives, and perhaps even learn something from young people about how to live in the world (np).

Toward this end, one might adopt a spiritual approach to education in which one would encounter the "indwelling spirit" (Macdonald, 1995) of the people we teach. Such an approach would require that teachers be "open and vulnerable ourselves in the presence of

those we teach...to focus on the development of habits of mind that many consider central to a spiritual presence in the world: reverence, respect, awe, wonder, reflection, vision, commitment and purpose” (J. Henderson & Kesson, 1999, p. 98).

Within such a spiritual approach to education and research, I view these “habits of mind” as essential to a rhizomatic viewing of children’s moments and so was particularly drawn to this method of analysis as a natural fit with rich potential to “to lay bare the questions that have been hidden by certain implicit taken-for-granted answers about education and inquiry; to foster “brooding about the issues involved in telling [schoolpeople’s] stories” (Lather, 1997, p. 234); and most certainly, to reduce the “commonsensical certainty” (Barone, 2001, p. 155) about “good” (where good = compliant) children and disobedient (and so, “bad”) children.

In this way, teachers and other adults may, in interrogating their comfortable and entrenched responses to children in the classroom, begin to frame responses that might allow for potential democratic notions of disobedience. As sharing the stories of disobedient, resilient and spirited children may lead the researcher and readers to consider more fully the complexity inherent in children’s acts of disobedience and dismantle and disrupt “compliance,” the method itself worked toward an expression of this resistance. In the tradition of Eisner and Dewey, the method joins the content in expressing spiritual, resistant and disobedient themes reflected in childhood.

The stories emerge from moments of children’s disobedience in two kindergarten classrooms in their literal state through carefully contextualized and detailed text.

Observation and recording of real time daily activities and routines of children in kindergarten classrooms provide the moments of entry into the following inquiries:

1. In what ways do kindergarten children disobey in the context of the kindergarten classroom?
2. In what ways are kindergartners' moments of disobedience representations and enactments of something more than merely disobedience?
3. In what ways are kindergartners' moments of disobedience opportunities for responding to others in caring, ethical ways and acting out the possibilities that a spiritual childhood provides (such as reverence, awe, wonder, reflection, imagination and thoughtfulness (Greene, 2006; J. Miller, 2000; M. Quinn, 2001) and the sensitivities in: awareness sensing; mystery sensing, and value sensing (Hay and Nye, 1998)).

For each of the questions above, efforts were made to generate and interrogate texts of the child, to seek surprises in order to “disrupt the familiar and obvious” (MacNaughton, 2004) in what is known and so, to form a new logic about what is happening in the text via building new understandings of its relationships to other texts.

Therefore, this study combines qualitative inquiry as presented in Eisner's (1998) *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice* and the method of rhizoanalysis as adapted, with the assistance of MacNaughton (2004, 2005), from Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) discussion of rhizomes in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, toward presenting an appreciation for the possibilities within the messiness and disobedience of authentic and spirited childhood.

### Rationale for Conducting Qualitative Inquiry and Rhizoanalysis

*Unyielding and uncaring, we slide back and forth behind your vision  
 In search of the forgotten and useless.  
 Functioning simultaneously and autonomously, we are a rhizomatic entity.  
 No central, no peripherals; a single unit composed of single units.  
 A rigorously structured group lacking any structure.  
 Above all, we are dangerous.  
 Structured but not controlled.  
 Self-aware but not self-conscious.  
 Driven without direction or definition.  
 Our potential is the potential to dismantle.*

(Nelson, 2004)

#### *Qualitative Inquiry*

To see is to experience qualities. [Qualitative inquiry]...is about the perception of qualities, those that pervade intimate social relations and those that constitute complex social institutions, such as schools. It is also about the meaning of those qualities and the value we assign to them (Eisner, 1998, p. 1).

Eisner (1998) further discussed qualitative inquiry via the experience of quality, explaining that while the sensory system is the instrument through which we experience the qualities that constitute our environment, the ability to truly experience these qualities requires more than merely their presence—it requires action. “Experience is a form of human achievement, and as such it depends on an act of mind...we learn to see, hear and feel. This process depends on perceptual differentiation...the ability to see what is subtle but significant is crucial” (p. 21). Becoming knowledgeable and wise about qualitative matters requires that one experiences or creates qualities worth experiencing.

This study seeks to “see” through experienced and concurrently fresh eyes qualities worth experiencing in a kindergarten classroom and to express these qualities via what Eisner

(1998) described as criticism, "...an art of saying useful things about complex and subtle objects and events so that others can see and understand what they did not see and understand before" (p. 3). This will not come about because I, the researcher, know more, but because I seek to *see* more in the qualities present in the typical daily kindergarten experience.

In a twist on what might be considered the knowledgeable expertise of what Eisner (1998) termed "the connoisseur," prior experiences, the body of information, the broader contexts and personal values and priorities are tempered with uncertainty. At times, critical perception can follow only after one abandons what one thinks she "knows." As Ellsworth (1992) reminded: "all knowings are partial...there are fundamental things each of us cannot know" (p. 101).

The two kindergarten classrooms selected for the study represent the typical social context of the daily activities and routines of American kindergarten classrooms. The direct observations used in this research captured children's disobedient actions often taken for granted without being considered in a wide range of possibilities. The process of capturing the moments of the kindergartner's interactions with and within the social context was designed to respect the qualities of those experiences and to perceive what is "subtle but significant."

Eisner (1998, p. 33-40) described six features of qualitative inquiry that served to guide the process of inquiry in this study. The features—field-focused, self as instrument, interpretative character, use of expressive language, attention to particulars, and criteria for success—are presented in *Table 1*, along with a brief explanation of the application proposed for this research

Table 1

## Features of Qualitative Inquiry and Applications in Study

Features	Applications
<p><i>Field Focused~</i></p> <p>Takes place in setting(s) of interest. Observe, interview, record, describe, interpret and appraise settings as they are (“naturalistic”) (from Lincoln &amp; Guba, 1985). Includes humans interacting, but also inanimate objects such as architecture, room arrangement, textbooks, locations of particular items, posters, displays, etc) (Eisner, 1998).</p>	<p>In addition to the videotape of the children enacting their kindergarten day, descriptions of room arrangement, schedule, texts (teacher talk, child talk, posters, readings, codes, classroom and school rules as posted, etc), school contexts, and other particulars of the field which contributed to the mood and aesthetics of meaning were included contextually and in the context of the moments of entry to analysis.</p>
<p><i>Self as Instrument~</i></p> <p>Being able to see what “counts.” Combining sensibility, perceptivity, sense-making, and use of schema toward unique insights as sources of meaning. “Sensibility alerts us to nuanced qualities and the schema relevant to a domain, the significance of what to seek and see” (Eisner, 1998, p. 34).</p>	<p>My experience as a kindergarten teacher allowed me to claim a degree of expertise in recognizing the typical schema of a kindergarten classroom. As a researcher, I also claim an open-mind, willingness to embrace possibilities; and in seeking to learn more about the process of research, as well as more about children as compliant and non-compliant beings, a questioning spirit. While this project interrogated ‘disobedience’, the way it was questioned was flexible and emergent and responsive to what was observed.</p>
<p><i>Interpretive Character~</i></p> <p>One meaning of interpretation relates to accounting for or explaining reasons for what one has observed. Why? The other role of interpretation relates to meaning, penetrating the surface, and in Geertz’s (1973) words, “thick description.” Meanings such as these as are influenced by the conceptual tools used by the researcher and by antecedent factors that serve as background (Eisner, 1998).</p>	<p>It is not my intent in this study to reduce uncertainty but instead to “seek out and celebrate meanings that are partial, tentative, incomplete, sometimes even contradictory, and originating from multiple vantage points” (Barone, 2001, p. 153) The conceptual tools of rhizoanalysis allowed me to explore the nuances and politics of the text constituting the kindergarten observations in order to create new texts. These newly constructed texts explored “how it means; how it connects with things ‘outside’ of it, such as its author, its reader and its literary and non-literary contexts; and by exploring how it</p>

	organizes meanings and power through offshoots, overlaps, conquests and expansions”(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21).
<p><i>Use of Expressive Language~</i></p> <p>The presence of voice in the text is vital in the development of understanding as it relates to empathy, emotion, and vicarious feeling. “Why take the heart out of situations we are trying to help readers understand?” (Eisner, 1998, p. 37).</p>	<p>Dewey (1934) made the distinction between stating meaning and expressing meaning. While the data gathered here is initially “stated” as transcribed, the quality of meaning is derived as much from the aesthetic (as opposed to anesthetic) nature of the text itself as from the content of it. In Dewey’s words: “The expression as distinct from statement, does something different from leading to an experience. It constitutes one” (p. 84, in Eisner, 1998, p. 31).</p>
<p><i>Attention to Particulars~</i></p> <p>Maintains the flavor of particular events, people and objects and so maintains the uniqueness of each case. “Revelation of the particular situation requires, first, awareness of its distinctiveness...but beyond that, the ability to render those distinctive features through text is required” (Eisner, 1998, p. 38).</p>	<p>While the identity of the children and their teachers remained confidential, their “selves” are not to be lost to generalizations or abstractions. This quality is highly pertinent to the purpose of the study, requiring that particular attention be paid to the unique nature of what some would characterize as the most mundane of situations. The process of expressing the distinctive qualities included meticulous attention to detail (and so the reason for videotaping), full inclusion of contextual support, and carefully constructed descriptive text.</p>
<p><i>Criteria for Success (Coherence, Insight, and Instrumental Utility)~</i></p> <p>Acknowledges the role of persuasion in qualitative research...“seeing things in a way that satisfies, or is useful for the purposes we embrace” (Eisner, 1998, p. 39). Evidence toward persuasion derives from “weight” and “fit” and then ultimately what counts is a “matter of judgment.”</p>	<p>Schopenhauer (in Hart, 2003) noted that in research, the “task is not so much to see what no one yet has seen, but to think what nobody yet thought about that which everybody sees” (p. 110). Part of my task, then was to ensure the reader “recognizes” school, kindergartners, and the events of the kindergarten day. The role of insights via the analysis led to the potential instrumental utility to be derived from the research.</p>

One purpose of this research is to provide a perspective on children's moments of disobedience in the schoolroom via what Eisner termed the enlightened eye of qualitative inquiry through which "the scene is seen." Qualitative inquiry was selected as a means of study because it supports direct observation of the actual actions and interactions of and between the children and their teacher during the daily activities and routines of a kindergarten classroom. As Eisner (1998) has claimed, "To know what schools are like...we need to be able to see what occurs in them, and we need to be able to tell others what we have seen in ways that are vivid and insightful" (p. 22). Beyond the vivid and insightful, I hoped to tell what I have seen in ways that are also disruptive. As MacNaughton (2005) cautioned:

The everyday language, ethics, routines, rituals, practices, expectations, ideas, documents and invocations of quality in early childhood services are formed through and motivated by very particular understandings of children and how best to educate them. Over time, some of this knowledge has settled so firmly into the fabric of early childhood studies that its familiarity makes it just 'right', 'best' and 'ethical' (p. 1).

If such knowledge is agreed upon as "right," to challenge and disrupt it smacks of disobedience and begs non-compliance to the normalized familiar. It was my intention that this research and its methodology would thus enact the complexity of disobedience even while learning about it from the children.

Qualitative inquiry into moments of children's disobedience selected from observations of kindergarten children in the context of their kindergarten classroom provided opportunities to orient "rhizomatic logic" to the readings of the children in order to "build

complex and diverse pictures of ‘the child’, of ‘observation’ and of ‘research’ ... [and offered] a tool for critically reflecting on how meaning is produced through the choices we make about what we use to map” our readings of the children (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 144-145). These “readings” require the best of my (the researcher’s) ability to, as qualitative inquiry requires, “experience or create qualities worth experiencing.”

### *Rhizomatic Thought*

Rhizoanalysis builds from the philosophical and cultural theories of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. They used the contrast between rhizome (rhizomatic) and tree (arborescent) as a metaphor of the contrast between two forms of logic. In challenging the dominant structure of thought as “tree logic,” Deleuze and Guattari (1987) applied a metaphorical description of the tree’s structure- from roots through the trunk to the branches—to a “fixed, determining and linear” logic used to explain in terms of cause-and-effect relationships. In contrast, the “lateral” structure of the rhizome’s collection of mutually dependent “roots and shoots”—is a metaphor of a more flexible and dynamic logic that “encompasses change, complexity and heterogeneity” (p. 120). *Table 2*, adapted from Rosenberg’s 1994 discussion of rhizomatic and arbolescent logic, provides a simplified (ironically, binary) overview of the contrasting characteristics of the two metaphors of logic. Even while examining the contrast between the two forms of logic, it is important to recall Deleuze and Guattari’s caution regarding their intersection, for this is “no dualism, no ontological dualism between here and there, no axiological dualism between good and bad, no blend or American synthesis. *There are knots of arborescence in rhizomes, and rhizomatic offshoots in roots* [emphasis mine]” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 20).

Table 2

## Deleuze and Guattari's Rhizomatic and Arbolescent Logic

<i>Rhizomatic</i>	<i>Arbolescent</i>
Non-linear	Linear
Anarchic	Hierarchical
Nomadic	Sedentary
Smooth	Striated
Deterritorialized	Territorialized
Multiplicitous	Unitary and binary
Minor science	Major science
Heterogeneity	Homogeneity

“The ‘arborescent’ model of thought designates the epistemology that informs all of Western thought, from botany to information sciences to theology” (Best & Kellner, 1991, p. 98). Arbolescent thought is represented by the tree-like structure of genealogy, branches that continue to subdivide into smaller and lesser categories and is said to be “linear, hierarchical, sedentary, and full of segmentation and striation...Arbolescent thought is vertical and stiff” (Best & Kellner, 1991, p. 98).

According to Best and Kellner, arbolescent thought is State philosophy (p. 98); by contrast, rhizomatic thought is nomadic. Rhizomatic thought is non-linear, anarchic and “radically horizontal” (Lechte, 1994, p. 102). Rhizomes create smooth space, and cut across—even permeate-- boundaries imposed by vertical lines of hierarchies and order.

Rhizomatic thought is multiplicitous, moving in many directions and connected to many other lines of thinking, acting, and being. Rhizomatic thinking deterritorializes arbolescent striated spaces and ways of being. Rhizomes are networks...build[ing] links between pre-existing gaps between nodes that are separated by categories and order of segmented thinking” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7).

In like fashion, both the Buddhists and Taoists speak of a “network of words” or a “net of concepts” thus extending the idea of the interconnected web to the realm of the intellect (Capra, 1985).

The merit of rhizoanalysis as the analytic perspective for this study is in Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the nomad and rhizome as “*articulated tactics of resistance to domination*” (in Rosenberg, 1994, p. 288). In applying rhizomatic principles to this research in order to study children's resistance to domination, I purposely seek to promote resistance to the underlying structures that tend to be unexamined.

Thoreau (1848/1966) warned, “The State never intentionally confronts a man's sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses (p. 236). While Foucault (1979) described four techniques (enclosure; partitioning; spatial designation; and ranking) in which power creates “docile bodies” out of its subjects (p. 141-145). In similar fashion, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, in Rosenberg, 1994) described a micropolitical field of struggle:

Located between the ‘zone of indiscernibility’—representing the ways in which the mind and body of a person is 'dominated' or determined by systems of cultural signification that remain invisible to that subject—and the ‘zone of impotence,’ in which the person is unconstrained by those systems, and so “can thrive in a space of creative resistance to domination (p. 272).

Children's living, breathing disobedience—their “resistance to domination”—implies a rhizomatic, deterritorializing interaction with, within and without the enclosed and partitioned structures of the classroom space and interactions, and therefore manifests a nomadic penchant for resisting the restrictive techniques of power as described by Foucault.

The sedentary, partitioned and designated spaces of the dominant culture's (adult's/teacher's) classroom environment are challenged, disrupted and reimagined by children as “malleable, living, permeable, and ambiguous micro-spaces and spaces” (Patton, 1996, p. 288). There is a fit here: rhizoanalysis resists.

*Rhizoanalysis: Principles*

Deleuze and Guattari described six principles of rhizomes that directed the method of rhizoanalysis in the course of this study. A brief overview of each of these principles (connectivity, heterogeneity, multiplicity, asignifying rupture, cartography and decalomania), and a description of the vital (for this research) concept of nomadic thought follow:

*Connectivity and heterogeneity.* The first two principles are those of connection and heterogeneity, which specify: “any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 7). However, the rhizome is also anti-hierarchical, so no point comes before another and no specific point must be connected to another particular point. These two principles recall the Chinese tern *li* –which can be roughly translated as:

The innumerable vein-like patterns in the Tao...signifying the pattern of jade or fibers in muscle...*Li* is a natural and unescapable law of affairs and things... In the Eastern view, then, as in the view of modern physics, everything in the universe is connected to everything else and no part of it is fundamental (Capra, 1985, p. 280).

In applying the principles of connectivity and heterogeneity to this research, I considered the Derridian notion of beginning “wherever I am” and then, not only following

the texts into other texts, but also purposely connecting unexpected texts in order to create surprises and so, potentially, new understandings of those texts.

*Multiplicity.* The third is the principle of multiplicity. A rhizomatic system is comprised of a multiplicity of lines and connections. “There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 8). Multiplicity celebrates the many and the plurality in contradistinction to “unitary, binary, and totalizing models of Western thought, thus affirming the principles excluded from Western thought and reinterprets reality as dynamic, heterogeneous, and non-dichotomous” (Best & Kellner, 1991, p. 99).

I interpreted the principle of multiplicity as an opportunity to confront the if/then notions of classroom disobedience (e.g., *if* you talk out of turn, *then* you miss recess); and to complicate perceptions of what is “good” and “bad” in the kindergarten.

*Asignifying rupture.* The fourth is the principle of an asignifying rupture. This principle is based on this: “A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9). In a recuperative nature of the rhizome, movements and flows can and should be re-routed around disruptions, and severed sections will regenerate and continue to grow, forming new lines and pathways.

In following lines of flight related to the selected moments of disobedience, there were breaks and ruptures related to unexpected detours and incoming lines of possibility. Given the purpose of the study as a disruptive and complicating provocation to the reader *and* to me, the researcher, these breaks and interruptions were welcome intrusions. As detailed in

Chapter V, the ruptures often led to multiple layers of text laid over the texts of the moments of disobedience.

*Cartography and decalomania.* The fifth and sixth principles are of cartography and decalomania. Rhizomes are about mapping new or unknown lines and entry points, not tracing which records old lines or patterns (Alvermann, 2001; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). “A rhizome is not amenable to any structural or generative model” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 12). In cartography, Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between maps and tracings. “A tracing is genetic; it evolves and reproduces from earlier forms and replicates existing structures. It is arborescent. All tree logic is a logic of tracing and reproduction” (p. 12). In contrast to tracings, maps are open systems with no starting or ending points.

One means of mapping new or unknown entry points is to lay or fold one map or text over another. Laying a text over another as a “decal” allows for viewing points in new places and through other points. In this study, entering at various points with moments of disobedience, in combination with laying various texts over the texts of the moments, served the disruptive intent of rhizomatic logic and led to surprises.

*Nomadic thought and resistance.* Apart from rhizomatics, nomadology and nomadic thought emerge from *A Thousand Plateaus* as an idea vital to this research. As described by Bey (1991), the rhizome and the nomad are “inseparable in the sense that the rhizome is the path that the nomad follows” (p. 101). While it is clear that rhizomatic pathways and lines of flight are structures through which nomadic movement can take place, the two terms, “rhizome” and “nomad” are linked in other ways, too. “Rhizomatics is a form of ‘nomadic thought’ opposed to the ‘State thought’ that tries to discipline rhizomatic movement both in

theory (e.g. totalizing forms of philosophy) and practice (e.g. police and bureaucratic organizations)” (Best & Kellner, 1991, p. 102). The disruptive intent of this particular study requires confrontation of State thought. According to Massumi (1992):

Deleuze and Guattari consider nomadic thought to be the minor science or minor language that constantly becomes colonized by major science, the arbolic State. These State side philosophers and scientists operate in closed systems; while nomadology functions in open ones...The space of nomad thought is qualitatively different from State space. Air against earth. State space is 'striated,' or gridded. Movement in it is confined as by gravity to a horizontal plane, and limited by the order of that plane to preset paths between fixed and identifiable points. Nomad space like the rhizomatic surface is 'smooth' or open-ended” (p. 6).

Recently when traveling from the United States to Finland, I noticed that when flying over rural areas in the States, the land appeared gridded—fields sharply marked in straight, squared, evenly-sized sections of green, brown and yellow—seemingly imposing ruled order on the land; while the fields over Sweden were curved and variably shaped and sized—as if respecting and following the natural bends and fluctuations of the land. While I do not know much about the Swedes other than what my grandfather told me, I wonder about their nomadic nature. I included the theme of nomadic thought here with the more well-known principles of rhizomatics in order to acknowledge and commit to the value of creating a “smooth, open-ended surface” on which to “write” the stories that will emerge from moments and fragments of text.

It is these stories or texts that allow us (the reader and the researcher) entry onto lines of flight. “For all of the human history that we know of, we have made stories to tell ourselves—stories of our origins, our purposes, our struggles, and our passions—and for centuries these stories have been “the curriculum...and transmitted the values and ethics that bind communities together” (J. Henderson & Kesson, 1999, p. 91-92). By engaging in the “astoundingly liberating an act of story sharing can be” (Barone, 2001, p. 180), I weave the moments of children’s disobedience with the rhizomatic links and connections in order to “playfully explore what understandings and meanings the story makes possible” (D. Jardine, 1992, p. 56).

Rhizoanalysis transforms our focus on the interpretation as a stable “text” to be “read” and interprets it as “a constantly moving configuration that is ripe with potential for divergent movements. The [moment] has no organizing center, frame, single meaning, or static pivot, but rather evolves and splinters in multiple directions” (Leander & Rowe, 2006, p. 13). Barone (2001) contrasted the function of the “epic” as an unambiguous text that may serve to reduce uncertainty with the function of the “story” in its “novelness” which may serve to promote a dialogue with no set of voices privileged over another. In a Bakhtinian (1981) sense, these sorts of exchanges “serve as constant reminders of otherness in speech, as they celebrate a diversity of voices offering varied interpretations of phenomena...and so entice readers to revolt, to break the silence, to dismantle the textual illusion for their own purposes” (p 157; 176). Further, only when a reader is self-doubting can s/he “be persuaded to question her own perspective and engage in the kind of dialogue that may lead to a textual event with what certain pragmatist philosophers call critical utility...[causing her] to question

certain values previously considered beyond questioning (p. 176). Barone (2001) cautioned us that reading a text such as the ones that derive from this research “requires an ultimate suspension of mutual mistrust in favor of an opening sharing of ideas and ideals toward a future that is both desirable and possible” (p. 179).

Reuben’s fall was striking in its effect on me in seeing the “good” and the “bad” in all its complexity and nuanced richness. The power of this aporia is what led me to ask the questions asked in this study. As Barone (2001) discussed critical utility—the moment of Reuben’s fall is what led me to self-doubt and so become persuaded to question my own perspective and engage in “what certain pragmatist philosophers call critical utility... which caused me to “question certain values previously considered beyond questioning” (p. 176).

As I puzzled my inquiry, I came to the conclusion that I did not seek to “see” only more examples such as Julian’s courage and kindness while breaking classroom rules— but moments of child disobedience that co-exists with other qualities and selves and values— ones that are not so glaringly representative of Julian’s paradoxical behavior. For, there is more to “goodness” than the altruism of helping (see Kohn, 1990). There is also the “goodness” of joy, of awareness, of wonder, of sensuality and sensing, of valuing and of mystery and awe, of I-thou relationalism, of engagement and belonging.

### *Classroom Rhizomatics*

I wrote in Chapter I of witnessing the moment of Reuben’s fall as an “experience of the unexpected and cognitively chaotic... as an “epistemological shudder,” a “marvelous” moment that led me to “recall, rethink and retheorise” what I had “known” before. However, it can certainly be understood that the events of Reuben’s fall and Julian’s punishment are

not at all, in themselves, unfamiliar or “marvelous.” Anyone spending time in school would witness similar events on a regular basis. The “unexpected” derived from seeing the moment as an occasion to “recall, rethink, retheorise” and disrupt.

In my mind, the classroom now begins to become the rhizomatic map: “The rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21). It is possible that due to the transpiercing of rhizome and map, the classroom becomes a rhizome itself through the children who live there and, concurrently, through this research. The kindergartners’ methods and modes of breathing, moving in and through, wondering and engaging the space of “classroom” pose a manner in which a researcher (and the children) may, while re-reading the idea of a classroom as a connective whole, be re-writing the classroom as a range of social, moral and spiritual possibilities.

Here the mapping of classroom space accomplished by kindergartners and the concept of “map” that Deleuze and Guattari articulate are not only complementary, but also essentially identical. The rhizome and the map intersect, overlap, and form each other. The classrooms become a rhizomatic map; it becomes a rhizome-structure when it is restructured as a map instead of a tracing.

From a ‘rhizomatic’ perspective, we can never ‘be’ ...in a fixed and final way; instead, we are always ‘becoming’ ...as fashions, expectations, experiences, values, beliefs, opportunities and desires change over time and between cultures and geographies.

From a ‘rhizomatic’ perspective, the development of ...young children requires more

complex explanations than the cause-and-effect relationships between, for example, parent expectations and children's behaviour. The 'lateral' logic of rhizoanalysis challenges the idea that one act causes another and that one idea or meaning inevitably leads to another. It highlights instead how relationships and meanings link in complex and shifting ways in our 'becoming,' (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 121).

My budding exploration of rhizomatic logic in research analysis leads me to wonder how using it might challenge early childhood research(ers) to look much more carefully and openly at children's (and adult's) discourse for its possibilities rather than merely reporting how it works.

As MacNaughton (2005) challenged: "To engage with the politics of our reporting the child is to go beyond merely reporting. To do so requires some simple moves towards rhizomatic logic" (p. 131). She suggested the following:

- Generate texts of the child (via observation in this study). MacNaughton called these "data fragments – observations or sections of an observation that differ in terms of who was observed, when, where how, why and by whom" (2005, p. 123). I referred to them as "moments."
- Interrogate the generated texts. Ask who is heard and how? Which are the texts one would *usually* defer to for answers? How might observations be used to offer space for children whose voices struggle to be heard?
- Be "nomadic" and find texts beyond one's own. Break boundaries from early childhood: "The choices you make about what texts to layer into the meanings of your observations will link to the rhizome you aim to build –to your political intent.

- The aim in rhizomatic logic is to link meanings (semiotic chains)” (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 131). In the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1987): “A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles” (p. 7)
- “Place these other texts in the middle of one’s own texts (in this study, the selected moments of disobedience) and see what they “do” to each other that surprises. Ask what is in the middle of the text by placing other texts in the middle of it. What do they do to each other? Reinforce? Rupture? Connect? Overlap? Point to the same direction? Call on same discourses? Seek surprises in this work in order to disrupt the familiar and obvious in what is known. Build new logic about what is happening in the text is about building new understandings of its relationships to other texts.
  - Use the surprises as points from which to practice afresh for freedom, well-being and moral wisdom. For “rhizomatic logic can orient you towards new lines for action, new ways to understand the child and ways in which dominant discourses of [disobedience]... twist in on each other in the daily lives of early childhood” (p. 131-134).

## Participants & Setting

### *Participants*

As the purpose of the study is to describe moments of children’s disobedience in the context of a “typical” kindergarten, the participants included all of the children in two public school kindergarten classes and their teachers. The classrooms were selected on a basis of convenience. There was no prerequisite for participation other than that the classrooms were

public school kindergartens considered “typical,” that the sites were located within thirty minutes of the university, and that consent be granted by and/or for all those involved.

The selection of participating classrooms was influenced by the likelihood of gaining permission to conduct research at the sites. The original plan had been to implement the study in only one classroom. However, my concern regarding school system approval in Andrews School’s large urban district was significant enough to approach another teacher (Mr. Scott) in a smaller system where approval was granted immediately. Additionally, each child’s participation was contingent on parental and personal (the kindergartner’s verbal) consent. The teachers I selected have a reputation for having positive relationships with families of their students, and so I knew I could enlist the teachers’ assistance in gaining parental consent for each child. This plan was successful and every child in both classrooms—the morning kindergarten at suburban Shadow Lake Elementary and the all-day kindergarten at urban Andrews Elementary—participated with consent.

*Kindergarten children.* Typically, children entering kindergarten are 5 to 6 years old (although some children will enter at 4 and turn 5 during the first month of kindergarten). Many will have had prior school-type experiences, such as preschool, daycare, Head Start or a children’s program related to the family’s religion (such as Sunday School). For some children entering kindergarten, though, this will serve as their first transition into a group environment away from the home and family. Generally, most children enter kindergarten with some school skills: academic skills, such as recognizing one’s name, naming colors and shapes, counting, some reading; social skills, such as waiting for a turn, lining up, following simple directions; emotional skills, such as separating from a caregiver; and physical skills,

such as using the restroom independently. However, as every kindergarten teacher knows, this is not true for all children.

In observing the children of Andrews Elementary and Shadow Lake Elementary—these commonly accepted characteristics of a kindergartner held true. Most of the children had school knowledge and skills as described above. And I learned that another source of school knowledge and skills came from older siblings—this from observations of children from both classrooms (“My brother told me that when you forget your gym shoes, it’s bad”—from Ariel<sup>3</sup>, crying, on gym day); and from statements made during a lesson (“Oh, I know that song! My sister sings that song every day!”).

*Teachers.* The teachers in this study were selected based on prior relationships and convenience. Katie Krinkle and Michael Scott, the kindergarten teachers involved in this study, opened their classrooms to the process of this study and assisted in gaining consent from the families of the children in their respective classes.

As do all kindergarten teachers in public schools in this state, Mrs. Krinkle and Mr. Scott hold baccalaureate degrees from universities offering programs leading to a teaching license/certificate for the early childhood or elementary education field. In addition, Mrs. Krinkle holds a Master’s degree, and Mr. Scott was, at the time of this study, completing his Master’s thesis toward his own degree. Further details about kindergarten teachers in general, and about Mrs. Krinkle and Mr. Scott in particular are presented in Chapter IV.

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<sup>3</sup> Names of the participants are not their own. Each participant chose the pseudonym to be used in the text of this dissertation. Children sometimes named themselves as non-children (Mr. Johnson); as a profession (Fireman, Mr. Policeman); characters like The Mummy; and even a vegetable (Corn-on-the-Cob).

*Setting*

The study was conducted in two local (Midwestern) public school kindergarten classrooms, one set in a large city school district and the other in a neighboring suburban district. Mrs. Krinkle's kindergarten, set in the city district, was a full-day program with variably, 20-23 children over the course of the study. Mr. Scott's kindergarten, set in the suburban district, was a half-day program and there was 22 children in his morning kindergarten.

The two schools are “typical” in their structures: each held grades K- 5 and those grade levels partition each. Each of the schools operates under the State Department of Education mandates, using the State Academic Content Standards as the content portion of the curriculum. At the time of this study, there was an overlap in the systems' adoption of texts to support those Academic Standards—each system choosing traditional texts published by familiar and highly successful (in a business/capitalist sense) publishing companies. Each is a neighborhood school, attracting the children who live in the neighborhoods—usually less than a mile away from the site—rather than open enrollment children. Neither school is a magnet school or an experimental school.

In these K-5 schools, the kindergarten is the entry into school. Traditionally, kindergarten is viewed as a place and time to prepare children for “real” school. If one were to enter a school and view classrooms while making one's way through the school, it would be easy to recognize the kindergarten room(s). Kindergarten classrooms generally share the following features: in place of individual desks for each child, a kindergarten room has tables

with 5-8 small chairs placed at each table, and instead of a place for the teacher to stand at the board or overhead there is a carpeted area in front of a reading chair for the teacher. Sometimes the chair may even be a rocking chair. Typically, the carpet area will also have a chart board, big book easel, and a bulletin board that will display a calendar. This is where the children are usually called to gather at the carpet for opening exercises, calendar work, to hear stories and books, to partake in whole-group lessons, classroom meetings, to practice whole-group activities related to developing reading and writing, and for closing exercises.

Centers are another component of the kindergarten classroom. In most kindergarten classrooms, one might still find a make-believe or housekeeping center consisting of kitchen-type furniture, dolls, pretend food and house-wares, and dress-up clothing. Other centers may include materials and activities related to science, pets, library, puppets, computers, blocks/building, math using ‘manipulatives’, water play and/or sand, musical instruments and arts/crafts. While there is great variability in how teachers “use” such centers with their children, generally, children will be permitted in centers at designated time(s) during the day, often on a rotating basis with prescribed conditions for numbers of children at each.

This description of typical kindergarten classroom culture is extended in Chapter IV in order to illustrate in what ways the classrooms used for the study might or might not be considered typical in terms of environment, daily activities, materials and routines. This is followed by a more specific description of the classroom settings/contexts in which this study is set.

## Procedures

### *Human Subject Considerations*

As mandated, I complied with the conditions for consent required by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and with the selected school systems' requirements for engaging in research in their schools. Before submitting these applications for research, I spoke extensively with the two teachers to ensure that what I presented to the IRB and school administrations would be acceptable to them. The city school required 10 copies of an eighteen-page application and six weeks of deliberation. The suburban school required only a verbal explanation and request by Mr. Scott.

My original plan was to conduct the research only in the city school. One site would have been sufficient to gather moments of disobedience. Additionally, my work before this research has been nearly exclusively in urban sites. However, because I was concerned that at the end of the six-week deliberation by the city school's district administration, I would be turned down, I approached Mr. Scott about including his school in the study, too. In this way, I was assured of a site, and serendipitously, I was then able to offer examples of moments of disobedience in a suburban kindergarten setting as well as an urban kindergarten.

Upon gaining permission from all three of those organizations, the classroom teachers assisted me in contacting families and obtaining consent for all children within the classroom to be videotaped. Copies of the consent letters can be found in Appendix A (sans letterhead). Because Mrs. Krinkle and Mr. Scott both have unusually close and trusting relationships with their school communities, I was not greatly concerned about getting

consent from the parents—and my optimism was validated when each teacher delivered 100% consent from the families of their children. Actually, Mr. Scott delivered 100% from his morning kindergarten<sup>4</sup>, but only 90% from his afternoon kindergarten (2 families declined to allow consent). Because I was concerned about conducting this research in circumstances that would require me to “avoid” a child in a classroom, the refusals in the afternoon class released me from making a decision regarding which of the two sections of Mr. Scott’s to choose. Mrs. Krinkle’s class is all-day. In conducting the research in Mrs. Krinkle’s classroom, I found I needed to gain additional consent from the other adult participants in the class. During fall semester, Mrs. Krinkle served as a mentor teacher for a field student from my university and for five students from a neighboring university. Each of the field students provided written consent. We also obtained consent from the mother of a four-year-old who often spent time in Mrs. Krinkle’s room while the mother participated in PTA volunteer activities in the school. *Data Collection*

During the second week of school, in September of 2006, I began visiting Mr. Scott’s classroom. I was still awaiting approval from Mrs. Krinkle’s school system, and so planned to spend a month (averaging 2 visits per week for 8 observations/6 videotaped) in Mr. Scott’s classroom and then a month (averaging 2 visits per week for 8 observations/6 videotaped) in Mrs. Krinkle’s, upon said approval. I did receive approval from the administrative offices in mid-September, and began my data collection in the city school in early October. There was

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<sup>4</sup> Of interest here—Shadow Lake’s policy for half-day and full-day kindergarten is tuition driven. Mr. Scott is the only one of the three kindergarten teachers in the school to have a half-day program. The other two kindergartens are full-day. Parents in this school district are given the option of sending their children to full- or half-day kindergarten; however, if they choose full-day, they must pay a hefty tuition. This policy serves to segregate the kindergartens on the basis of income.

no gap in weeks between the two sites. As soon as I completed my work in Mr. Scott's room in the first week of October 2006, I transitioned to Mrs. Krinkle's kindergarten classroom.

In order to become a familiar person to the children, to gain a sense of classroom routines and child interactions and to introduce and practice videotaping procedures, I visited each classroom two times before actually videotaping the classes. During those visits, in addition to the aforementioned familiarity goals, I kept field notes of contextual data and took digital still-photos of the two classrooms (while empty) and of the school hallways and signage. These notes and still photos provided the details regarding the physical, structural and institutional characteristics of the two schools and the two kindergarten classrooms. It was from these data sources that much of the site-based contextual information in Chapter IV was derived.

I spent approximately 3 hours per visit in order to become acquainted with the classrooms, to develop context, compose context notes, and to plan the best times and places to videotape. In the case of Mr. Scott, this was the whole "day" for his morning kindergarten; for Mrs. Krinkle's class, I spent one day in the morning that week, and the other day I came in the afternoon. During this time, I wrote extensive field notes to capture the physical environment of the classrooms and schools, the daily "schedules," and various details related to procedures in place, ways the various areas of the classrooms tended to be used (or not) and details related to the children and teachers. This period of adjustment allowed the children and their teachers to adjust to my presence and the use of the field notebook and camera. I took the camera with me from the beginning and when introduced to the children

by their teachers, I showed it to them and explained how I would be using it. It was also during these visits, that I obtained verbal consent and pseudonyms from each of the children.

Data collection for the study took place during Fall 2006 from the first full week of September through the first week of November for approximately 2 hours per day, 2 days per week for four weeks per site; three of those four weeks included videotaping. The length of the data collection period was contingent on the “qualities of experience” (Eisner, 1998) captured during the moments of observation and collection.

In addition to classroom visits, I met with and spoke with the two teachers on at least a weekly basis. We met for dinner two times during the month of data collection for each teacher, and once the three of us met together. Mrs. Krinkle and Mr. Scott had not known each other or met before the occasion of this dinner meeting. I used these meetings and phone conversations to gather details about the two of them and information about their respective sites, and to engage in conversations about observed classroom interactions. This allowed for an informal participant check and in many instances, informed this research as related to the school and classroom expectations regarding children’s and teachers’ roles in kindergarten. As “disobedience” as been described in Chapter I as “an action or interaction that appears to disregard or defy structured expectations of a particular situation, place or person,” it was vital to this research to gain an understanding of the “structured expectations” of each site.

*My role in data collection.* In gathering data to represent the complexities of these kindergartens and of the children themselves, I was interested in looking closely at the small,

the seemingly mundane. As I worry about small things being lost, I saw the mundane as fascinating.

In a continuum of detached observer through full-blown participant, I would place myself somewhat in the middle. While I deliberately refrained from engaging with the children in ways that would confirm my authority, I did interact with them in naturalistic ways. I laughed, talked, tied shoes, helped when help was needed, made comments, explained my camera and presence and was obviously “there.” Privy to some of the benefits of participant observation—even a partial one, I concur with Lohman’s (in Emerson, 2001) suggestion that “the sympathies and identities established through a close familiarity [may] reveal meanings and insights denied the formal investigator” (p. 13). In my casual interactions as described above and as a past participant in kindergarten classrooms as a kindergarten teacher, I was able to call on the close familiarity described, and so hopefully, the “meanings and insights.”

Because I wanted to observe the children as they interacted within the space of School as they were surveilled and not surveilled by authority, I made every attempt to distance myself from the role of Teacher. The children, of course, viewed me as an adult, and so imbued with some authority... but as a subordinate adult. Out of courtesy—but also by design toward defusing my authority in the children’s eyes—I deferred to Mrs. Krinkle and Mr. Scott, asking permission to place or move the camera in particular places, asking permission to come along when the children left the classroom, and asking them to introduce and explain my role to the children in my presence.

Concurrently with confounding an adult authority role, my work required that as I observed the children's interactions, I participate as an observer to see the child's moments of disobedience as an adult could/would/might. The purpose was not to "understand" the child's intentions or reasons—which is why I chose not interview them or question their choices—but instead to see the actions/interactions as any observer might—albeit a skilled observer, one who has and continues to participate in kindergarten/school outside of this study.

### *Data Management*

Upon completion of data collection, the video footage was transcribed from the DV format to VHS tapes in order to facilitate speed and ease of watching the videotapes directly through a VCR rather than using the camera connected to a television set. All DV and VHS tapes were marked with teachers' names, videotaping days and dates and times and the number of tapes in a particular block of documentation. I viewed the tapes for transcription at my home or in my study carrel in the library and I stored them in my home or in the locked study carrel between transcribing sessions.

I kept my handwritten notes taken during observations and during viewing of the videotapes in spiral notebooks, initially color-coded per site. I used these handwritten notes, meeting notes, and drafts throughout the data analysis process to both justify decisions and to provide clarity to written text.

### Data Analysis

"Fieldwork is seen as a deeply reflexive process in which 'findings' are inseparable from the methods used to generate them" (Emerson, 2001, p. 2). In considering the analysis

of these data at this embryonic state of my work, I attempted to weave together components of Eisner's qualitative inquiry and Deleuze and Guattari's rhizoanalysis. What follows are themes that influenced the process of analysis.

*How Do We Know What We Know*

Eisner (1998) asked, "How do you know what you know?" He responded by suggesting the following means of "knowing" with a "*reasonable* standard of credibility" (p. 110) [*italics mine*], that I further temper with Ellsworth's (1992) caution regarding the "partiality" of knowledge.

*Structural corroboration and internal coherence.* Multiple types of data were related to each other to support or contradict the interpretation or evaluation of the study (e.g., environmental context, supporting documents such as posters, codes etc). I pursued a confluence of evidence to breed credibility. The following points regarding structural collaboration influenced my analysis (unless noted, quotes are from Eisner, 1998):

- "In seeking structural corroboration, we look for recurrent behaviors or actions, those theme-like features of a situation that inspire confidence that the events interpreted and appraised are not aberrant or exceptional, but rather characteristic of the situation" (p. 110).
- "One must not forget that a description is shaped not only by virtue of what an individual researcher...brings to a scene, but also by virtue of what a method or approach leave out. Both omission and commission affect what we convey" (p. 111).
- "Because qualitative methods are vulnerable to effects [of one's vested interests or educational values], *it is especially important not only to use multiple types of data,*

*but also to consider disconfirming evidence and contradictory interpretations or appraisals* [emphasis original]... when one presents one's own conclusions it is both prudent and important to consider those alternative interpretations and appraisals that one considers reasonably credible...It does not mean relinquishing one's own view" (p. 111).

- "Structural corroboration requires a mustering of evidence. The weight of evidence becomes persuasive. It is compelling. In a sense, matters of weight and coherence appeal to aesthetic criteria. They are qualities felt as a result of what is revealed. The tight argument, the coherent case, the strength of evidence are terms that suggest rightness of fit" (p. 111).
- "In writing educational criticism, the critic can allude to the multiple data sources in order to provide warrant for interpretations and appraisals. The form through which such warrant is provided is left to the critic. Like criticism in the arts and humanities, the manner in which criticism is written should bear the signature of the writer" (p. 111).
- Geertz (1988) regarded the author's voice as one source of the work's authority (p. 112). As a former kindergarten teacher, my analysis would include this kind of "empathetic understanding"

In order to provide multiple types of data, I sought out not only credible and compelling data related to the children in the two kindergarten classrooms in this study, but also a body of evidence related to Kindergarten classrooms, teachers and schools writ large. As educational criticism requires engaging in the complexities and subtleties of particular

events, the discussion in Chapter IV of the two kindergartens in the context of Kindergarten, the two teachers in the context of Teachers, and the two schools in the context of School will serve to account for some of the complexities of children's interactions while engaging with their teachers, kindergartens and schools.

*Referential adequacy.* Eisner (1998) named the primary aim of educational criticism as that of illuminating its subjects toward brining about “more complex and sensitive human perception and understanding....The work is referentially adequate when readers are able to see what they would have missed without the critic's observation” (p. 112-113). The following paragraphs discuss the importance of referential adequacy to this work.

Eisner and Barone's (1997) discussions of forms of texts clearly resonate with the quality of rhizoanalysis that allows for exploration of the politics of a text in order to create new texts. This serious work has a playful quality that further resonates with the study itself—that of discerning the possibilities inherent in the playful and serious disobedience of young children. As MacNaughton (2005) explained, “rhizoanalysis reconstructs a text by creating new and different understandings of it; and it does so by linking it with texts other than those we would normally use” (p. 120). For instance, one might use rhizoanalysis to replot the links between an observation of a child and a child development text, a political text and a popular culture text in order to reconstruct an understanding of disobedience in that observation. For instance, as one constructs a rhizome of “disobedience” meanings in the observation, one rethinks what it means to “do” disobedience at five years of age and how one might see and work with children's compliancism in kindergarten.

In selecting the fragments of texts to map over the moments of texts captured by the research, there is, by design, a pronounced deliberateness in this choosing. For purposes of considering “a robust and justifiable conception of human well-being” (Hostetler, 2005); “a ‘morality’ of democratic living as a wisdom challenge” (J. Henderson, 2001a); and the potential freedom of authentic democracy (Greene, 1988; MacDonald, 1995; Purpel, 2001)—I sought to lay texts to engage with and disrupt how “compliance” interests and circulates within and through discourses of well-being, morality, a wisdom challenge and democracy. Randomly chosen or traditional texts, discourse and theorists would not produce the same effects, but would merely remap the epistemology of the child. “The intent of rhizoanalysis is to use text, discourse and theory to ‘cast a shadow’ over mapped text to create tracings that disrupt and challenge what had been mapped” (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 136).

In purposefully choosing and laying new texts next to the texts of moments of disobedience, I sought to “educate,” if education may be described as a practice of “organizing knowledge for a truth to break through” (Badiou, 2000). While I would resist the concept of “truth” as it is normally known in the science of education, for Badiou (2000) “truths” consist of process rather than illumination. They emerge in a process instigated by an “event” which breaks through the “state of situation” a person before the “event” took to be either natural or sufficient in its concerns, opinions and descriptions” (p. 61). As Badiou noted later (2006), “a truth is solely constituted by rupturing with the order which supports it, never as an effect of that order,” calling this rupture which opens up truths, “the event” (p. xii). This recalls an earlier description of the “epistemological shudder” which, according to Giugni (2006), occurs when one’s “preferred representation of the known world prove

incapable of immediately making sense of the marvelous and may have a reaction that makes her feel uncomfortable, displaced, and in a sense almost paralysed, not knowing where to place this information” (p. 101).

In this research, I analyzed moments of disobedience. In order to “see” these moments, it was imperative that I recognized them as moments of disobedience and to capture as much of the full context as I could. Given the “figured world” of the kindergarten in which “categories of expression and more tangible artifacts ‘afford’ ways of doing not only things but also people” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998), I sought to identify a moment as one of disobedience by comparing a child’s action/interaction against what is expected or directed using a combination of cues. These cues included:

- Others’ response to the action/interaction (a headshake);
- Written, verbal or non-verbal expectations and rules (“blow a bubble, boys and girls”);
- Responses to prior similar behaviors (a child looks to the teacher to “check” her response when another child steps out of line);
- Known “typical” actions (children in schools aren’t allowed to talk when in line);
- The “normed” behaviors at that moment (what are the other children doing?)

Among the many moments of disobedience that occurred during my visits to the sites, I chose those moments to analyze which seemed to have the richest potential for “seeing” within the disobedient moment the child as her spiritual self—and so the moments rife with

spiritual /moral and democratic possibilities. In the process of reviewing the film and beginning the transcription, the possibilities emerged in a rhizomatic fashion.

As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) have described, the rhizome is a map—a map with multiple entryways, a map that “is open and connectable in all to its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, and susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation” (p. 11). Mapping the moments—the texts of the kindergarten classroom—served to constitute and re-constitute the “truth” about the child and the role disobedience plays.

*Validity.* Here I have replaced Eisner’s *consensual validation* with a more poststructural discussion of validity. In Eisner’s (1998) discussion of consensual validation, the focus is on consensus among “judges” –which Eisner he de-emphasized as a means of validating educational criticism. He wrote: “Consensual validation in criticism is typically a consensus won from the readers who are persuaded by what the critic has to say, not by consensus among several critics” (p. 113). Given the disruptive nature of this study, a “consensual” type of validity would seem at cross-purposes. In seeking to “open up truths” (Badiou, 2006) as a result of disrupting the familiar order and structures, a consensual type of validation is not only unlikely, but is also not desired.

Therefore, I sought out other discussions of research validity. In keeping with the rhizomatic logic of the study, I determined that aspects of Lather’s catalytic validity in addition to her translation of Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomatic validity were better match to my intentions for this research.

Lather (1991) proposed a “more collaborative, praxis oriented” model for validating research in naming an emancipatory and advocacy model of validation catalytic validity. Here the researcher is not neutral and acts on a purpose and a desire to engage people in self-understanding and self-determination. I also like the way Lather engaged in struggles with the idea of other validities in poststructural research. She wrote about rhizomatic validity:

A supple line, a flux, a ‘line of flight...where thresholds attain a point of adjacency and rupture,’ my ephemeral practices of validity after poststructuralism are ‘an arrangement of desire and enunciation’ rather than a general recipe. My intent has been to forge from a scattered testimony a methodology that is not so much prescription as ‘curves of visibility and enunciation’ (Lather, 1993, p. 686).

What she described is what I would like my work to do for teachers (and so for children). Not to offer a prescription or a “recipe”—but to complicate their roles and lives as they ride along unexpected lines of flight. Perhaps, instigated by an event such as a moment of disobedience, disrupted further by a rhizomatic twist, a teacher may engage in “the process of ‘affirmative invention’ ...described as a trajectory no longer contained within the point of the situation [a line of flight] (den Heyer, under review, p. 19). As my intentions for this work do, rhizomes (metaphorically) “work against the constraints of authority, regularity, and commonsense, and open thought up to creative [and affirmative] constructions” (Lather, 1993, p. 680).

Lather (1993) offered further description of rhizomatic validity:

- Unsettles from within; taps underground

- Generates new locally determined norms of understanding; proliferates open-ended and context-sensitive criteria; works against reinscription of some new regime, some new systematicity
- Supplements and exceeds the stable and permanent
- Works against constraints of authority via relay, multiple openings, networks, complexities of problematics
- Puts conventional discursive procedures under erasure, breaches congealed discourses, critical as well as dominant (p. 686-687).

This list of descriptors demonstrates the contrast of rhizomatic validity to consensual validity. As well, the content foregrounds what will occur in the discussion of the moments of disobedience in Chapter V. As described by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) in their book about reflexive methodologies:

The “truth” of the moment is, therefore, not abstract and other-worldly, but concrete, particular and sensuous—while at the same time being open, in an ongoing state of creation by the actors, transcending the boundaries between the ordinary and the fabulous...it is more related to Bakhtin’s dialectic and paradoxical ‘vulgar’ poetics where joking and seriousness, high and low occur abruptly side by side (p. 174).

The moments of disobedience—as represented by the texts in Chapter V (and along with the rhizomatic texts to be laid next to them)—are their own event and while the interpretation is mine, it is also the reader’s. The validation will derive in this way from the reader’s interaction with the text in the form of a “catalytic validity” (Lather, 1991). The

value of the work derives from the meaning made by the researcher and the reader from engaging with the rhizomatically laid texts.

Eisner (1998) discussed the relationship between qualitative inquiry and literary texts, connecting the value of these texts in, what is fundamentally related to the disruptive quality of rhizoanalysis: “Texts can take different forms: literally written text can do what the figurative treatment of language cannot; poetry can say what prose cannot convey, and vice versa” (p. 22). Barone (2001) described narrative texts (especially fictional ones) as designed to “do what good art does so well. And what is that? According to the novelist James Baldwin (1962), the greatest achievement of art is the “laying bare of questions which have been hidden by answers” (in Barone, 2001, p. 154).

Barone and Eisner (1997) analyzed deep structures of works of literature to determine the design elements that challenge and impact the reader. While they acknowledged that it is “nigh impossible to delineate them precisely and completely,” they list the following:

The presence of expressive, contextualized, and vernacular forms of language; the promotion of empathetic participation in the lives of characters; the creation of a virtual reality; the presence of the author’s personal signature; and perhaps most importantly, a degree of textual ambiguity (p. 154).

In analyzing my own findings, I sought to include language that was contextualized as opposed to abstract and more vernacular than technical. As Barone (2001) described in regard to his own stories of one teacher’s impact on the lives of his students, I sought to use this language in order to “re-create the lived worlds of protagonists [children] and to encourage readers to dwell momentarily within those worlds” (p. 154). As the author who

once titled her paper, *The Joy of Not Knowing*, I anticipated that my “personal signature” to be expressed via “a degree of textual ambiguity”—but that remains to be seen by the reader.

*The Function of Rhizoanalysis*

Deleuze wrote in *Negotiations* (1995) about *Anti-Oedipus*:

We’re not writing for people who think psychoanalysis is doing fine and see the unconscious for what it is. We’re writing for people who think it’s pretty dull and sad as it burbles on about Oedipus, castration, the death instinct and so on. We’re writing for the unconsciousnesses that have had enough. We’re looking for allies (p. 22).

In searching for allies, I share intent similar to Deleuze. I am not writing for people who think everything in the classroom is fine. I am writing for people who think it’s pretty dull and sad as it burbles on about quiet compliance, structured order and joyless standards of behavior. I am looking for allies. I, too, imagine “these allies are already out there...people who have had enough and are thinking, feeling and working in similar directions.” Moreover, I imagine that there are texts in this work that will speak to those who share this unconsciousness.

The experience of speaking to an unconsciousness is meaningful to me. I have experienced the effect of disrupting texts many times. Earlier, I described using the movie, *Instinct*, (Turteltaub, 1999) in my teaching because of the clear connection to be made between the constraining and surveilling natures of both school and prison. The moments that made this clear to me were these: As correctional officers were walking groups of prisoners from one place to another, one said gruffly, “Hands at your side.” I recognized myself in that moment: as a kindergarten teacher, I had said that to children as we moved from one place to

another. Hearing it said like this—in this place of the prison, and by a person set to “guard” another—allowed me to hear myself saying and doing what I would hold abhorrent in anyone else. I never did it again. When the character played by Cuba Gooding, Jr. challenged the character of the prison’s senior psychologist, played by Charles Durning, regarding a tradition in place in the prison gymnasium, Durning’s character responded, “It works...” And Gooding’s character said, “It works *for us*.” This prompted another disruption which I laid against my unconsciousness and so “recalled, rethought and retheorised” every instance of reading and hearing “what works” in the context of school. And I realized who it nearly always works *for*.

It appears that in every school and classroom, decisions—funding, pedagogical and curricular—must be justified by an explanation of how the decision will certainly result in some impact on some numbered measures of children. As my principal required us to defend and rationalize by “results,” I recall thinking but not saying, “Who cares?” every single time. I meant it, but could not say it too often without sounding flip and so being hobbled in my request. I felt it—my “unconsciousness” felt it—but could not articulate why.

But Jonathan Kozol could. I remember vividly the first time I saw *Children in America’s Schools with Bill Moyers* (Hayden & Cauthen, 1996). Kozol served on the discussion panel and in the final five minutes of the two-hour program, he wondered aloud why we wouldn’t provide beautiful places for our children to go to school “...even if it doesn’t pay off. Even if it isn’t useful to America’s competitive edge. Even if it isn’t good for IBM or General Motors or Wall Street” (np.), and I was stunned. He articulated what I had long felt. My unconsciousness had held those ideas and did not “know” them until I

heard them. After that, I was able to say, “Who cares?” in response to the bottom-line, “Results” question, mean it, and know why I meant it.

In this way, this research serves to inform my own understanding. By turning the “enquiring eye” on the moments of children’s interactions with kindergarten to experience afresh their instances of obedience and disobedience, and laying texts over them to inform the possibilities within those moments, I sought to understand the disobedience in ways guided by engaging in new texts. Just as Kozol’s passionate appeal re-freshed my unconsciousness regarding the texts of “results,” so this project serves to lay fresh texts over the text of disobedience. I have had enough and I believe others have too. I, too, am looking for allies.

### Summary

Employing a qualitative inquiry approach, the purpose of the study is to present moments of kindergarten children’s disobedience in order to more fully understand the complexity of each moment concerning children’s interactions with other children, adults and the kindergarten environment. The intent is to better understand the phenomenon/function of how the spirited/spiritual child negotiates the context, complexity, constraints and freedoms of a kindergarten classroom as represented through moments of disobedience.

While typically, past research has directed our attention to “fixing” the problems of disobedience and studying it to determine how it “fits” in the roles and relationships of children and teachers, the present study offered an opportunity to view these familiar actions through fresh lenses of possibilities. In order to openly seek lateral paths toward developing new understandings and questions regarding the non-compliant nature of children,

rhizoanalysis was used to “destabilize and challenge” the known and given texts of children’s disobedience (J. Henderson & Kesson, 1999). By doing so, I seek to disrupt the assumptions often made regarding the actions and interactions of young children as “bad” or “good” and offered ways to “see” each moment of interaction as many things... both-and-neither bad n/or good. To reiterate my intentions as articulated in Chapter I, I entered this work believing that as children confront the complexities of the very human “morality of ends” and the more cultural “morality of laws” (J. Dewey, 1929/1984; Zinn, 1968) their moments of disobedience might be related to an awareness unique to children that allows them to disrupt the universe in ways that may lead us into joy.

## CHAPTER IV

### S/sCHOOLs, K/kINDERGARTENs, T/tEACHERs

*A school should be the most beautiful place in every town and village—so beautiful that the punishment for undutiful children should be that they should be debarred [sic] from going to school the following day.*

~from a local public school website, on the principal's page

*How can you say no child is left behind  
We're not dumb and we're not blind  
They're all sitting in your cells  
While you pave the road to hell.*

P!nk, *Dear Mr. President* (2006)

### Introduction

This chapter includes discussions of S/school, K/kindergarten and T/teachers, each topic first writ large, and then in specifics related to the places and people involved in this study. Given the upcoming analysis in Chapter V—laying texts over the texts describing children's actual moments of disobedience in kindergarten classrooms—it is imperative to first provide contextual background regarding the schools, kindergartens, and teachers the children will be interacting with/in.

In order to identify a particular event as a moment of disobedience, an understanding of the “structured expectations” of the institutions of Schools, Kindergartens and Teachers is necessary. One function of this chapter is to detail these expectations. Further, as mentioned in Chapter II, a purpose of this study is to disrupt and destabilize what is dominant in the highly accessible writings that serve to influence those institutional expectations. This chapter brings into play sources of information from the public arena: teacher internet sites, public school websites, best-selling books and programs marketed to classroom teachers, and teacher preparation textbooks.

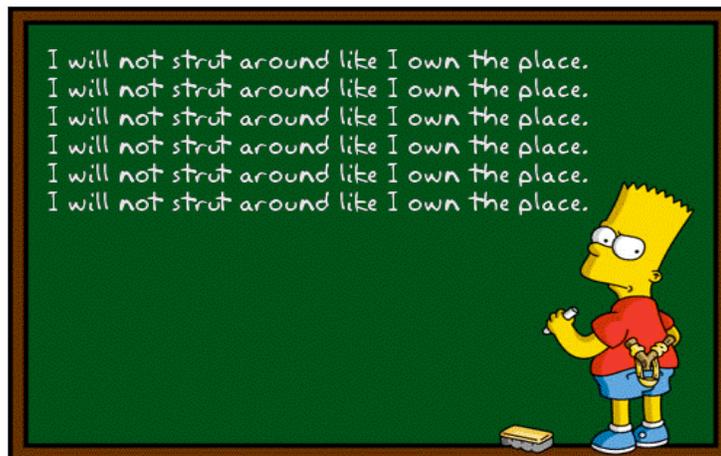
The means of sharing this overview of Schools, Kindergartens and Teachers—and of the particular schools, kindergartens and teachers involved in this study—approximates what Eisner (1998) described as criticism, “an art of saying useful things about complex and subtle objects and events so that others can see and understand what they did not see and understand before” (p. 3).

This chapter includes criticism, description, interpretation, valuation and identification of dominant features of the pervasive qualities of School, Kindergarten and Teachers, especially as related to children’s disobedience. However, rather than engaging as a true “connoisseur” (Eisner, 1998), the discriminations and perceptions I provide are a combination of expertise (a result of my experience in kindergarten) and naiveté (a result of my willingness to bring fresh eyes to the page). However, true to the concept of connoisseurship, the function of this chapter is to reveal the complexities of the place of school, kindergarten and teachers as related to children—as well as to serve as catalyst of new ways of seeing and thinking about children’s disobedience—but through a position of not knowing.

### School

*Living in school is an essentially inferior, vulgar, imitative, second-rate human experience because this is the kind of ecological press that surrounds us both in and out of school...a living embodiment of the very shoddiness that pervades our general social experience...a rather faithful replica of the whole.*

(Macdonald 1995, p. 51)



*Figure 2: Who Owns the School (Daniels & Groening, 1995).*

One of the teachers in this study, Mr. Scott, told me about a discussion that once took place in his classroom. While discussing whether or not to comply with a mandate to choose a “citizen of the month,” some children expressed concern that Mr. Scott would “get in trouble” if they did not follow the rest of the classrooms in choosing a single child. One little girl asked him, “Won’t the people who own the school be mad at you?” Since then, Mr. Scott has adopted her question as the title of his upcoming master’s thesis, and ponders the question of who owns the school. As illustrated in *Figure 2*, it is commonly acknowledged in pop culture (and elsewhere) that it is *not* the children who do.

There is no dearth of talk about school. In the quote above, James Macdonald lamented the unfortunate reflection of the “shoddy” side of human society in the space and place of school. I have visited dozens of classrooms across several districts and states, and have sadly found that many children’s experience in school is, indeed, a “second-rate human experience.” Children’s relationships with teachers and with the other children is reduced to a series of procedures and if/then conditionals as “through observation, surveillance, and

normalized judgment in schools, the calculable child is formed [and] they become members of the classification schoolchildren” (Ehrensals, 2003, p. 120).

Related to the concept of the “calculable” child is Krieg’s (2006) discussion of the “institutionalized” child. In Krieg’s study, she listened carefully to the way that early childhood teachers talked about children. In one excerpt, Krieg shares a teacher’s discussion about how “being positive” with students “gets results.” Krieg noted that in Ray’s talk, she presents:

...a picture of the “institutionalized” child. The child is listed (“I’ve a list of all my students”), labeled (“not very intelligent”), documented (“the past teachers have put comments on them”), identified (“this child low”), tested (“at the beginning of the year”) and later, as age defined (“at that age...”) [and further interprets Ray’s story as one in which the child is quite passive]...according to Ray, the child ‘doesn’t think’ and has ‘come so far’ and ‘thrives’ (p. 5).

Krieg noted that teacher talk such as Ray’s presented an understanding of the child as being “done to,” and is as it should be since the child is associated with attributes of dependence, immaturity, pre-competence, development (as age appropriate) and compliance. Given evidence of such beliefs about the calculable and institutionalized child, it is not surprising that the adults in charge at school view their role as one that will direct these children into the order already determined by the more mature, developed and competent adult.

Alfie Kohn (in Watson, 2003) suggested that “everything turns on the fundamental questions that drive classroom practice...How can we get these kids to obey?...[or] What do

these children need?” (p. xiii). If one were to ask that question to one of the best-selling authors in the field of classroom management, Harry Wong, it would be easy to surmise, given his body of work, to which of the questions he most actively responds. While there are hundreds of books published for classroom teachers related to guidance, management, and/or discipline, Wong’s (1998) *The First Days of School*, is recognized by many (as evidenced by the number of books sold) as the preeminent book on classroom management and student achievement.

According to Dr. Douglas Brooks, professor of Teacher Education at Miami University, as quoted in a flier advertising Wong’s book—along with his eLearning course, and two DVD series—*The First Days of School* is a:

Massive compilation of common sense that is well-documented and well-supported by substantial reviews of fairly complicated research. The text delightfully reverses the structure of most education books. The pages are filled with factual advice; the insets contain the research (np.).

Dr. Brooks, along with countless other teacher education professors, has adopted the book as a classroom management text. School systems purchase the books in bulk to distribute to new teachers. In fact, the two school systems that house the research sites of this study have—either currently or in past years—purchased copies of this book for all newly hired teachers—a practice common in the area. In addition, Wong and his wife are booked as speakers over two years in advance. The website, [www.harrywong.com](http://www.harrywong.com), reports that over 500,000 teachers have already attended his presentation and he has sold over 3 million copies of his seminal book, *The First Days of School*. This overwhelming popularity

is indicative of how closely Wong has tapped into the zeitgeist of the classroom as a place where children are calculated as subjects of carefully structured procedures and where teachers hope to better calculate their most efficient interactions with children.

David Jardine (1998) told of a time that he was dismayed by his student's lack of affect as he watched her teach a lesson to the children in her student teaching placement. He noted that "she seemed to be 'somewhere else' during the lesson, appearing vaguely unhappy, not 'there' somehow [and] suggested that this 'disconnectedness' might have been partially responsible for why the children seemed to stray" (p. 5). Jardine reported her "frightening, but also vaguely sad and almost poignantly humorous" response: "You mean you want me to smile more? Maybe I should have used more eye contact or something?" (p. 5). This student teacher may join the ranks of teachers who claim Wong's work as "lifesaving" if she were to read the two-page script explaining *how to smile* (see *Table 3*).

I emphasize here the extent of Wong's popularity with teachers and the extent of his work, not because I wish to deeply analyze a Wongian notion of school, but because I wish to make clear that Wong's work is so popular with the teaching public due to the notion of school as an ordered, disciplined, and predictable place. As school personnel enact this notion of School, Wong's work joins other Classroom Management experts—and their number is legion—in providing the most effective, simple, convenient, and *easy* strategies in which to compel children into the straight and narrow spaces left for them. So easy, the teacher does not even need to be in the room! In a mailed advertisement for Harry Wong Publications, Inc., Dr. Scott Behrens, the Chair of Teacher Education at Adrian College, MI, wrote:

I require all of my students to purchase your book, *The First Days of School*, and I model what you have to teach in my own college classroom. In preparation for being away at this conference, I put together a PowerPoint presentation complete with video clips and voice over. I had one of my colleagues turn it on for me at the beginning of class. Once turned on, it ran itself and the students went right to work as they knew what to do. No one leaves my class because I am absent just as I don't leave them when they are absent. In fact, my students experience one of the most important classes of the semester while learning how to use technology to run a class in their absence, thanks to good procedures (np).

Wong's work resonates consistently with Foucault's (1979) description of how to produce "subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile bodies'" (p. 138). The use of techniques of subtle and constant coercion, "supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result and...exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space and movement" (p. 137), aligns closely with Wong's recommended techniques for being an "effective teacher." The following table (*Table 3*) provides a sampling of techniques as described in Foucault's 1979 study of public institutions, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Aligned with a selection of these Foucauldian techniques and concepts (enclosure & partitioning; timetables & minute control of activity; a precise system of command; surveillance; normalizing judgments; and the carceral) are a small sampling of techniques from Wong's *The First Days of School*.

Table 3

## Foucault and Wong: Means of Control

Means	Foucault, 1979 <i>Discipline &amp; Punish: The Birth of the Prison</i>	Wong, 1998 <i>The First Days of School</i>
<p><i>Enclosure, partitioning:</i></p> <p>Where someone is indicates who and what he is. For instance, if you are on the wall at recess, you must be bad.</p>	<p>“Classrooms should be divided up into three parts: ‘The most honourable for those who are learning Latin... it should be stressed that there are as many places at the tables as there will be writers, in order to avoid the confusion usually caused by the lazy’. In another, those who are learning to read: ‘a bench for the rich and a bench for the poor’ so that vermin will not be passed on. A third section for the newcomers: when their ability has been recognized, they will be given a place” (p. 314-315).</p>	<p>“Have a strategic location ready for students who need to be isolated from the rest of the class. Disruptive students must be separated from the class or at least from other problem students” (p. 95).</p> <p>“Disruptive students must be placed close to the teacher. This is appropriate for distractible, dependent and occasionally resistant students” (p. 95).</p>
<p><i>Timetables; minute control of activity</i></p> <p>Decisions are deferred to the clock and the schedule. There is no question of what to do now. The schedule knows.</p>	<p>“In the elementary schools, the division of time became increasingly minute...by orders that had to be obeyed immediately: ‘At the last stroke of the hour, a pupil will ring the bell and at the first sound of the bell all pupils will kneel, with their arms crossed and their eyes lowered...the teacher will strike the signal once to indicate that the pupils should get up, a second time as a sign that they should salute Christ, and a third that they should sit down...9:00 the children go to their benches, 9:04 first slate, 9:08 end of dictation, 9:12 second slate, etc...an attempt is also made to assure quality of time used... the elimination of anything that might disturb or distract:... it is expressly forbidden...to amuse one’s companions by gestures, to play any game whatsoever, to eat, to sleep, to tell stories or comedies” (p. 151-152).</p>	<p>“To increase the amount of time the student works to learn: 1. have an assignment posted daily to be done upon entering the classroom 2. teach procedures and routines to minimize interruptions and maximize uninterrupted learning time 3. constantly monitor students so as to keep them on task” (p. 206).</p> <p>“An axiom of handling behavior problems is that little or no instructional time should be lost. Time is wasted when you stop to find a place or move furniture around for the offender. The good students resent this waste of time <i>just as much as you resent the troublemaker</i>” (italics mine) (p. 95).</p> <p>“9:00 bellwork, 9:05 morning message, 9:10 change helpers, 9:15 journal writing, 9:50 listening skills activity, 10:20 recess (*supervision*),</p>

	<p>“In the correct use of the body, which makes possible a correct use of time, nothing must remain idle or useless...[for good handwriting, for example], the pupils must always hold their bodies erect, somewhat turned and free on the left side, slightly inclined, so that with the elbow placed on the table, the chin can be rested upon the hand, unless this were to interfere with the view; the left leg must be somewhat more forward under the table than the right. A distance of two fingers must be left between the body and the table for not only does one write with more alertness, but nothing is more harmful to the health than to acquire the habit of pressing one’s stomach against the table...the right arm must be at five fingers from the table, on which it must rest lightly...A disciplined body is the prerequisite of an efficient gesture” (p. 152).</p> <p>“Writing exercise: 9: hands on the knees. This command is conveyed by one ring on the bell; 10: hands on the table, heads up; 11: clean the slates: everyone cleans his slate with a little saliva or better still with a piece of rag; 12 show the slates; 13 monitors, inspect. They inspect the slates with their assistants and then those of their own bench. The assistants inspect those of their own bench and everyone returns to their own place” (p. 315).</p>	<p>10:30 handwriting, etc.” (p. 124).</p> <p>“The effective teacher teaches RESPONSIBILITY. This is because effective teachers have their schedules and assignments posted. It is a joy to watch such teachers and classes in action. The students in these classes know what to expect during the day and where to look for assignments. They can now go about doing their work on their own. You cannot teach children to be responsible unless they know what you want them to do” (p. 124).</p> <p>“Technique for smiling, speaking and pausing. Step 1. SMILE Smile as you approach the student, <i>even if your first impulse is to behave harshly toward the student</i> (emphasis mine.) Step 2. FEEDBACK Observe the reaction to your smile. Are you receiving a smile in return or at least a signal that the student is relaxing and receptive to your approach? Step 3. PAUSE (Timing, timing). Step 4. NAME Say “Nathan” with a slight smile. Step 5. PAUSE. Step 6. PLEASE Add please, followed by your request. Do this with a calm, firm voice, accompanied by a slight, non-threatening smile. Step 7. PAUSE. Step 8. THANK YOU. End with “thank you, Nathan” and a slight smile. ...Practice this in the mirror, over and over again” (p. 74).</p>
<p><i>A Precise System of Command</i></p>	<p>“The training of schoolchildren was to be carried out [with] few words, no explanation, a total silence interrupted only by signals-bells, clapping of hands, gestures, a mere glance from that teacher...[and] a system of signals to which one had to react immediately. Even verbal orders were to function as</p>	<p>“Shirley Lee’s class is a joy to behold. She doesn’t even have to open her mouth when the bell rings. She may say ‘Good morning’ or compliment the class on their appropriate behavior, but while the students are <i>quickly and quietly</i> [emphasis mine] at work, she</p>

	<p>elements of signalization: ‘Enter your benches. At the word enter, the children bring their right hands down on the table with a resounding thud and the same time put one leg into the bench; at the words your benches they put the other leg in and sit down opposite their slates’ (p. 167).</p> <p>“To make a sign to stop to a pupil who is reading, he will strike the signal once... To make a sign to a pupil to repeat when he has read badly or mispronounced a letter, a syllable, or a word, he will strike the signal twice in rapid succession. If, after the sign had been made two or three times, the pupil who is reading does not find and repeat the word that he had badly read or mispronounced... the teacher will strike three times in rapid succession, as a sign to him to begin to read further back; and he will continue to make the sign till the pupil finds the word he has said incorrectly” (p. 167).</p>	<p>completes her chores, which typically must be done by all teachers, like taking roll” (p. 125).</p> <p>“Students, I have a procedure when I want your undivided attention. You will see me stand here with my hand up. Or I may tap a bell because some of you may not be able to see my hand when you are working in a group. When you see my hand or hear a bell, the procedure is as follows: 1. Freeze. 2. Turn and face me; pay attention and keep your eyes on me. 3. Be ready for instruction. I will have something to say. Let me repeat and demonstrate what I said... Byron, please tell me the procedures when you see my hand or hear a bell” (p. 181).</p> <p>“Students readily accept the idea of having a uniform set of classroom procedures, because it simplifies their task of succeeding in school. Efficient and workable procedures allow a great variety of activities to take place... with a minimum of confusion and wasted time. If no procedures are established, much time will be wasted organizing each activity and students will have to guess what to do. As a result, undesirable work habits and behaviors could develop which would be hard to correct” (p. 168).</p>
<i>Surveillance</i>	<p>“The Panopticon provided a model for using Discipline in prisons. Constant observation and penalties for the smallest infraction of the many rules would start the process. Every second of the day and night could be carefully structured. “He is seen but does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication. The</p>	<p>“As soon as the tardy bell rings, your first task is scan the room, not to take roll, but to look for students who are not at work” (p. 130).</p> <p>“It is wise to begin the year with the desks in rows facing the teacher. This minimizes distractions, allows you to monitor behavior more readily... have</p>

	<p>arrangement of his room...imposes on him an axial visibility, but...imply a lateral invisibility. And this invisibility is the guarantee of order...if they are school children, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time...Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (p. 200 – 201) and so guarantees a docile student who does as ordered without question.</p>	<p>a strategic location ready for students who need to be isolated from the rest of the class” (p. 95).</p> <p>“Place the teacher’s desk so that you can easily monitor the classroom while at your desk” (p. 98).</p>
<p><i>Normalizing Judgments:</i></p> <p>Disciplinary power not only punishes deviations from normality, it rewards “normalcy” (good behavior) with gold stars &amp; candy. Those who transgress are defined not only as bad, but as abnormal. It is a more subtle use of power that works on the transgressor from the inside &amp; consolidates the ranks of the ‘normal’ against all others. Recall: no one else got out of line to help Reuben.</p>	<p>“The school [was] subject to a whole micropenality of time (latenesses, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behavior (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body (‘incorrect attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness)’... and that punishment would include everything that is capable of making children feel the offence...of humiliating them, confusing them... a certain coldness” .</p>	<p>“One teacher taught her class to look down whenever a child was behaving in a way which would be reinforced by their attention. This same teacher made herself a badge with ‘Not now Jason’ written on it. Whenever the child in question interrupted her yet again all she had to do was tap the badge without so much as looking at him. Eventually he would learn that he would get attention at more appropriate times, not on demand (Roffey, in Wong, 1998, p. 130).</p> <p>“Heart: Have the students make a pattern with their name on it. Place all the patterns inside a heart-your heart-on the bulletin board. If there is a violation of the rule, kindly remove the pattern and place it outside of your heart. Encourage the students to return to your heart” (p. 158).</p> <p>“After a few weeks or months, if someone should ask you, ‘Why are you picking on me?’ all you have to do is stand and smile at the student. The entire class will respond for you: ‘Because you CHOSE to break the rule!’” (p. 158).</p>

The Carceral	<p>“The ‘carceral’ with its many diffuse or compact forms, its institutions of supervision and constraint, of discrete surveillance and insistent coercion, assured the communication of punishments according to quality and quantity...I shall note the slightest irregularity in your conduct” (p. 299).</p> <p>“Perhaps the most important effect of the carceral system is ...that it succeeds in making the power to punish [and reward] natural and legitimate, in lowering at least, the threshold of tolerance to penalty” (p. 301).</p>	<p>“Many people...believe that nothing is wrong until they are caught. Imagine this typical classroom setting. A teacher is speaking at the front of the room....Student A, without permission, goes to the pencil sharpener...student C abruptly speaks up to ask the teacher a question not relevant to the topic, student D leans over to say something to Student E. Students F through Z look on. Students are aware of a teacher’s enforcement or non-enforcement of the rules...POST YOUR CONSEQUENCES (p. 151-152). “The consequence should be suitable and proportional to the violation; in other words, the penalty should fit the crime” (p. 156).</p> <p>“Failure to work off the penalty automatically moves the student up to the next level of the consequences or doubles the penalty” (p. 157).</p>
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Wong’s book is not the only classroom management book that could potentially be held to a similar comparison. However, I chose this book by virtue of its popularity –and thus, how it represents what a large number of educators believe is necessary in order to be better and more efficient teachers—and to more efficiently and *easily* control their students. This brief analysis was included in this overview of School because I believe it validates the heart-felt concern expressed by James Macdonald at the beginning of this section that “living in school is an essentially inferior, vulgar, imitative, second-rate human experience” (Macdonald1995, p. 51); and that somehow, sadly and inexcusably, “children are no longer our kin, our kind; teaching is no longer an act of ‘kindness’ and generosity bespeaking a deep connectedness with children” (D. Jardine, 1998, p. 5).

Might a sort of “goodness” in the space and place of school derive from a commitment to what some call the “democratic good life”? According to Dewey (1985), democracy is:

Simultaneously a way of life, an ethical ideal, and a personal commitment. Specifically, it is a way of life in which individuals are presumed to be self-directing and able to pursue their own goals and projects. No society that maintains order through constant supervision and/or coercion can be rightly called democratic. Further, individual benefit and the common good are mutually enhancing in a democracy (p. 349).

An important consideration of Dewey’s conception of democracy is that each person is best served by a democracy created to maximize the common good. However, as Dewey noted, school cannot maximize the common good when, by virtue of the systems of control described above and by its institutional nature, it serves to—at least ostensibly—privilege those who most comply with what Goffman terms “House rules.” Goffman (1961, in Macdonald, 1995) described the privilege system of total institutions via three elements:

1. ‘House rules’ or a formal set of prescriptions and proscriptions that sets the requirements of inmate conduct
2. A small number of clearly defined rewards or privileges held out in exchange for obedience
3. Punishments designed for occurrences of rule violations (p. 43).

Macdonald joined schools to prisons and mental institutions as one of Goffman’s (1961) “total institutions” and further names them as “degree factories” and, in Thoreauian-fashion, a place to prepare for the occupation of war. He cautioned that “a careful examination of this allegation suggests that it is overly simple, yet how [else might our]

authoritarian relationships, and our prizing of docility, punctuality, and attendance be more readily explained?” (p. 41).

The pervasiveness of an objective to produce normalized “docile bodies” –including the common exclamation of how *easy* it can be!–is further addressed in a later section of this chapter. But first, what follows is an overview of the two schools in which the study took place.

### The Schools

The two schools housing the research classrooms are similar in ways that nearly all schools are similar. The buildings are large with multiple classrooms into which children are divided according to grade level, determined by chronological age. There are particular rooms for the principal, counselor, special teachers, custodians, and for activities such as art, music, gym, therapy, tutoring, and for teachers to lounge. The segments of the school day are punctuated by ringing bells and amplified announcements. In both schools, there are signs and posters in common areas to represent to all who enter what kind of place this is and what is valued there. Both school systems have purchased a character program and so each building has posted prominently *The Six Pillars of Character* as determined by the purchased program: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. These traits are displayed on walls throughout the buildings as are other posters and signs admonishing all who enter to ask themselves, “Have you signed in at the office?” and to inform them that they are “about to enter a learning zone,” and that the school community “strives to provide a positive learning environment to prepare caring, responsible citizens,” and that “our mission is to teach students not only how to walk, but where to walk.”

Each building bears signs of the institution: hard, cold linoleum floors and hard, rough, cold, pastel-colored concrete walls. Described by Somers (1976, in O'Donaghue, 2006) as the “hard architecture” typical of prisons, hospitals and schools—the walls, halls, doors, floors, and furniture of the schools “resist any form of human imprint” (p. 24). These schools share physical characteristics with the school building described by O'Donaghue (2006):

Overall, surfaces are hard and flat and exposed and unsympathetic even to the smallest of creatures such as spider. For a spider crawling on the wall, there is no hiding place... clearly, ideas of strength, resilience, resistance are echoed in the architectural surfaces in the [schools] (p. 25).

*Mrs. Krinkle's School*

Mrs. Krinkle's school is one of 46 elementary schools in a large city system located in a Mid-western state. The city is racially mixed 66.7% White, 28.5% Black—however the neighborhoods within the city are much more segregated—by race and by income. This is reflected in the racial make-up of the population of children in Andrews Elementary School which is approximately 68% Black, 27% White and 5% “Other.” Most of the children—99.6%—in this school qualify for the federal free lunch program and so are named “economically disadvantaged” on the state's department of education report card for 2005-2006. This is reasonable given the median income in the city (\$32, 937 according to [http://www.city-data.com/city/\[city\]-\[state\].html](http://www.city-data.com/city/[city]-[state].html) per year). According to the state report

card, this school was in “Academic Watch”<sup>5</sup>.

While visiting the school, its appearance did not offer the sense that this was a place for or of children. It was a quiet place and nearly all movement was subdued and uniform: children moving in lines from one place to another and gathering on command in different places in classrooms. There was evidence that the school had adopted techniques similar to those discussed in the Foucault/Wong comparison. Laminated and posted on school walls and individual classroom walls were the following:

#### Andrews Schoolwide Rules

1. Follow directions the first time they are given.
2. Raise your hand and wait for permission to speak.
3. Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself.
4. Walk throughout building at all times.
5. No fighting.

#### Positives:

- Praise
- Recognition Program
- Positive notes sent home
- Fun Fridays

#### Mischievous Steps:

1<sup>st</sup> Offense- Verbal Warning

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense- Deprived of Privilege

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense- Phone call home

4<sup>th</sup> Offense- IC ½ day [IC was a form of in-school suspension]

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<sup>5</sup> Schools receive designations, in part, based on percentage of indicators that apply to their school:

- Excellent schools meet 94% or more of applicable indicators or 100 or above on the Performance Index (PI).
- Effective meet 75% to 93.9% of applicable indicators or score 90 to 99.9 on the PI. Continuous Improvement meet 50% to 74.9% of applicable indicators or 80 to 89.9 on the PI OR meet AYP (the lowest a district can be rated if they meet AYP is CI).
- Academic Watch schools meet 31% to 49.9% of applicable indicators or score 70 to 79.9 and have missed AYP.
- Academic Emergency schools are those that met 30.9% or fewer indicators, scored less than a 70 and missed AYP. (source: <http://www.ode.state.oh.us>)

5<sup>th</sup> Offense- IC (1 day)  
6<sup>th</sup> Offense- IC (2 days)  
7<sup>th</sup> Offense- 1 Day Suspension

Severe Clause:

1<sup>st</sup> Offense- 1 Day Suspension  
2<sup>nd</sup> Offense- 2 Day Suspension  
3<sup>rd</sup> Offense- 3 Day Suspension

Mischivous and Severe Clause starts over every nine weeks.

In early visits to the school, I was often reminded of the institutional prison-school connection as described in Chapter II; and on reading this article from the *Talk.left.com* website, I thought immediately of Andrews Elementary School:

The bullhorn blares across the yard. Young Latinos and African Americans quickly scan their surroundings, noticing the many faces that watch them. A chain-link fence, 20 feet high, surrounds them on three sides. Dutifully, they fall into place in line. Heads up, hands clasped behind their backs, shoulders straight. Most know better than to talk. A few test the rules and murmur among themselves. "You're wasting my time!" barks the attendant. Rumpled play dollars are doled out to the well behaved; order is maintained through this token economy. Thus begins their day.

This is elementary school. First grade. Our inmates are 6 years old. They are not criminals. Small and wiry, these are children whose usual offenses are pulling braids or not sharing Hot Cheetos. The children must walk in straight lines. Hands must remain behind their backs, as though in handcuffs. The high fences separate them from the outside, physically and symbolically. What does it mean when you are 6 and your school is run like a prison?

It is lunchtime. The students are herded through line, picking up their cardboard

trays of chicken nuggets and milk. Eating must be done in silence. Misbehaving children face a ‘three-strikes-you’re-out’ policy. The same policy that puts many neighborhood men in jail is also used to deny chattering children recess (Jeralyn, 2004).

Except for a few details (I saw no bullhorn; the standard token in this school was not play money, but instead, candy; and the children at Andrews are afforded seven strikes instead of three), the description above could easily have been made of an observation of Andrews Elementary School.

#### *Mr. Scott’s School*

Mr. Scott’s school is one of six elementary schools located in a medium-sized suburban district in the same state as Mrs. Krinkle’s school. In fact, the town is a suburb of the city that houses Mrs. Krinkle’s school—the two schools are less than thirty minutes apart. In distance.

By other standards—funding, socio-economic status of students, state rating, racial make-up, condition of physical plant—the two schools are worlds apart. The children who attend Shadow Lake Elementary School come from families in a town composed of a 95% White population with a median income of \$59, 800 ([http://www.city-data.com/city/\[town\]-\[state\].html](http://www.city-data.com/city/[town]-[state].html)) The school’s state rating is “Excellent.” Reflecting the city’s racial distribution, the population of children who attend the school is 93% White and those designated as “economically disadvantaged” according the same state report card include 13.5% of the school population.

While there was slightly more movement and ease in this building—on entering, it was not uncommon to see children moving through halls on their own without reprimand and

there was a lighter “feel” to the place—there was evidence of tight and narrow school expectations here, too. On the walls in the hallway near the office, one can read signs of the Institution:

- School versions of corporate motivational posters: success, risk, friendship, and commitment.
- Character Counts at Shadow Lake: RESPONSIBILITY (with an elephant): Are you responsible? Do you do what you are supposed to do? Do you think about how your actions will affect others? Do you always try to do your best?
- Bulletin Board outside a classroom: “HAVE A SLICE OF OUR CHARACTER”  
Pizzas with pepperonis which proclaim: “I am citizenship because I don’t hit” “I trustful because I keep secrets” “I am respectful because I respect people.”
- Sign: In accordance with state laws, visitors must sign in at office”
- The school system’s vision statement and core beliefs posted throughout the school and on many classroom doors:

#### Our Mission, Our Vision, Our Purpose Statement

Shadow Lake staff has worked cohesively to develop a framework to identify our belief systems. Our mission, vision, and purpose statement reflects this collaborative effort.

**MISSION:** Our purpose is to focus on the child, and as adults, create a positive learning atmosphere in which we model dignity and respect for others.

**VISION:** We believe that every day, every child will be actively engaged in a nurturing and successful environment and that every adult will be passionately dedicated and inspired to motivate the development of children (as individuals) who will be leaders.

#### PURPOSE STATEMENT:

- 1) Every child is provided with an opportunity to learn at his or her own level.
- 2) Every child should feel safe in the school environment.
- 3) A strong partnership between parents, children and school personnel should be developed to ensure equal responsibility.”

Also posted is the school's schedule along with consequences for variations.

#### DAILY SCHEDULES

8:45 Students may enter the building  
 9:00 Students must be in classrooms  
 11:45 AM Kindergartners dismissed  
 11:45-12:30 All-Day Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd Grade Lunch/Recess  
 12:00-12:45 3rd and 4th Grade Lunch/Recess  
 12:45 PM Kindergarten begins  
 3:30 Dismissal begins

- Students arriving after 9:00 and before 10:30 are marked tardy
- Students arriving after 10:30 are marked with a "Half Day" Absence<sup>6</sup>
- Students that leave and return during the school day are marked with a "Partial" which is equivalent to a Tardy
- Students that leave prior to 2:00 are marked with a "Half Day" Absence
- Students leaving after 2:00 and prior to 3:30 are marked with an Early Dismissal which is equivalent to a Tardy

Mr. Scott reported that in a recent faculty meeting at this school with a mission statement and vision statement that claim an atmosphere of "dignity and respect for others" and "that every adult will be passionately dedicated and inspired to motivate the development of children (as individuals) who will be leaders," he was a bit disconcerted to learn that his principal had ripped up a petition written by the students in the third and fourth grades. The students had objected to a change in arrangements of lunch periods and decided to propose a different solution. Faculty reportedly derided the petition: "What do they think this is—a democracy?"

Michael Scott reported that at parent meetings and in staff mailboxes, the principal and others who wish to share insights about how to handle children, distribute articles written by John Rosemond, an "expert" who espouses the traditional values of behaviorism. Mr. Scott

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<sup>6</sup> Which recalls, from Foucault (1977), "Anyone who is absent for more than five minutes without warning... will be 'marked down for a half-day'" (p. 178).

reminded me that Rosemond, in his column, radio show and website, persuades parents and educators to be decisive authorities, rewarding compliance and punishing misbehaviors. In a recent column, Rosemond (2006a) claimed, “the best research is clear that high self-esteem is associated with anti-social behavior...I think the world was a much better place when children were little fishes who dared not get too big for their britches” (np). James Macdonald (1995) explains the impact of a viewpoint such as this:

We may in other words, “teach” our youngsters to be “good” and “right” so that they learn to see themselves in these terms and to have feelings of shame and anxiety when “bad” or “wrong.” The “badness” and “wrongness” encapsulates the developing individual in an affect-embeddedness which becomes a powerful drive for equilibrium, for returning to the security of what is “good” and “right” (p. 27).

And if that does not work, Rosemond (2006b) offered another suggestion for us as related in another recent column. Here he espouses lying to a child to cure him of:

One of the most annoying of childhood behaviors...the impulsive, narcissistic, inconsiderate, rude, talk-for-the-sake-of-talking loquaciousness, or –as it was once known—‘motor mouth’ by telling him that...you have consulted with a person who is an expert on children who talk too much and learned that the problem is highly associated with lack of sleep... and so you’ve decided to move his bedtime to an hour earlier. [Rosemond suggested telling him on a Saturday morning] –“a non-school day when he looks forward to staying up later than usual (np).

By distributing articles such as these to parents and teachers who are caring for the children of Shadow Lake, the school (via the principal and some teachers—who are not alone

as educators in considering this author an expert worthy of consultation) communicate that the Alfie Kohn<sup>7</sup> question they are responding to is “how can we get these kids to obey?” and that the goal is to find the easiest means possible to do so. The message here is one of the adults somehow banding together against the children who were once “our kin and our kind.”

While the promotion and implied endorsement of Rosemond may not faithfully signify the heart and mind of this school, it does offer an indication that while this school may not quite appear as prison-like as Andrews school, it does operate (as do most “Schools,” see first section) as a place where children are *calculable* and to be controlled by means which may include a well-placed lie.

### Kindergarten

Based on more than twenty years of experience as a teacher in elementary school and as facilitator and supervisor of field students based in elementary school sites and backed up by a somewhat cursory survey of early childhood texts (Althouse, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2003; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Dever & Falconer, 2008; Driscoll & Nagel, 2002; Gordon & Browne, 2008), I offer the following as “typical” of what can be found in the physical environment of kindergarten and of the way kindergarten time is allotted.

#### *Space*

While, certainly, a visit to any kindergarten classroom may suggest variations on these descriptions and listings, there is a tradition of what is “kindergarten” that allows for easy distinction between a kindergarten classroom and other classrooms in an elementary school.

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<sup>7</sup> Recall the questions posed by Alfie Kohn as reported earlier in this chapter: “...everything turns on the fundamental questions that drive classroom practice...*How can we get these kids to obey?*...[or] *What do these children need?*” (in Watson, 2003, p. *xiii*.).

While most graded classrooms fill more than half the space with individual desks and chair in scale to the grade-level/age of the child, in the kindergarten classroom, one will see tables seating 4-6 children with shared materials on them. The rest of the space is devoted to gathering space for meetings and whole group lessons, and areas set up as centers. In most kindergarten classrooms, one will find areas for blocks/construction; dramatic play with play props; a library including puppets, books on tape, pillows/beanbag chairs; a writing center; an art center with easels; and a play-dough or another kind of tactile center. One might also see a sand or water table; computers; science centers, sometimes with plants and/or animal; a felt board center; an invention center or a take-apart center; and a music area with instruments and song tapes.

### *Time*

Again, according to the early childhood texts (Althouse et al., 2003; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Dever & Falconer, 2008; Driscoll & Nagel, 2002; Gordon & Browne, 2008), information shared on teacher and school websites, and personal experience, the kindergarten day is typically divided into particular “times” or events. If one were to visit a hypothetical kindergarten classroom, one might expect to find the children and their teacher engaged in any of the following: arrival, whole group time, small groups, active times and quiet times, calendar time, learning centers, rest/nap, seat work/work assignment, snack, language, transitions, free time, center time, project time, recess, PE, art/music, outdoor play, shared reading, class meetings, and/or closing.

*Space and Time*

In one popular source in the early childhood field, *Scholastic.com*, teachers and parents are presented with examples of typical kindergarten days. In these descriptions, the components of kindergarten time and space blend:

Let us take an imaginary walk around a good kindergarten classroom. One of the first things you might notice (and be surprised by) is that not everyone is doing the same activity at the same time! Children are happily playing and working in small groups, or independently, in learning centers around the room:

- Four or five children are using math and science skills as they build a complicated structure in the block area.
- In the dramatic play area, a small group is creating a pretend restaurant complete with waiters “writing” orders and cooks “reading” recipes.
- The book area is filled with children enjoying library books and books written by their peers.
- Nearby, some children are writing and drawing in the writing center.
- ‘Hands-on’ science is happening at the water table as a group of children investigate which items will float or sink.
- In the math area, children sort, classify, weigh, and measure small rocks and stones.
- The teacher moves from group to group answering and asking questions, keeping the learning going.
- Later the students will all gather together to share what they have learned in the

centers, read a story, and practice literacy skills” (Church, 2007).

This is representative of many kindergarten classrooms. However, there is more going on here. Recall the tale that predicated this study—the story of Reuben’s fall. Julian’s difficulties in his kindergarten classroom derived from his inability to adhere to “silent playtime” and the inflexible structures that discounted his competence as a social member of his group. Mrs. Buttercup’s classroom, like the one describe above, had the accoutrements of kindergarten: blocks, a dramatic play area, easels, puzzles, a library with puppets, even a cage with a gerbil. In this space, filled with child-friendly materials suggesting accommodation of children’s interests and social needs, were specific rules and standards to which children had to comply in order to enter and take part. On most days, Julian did not qualify.

In classrooms I have visited, while children were certainly engaged in “playing and working in small groups, or independently, in learning centers around the room,” there were nearly always a few who have been removed from this context: sitting in “time out” or completing a paper left over from bell work or last night’s (or last week’s) homework. Their participation in idyllic and “typical” kindergarten was contingent on compliance to the narrow expectations regarding how to properly “do” kindergarten. The following are observed<sup>8</sup> examples of children’s non-compliance to— and so removal from—the order of kindergarten:

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<sup>8</sup> These incidental observations took place during my visits to schools as part of my responsibility to facilitate field placements and supervise student teachers and field students. The kindergartens observed were sometimes in the same districts as Mrs. Krinkle and Mr. Scott’s schools—and sometimes in the same buildings. All observations were made in the twelve months prior to, and during the time of, this research project.

- Briona was sent from her kindergarten class's carpet time nearly daily to stand on a taped-out square in another classroom because she sat too close, or even touched, other children.
- Three boys in a kindergarten class were sent to sit in chairs placed in three different parts of the room during center time because they carried materials from the art center to use in the block center.
- Jamil, a kindergartner, had to stay on the carpet while his classmates were dismissed to free time after he started to stand up before his name was called.
- Third-grader Phillip had to turn his card yellow – which indicated a range of penalties – for stopping to look at the hamsters on his way to line up for the restroom.
- Janeen “lost ‘Discovery’” when she tickled Olive while walking in line back to their first-grade classroom from a special.
- Five-year-old Bruce was forbidden to participate in recess because he forgot to put his homework in the basket before the second bell rang.
- Yana, a kindergartner, was sent to principal from music class for shaking her hips to *The More We Get Together* (“...the happier we’ll be...”).
- In front of two other classes of children, six-year-old Stephan was sent to walk up the stairs the “right” way five times – until he got it “right.”
- Tevin, a first-grader who missed eight days of school due to a family tragedy, had to stay in from recess to complete the stack of worksheets that had collected on his desk during his absence. Tevin had not had recess for quite a while before this event—he often did not “finish his work” in time to join the “good” workers for recess.

- Forty-four of the fifty-one first-graders in one school sat in one classroom with their heads down for an entire Friday afternoon while the seven children who “stayed on green” for the whole month enjoyed a pizza party and movie in another room. Some months, there are as few as three, and as many as ten children who make it for the entire month and earn their admission into the reward room.
- Two children, Donald and Tremonte’, whispered during a heads-down afternoon in the punishment room, and in addition to missing the pizza/movie party, were banned from recess the following Monday.

These may sound unusually harsh for young children in school—harsh for anyone in any situation. But, these punishments (“consequences” in Wong’s terms) are not unusual. These incidents are representative of kindergarten and other primary grade interactions as observed during informal and formal visitations made to kindergarten classrooms in nine different schools, including Shadow Lake and Andrews, across four local districts (one urban, three suburban).

Just as the earlier descriptions of idyllic kindergarten environments are typical, so is the following posting on a teacher’s classroom website titled *Mrs. White’s Kindergarten Class* (White, 2007) representative of many kindergarten classroom discipline policies to be found in classrooms and on the web:

Please refer to my classroom discipline letter/policy given to you at Parent Orientation for complete comments. Below our rules, rewards and consequences are listed again for quick reference:

**RULES:**

1. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS (please remember that this includes daily

routines)

2. KEEP HANDS, FEET AND OBJECTS TO YOURSELF
3. USE INSIDE VOICES (SILENT IN ALL HALLWAYS) AND WALK AT ALL TIMES WHILE INSIDE.
4. BE KIND AND RESPECTFUL TO OTHERS
5. CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF

REWARDS:

1. Praise
2. Hand stamps and stickers
3. Weekly treats for good behavior
4. Good notes home, comments on weekly work folder
5. Positive phone calls home
6. Awards at the end of each nine-week grading period: CITIZENSHIP AWARD for good behavior

CONSEQUENCES:

1. First infraction: Verbal warning with explanation ("second chance warning," does not move clothespin) will still receive hand stamp at end of the day if they remain at "second chance"
2. Second infraction: Move clothespin to yellow "warning face" circle; lose 5 minutes of free time ("S" on hand instead of hand stamp).
3. Third infraction: Move clothespin to red "sad face" circle, lose 10 minutes of free time, lose hand stamp ("N" on hand instead of hand stamp).
4. Fourth infraction: Note or phone call to parents.
5. Fifth infraction: Send to principal.
6. Severe clause: SEND DIRECTLY TO PRINCIPAL/ POSSIBLE DETENTION (np.)

Mrs. White's description of her rules and expectations are public—shared with not only the parents of the children in her classroom, but with other teachers and parents via the Internet. There are many such “plans” distributed and copied—with little variation in content or form. Small samplings of these have been included in Appendix B.

Kohn (in Watson, 2003), assuming the pervasiveness of such plans and their high recognizability to the reader, can then share, with little explanation, an example of one teacher's rating scale for her young students:

The boy explained to [his father] how the system works: a “1,” the lowest possible rating is very rare; a “2” is essentially a punishment for any action frowned on by the teacher; and a “3” signifies that the child has followed the rules. ‘What about a “4”?’ asked the father. ‘Well’, replied the boy, seeming awed by the mere mention of this number, ‘to get a “4,” you’d have to be a statue!’ (p. *xiii*).

Kohn used this example as I did Mrs. White’s—as representative of the programs and variations on behavior management that are out there (see Appendix B), “from cutesy to sadistic” (p. *xiii*)—programs, strategies and systems that are designed to control children. Even a young child “realizes that such policies are not intended to foster curiosity of creativity or compassion; [that] they are primarily designed to elicit mindless compliance, the ideal evidently being a student who resembles an inanimate object” (p. *xiii*).

The idea of preferring a child as a “statue” or an “inanimate object” may seem extreme—a joke made for effect. However, one of my most vivid memories of school staff meetings is about just that ideal. The teaching staff at my former school had been discussing “discipline” as a topic at this meeting and the conversation drifted from general solutions to better calculate the children’s behavior and how better to herd them through the day to the successes of some particular teachers’ methods. One staff member told of seeing Mrs. Benn’s lines when her children were standing in the hall waiting for their turn in the restroom. She praised Mrs. Benn’s quiet lines as the other staff members nodded and commended Mrs. Benn, one person praising her orderly lines this way: “The children were so still and quiet—they were almost lifeless!” My heart nearly broke.

## The Kindergartens

The following section details the two kindergarten classrooms which served as the sites for this study: Katie Krinkle's, a full-day kindergarten in Andrews Elementary School located in an urban district; and Michael Scott's, a half-day morning kindergarten in Shadow Lake Elementary School located in a nearby suburban district.

On entering either Mrs. Krinkle's or Mr. Scott's room, one would recognize it as a kindergarten classroom. Each have the following "places," as listed above: a gathering space for meetings and whole group lessons, dramatic play center (or housekeeping as some call it), blocks/construction, books/literacy (including puppets, books on tape, pillows/beanbag chairs), manipulatives, puzzles, computers, games, music, play props, tables seating 4-6 children with shared materials on them, and a teachers desk.

However, while each had the appearance of kindergarten, the rooms are as different as are the teachers and children in them. Mrs. Krinkle and Mr. Scott bring unique backgrounds, interests, and priorities to their classrooms.

### *Mrs. Krinkle's Space*

Mrs. Krinkle, who has been a kindergarten teacher, in the same room, for more than three decades, has devoted those years to collecting, building, and designing a wide range of instructional materials and spaces for her kindergarten class. The classroom is very large—more than 30' X 40'. Half of the floor space is carpet and half is linoleum. The classroom, like the building is old. The bulletin boards, chalkboards, and doors are framed in dark, aged wood. On one wall is a vintage fireplace in which Mrs. Krinkle has placed shelves that hold boxes of educational materials. There are four tables for the children to sit—each made of

two trapezoidal tables placed together into hexagon shapes—and the chairs (six at a table) have chair pockets placed over them where the children place their supplies and where the teachers place papers.

The room has obvious functions in different parts of the room and the areas included spaces for the following: five computers (but not all of them work); math tubs; flannel board; two separate tanks for turtles (one turtle per tank); a fish tank; several large containers with plants and grow-lights; a block center; puzzles; a range of make-believe areas; a library area with puppets, flannel kits, hundreds of books, big books with pointers and easels; an art center with painting and other art media; and book shelves loaded with manipulatives, more books, learning boxes, and labeled boxes of seasonal and thematic supplies. Mrs. Krinkle's classroom leads into a separate anteroom that holds storage areas for her, and with hooks and shelves for the children's coats and other belongings. Off this little area was a restroom—a very old restroom. Because of this, the children do not have to leave the classroom to use the restroom or get belongings from lockers.

Mrs. Krinkle has grown-children who, over the years, have donated many of their toys and books to Mrs. Krinkle's classroom, and she has also contributed a great deal on her own. Mrs. Krinkle is successful at writing grants and with the funds she receives from those, she purchases more materials for the children (her most recent was an assortment of elaborately authentic wild animal puppets) and funded field trips, such as the trips to farms during that current school year.

On her walls are soft sculptures, dozens of commercial, home-made and child-made posters—including ones of color words, senses, seasons, numbers, ABCs, Martin Luther

King, animals, flowers, maps, trees and more. She keeps a word wall that, at the time of the research, had the children's names and words related to the farm.

Mrs. Krinkle maintains a chart of behavior using weather as a theme. If the children's stars remained under "sunny," it meant they had a good day. However, some children were asked to move their stars, and progressed from cloudy to rainy to stormy with consequences of similarly progressing seriousness. Mrs. Krinkle did not ask the children to move their stars very often, but the possibility was always there.

#### *Mr. Scott's Space*

Given the similarities they shared as "kindergarten classrooms," Mr. Scott's room is quite different from Mrs. Krinkle's. First, his classroom is housed in a newer, more modern building (Shadow Lake was about 40 years old -- while Andrews school was constructed in 1920). The room itself is much smaller, yet it looked larger because Mr. Scott does not have nearly the amount of materials that Mrs. Krinkle has collected. Much of Mr. Scott's materials had come from the school as part of kindergarten, and from the PTA—which had been generous in providing him with materials he had asked for. Generalizing by gender can be dangerous--however, I venture to say that on looking in at Mr. Scott's room, I would have guessed it was a "man teacher's" room. While certainly functional, and containing (as will be detailed in a moment) what might be expected in kindergartens, it was somewhat sparse with obscure attempts at "décor."

Areas in Mr. Scott's room include housekeeping/make believe (wooden stove, sink, etc), blocks (in tubs, plastic, cardboard and wooden blocks), library (books in fronted-shelf, tubs, and beanbag chairs), gathering area (calendar, big book easel and box of big books,

games, chair), computer center (4 computers with children's programs installed) and shelves with art and math materials. Hanging from the ceiling were an inflatable fish, a disco ball and a sun mobile. Mr. Scott had labeled items in the room: door, closet, light, sharpener, chair, computer, teacher's desk, flag, wall, pencil, and clock.

Like Mrs. Krinkle's room, Mr. Scott's room has a fish tank: prompting children to ask "Where's the fish?", as it was empty. On his walls at the time of the study were a number line, posters with color words, and ABC chart across whole wall, Character Counts posters: Respect, Trustworthiness, Honesty; and on a word wall, Aug/Sept words: pencil, scissors, backpack, computer, books, crayons, paper, lunch box.

Mr. Scott no longer uses a formal discipline system. He once did, but was influenced by conversations with his student teachers and by his own study to abandon the "box" system he once used. At the time of the research, he was studying his new, more relational means of constructing a workable kindergarten classroom with his students, and including that studying in his in-progress Master's Thesis.

### Teachers

Much of what I have learned about teachers, I have learned by listening to their conversations about children. In the past, I could overhear such insights into teachers' views of their students and of their responsibilities as teachers in the teachers' lounge or in the hallways. In my travels to schools, I was still privy to some such discussions, but as a relative outsider. However, one particularly pertinent and available source of the teacher-to-teacher conversations is the Internet, on bulletin board and chat rooms. These are sites where teachers can take part in conversations on particular topics, grade levels, issues, etc. related to

school. These were of particular interest to me for several reasons. First, I was interested in the opportunity to “overhear” teacher talk in places other than the schools and systems where I have taught, facilitated or observed, so that I could learn if the topics and views that I had overheard and witnessed in the schools I worked in and visited were particular to my geographic area.

I was also eager to observe the exchanges where there is, in many ways, no observer. Virtual observations can be made by visiting teacher websites such as *teacher.net*, and reading the chat-boards under the categories of “classroom management” and “classroom discipline.” I found the conversations to be very similar to those one overhears in the teachers’ lounge: candid, venting, commiserating, and often somewhat shocking. What follows are outtakes from sequences of postings—postings that are highly representative of the hundreds of posting sequences of teacher conversations on *teacher.net*. I have also included some examples of these pages in Appendix C.

*Classroom Management* and *Classroom Discipline* are common topics to be found on teacher websites. Teachers post discussions that request and describe punishment and reward systems, including one titled, “The World’s Easiest Token System-- a classroom behavior management plan that’s simple for you and motivating for kids” (see Appendix B). The following is a list of phrases and titles found on various pages of *teachernet.com* describing a wide range of such systems:

- Fish Bowl
- Gumball machine
- Three strikes, you’re out!
- Friday Fling

- Checkbook reward
- Token/box of prizes
- The Ladder Plan
- Caught being Good Stickers
- Banana Bucks
- Bonus Bucks
- Bulldog Bucks
- Barnyard Bucks
- Behavior Bucks
- Mrs. Angelo's Angels
- Dragon Dollars
- Space Race
- Mystery Envelope
- Mystery Walker/ Mystery Person: "every time we walk in the hallway, I pull a name out of a jar and that is the "mystery walker." I look for the "mystery person" walking there and back. If they were successful, they color in one gumball and when they are all colored in, we have a bubblegum party.  
Nothing is better than gum in school!"
- 100 minute club
- Class compliments
- Goody drawings
- Green, yellow, red (or green, yellow, yellow, red; or green, blue, yellow, red; and other variations of this—green always meaning good and red being the worst)
- Clothespins
- Bonus Days
- Ice cream contest
- Hole punches

- JABBERJAWS – “write JABBERJAWS on the chalkboard. Each time children talk when they are not supposed to be, erase a letter. At the end of the day, if there are letters left, the children get that many minutes of free time.”
- PAWS
- Class store
- Apples on apple trees
- Class piggy bank
- Behavior puzzle
- Surprise!
- A silent cheer
- Pasta discipline
- Who’s watching
- Proper Pennies: pennies (copied from math book) to be spent in prize box
- Class stoplight
- Round ‘em up
- I spy
- Reward jar
- Colored cards
- Frogs on lily pads
- Puppy love
- Rockets to the moon (to space, to Saturn, to the universe)
- And on, and on, and on...

One particular online exchange, titled “ocean themed discipline plan”—which will follow this discussion—is representative of the nature of these systems and the effect of a misdirected focus on the *techne*’ mode of inquiry as cautioned in Henderson & Kesson’s (2004) *Curriculum Wisdom*:

Educators are often so caught up in the refinement of craft knowledge, the day-to-day business of teaching, and the pressures of the profession that we often fail to continuously ask the more meaningful “why” questions. Concern with *techne*’—with the details of method, process, and technique—can cause us to fail to see the forest for the trees (p. 49-50).

The “trees” in this case may be what is presented as “moral education”—a picture of moral growth and education that conforms to the general notion that children should get morally “better” as they develop and that moral education entails a process of gradual building up of virtue through socialization into one’s “cultural norms” (Bennett, 1993; Lickona, 1991; Wynne & Ryan, 1993). If this is true—*if* moral development is built on preset “cultural norms” which children must be molded to fit, then systems of coercion may make sense—at least when admiring the trees and so losing the forest.

Recall Noddings (2002) question: “Can coercion be a sign of caring?” She noted that many teachers would insist “that the coercion they exercise...is indeed a manifestation of caring. It is ‘for their own good.’” Alice Miller (1983/1990) described this as “poisonous pedagogy,” a rigid and coercive pedagogy that “seeks to substitute the will of the teacher for that of the student...insisting that what they are demanding is right and that coercion and cruelty, if they are used, are necessary ‘for the child's own good’” (in Noddings, 2002, p. 29).

Indeed, in reading over the content in the following chat room excerpts, the concept of coercion for the children’s own good is clearly evident. This chat board posting from <http://teachers.net/chatboard>, requesting help with a craft-oriented discipline plan elicited a

number of responses. It concerned a teacher's question about a system of management to "go with" her current academic theme: the ocean.

Post: Any ideas about an ocean themed discipline plan?

Posted by Ann on 5/31/07

For next year I am having an ocean theme. However, I cannot think of any cute ideas for a behavior plan. I read somewhere (can't remember where though) the behavior board said, "Behavior Bay." I am not really sure what I would do for a board like this but I like the title. If anyone has any good ideas please share.

Ann

Posted by HDGuy on 5/31/07

Hmmm...

**SUPPORT:** As the ocean supports the ship, we Support each other. We want each other to not only float, but swim really well. And so, in our shipboard classroom (on our island), we want each other to succeed at everything!

**SAFETY FIRST:** In order for us to have fun without endangering anyone else, we must create Safety. That might mean "No Running" aboard ship, but it means "Be Kind" in our shipboard classroom (on our island).

Good luck!

Tom

Posted by Carolyn on 6/01/07

You can also have a board that has clown fish and sharks. The clown fish represent good, respectable fish. The sharks represent bad behavior.

As the main theme, the clown fish (students) are trying to get across the ocean safely without being disturbed by the sharks (disrespect, bad behavior). Put the clown fish across the board as you feel they deserve it. If that student misbehaves, start moving a shark down from above (or up from below), indicating the clown fish is getting closer to the "danger zone." Corrected behavior, and the shark is sent back down (or above). This way, you're not punishing the child (clown fish), but pointing out the inappropriate behavior that is being done (the shark).

You can even incorporate different kinds of sharks to represent different kinds of misbehavior (great white = rude to teacher, nurse shark = talking out, etc.) You can even add dolphins in to indicate overall good classroom behavior or really smart choices (because dolphins are so smart!) If there are five dolphins by the end of the week, the kids are given some sort of reward/recognition. Make the

board interactive and allow students with exceptional behavior to add their own "ocean" contribution: coral reef, another type of fish, etc. Watch how the board comes to life!

I can hear it now: "The teacher told me I was a dolphin today!" "I got eaten by two nurse sharks AND a great white in class today"...That would make for interesting dinner conversation!

Posted by Tom(HDGuy) on 6/01/07

Carolyn,  
WOW!! I love this! What a great idea, and what a terrific way to have fun while enabling a whole new understanding of the support process! This makes me want to go to whatever classroom uses this notion and live there for awhile!!

All my best,  
Tom

Posted by Carolyn on 6/01/07

Why thanks, Tom!

I literally thought it up while sitting here at the computer. I've never seen this done in the classroom by any other teacher, it was just a burst of creativity from my brain. One thing that should probably be said about this idea: There needs to be some form of back up or notetaking the teacher needs to write down at the end of every day -- should kids decide to manipulate the fish themselves. That way, the teacher has some way to pick up where they've left off from the day before, should there be any type of "creative interference."

The great thing about this board idea (sorry to brag) is that it offers an immediate assessment of how the class is behaving overall. By knowing what the fish represent, the teacher can turn to the students at any time of the day and say, "Wow, there are way too many sharks on this board right now -- let's try to get them to swim away, ok?" or "Look at all the dolphins in the water! Wow! What a wonderful view of the ocean we have all created together!"

Carolyn" (posted on 5/31/07 and 6/1/07 on teachernet.com)

Troubling this notion of "how to" is the issue of variously deficient children whose presence serves to complicate the smooth application of these methods and techniques. The children in this teacher's room were to be eaten by a shark for disobedience such as "talking

out” (a nurse shark), or being “rude to teacher” (a great white); only the children with “exceptional behavior” would be permitted to “add their own ‘ocean’ contribution”; and finally, the children were *expected* to cheat and so force the teacher to make contingency plans via note-taking in order to circumvent any “creative interference” by the children (maybe a tiger shark would eat those children). The obscuring trees in this forest were assumptions these teachers held about the children as deficient and so in need of coercion and manipulation—for their own good—by those who are less deficient.

This view of children as in need of socialization and better preparation for the world of school was brought to the front page of the local section of a city newspaper in a report on “pupil’s readiness,” or lack thereof. The headline read, “Urban districts cite lack of preparedness” (*Akron Beacon Journal*, 2003) and claimed “recent research shows that a lack of kindergarten readiness is the single biggest reason for the achievement gap between poor and rich children.” The featured kindergarten teacher was “shocked by the differences in the students” when she returned to the city schools after teaching in the suburban “top performing” school that her own children attended. She said, “I am killing myself trying to catch them up on *what they don’t have* [emphasis mine].” Like the teachers who communicated on the next chat board entry, the children and their deficiencies have become in her eyes (and heart), not kin or kind, but are “killing” her.

While most of the discussions on the chat boards were related to *techne*’/craft, a good number were related to teachers’ similar viewpoints about children—that they were “killing” us with their deficiencies, immaturity, disobediences, inadequacies, and negative character

traits, such as being “ungrateful.” Here is one chat-board discussion, also from

<http://teachers.net/chatboard>, titled, “How to handle ungrateful students”:

Post: How to handle ungrateful student????

On 11/24/06, kat wrote:

Hi, everyone! I've been teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> grade for a few years now and I do really enjoy this grade level. I have set rules and procedures in my classroom and the kids understand them. As a bonus, I have a bulletin board (For November it was titled 'Turkey-rific Behavior'), where the kids have to ALL be following the rules to earn a reward to staple to the board. They must earn 25 and then we can vote on a class-wide reward. On the back of a few of the rewards, there are short (5 min) games that we play or I spontaneously read a fun poem aloud, etc. This system has been fun for the class (and me) in the past, but this year, it seems that after we do the fun small reward, I'll have kids that seem ungrateful. For example, I heard someone groan after the small reward was revealed! After the class-wide reward, I actually had a kid tell me that he didn't have a good time! The kids do know that this is just a fun 'extra' thing I do...I've decided that if I leave school at the end of the day unhappy or bothered, it's not worth it to me anymore. If I tell the kids that the games have to stop, am I punishing the kids who are grateful and deserving? Your thoughts are appreciated.

On 11/26/05, ha ha wrote:

Over the years I have noticed that kids have more of a sense of entitlement and no ability to express gratitude whatsoever. Last Christmas, I gave each kid a ruler with his or her name painted on it. All of the kids looked very miffed. One actually said, 'This is it?' So, I took all the rulers back, broke each one in half, and threw them in the trash. It was worth every dime to see the look of shock on their faces. Extreme, but it got the point across.

On 11/26/06. ellen wrote:

Wow. That must have felt good. But really, doesn't this sort of thing just make you want to not spend a dime of your own money on them?

The content of these postings is extraordinarily telling. My experience in schools, as a teacher and as a university facilitator/researcher has provided a long-term window into the

zeitgeist of teacher/child relationships—one that frightens me. For teachers adhering to relationships with children based on systems of rewards and punishments and the advice of child-rearing experts such as John Rosemond, their regard for children is conditional on how well the children meet their adult needs (“I’ve decided that if I leave school at the end of the day unhappy or bothered, it’s not worth it to me anymore”). Indeed, “children who fulfill their parents’ [and teachers’] conscious or unconscious wishes are ‘good’ but if they ever refuse to do so or express wishes of their own that go against those of their parents, they are called egoistic and inconsiderate” (Miller, 1979/1990, p. 12).

As in many of the exchanges on this chat-board, the initiator asked for help with a problem or concern. And, again, as in many of the exchanges asking for input, the concern had to do with: (a) fill in the blank (some deficiency—pick one: ungrateful, noisy, tantrum-throwing, interrupting, talkative, lazy, defiant, disrespectful...) students; (b) efficient and easy ways to manage said (some deficiency) students and/or; (c) techniques that no longer seem to work like they did before. If one spends time reading through any random sampling of these unsolicited and candid discussions, one might get the impression that these teachers don’t much like the children in their classrooms.

#### The Teachers

The following are brief introductions to Katie Krinkle and Michael Scott, the teachers who volunteered their classrooms for this study.

##### *Katie Krinkle*

I have known Mrs. Krinkle for over twenty years. I taught in the same school district, although never in the same school building. We became acquainted as we participated in

kindergarten curriculum development for the school system and as we facilitated system-wide workshops for kindergarten teachers. In these inter-building associations, it was often Mrs. Krinkle and I who were aligned together against the majority of the teachers and administrators in selection of system-wide texts, curriculum decisions in math, science and language arts, and especially in advocating for children in those contexts. We shared a similar concern that many educators involved in large-scale decision-making grossly underestimate the intellectual, moral and social capabilities of young children. Even though we also shared some fundamental differences in our beliefs about ways to enact our regard for children, I have considered Mrs. Krinkle an ally in the schools for a very long time.

While Mrs. Krinkle and I do not always agree about everything related to Kindergarten, I trust Mrs. Krinkle's deep regard for children. I have observed her with children, and have listened to her talk about her students—always with respect and enjoyment.

I am not the only one who sees Mrs. Krinkle as different—her colleagues do, too. She is highly respected and is/had been a leader in her building. I qualify the leadership part because of what Mrs. Krinkle told me when I expressed concern to her about what seemed to be happening with math in a first grade classroom upstairs. She said, “Yes, I thought I had them convinced—it was much better a couple of years ago, but with the tests and all the pressure for the kids to get those scores up, they're [the teachers] too scared to think for themselves anymore.”

More significantly, teachers in Mrs. Krinkle's school demonstrate their view of her by sending her their problems. Every year, Mrs. Krinkle receives 2-4 “new” students. These are generally not children who had recently moved into the neighborhood, but are children from

other classrooms. When a teacher can't "handle" a child anymore, they are sometimes sent to Mrs. Krinkle's room as a time-out, but just as often, the child is moved to Mrs. Krinkle's classroom permanently.

Of note here, is Mrs. Krinkle's smile. It is not the practiced, scripted smile described by Wong in Table 3; nor is it the measured smile of David Jardine's (1998) puzzled student teacher<sup>9</sup>. Rather, Mrs. Krinkle's smile is an artifact of her connection to the children. She "looks deeply" and smiles, for "the source of a true smile is an awakened mind...[and] smiling helps you approach the day with gentleness and understanding" (Hanh, 1990b, p. 3).

*Michael Scott*

On my first visit to Mr. Scott's school, I noticed that outside every classroom a bank of lockers. Every single classroom had labeled these lockers with children's names. Moreover, nearly every single classroom had placed on those lockers die-cut, store-bought shapes with the children's names written on them by teachers. Every classroom had a theme: dogs, frogs, smiley faces, apples, triceratops, stars, balloons, bulldogs (the local high school's mascot), composition books (various colors), bees, bones, "school"(bells, apples, books, crayon boxes, pencils, rulers). However, Mr. Scott's lockers had wrinkled up, somewhat scribbly nametags. He had given each child a ½ sheet of white paper on which the children wrote their own names and decorations. Without even benefit of lamination, the children proudly hung their nametags on the lockers they shared with one another and with the afternoon kindergarten (one locker had FIVE nametags on it!) and I noted that individual children made adjustments to their nametags at times when passing it on their way to special or recess.

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<sup>9</sup> "You mean you want me to smile more? Maybe I should have used more eye contact or something?"

Michael Scott was, during the time of the study, an 8-year veteran of teaching. His experience, like Mrs. Krinkle's was all in kindergarten and in the same classroom where he started. He teaches next door to another male kindergarten teacher—his mentor teacher during student teaching. I had known of Mr. Scott for about two years. While I did not meet him until he was a student in a graduate class I taught in the summer of 2006, I knew of him from his role as a mentor teacher to a student I had had in class the previous fall. This class was a *Guidance of Young Children* class—and I had learned through “Mary” (the field student in Mr. Scott's class), that her mentor teacher was interested in the ideas we talked about in class regarding ways to teach with care and regard for children as a paramount consideration. By coincidence, he came to join my course that summer—a course that was related to building thoughtful, caring “sociomoral environments” for early childhood classrooms and Mr. Scott devoured the readings and engaged in discussion with an intensity derived from a deep interest in the intellectual, moral and emotional aspects of the teaching relationship.

Mr. Scott, like Mrs. Krinkle, reported that the colleagues in his building view him as “different.” His method of trusting children to travel to the bathroom individually as needed; his rule of not talking *too much* (as opposed to not at all) in the hallways; and of course, his less-than-stellar locker design mark him as perhaps (as colleagues warned him about three of his incoming kindergartners after seeing them on the first day of school) “out of control.” He also told me that after one trip to the restroom too many for some, he realized that “my children have defiled the sanctity of the hallway,” and playfully called the reactions of the other teachers the “sanctimonious and the profane.”

## Summary

This chapter presented an overview of Schools, Kindergarten, and Teachers, as well as of the particular schools, kindergartens and teachers involved in this study. These “readings” provided in this chapter required the best of my (the researcher’s) ability to, as qualitative inquiry requires:

Experience or create qualities worth experiencing...[requiring] an ability to notice and to appreciate the symbolic import of social objects and activity...We can ask: What are our classrooms made of? What is the character of the tasks we ask students to engage in? (Eisner, 1998, p. 126).

The purpose of this chapter was two-fold. The first function was to provide a picture of and an educational criticism of “school,” and especially its structured order, including the procedures and rules that the children must negotiate. In order to discuss children’s disobedience in kindergarten classrooms, one must have an understanding of what is expected of obedient children. This chapter served to remind that, for the most part, teachers in schools expect obedient children to be quiet, to be in the right place at the right time, to keep one’s self to one’s self, and to cooperate with the adult in charge.

The second function of this chapter was to introduce the particular teachers and their schools and kindergartens involved in this study in order to place them in the larger context of school, but also to provide a context for the moments of disobedience that are described next in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V  
MOMENTS in KINDERGARTEN: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

*Small things- the morning, perspective - can be lost in the bowels of the earth,  
in tunnels where trains convey bodies, human beings with purposes,  
human beings surviving.*

(Wenner, 2004, p. 3)

Introduction

I worry about small things being lost. This chapter serves to hold small moments up to the light in order to not only see them—but value them just as much as the “big” things. This study seeks to “see” through experienced and concurrently fresh eyes qualities (which can be very small things) worth experiencing in a kindergarten classroom; and to express and complicate these qualities via “rhizomatic logic” to the readings of the children’s moments of disobedience in order to “build complex and diverse pictures of” the readings of children’s texts (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 144-145).

MacNaughton (2005) cautioned:

The everyday language, ethics, routines, rituals, practices, expectations, ideas, documents and invocations of quality in early childhood services are formed through and motivated by very particular understandings of children and how best to educate them. Over time, some of this knowledge has settled so firmly into the fabric of early childhood studies that its familiarity makes it just ‘right’, ‘best’ and ‘ethical’ (p. 112).

In the previous chapter were descriptions of the structured expectations of schools, classrooms and teachers in general—including the rules, routines and regulations constituting the implicit lessons that Phillip Jackson (1968) has termed the “hidden curriculum.” In descriptions of the two schools, two classrooms and two teachers involved in this particular

study, the hidden curriculum is in play, “socializing students to the norms, values, purposes of schooling” (Pace & Hemmings, 2007, p. 13)

It is important to note here that the goal in spending time in these classrooms with these teachers is not to comment on these discourses or to say the teachers are “wrong.” As Pillow (1997) discussed the teachers in her work, the teachers I watched and engaged with are “dedicated, caring professionals” for whom I have the highest respect. However, in the process of “situat[ing] and attempt[ing] to understand what impact the regulatory function of [teacher control] may have on [the moments of disobedience] spoken and embodied in these classrooms” (p. 361), it is necessary (and desired) to confront the choices and actions made by these teachers in the course of their play within the context of the selected moments.

This chapter details particular events that occurred within the walls of Mrs. Krinkle’s and Mr. Scott’s classrooms and schools—events that I have named “moments of disobedience.” Disobedience, in this study, describes an action or interaction that appears to disregard or defy structured expectations. These expectations might be explicitly stated (verbally or textually), or they might be implicitly expressed via the physical arrangement of school, normalizing procedures and rituals, and/or something as simple as a glance from another child.

For each of the three moments of disobedience that comprise this chapter: *Right Here*, *Right Now*; *Behind Her Back*; and *Shoulder to Cry On*, I offer the following: (a) a context, (b) a description of the moment via transcriptions and narrative, (c) a recap of the moment, (d) a rhizomatic analysis of the moment by laying another text or texts over the text of the

moment, and (e) a brief description of what those texts “do” to the original text (the moment of disobedience).

Recall that rhizoanalysis is a means to explore the politics of a text in order to create new texts as it serves to both deconstruct and reconstruct a text. It deconstructs a text (e.g., a research moment or child observation) by “exploring how it means; how it connects with things ‘outside’ of it, such as its author, its reader and its literary and non-literary contexts; and by exploring how it organizes meanings and power through offshoots, overlaps, conquests and expansions” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, in Alvermann, 2001, p. 120).

#### Moment of Disobedience: “Right Here, Right Now”

The following moment of disobedience is representative of children’s responses to the time and space constraints of the kindergarten classroom. A kindergarten teacher is expected to marshal each year’s crop of kindergartners into the very specific structure of school. As described by Wong (1998), “the effective teacher establishes good control of the class in the very first week of school” (p. 4). And the job of the kindergarten child is to synthesize the stated, the implicit, and the structural cues in order to seamlessly take on the role of the good kindergartner. These school/kindergarten expectations are guided by normative rules of events. Complicating matters is that these tacit rules vary according to situation. Children and teachers must learn the rules and expectations for each situation, recognize the differences, and produce behavior appropriate to each situation (Mehan, 1979).

As in Mehan’s work studying the lessons learned by taking part in the organizations of school, children are actively involved in making sense of the everyday events of the kindergarten classroom, and are, in fact, working with their teacher in contributing to its

organization. Often this organization is taken for granted and not remarked upon. Attending to the organization can sometimes require an outside or sideways viewpoint.

One of my earliest recollections of looking askance at what I see involves a long-ago visit from my brother to my kindergarten classroom. He had come to chaperone a field trip that day and was early. I remember feeling embarrassed by what I assumed he would view as disorder and chaos and a lack of “control” on my part as the teacher in this kindergarten classroom. But instead, here is what he said: “It’s amazing. (And I waited for the hammer to fall)...you ask them to come to the carpet and they come. You turn the page in the book and they get quiet so they can hear the next page. You say ‘clean up’ and they do. It’s amazing.” And I realized—it was!

An important aspect of any effort to study moments of disobedience is that an understanding or at least an awareness of the fundamental order of the context situation is required if one is to be able to spot disorder. And most certainly, the fundamental order is generally taken for granted as it was above and so all I could see in that particular instance were the parts that “stuck out”: the disobediences. My brother saw the order and rule of kindergarten—and probably saw the minor disobediences that so concerned me as part and parcel of that larger order. In all discussions of moments of disobedience in this chapter, the larger compliant order is included as a necessary prerequisite for said disobedience.

### *Setting Boundaries*

The arrangement of Mr. Scott’s classroom (and any kindergarten classroom) reflects the expectations of each space. Table arrangements—the placement of the tables as well as the distributions among them—determine whether and with whom children could interact

during the times the children were directed to sit at those tables. Spaces for gathering—the carpet and the lesson areas—are open with a designated teacher chair to cue the children where they should direct their attention. Some center areas—the block area, the library, make-believe and the math tubs area—are somewhat hidden. Placed in corners or against walls with furniture dividing the spaces from clear lines of vision in the classroom—these places offered the children opportunities to act without consistent supervision. Notes documenting the children’s interactions while working in these areas of the classroom often included a range of bawdy or bathroom talk (whispered, snickering comments about butts or heinies, giggling and pointing out pictures of partially naked characters in books like *In the Night Kitchen* and *I’m Going to Run Away*, and one gasped-filled, mouth-covering conversation about whether or not Mr. Scott poops), as well as physical interactions that included sword play (with snapped together math cubes), paddling one another with the long wooden blocks, and, on a more gentle note (but just as frowned upon in school) laying on top of one another and stroking hair.

However, while children recognize these spaces as places of relative freedom from surveillance, it is the teacher who generally arranges the spaces and determines who may go to these spaces and when. While kindergarten is unusual among school classrooms in the relatively generous allotments of “free” space, classroom arrangements are still “designed to maximize the teacher’s ability to keep an eye on students” (Nespor, 1997, p. 133). This is true in Mr. Scott’s room, too.

*Mr. Scott's Articulations of Order*

The following are descriptions of a selection of the many and varied attempts by Mr. Scott to assist the children in the morning kindergarten at Shadow Lake Elementary School to adapt to the time and space constraints inherent to kindergarten. The moments have been gathered via videotape during the first few weeks of school at the time Mr. Scott was most carefully articulating the boundaries that define the time and space of kindergarten. The following transcripts and descriptions offer some examples of the means Mr. Scott used to engage the children in kindergarten expectations regarding where they should be and when. This particular snapshot of Mr. Scott's classroom was taped on Friday, September 8, 2006, as the children arrived in the morning.

The children on entry moved independently to seats at 3 rectangular tables and 2 trapezoidal tables pushed together to make one hexagonal table – with about 6 chairs at each table. Most children placed their backpacks on their seatbacks—hanging them by their straps even though they have lockers in the hallway.

The children talked to one another and some moved from table to table before choosing one at which to sit. The conversations remained generally confined to those sitting nearby—either at the same table or at chairs that are adjacent to one another at the closest tables. The talking rose and fell in volume. Some children absently played with the crayons that fill the plastic tubs. While there was some movement once seated—turning in seat to speak to another child, arm reaching into crayon tub, it was as if their bottoms were glued to chairs—not one child left their chair once seated. (Although Fred and Jamie dawdled choosing a

chair, walking from table to table with their book bags held in front of them as if ready to place on their chairs).

Line<sup>10</sup>

103. T: ((walks between and around the tables carrying a laptop, which he is absently looking at and typing as he walks))

104. T: ((looks at the clock periodically and as the time draws near to 9:00, moves toward the chair that is placed against the chalkboard very near one of the tables, and sits, slowly typing))

105. T: OK friends, that bell's going to ring any minute

106. (unknown child): Yes sir

107. ((Buzzer from loudspeaker))

108. ((Children continue to talk loudly and engage in hand play—at one table four children have their hands in the crayon tub, two of them pulling at one crayon)).

109. T: Boys and girls, there's the bell.

110. T: There's the bell and it tells us be ready to listen. Because the uh ((1.0)) the morning announcements are coming on

Mr. Scott's actions and statements indicated an awareness of the time elements inherent in the kindergarten day. Even during a relatively relaxed portion of the day – arrival—a time in which the children were engaged in casual conversation with one another and there is

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<sup>10</sup> The transcription symbols are very basic. In all transcript excerpts, T represents the classroom teacher, and the children are represented by their pseudonyms. Actions or narrative are placed between double parentheses (( )) and longer narratives are italicized. If there are pauses, they are indicated by approximate number of seconds inside double parentheses (( )). Single parentheses ( ) indicate something unheard. All caps indicates LOUD.

some ease in the structure of time and space. Recall: “The children talked to one another and some moved from table to table before choosing one at which to sit”; Mr. Scott checked the clock (Line 104) and as he anticipated the impending announcements, and cued the children via a gentle warning (Line 105, “Okay friends, that bell’s going to ring any minute”). Finally, he directly explained the function of the bell (Line 110: “There’s the bell and it tells us be ready to listen”).

The children’s actions for the most part, demonstrated that the lessons of kindergarten are clear. With very little direction, the children “knew” where to be and when. They have entered the classroom on their own—and have selected places to sit where they will stay until directed to move elsewhere. The children who resist these elements of the day are, for the purpose of this work, disobedient. Mr. Scott, for whom time was of paramount importance, and for whom the children’s adherence to the “school” expectations was facilitative to his role as their teacher, expended a great deal of effort to explain to the children the time and space constraints of kindergarten. The following are brief non-sequential excerpts representing these efforts:

Line

111. T: And the song is over. That means that it’s time to walk on over to the calendar.
112. T: You’re expected to be quiet and listening in three, two, one, zero, Mason you need to scoot up I am worried that you’ll bump your head
113. T: Once again there are people who are not ready... it’s not time to talk to a friend

114. T: This is a turn-taking time.
115. T: That'll have to wait ((to a kid who has offered a non-sequitor during sharing time, implying that it's not time for that))
116. T: Wait til I say go ((spoken when one child gets get up too soon to go to centers--before all the groups were named))
117. T: Noowww, I would like you to be able to move around the room and talk to anyone you want ((0.2)) however we're still sharing things from home. That's what we're talking about. That's what should be in our hands."
118. T: ((turns out the lights))—would everyone please put everything away... carpet time is coming up.
119. T: Boys and girls, here's what we need and we need it right now."
120. T: Terocko, right here, right now. ((1.0)) Right here, right now.
121. T: Right away, I'm seeing a problem with our circle. The first problem we had was it took too long to make our circle.
122. T: ((after sending children back to their chairs)) Look at me right now. Our meeting is a waste of time ((0.5)) when people don't come to the carpet ready to listen when we get to the carpet.
123. T: That circle was a problem too, I saw people coming over and they were spinning around friends, like this ((demonstrates this while talking))....  
And...(0.5). It was probably about two minutes before we could sit down.
124. T: If you wanted to try out Billy Bob Joe's machine, Now's the time to do that.  
We're going to stay at the carpet. You can talk to anyone you would like now.

You don't have to raise your hand for a turn. You can get up and move. You don't need to stay in a circle. You can talk to anyone now

125. T: Boys and girls, here's what we need and we need it right now. Right here, right now. Right here, right now. And sit!

Mr. Scott used language along with nonverbal behavior and cues in order to continuously orient the children to expectations of the kindergarten classroom. He used the word "time" over and over, actually naming parts of the day: "time to walk on over to the calendar" (Line 111); "not time to talk to a friend" (Line 113); "turn-taking time" (Line 114); "carpet time" (Line 118); and "the time to do that" (Line 124).

In addition, he demonstrated to the children that he was actively keeping time and noting the passage of time. For instance: "You're expected to be quiet and listening in three, two, one, zero" (Line 112); "carpet time is coming up" (Line 118); "the first problem we had was it took too long to make our circle (Line 121); "Our meeting is a waste of time" (Line 122); and "It was probably about two minutes before we could sit down" (Line 123).

Finally, Mr. Scott delineated the places children should be at particular times and the importance of coordination of those elements. More often than not, he noted time as the children were to transition from one place to another: to come to the carpet, line up, go to the tables, get in a circle, go to centers, to transition to clean up, even to stand or sit (so, in the chair or not in the chair). In these non-sequential examples, Mr. Scott implied or specified place as follows: "That means that it's time to walk on over to the calendar" (Line 111); "Mason you need to scoot up I am worried that you'll bump your head" (Line 112); "Noowww, I would like you to be able to move around the room" (Line 117); "((after

sending children back to their chairs)) Look at me right now. Our meeting is a waste of time ((0.5)) when people don't come to the carpet ready to listen when we get to the carpet" (Line 122).

Mr. Scott named times via their function and implied function of space in his directions. Sitting in chairs implied a stasis—the children tended to stay there until called out, and a return to chairs was often used as means to interrupt what is occurring and/or a means of control—because as the children sat in chairs, they were less likely to be in contact with one another and their freedom of movement was impeded. A call to the carpet did not only name the place to come, but also the time to come (right now), and what to do/be on arrival (ready to listen). When expectations were different from this default structure, Mr. Scott must articulate this: “We’re going to stay at the carpet. You can talk to anyone you would like now. You don’t have to raise your hand for a turn. You can get up and move. You don’t need to stay in a circle. You can talk to anyone now” (Line 124).

### *Pushing Boundaries*

As Mr. Scott and the children collaborated on their use of the time and space of the kindergarten, the boundaries became drawn and redrawn. Contrary to the inflexibility of the disciplined classroom as described by Wong & Wong (1998) and other experts in the field of classroom management (see Chapter IV), the teacher and the children in this classroom were responsive to one another as they interacted within it. Most of the children consistently remained within the boundaries with very little variation—and, in fact, did not move from one place in the classroom to another until cued to do so. When the cue did come—a verbal direction, a hand wave, a nod, a ringing bell—these children responded immediately and as

prescribed. A few, though, often operated on the edges of these boundaries, sometimes pushing them out of shape a bit. When these boundaries of time and space *were* pushed, the teacher responded by either making new space for the broader boundary or pushed it back in. The following details a particular event involving snack time in which the time and space kindergarten boundaries were pushed by many of the children. Following this example, I will focus on one particular child, Mason, whose engagement with the time and space restrictions of kindergarten was particularly flexible.

Line

126. T: We've got about two minutes to enjoy our snack (.01) before we go out to play.

*The children continue to enjoy their snack and to talk with one another. Snatches of conversation can heard related to what color the food is, how much one can put in a mouth, and lots of laughter, children generally stay in chairs while talking and laughing and eating, but periodically a child will get up to throw something away, to talk to someone at a different table, to walk out into the hall to get a drink, put a lunchbox away, and to walk into the hall to use the restroom. The teacher is walking between tables and casually talking to the children and responding to their questions.*

127. Sally((to Mr. Scott)): Can we tell jokes?

128. T: Yes, you can tell jokes, it's an excellent time for jokes.

129. Fred: knock knock....

130. ((More of the enjoyment of snack (180.0).

131. Mr. Scott has been checking the clock and is gauging the time left before the kindergarten recess is scheduled to begin.))

The three kindergarten classes had arrangements to meet outside for recess and the three kindergarten teachers take turns in supervision. In addition, Mr. Scott's class had lessons and specials scheduled for the time remaining for morning kindergarten after the scheduled recess. Mr. Scott was acutely aware of the constraints of time here and to gently initiate the transition between snacks and clean up he began reminding the children about some solutions they had suggested during a class meeting they had had before regarding concerns about snack.

132. T: There were a few helpful hints from you guys. ((.05)) One person said we need to get started right away. Another person said it's, ahh ((.02)) probably a good idea to talk quiiiietly while we do this; another person said as soon as you're done, see if you have a friend that needs your help. As soon as you are cleaned up, please sit down quiiiietly at your table so we'll be getting ready for the playground

133. ((As he is talking, the majority of the children are busily cleaning up: putting left over snack in lunch boxes, throwing away trash, leaving the room to go in the hall with lunchboxes or book bags, and then sitting down. Some are not.))

134. T: Mason, are you all cleaned up, friend?

135. Mason: ((off camera)) yeah...

136. T: One helpful hint was to do it right away ((checks two more tables))

137. T: Now, Mason, it's time to clean up so close the lunchbox

138. Mason: ((enters camera range with lunch box))
139. T: And put it away.
140. Mason: ((with lunchbox, trots over to another table, swinging the box, and after weaving in and out of every chair and table with arms outstretched, reaches the counter by the sink and carefully sets his lunchbox on it and then crawls beneath Cupcake's and Fred's table and disappears from view))
141. T: Mason, you're done cleaning up? Have a seat in your chair.
142. T: ((continues to walk from table to table making suggestions for cleaning up))  
Hey, guys, have a seat in your chair when you are finished cleaning up ((2.0)).
143. ((While most of the children have already cleaned up and are sitting quietly and patiently waiting for the next direction from Mr. Scott—the direction that will transition them outside. However, some children are still eating, some are talking to a friend while their snack wrappers lie in front of them on the table, and some children have not yet returned to their seats.))
144. T: Hey guys, recess is starting without us. We're having the same problem that we did before ((walks out to the doorway and checks down the hall for children to return from restroom ((3.0))
145. ((Na'ton and Billy come back in the room—either from the restroom or from their lockers))
146. ((Mason and Lemmie are seated at their tables but are engaging in hand play—each taking turns laying a hand flat on the table, palm up so that the other can smack it, if they can time it before the hand-on-table person snatches it away.))

147. T: C'mon over and have a seat at the carpet
148. T: Now. Come to the carpet and come ready to listen...
149. Sally: Can I throw this away?
150. T: Please do—it should have been thrown away about 10 minutes ago.
151. T: Mason, I want you right here and I want you to listen
152. ((Mr. Scott has walked to the carpet— and the children have followed him, many pushing in chairs as they rise and are, for the most part, silent as they make this transition. When they are all seated, Mason included, Mr. Scott reasons with them.))
153. T: Does it matter if we get outside?
154. ((children indicated their answer with raised hands, and)) “yeah, yeah.”
155. T: Now what you guys are telling me is that you want to go outside on time, and you are also telling me that snack time is important to you. But you need to be trustworthy in order for it to work. Right now do you think I am thinking we're going to have a good clean up time tomorrow?
156. (children): noooooooooo
157. T: I am worried about it
158. Sally: ((fingers in mouth, kind of cute-girl-ish)) no you're nooooootttt
159. T: Yes. ((1.0)) I am.
160. T: We have only about 4 minutes. Very quick play time. We wasted a lot of time cleaning up.
161. T: Now let's line up behind Allie.

162. ((The children, en masse, get up from the carpet and hurry into what approximates a line. Terocko has hurried enough that he is the first in line, not Allie.))
163. Sally: ((loudly)) There's a boy in front ((2.0)) There's a boy in front!!!
164. ((The children are in a rough line, many are talking, hands are snatched, pulling one another, hands around necks, hands touching hair....))
165. (unidentified child/ren): OWWWW
166. Sally: There's a boy in fr....
167. (unidentified child) OoHHHH
168. T: We have about three minutes left guys
169. (unidentified child): Ohhhwww!
170. (unidentified child):OOOOWWW!
171. (unidentified child, loudly): STOP!!
172. T: Sit down in your chairs. We're out of time. Sit down in your chairs. We're out of time.
173. T: Sit down, we're out of time. Sit down, we're out of time.

In this excerpt, a small number of children were engaged in various kinds of disobedience: taking too much time (Lines 134-139; 142-153); disregarding function of space, in this case, the quiet, and physically separate space of The Line (Lines 162-173); and disdainful of the expectations of transitional times as ones in which one is to be relatively quiet and so ready to listen, and still, and so ready to move on command (Lines 148; 150; 161-172). What I did not clearly describe, however, is that of the 23 children, most of them—18

or so—were totally compliant with the stated and unstated expectations. These children assisted in drawing and maintaining the kindergarten boundaries and quietly pulled back as individual members pushed them out. It was not Mr. Scott alone who set these boundaries, but it was with the children’s tacit agreement. They were complicit in the process of setting these boundaries and their compliance pointed to the non-compliance of the dissidents.

In later conversations, Mr. Scott worked to reason with them about the bargains to be made with time and about the basic idea of time as a commodity—IF it takes too long to clean up from snack, we’re late for recess; IF it takes too long to clean up for snack, we might not have snack anymore. IF we cannot line up quietly in the allotted amount of time, we miss recess. He must also communicate that having snack is not necessarily a done deal by saying, “Every day, in school, you guys have been able to count on me to say, ‘Time for snack, ’” while problematizing whether or not to have snack or not. Ever again.

*Mason Stretches Boundaries: Right Here, but Not Now; Right Now, but Not Here*

After the children were out of time and sent back to their seats, Mr. Scott reluctantly went to the board to where he had posted the schedule for that day.

Line

174. T: So let’s take a look at our schedule here. Also outside recess is finished.

175. Mason: But we always go outside

176. T: Not today.

This little exchange is important because in this next series of moments of disobedience, I will be focusing on Mason and his particular brand of negotiating the time and space boundaries of kindergarten. Watching Mason push and pull boundaries of time and

space in kindergarten led me to sometimes wonder if he had any idea of what is happening in the kindergarten, and at other times, to wonder if he is anticipating and aware of more than even the teacher. He bridged from moment to moment a vagueness and an acute awareness in the workings of the kindergarten. His statement above, “but we always go outside” was a reminder to Mr. Scott that he (Mason) knows the way it (Kindergarten) works. And the absence of going outside became a palpable presence to Mason, as he questioned Mr. Scott three times later that morning about going outside: “Don’t forget: outside, Scott,” “When are we going outside?” and “Have we gone outside yet?” In making sense of the events of kindergarten, Mason had built some structures that were indelible: the components of the day remain constant even though the timing of them and their actual enactment may vary.

This holds true in the following descriptions of Mason’s flexible participation in the kindergarten. Each vignette offers some context and then Mason’s response to that context. These moments of Mason’s disobedience are ones in which he engages with the boundaries set by kindergarten, Mr. Scott and the other children as if those boundaries were elastic—stretching but not breaking.

*“I Said It, Too”: Mason Fakes the Pledge*

Mr. Scott and the children were preparing to participate in saying the Pledge of Allegiance at the close of the morning announcements.

Line

177. PA: I would like ...

178. ((Fred stands))

179. PA: you to stand as

180. ((Mr. Scott lifts both hands in a rising motion and the children begin standing and pushing in chairs. Some turn to face the place in the room where the flag is placed))
181. PA: we slowly and proudly recite the pledge of allegiance.
182. T ((with some approximations by most students)): I pledge allegiance to the flag
183. ((Bravo puts knees on chair))
184. T and children: of the united states of America
185. ((Bravo sits))
186. T and children: and to the republic
187. ((Fred sits, Mason scratches knee while facing the chalkboard (not the flag)))
188. PA: I pledge allegiance to the flag
189. T: Oh! They just started ((laughs)) to...To the flag of the united states of
190. ((Eric picks a wedgie))
191. T, PA and children: America and to
192. ((Bravo taps Fred))
193. ((Frank, with both hands on his stomach escalates his twisting motion))
194. T, PA and children: the republic
195. ((Eric begins shifting weight from foot to foot))
196. T, PA and children: for which it
197. ((Mason scratches his head and is facing the back of the room))

While the disembodied voice of the principal gave direction, the children took their cues from Mr. Scott. Their compliance was generally complete—all the children stood when signaled to by Mr. Scott; many took part in a choral recitation of words approximating the pledge of allegiance --although the tape only picked up Mr. Scott's words as decipherable—the children's recitation was a low mumble with a random cadence. Within that space of compliance—that structure which presumes uniform participation—the children offered a wide range of variations within the small geographic area of “the seat” (not one child moved more than 6 inches away from his or her seat) and within the expectation of individual participation with the whole-group action. During the recitation of the pledge, I had trained the camera on a table of seven boys – including Mason. In fact, these children did comply—with variations— during the pledge. Some variations:

- Billy sat down before Mr. Scott even said “America”
- Frank turned his shoulders from side to side- the movements becoming progressively larger as the pledge continues
- Corn-on-the-Cob faced the wall that is 90 degrees to the left of the flag wall, but his right hand does approximate heart position
- Fred sat and stood at will throughout the pledge
- Mason looked around the room and rubbed his neck, scratched head and faced every direction except toward the flag. He appeared totally oblivious to the event of the pledge—saying nothing, not even mumbling,

And yet, when the principal thanked them for joining her in say the pledge, Mason called out: “I said it, too!”

Mason did not stand out in this instance. His variations on compliance were not so different from many of the others at his table. What is telling about this particular event is that Mason moved quickly from an apparent disinterest and obliviousness to what was happening to making an overt attempt to reclaim his membership as a compliant member of the kindergarten, claiming for all to hear: “I said it, too!” This, on very small scale was what defines Mason as a disobedient child in Mr. Scott’s kindergarten class. As will be seen in the snapshots of Mason to follow, Mason worked the boundaries with a particular elasticity that stretches the time and place kindergarten boundaries in unexpected and inconsistent directions. In considering Mason’s association with the kindergarten boundaries of time and space, he was a Mummenschanz performer and the boundaries are the colorful spandex that covered him. As Mason contorted and pushed out against the rubbery fabric, he reshaped it—even while staying within the flexible confines of the fabric.

*Where’s Mason?*

The following excerpts of the kindergarten day are contextualized, non-sequential snapshots of Mason as he interacted with the time and space constraints of kindergarten. Throughout the observation periods of this research, Mason “stood out” as he resisted these constraints and as the majority of the other kindergartners did not.

It should be noted that Mason stood out in other ways. In this mid-western suburban kindergarten class, he was the only child of color. Mason is biracial: his mother is White; his father was Black. He was also the youngest, entering school at four, and turning five during the first month of kindergarten. Mr. Scott also shared his understanding of Mason’s sensitivity—acutely aware of any disapproval from Mr. Scott and transparently vocal when

his feelings were compromised by that sense of disapproval. Mr. Scott reported that Mason's father passed away several months after my visits and discussed with me how the respectful and caring relationship between the two of them (and the caring classmates) may have somewhat ameliorated the difficulties inherent in such a tragic and emotionally devastating circumstance.

What follows are contextualized, non-sequential snapshots of Mason's moments of disobedience as related to the time and space expectations and restrictions of Kindergarten.

*Snapshot #1.* Mr. Scott and the children were on the carpet discussing my presence with the camera. The children were sitting in a circle and recall—sitting on the carpet implies not only a place to sit, but also a way of being. A call to the carpet does not only name the place to come, but also the time to come (right now), and what to do/be on arrival (ready to listen). And as gleaned from hours of observation in this kindergarten, “ready to listen” means to being quiet, looking in a prescribed direction (at the speaker, in front), and sitting down (whether on the carpet or on a chair). Therefore, Mason's moments of disobedience were related not only to his presence in the right place at the right time, but to his way of being in that particular place.

Line

198. T: No one can really have a turn because if everyone's talking then no one's listening. We won't hear what we have to say unless you're gonna ask for a turn.

199. T: Billy, did you have a question or something to say about this camera?

200. Billy: I think she's ((some talk about taping so that my kids can see what

kindergarten is like))

201. Mason: ((sings)) dah dah dah dah

202. ((Mr. Scott touches his head gently and then his back))

203. Billy: ((quietly)) I think she's going to make a video to show her kids

204. T: You think she's going to make a video....

205. Mason ((begins singing again)) doo doo doo doo

206. T: Oh—right now, what are we talking about?

207. Mason: ((looks behind himself and very slowly begins to scoot backward away from the circle and toward Mr. Scott's chair. Eventually he has removed himself from the circle and then slowly and surreptitiously shifts toward Mr. Scott's empty teacher chair placed immediately outside the circle and next to the book easel. With little fanfare, Mason backs up to the chair—still scooting—and slides up into it. While in the chair Mason kicks feet together, slides down and pushes back on the chair.))

208. T: Right now we are talking about Ms. Leafgren and her camera....

Once Mason had left the circle, he was free of the constraints inherent in the rule of kindergarten circles. First, he continued to slide up and down in Mr. Scott's chair—the chair that is out of Mr. Scott's line of sight. No other child remarked on Mason's desertion of the circle. He quietly slid up and sat in the chair, turning first and touching and seeming to count the magnetic letters on the board behind him, and finally getting up and walking to the easel, which is behind where Mr. Scott has squatted in the circle. He took a book from the easel, sat back down in the chair, and opened the book. Mr. Scott, who had not remarked on Mason's

exit from the circle, now looked at him. He gently removed the book from his hands and placed it back on the easel. He shook his head. Mason frowned and slid down the chair onto the floor and remained seated on the floor but outside of the circle.

*Snapshot #2.* There was a period of time on the carpet where the children who have brought something to share show it to the others while still seated on the carpet. Mason had brought something, so had rejoined the circle. He was the second to share and told about the little notebook his mother gave him to “write in and draw in.” After his turn, and while the other children speak, he absently turned the pages in his notebook. Bravo had taken his turn last and was walking from child to child in the circle to let them touch his keychain. Mr. Scott began a transition:

Line

209. T: While Brrrravvvo is showing everyone ((0.30)) his keychain, ((0.5)) please put your eyes on me. I’m going to tell you what you’re going to do next. ((1.5))  
Next we’re going to take, give everyone a chance to talk

210. T: ((to Billy, touches his head)) did you hear that?

211. T: You can talk to any person that you want. If you wanted to see something that someone brought or maybe try out Billy Bob Joe’s ((1.0)) what did you call it?  
Machine?

212. Billy Bob Joe: yeah.

213. T: If you wanted to try out Billy Bob Joe’s machine, now’s the time to do that.  
We’re going to stay at the carpet. You can talk to anyone you would like now.

You don't have to raise your hand for a turn. You can get up and move. You don't need to stay in a circle. You can talk to anyone now

The children moved in, closing the circle—Mr. Scott moved to the library area where he teaches language lessons. He was preparing a tape and a book for the next lesson. Mason sat with the other children for 44 seconds. He looked toward Mr. Scott and rose on one knee announcing: "I'm gonna read a book." He waited 2 seconds and repeated, "I'm gonna read a book" and he rose and walked quickly and stiffly over to the area where Mr. Scott was working. Mason slowed down as he approached him and tugged at the fabric of his own shorts as he stood by Mr. Scott and repeated more quietly, "I'm gonna read a book. Scott. I am reading a book." Mr. Scott listened and then pointed to the children still sitting and sharing on the carpet: "We're doing this now." Ariel had picked up Mason's notebook that he left on the carpet and as he turned away from Mr. Scott, she followed him and handed him his notebook that he had left. Mason, still grasping the cloth of his shorts, along with the notebook, fake- limped back to the group of children but upon reaching them, took a slight detour, placing the notebook on the chair he sat in earlier and then arrived at the book easel where he once again took the book off its shelf. Ariel stood beside him. Mason placed the book back on the shelf and turned toward the board just as Mr. Scott arrived back to the circle area. Mr. Scott gently touched Ariel cueing her to return to the group of children 4-5 feet away and Mason turned further toward the board and quietly walked to farthest corner of the carpet and sat, watching the groups of children as they shared their items from home.

*Snapshot # 3.* During a class meeting about whether or not to keep backpacks on the chair backs or out in lockers, Mason, while remaining on the carpet and basically in the circle, was:

- On his knees, with finger in mouth
- Balanced on combination of knees, forearm, head and hand, until lifting the hand to tap Na'ton, then leaned forward on hand and knees, shifting weight so that feet go upward, then shifts back to sitting on heels—raises hand in response to wanting to use locker and then swings back down to knees and forearms.
- Sitting on his bottom but reached out and rubbed the curve of Na'ton's head, ending with a slight push. Na'ton looked briefly at Mason and Mason made a “yeah, so...” face...and put his arm akimbo against his side.
- In crab walk position, on hands and feet, stomach up, bottom tucked under, head back.
- Lying down on his back, knees bent and feet sliding back and forth across the carpet.
- Sitting up and with legs straight in front of him, begins to tap feet together.
- Tapping Billy Bob Joe's head
- Pushing Billy Bob Joe's head back like it's a Pez dispenser

Thirty minutes later, when Mr. Scott has called them to the library area to listen to a book, Mason did the following while Mr. Scott read:

- Turned his body away from Mr. Scott, facing me
- Laid on his back with his feet in the air
- Bicycled his feet

- Turned to watch Corn-on-the-Cob rub the fabric of his pants
- Faced “wrong” directions.
- Rolled as if putting out flames.
- Walked his fingers up Corn-on-the-Cob’s pant leg.
- Stroked Flower’s hair (but only for a moment—she yanked her head from his reach).

*Snapshot #4.* The children were sent to assigned centers. There were 4-5 children assigned to 5 centers and Mr. Scott “rotated” the children through each center by timing them and announcing when and where to move. At first Mason remained with his group of five, but soon left the others and, anxious to get a book, joined Cupcake’s group at the library. During his transition, he again made his stiff-legged (and I think tentative) walk—the walk that seemed to signal an awareness of being in/going to the “wrong” place. Mason lifted a book from the bookshelf. Terocko said, “Hey!” and Mason took the book away from the library to the carpet part of the room.

*Where’s Mason? He Knows.*

Mason’s understanding of the kindergarten structures of time and place is clearly demonstrated in these snapshots. While his movements were not normalized to the class’s movements, his flexible interpretations of their shared boundaries were apparently accepted and even expected. Even though Mason directly disobeyed several of Mr. Scott’s directions and expectations (not “ready to listen” while on carpet, leaving assigned centers, otherwise being at the wrong place and the wrong time and with the wrong things in hand), he never totally pushed through the kindergarten boundaries. He was out of place, but still within the

boundaries of place. He was “out of step and still part of the parade” (Leafgren, in Henderson, 2004, p. 136).

The final example of Mason’s elastic sense of time and space boundaries demonstrated his skill in negotiating the time and space constraints in kindergarten and the collaborative nature of the drawing of those time and space boundaries. Mason, once again, disobeyed the structured expectations, and so *influenced* those expectations.

*Mason Sits in Mr. Scott’s Chair Again*

After the announcements that day, Mr. Scott noticed that some of the tables were “very very crowded” and some tables had empty spaces. So, he spent several minutes making adjustments to the distribution of children among the four classroom tables. As he named children to come join Sally at her table—first Emily and then Ariel—Mason called out: “me!!” Mr. Scott continued to name children, including Fred and Flash. “Bring your backpacks with you; come have a seat at this table.” Without notice, Mason who had not been named (and so not directed or expected to leave his seat) tiptoed by the camera on his way to sit on the chair on the carpet. Mr. Scott continued to direct the movement of the children, “Walk on over Emily. Flash will you come over, too? Keep Fred company. C’mon over here, bud. There’s a chair for you right there.” By this time, Mason had not only left his table but was, by then, sitting/sliding up and down the teacher’s chair on the carpet.

Line

214. Mason: Scott. ((Note: Mason often calls Mr. Scott by his last name sans the prefix of “Mr.”))

215. T: ((noting that Mason is seated at the gathering carpet, albeit in Mr. Scott's chair)) You're ready to go.
216. T: ((Walks over to Mason (on the carpet) and Mason mimes dribbling a basketball)).
217. T and Mason: ((Private exchange)).
218. T: Oh it's not time to play basketball right now. I know what you're talking about, but we won't be using that.
219. Mason: ((stands with arms akimbo)).
220. T: BOYS AND GIRLS. ((2.0)) Please stand up, push in your chairs ((1.5)) And join Mason and I on the carpet.
221. (Unknown child): Hey! He already knew we're going to be on the carpet.

In this moment of disobedience, Mason was at the right place, but at not at the right time. Mr. Scott – he of the elastic boundaries—did not reprimand Mason, and in fact, used Mason's anticipatory position on the carpet in his transitional instruction to the other children (Line 220: "And join Mason and I on the carpet"). Mason (one of the children described as "out of control" by colleagues of Mr. Scott in Chapter IV) demonstrated here his profound understanding of how his classroom works. He was making sense of the social situation of kindergarten and was able to apply his overt and tacit understandings of the boundaries co-drawn by Mr. Scott and the children in order to resist and so push those boundaries. In this way, Mason was an anomaly, as described by Mehan (1979)—and acting purposefully, even while acting anomalously. It is precisely his skill at learning the kindergarten boundaries that allowed him to effect change on them. Even the child who remarked on Mason's precipitate

presence on the carpet does not point out that he is there at the “wrong” time, or that he wasn’t in his seat where he was supposed to be—but instead, remarked: “Hey! He already knew we’re going to be on the carpet” (Line 221). Mason “works ahead,” anticipating what is to come, and entering that place.

Mason played with these boundaries with great awareness and aplomb. Even with Mr. Scott’s generous latitude with boundaries of time and space, Mason stretched them— he was often two steps ahead, behind, or sideways. His behavior sometimes seemed to indicate that he was oblivious to the expectations and the moment-to-moment occurrences. When Mr. Scott had spent so much time working through the causal relationship between snack clean up and recess, Mason was not actively attending, and so was, I believe, unaware that a fundamental shift in the structure of the kindergarten day had been made. In fact, it was this rift that seemed to trouble Mason more than any stretching and misshaping had done for anyone else. Clean-up time may take too long, the circle may be left, but not the room—but the hole left by a missing element such as recess was not acceptable to Mason: “But we always go outside.”

The children and teacher in this classroom, influenced by the moments of disobedience committed by Mason and others in the classroom, were relatively aware of and receptive to the elasticity of their time and space kindergarten boundaries. Moreover, as a consequence, more aware of the boundaries themselves.

### Laying a Skateboarding Text

Outlaw



Figure 3: Outlaw (Groening, Kogan & Wolodarsky 1990)

In considering Mason's moments of disobedience in the above descriptions, the expected connections in analysis might be to developmental stages or methods of ameliorating his lack of fit to the time and space constraints of kindergarten. However, as befits a rhizomatic analysis, in seeking surprises in order to "disrupt the familiar and obvious" (MacNaughton, 2004), other texts may be found on which to lay this particular text of a child's moments of disobedience. In this case, I seek to engage the reader in considering the inventiveness in Mason's resistance—and so the following is an analysis of this quality mapping a "new entry point" (Alvermann, 2001; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 134-135).

Mason's sometimes oblivious, sometimes self-pleasing, and sometimes brilliant negotiation of the social terrain of the kindergarten was fluid, transpiercing, transforming, resistant, marginal, and often "outlaw." Outlaw in a way that resonates with the skateboarding subculture celebrated in the literature of the *Outlaw Collective* in which socio-spatial resistance is a way of life. As Nelson (2004) wrote, "I felt as though skateboarding

not only allowed me to feel something in the world that others didn't seem to notice, but that skateboarding also pushed me into an odd marginal space in society where I wasn't a criminal (at least not always), but I wasn't a 'normal,' respectable youth either" (p. 1). This "outlaw" sensibility is articulated in *Figure 3*, as Bart Simpson enacts his punishment for the transgression of riding his skateboard in the halls.

Mason often operated on the margins—even creating new margins as he pushed on the borders of the kindergarten space. In describing his negotiation as “brilliant,” “self-serving” and “oblivious,” I note that Mason seemed to feel something in the classroom that others didn't seem to notice—and seemed to *not* feel things others did notice; thus, the simultaneously occurring states of obliviousness and awareness. In the same spaces (the tables, the easel, the centers, and especially carpet) and times (lessons, centers, snack, recess, and especially gathering times), he shared with Mr. Scott and the other children, Mason saw, felt, and valued qualities and opportunities that allowed him to pick the borders up and slide beneath. As if he were a member of the *Outlaw Collective*, not really a criminal, but not “normal” /normalized either.

### *Flexible Space and Time*

At an African-centered school where I taught several years ago, the children adopted their African day names—names bestowed based on the day of the week they were born, and by gender. Boys born on Thursday were called *Kwa*, and their overarching trait (their contribution and responsibility to the culture) was that of “transcendental pathfinder.” One *Kwa* in my classroom was like Mason—seeing, feeling and valuing the kindergarten space in ways most of us did not. Like Mr. Scott's work with Mason, it was my job to bring *Kwa*

somewhat into the fold, to help him see the boundaries and remain within them, even while remaining on the margins or pushing the boundaries out of shape a little. *Kwa* and I talked about this one day. Together we devised a signal that I would give him when I noticed him drifting to the edges or ripping and tearing down the fences marking the boundaries—which in some ways we needed. With my index finger, I traced on his chest a circle and told him that the circle was our kindergarten. And that while most of the people in there liked to travel in that circle in lines like this (drawing with my finger smooth, gently curving lines within the circle), that I could see he liked to go like this (traced wild squiggly lines in the circle). I told him that I noticed that, at times, his route was so wiggly and wild, that he left the “circle”—transpierced the boundaries in ways that left us behind. This communication between *Kwa* and I was often recalled with a signal. The signal—me tracing a circle on my own chest—was enough most days to call him back to an awareness of the boundaries of kindergarten. And watching him figure out ways to interact and move in and on the edges of kindergarten space and time, allowed me to see the circle as much larger than I had thought it to be.

As the children in classrooms interact and co-create the space of kindergarten, they re-imagine the conditions of both their child-ness and of the school, often through a “youthful reinvention of the form and function of [school] spaces” (Nelson, 2004, p. 4). In abandoning the vertical tree logic which separates the concept “good” from the lived “good,” Deleuze notes Nietzsche’s refusal to acknowledge separations between the “world of appearance” and the “world of essence of reality” in flipping the “vertical axis of objective truth” sideways toward a “horizontal axis of values” (Deleuze, 1983; Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983;

Nietzsche, 1966). In these subjective values of good and bad, children can find “goodness” in their own encounters with the world

Like *Kwa* and like the skateboarders, Mason’s reinvention of his school space is not only physical/functional, but generative and, in micro-ways, revolutionary. Borden’s (2001) discussion of “micro-spaces” furthers the concepts of reinventing and revolutionizing spaces:

When skateboarders ride along a wall, over a fire hydrant or up a building, they are entirely indifferent to its function or ideological content. They are therefore no longer even concerned with its presence as a building, as a composition of spaces and materials logically disposed to create a coherent urban entity. By focusing only on certain elements (ledges, walls, banks, rails) of the building, skateboarders deny architecture’s existence as a discrete three-dimensional indivisible thing, knowable only as a totality, and treat it instead as a set of floating, detached, physical elements isolated from each other; ...skater’s performative body has ‘the ability to deal with a given set of pre-determined circumstances and to extract what you want and to discard the rest’, and so reproduces architecture in its own measure, re-editing it as a series of surfaces, textures and micro-objects (p. 214).

In the case of Mason, he was often clearly aware of the totality of the intersection of the time and space boundaries articulated by Mr. Scott and the other children: boundaries that included expected behaviors in certain places at certain times, and that also included each child as a member of the Kindergarten. Mason, however, more often experienced this totality in “micro-spaces,” indifferent to its structured expectations. The elements of the classroom were acted on by Mason as “floating,” “detached” and “isolated from each other.” Coming

to the carpet did not automatically mean the total package of “coming to the carpet” for Mason. While most of the other children “knew” what “coming to the carpet,” meant (right now and ready to listen (which in turn meant sitting down, being quiet and looking at the speaker and/or up front)) as a package deal, Mason did not behave as if he “knew” this. Mason came to the carpet often before or after the rest of the class. He did not just sit down: he sat, rolled, somersaulted, bicycled, touched, pezzed, wiggled, kicked, slid, scooted, and laid down. He re-edited the carpet space as a place to explore – a flat surface on which to lay the shapes and designs his body made—and a flexibly purposed space where, at least for a moment, one can come “ready to listen” or not.

Mason’s interaction with the space in the classroom reflects the role of skateboarders in the city. Skateboarding transforms and mutates the objects and spaces of urbanity and “suggests that cities can be thought of as series of micro-spaces, rather than comprehensive urban plans, monuments or grand projects, architecture is seen to lie beyond the province of the architect and is thrown instead into the turbulent nexus of reproduction” (Borden, 2001, p. 217). Just so, The Carpet and the classroom are not sacred, and while the teacher lays the design, it is disobedience that, like skateboarding, throws the structured expectations into a “turbulent nexus of reproduction.”

However, in these ultimately adult-owned spaces, freedom such as Mason’s is hard won. As is detailed in Chapter IV—in the name of “their own good” and in order to earn and keep the regard of their caregivers, children are admonished and driven to be “good,” to keep their hands to themselves, to mind their own business, to stay on task, to be still—ultimately to disengage from the world that envelops them. For most children—ones who are less likely

to risk a normalizing adjustment—school does not offer skateboarder-like generativity.

Rather, “...their education destroys the special bent and leaves a dull uniformity” (J. Dewey, 1916, p. 116).

When Lynch (1979) summarized his work on children’s conceptions of the material environment, he was surprised by “...how rarely we heard discussion of a playing field or of a school” (p. 104). Children believe that playing fields and school impose an order that limits bodily movement that might organize childhood space and so chart the shapes of pleasures and pains. Because of these limits, the children in Lynch’s 1979 study focused on spaces that could be reworked for their own uses. Lynch suggested this was partly because children’s spaces are too often “...controlled by adults and their time controlled by adults” (p.107). Kids value settings for the possibilities they allow for bodily play and performance.

It is often suggested in studies of youth and skateboarding that there is a specific attraction to spaces of potentiality and possibility, to open spaces in which to play (Bradley, 2001; Woolley & Johns, 2001). This, however, causes problems for youth as “open space is highly regulated or closed and is where young people are expected to show deference to adults and to adults’ definitions of appropriate behaviour” (Woolley & Johns, 2001, p. 3). It is deceptive in its permission; there seems always to be a “but”: “You can...but...” And so, children learn quickly and thoroughly to gauge adult expectations—and learn about themselves in the process: “Kids are taught to control and regulate their bodies in ways acceptable to adults. But more important, as kids grow up the body ceases to be acknowledged as a primary tool for mediating relations with the world” (Nespor, 1997, p. 122). As language literacy and other representations of communication replace the body for

connecting to the world, those who resist sometimes feel a difference in their world experience—as this skateboarder describes:

I started to realize that due to skating I was always looking down or my eyes were always scanning the surface for ledges, gaps or bumps...I knew which lights I could make, which hills were smooth and where all the good curb cuts were. I even knew some neighborhoods right down to the last crack. That's when I realized that, as skaters, we live in an entirely different world. Our minds are no longer processing things in normal terms" (Bourne, 2005).

Processing in “normal terms” may be considered the linear, arbolescent model of thought, while the skater mirrors what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) might exhort us all to do: “Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don't sow, grow offshoots! Don't be one or multiple, be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point! Speed turns the point into a line! Be quick, even when standing still! Line of chance, line of hips, line of flight!” (p. 24-25).

In the fashion of the rhizome, skateboarders and those others—such as a kindergarten child—who disobey/ resist enclosure and stasis. However, when skateboarders are relegated to the reservation—the skatepark—it is recognized as a means of control. Lundry (2003) warned the skater:

Skateparks should be ridden only as a matter of convenience or out of laziness, as an alternative to streets, backyard ramps, pools, pipes, ditches, banks, plazas, handrails, etc...Once they have us isolated and classified, we are much *easier to control* [italics mine]. And if we continue to rely on them for our spots at the exclusion of finding or creating our own, we are allowing them to dictate to us how, what, where, and when we

ride. And if the day ever comes when they decide to take them away, we'll be left with nothing. Progress can be good, but we must always ask: 'At what price?'" (p. 149).

In like form, in his relatively elastic classroom with Mr. Scott, with its appealing play centers, colorful posters and compliantly content classmates, Mason will very likely soon become more acclimated to kindergarten constraints. He may one day exist within the boundaries of time and space without pushing against or warping those boundaries and may enjoy the inherent "rewards" of compliance. This might be considered progress—as Mason "matures" and "develops" an appropriate school(ed)-self. But at what price?

#### Moment of Disobedience: "Behind Her Back"

*Miss Juste's police whistle rent the air with two awful blasts. The two hundred little girls in green rompers stopped dead in their tracks. Two blasts meant line up. Line up like at the beginning of the period.*

*Obediently, the green rompers milled about and found their appointed places in regular lines the length and breadth of the gymnasium. With grim pleasure, Miss Juste watched the girls respond to her command. She had called them back, after once dismissing them, as a master might jerk her dog back on a leash...Standing at attention, her shapeless white sneakers side by side, her knees like two cauliflowers below the voluminous serge bloomers, Miss Juste waited till every movement in the lines should cease. As usual, it was Edith Polizetti who could not find her place. Edith Polizetti who, under the terrible eye of Miss Juste, tried to squeeze her way anywhere into a line and was mercilessly shoved out by the other little girls.*

(Highsmith, 1941/2002, p. 53)

"Under the terrible eye..." Just as the in Ms. Highsmith's rendition of Miss Juste's gymnasium, there are places in school—for instance, The Line, The Carpet, The Tables—where children are "under the terrible eye," the inescapable eye. These places share their own kind of time and space: surveilled, constrained and highly restricted. The restrictions usually include some reference to noise, but much more often than not, a prohibition related to touch.

The following descriptions of moments of disobedience span the classrooms in both schools, Andrews School and Shadow Lake, but culminate in one moment at Andrews School involving Moby touching and being touched on the carpet. Within these moments are examples of the means employed in both schools to keep children apart from one another. A normalizing and controlling technique described in Chapter IV—surveillance (the terrible eye) serves to actively limit interaction between and among children, especially physical interaction.

In kindergarten classrooms, children are kept apart from one another. Structures, procedures, rules and early childhood norms serve to explicitly and implicitly place children in the “right” place at the “right” time, and, especially, apart from one another. Walking in lines with hands at sides or clasped behind backs, standard school-wide rules—“keep hands, feet and other objects to yourself,” assigned places on gathering carpets, admonishments to stay “in your bubble”—all are in place to prohibit touch. As Tobin (1997) noted, “children’s spontaneous, enthusiastic bodily expression and pleasure are contained and traded for the adult’s sense of order, propriety and control” (p. 63). Yet children find ways to surreptitiously connect, using said “hands, feet and other objects” to do so. As school places children in close proximity—in clear view of one another—the children see, and so desire. Desiring in revolutionary, productive ways (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983), children join and so create new connections in the classroom space.

This particular series of moments of disobedience details the ways that the children in Mrs. Krinkle’s and Mr. Scott’s classrooms learned to recognize unsurveilled places and unsupervised—sometimes for merely a moment—times in their kindergarten classrooms, and

how they found in this temporary freedom, a space to connect flesh to flesh. In these secret touches, children found spiritual pleasure and erotic pleasure: an “Eros born of Chaos, personified [by] creative power and harmony. [The erotic is] a life-force manifested in a capacity for joy, intense feeling, and a deep sharing with others” (Lorde, 1984, in Phelan, 1997, p. 87).

### *Slipping Surveillance*

Long ago, when I was in elementary school the teacher would sometimes leave the room. Without discussion, one child would immediately go to the classroom door to serve as the “look-out.” While remaining, for the most part, in the room, the lookout would keep close watch on the hallway for the approach of any adult and still manage to take part in the goings-on of the classroom. The worst of these goings-on were usually merely conversations taking place out of our seats, and a periodic peek at what was on the teacher’s desk, but I can still recall the feeling of release – until – “SHHH!! She’s coming!!!” There were always a few of the children who remained sitting quietly in their seats, and looked on disapprovingly, and a few who looked on longingly—but none of them ever “told.” In my mind, these moments had extraordinary potential. I was greatly influenced by televised episodes of *The Little Rascals* and by *Peanuts* specials where the adults were invisible and the children accomplished wonderful things.

Earlier in this chapter, at the time of snack clean-up in Mr. Scott’s room, Lemmie and Mason were engaged in hand-play (recall Line 146: Mason and Lemmie are seated at their tables but are engaging in hand play—each taking turns laying a hand flat on the table, palm up so that the other can smack it, if they can time it before the hand-on-table person snatches

it away). Before the hand-play began, Lemmie committed three checks—turning her head to gauge Mr. Scott’s attention. Each time, Mr. Scott was looking in her general direction. She remained still. After her third check, Mr. Scott turned to the door to look for stragglers coming from the bathroom—and instantly, without committing another check, Lemmie reached across the table with both hands and gently smacked them on top of Mason’s. He snatched his hands back and she laid hers out on the table, Mason, without checking, smacked hers carefully, too. They reversed roles and as Mr. Scott was coming back in, he saw them. Mr. Scott said nothing, but immediately called the entire class to the carpet to talk about the problems involved in getting ready for recess.

This exchange is typical of those where children seek out time and spaces that will permit them to physically connect. In this instance, Lemmie and Mason were in one of the most public places in the kindergarten—at their tables. Yet, because it was a transitional time and because Mr. Scott was partially occupied with other children who are at various states of preparation in the clean-up process, Lemmie and Mason sense a space for illicit physical play.

What is not typical, given the information we have about kindergarten in Chapter IV, is Mr. Scott’s response. He may have been frustrated about the distractions that were keeping the children from moving on in a timely fashion from snack to recess, but he did not impose consequences on children for the various transgressions committed as recommended by Wong (1998) and as detailed by the myriad discipline and behavior plans described in the previous chapter and in the Appendices.

However, both Mr. Scott and Mrs. Krinkle are participants in school. Components of their roles as teachers in kindergarten classrooms in their public schools are surveillance and partitioning. One of Gatto's (1992) seven rules of *The Seven-Lesson Schoolteacher* is "One can't hide." He related:

I teach students that they are always watched, that each is under constant surveillance by myself and my colleagues. There are no private spaces for children, there is no private time...the meaning of constant surveillance and denial of privacy is that no one can be trusted, that privacy is not legitimate. Surveillance is an ancient imperative, espoused by certain influential thinkers, a central prescription set down in *The Republic*, in *The City of God*, in the Institutes of the Christian Religion, in New Atlantis, in Leviathan, and in the host of other places. All these childless men who wrote these books discovered the same thing: children must be closely watched if you want to keep a society under tight central control. Children will follow a private drummer if you can't get them into a uniformed marching band (p. 12).

*Surveillance by Lining 'Em Up*

In school, children are herded, in preemptive, panoptic fashion, by their teachers from "one teacher-dominated space to another" (from classroom to library, from art-room to classroom) and are expected to "walk in single file, facing forward, in silence" (Nespor, 1997, p. 126).

While visiting Mr. Scott's classroom, I could often see or hear lines of children from other classes in the hallway. Lines are places where children can be carefully surveilled—no place to hide, highly constrained space, expectation of very limited variation in movements;

and yet, lines are a place to hide in plain sight—behind the rest of the line, and a place where one is able to easily see if the teacher is looking. In the line, this is often not the case. If the line is moving, the teacher usually leads the way, and if it is stopped, the teacher may be committed to watching restroom doors and water fountains. This odd juxtaposition of high surveillance and high freedom was apparent in the incidental observations of a variety of lines over the course of two months in two different schools.

As I sometimes watched the lines moving through hallways, I saw children doing the following (in addition to standing and walking):

- Touching
- Spinning
- Squeezing faces
- Touching butts
- Stomping
- Doing the bump to people
- Jostling for 1<sup>st</sup> (or other places) in line
- Holding arms behind heads (one's own and others')
- Drifting
- Walking backwards
- Engaging in conversation
- Flipping papers hanging in hallways
- Arm flapping
- Yelling
- Riding other kids (then falling)
- Falling (in general)
- Tossing balls (on way to recess)
- Wiggling
- Shaking butts

- Hair pulling/twirling/stroking/braiding/and/or brushing
- Crawling
- Walking on/jumping over furniture
- Wall-rubbing
- Taking giant steps
- Taking steps so small they might be absent of forward motion
- Skipping
- Hopping on one foot
- Hopping on the other foot
- Laughing

On one day, I made the following observation of a teacher's line moving through the hallway at Shadow Lake. There were 20+ kindergarten children walking in a line past the door with NO talking at all. The line stopped and from Mr. Scott's classroom door, I could see a portion of the line—the last seven children. There were two girls at the end of the line—the second-to-last girl (The Toucher) turned and ran her hands down the last girl's arms, starting at her shoulders and rubbing up and down. She did this several times. The Toucher then lifted the arms of The Last Girl so that they were perpendicular to her body. She was shaped like a "T." The Toucher now ran her hands from The Last Girl's fingertips, down the inside of her arms to the armpits and then down her body again. She did this twice. Then she hugged her hard four times. While still turned around toward the back of the line, she bent down to do several toe touches, checking to see if The Last Girl was watching (learning?). The Last Girl did one toe touch. All of this was accomplished with no talking or noise whatsoever. When the children began walking again to go back to their room, the only one who talked was The Toucher – she was correcting (and holding back!) her silent friend from passing her by saying, "Don't run in the hallway." Thus, immediately upon a

prolonged period of unnoticed, silent touching, the girl who touched risked a reprimand to help the one who needed to be cared for. She went unnoticed.

Even so, on further incidental and purposeful observations of lines of children at both schools, I made note of teachers' attempts to maintain an active surveillance, and so to inhibit the children's freedom to deviate from the standard line rules and expectations: silent, lines straight, arms at side, face front, walking, stay in your place. Here is what I overheard as teachers walked with their children in the hallways of Shadow Lake and Andrews Schools:

- No skipping. You can skip in gym class.
- Kevin, you're going to trip. Don't put that on your head.
- \_\_\_\_\_'s table, you may put your books away quietly and line up for art.—This four times in a row.
- Walk quietly down to the art room.
- Someone else is talking.
- Okay, some girls came out but you wouldn't know it since you aren't facing front!
- Arms at your sides—now!
- Are you in line?
- I'm waiting for everyone to face the front.
- Not now, not now we don't ask any questions.
- I can hear your feet—stop it!
- Brian, you're behind Bobby.
- Do you think this is a playground?
- You're the first person so the line should be behind you.
- Don't do that in here. It's distracting!

Intriguing here is that the adults, in defining the line as a place to be still and quiet, name places designated as settings where bodily play may be permitted—the gym, and a playground. Yet, even in these spaces—the ones not like the line-- play is considered

permitted, so still in the control of the adults who can name where and when to play, where and when to touch. The function of these adult admonitions for order in line is to promote the expectation that a reprimand or reminder to one child will in the process keep the other children acutely aware that they are being watched and that chances are, variations of the lines rules will be seen and corrected through normalizing, civilizing controls. In true swaddling fashion, as the teacher joins the children in the corridor, they may “be demonstrating caring and responsive styles of management while they are simultaneously engaged in acts of policing or surveillance” (Clarke, 2004). Rogovin (2004) advocates consistent enforcement of hallway (and other) rules:

Our ‘no talking in the stairway’ rule is always in force, not just when I feel like enforcing it. If you are not consistent, you end up wasting a lot of time dealing with misbehavior. If you enforce a rule consistently, after a while, it is internalized and stays in place. In time, the children will become silent in the stairway when they see me hold up two fingers or if I simply turn to look at them with a serious (not mean) look. In time, I don't have to do any of that, they just walk in silence (p. 7).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979, in Clarke, 2004) described the way in which docile bodies are induced to discipline themselves through practices of rituality “in which they take on the monitoring, scrutiny and appraisal of their own practices as if they are constantly subject to the gaze of unseen others. While corridors might thus be construed as part of the disciplinary architecture of educational institutions” (p. 9).

Thus, the hallway joins the ordered structure of school toward the children’s progression from of what Bakhtin (1968/1984) described as the “grotesque body,” one with

“shoots and branches [and] all that prolongs the body and links it to other bodies or to the world outside” (p. 315-317), to the “civilized body...an entirely finished, completed, strictly limited body” (p. 320)—so the kindergartner’s body becomes a civilized body. Nespor (1997) named the civilized body as a “schooled body, one that stays silent, walks in line, keeps its hands to itself, and doesn’t get out of its chair and walk around the room” (p. 131).

A vivid example of the civilized kindergarten body involved Fireman, a child in Mrs. Krinkle’s class. One day, as the children in the class were cleaning up and then preparing to line up for dismissal, Fireman, who had cleaned up very quickly, helped other children and then gathered his belongings, and stood “in line” to await the other children. Because the other children were taking so much time—talking, dawdling, playing—he stood for several minutes. Alone. And because his “place” in line was toward the end of the line-to-be, he was standing in an odd place: toward the end of the carpet and right in the path of the children as they move from clean-up to the cloakroom and back out to their tables to gather more items. As minutes ticked by, Fireman looked at me and shrugged. Finally, he said, as if to himself, “I’m standing in line for nothing.” But still he stood.

### *Touch*

A recent article in the *Washington Post* related the story of one middle school setting in place a rule against all touching. Claiming benefits of safety, and ease against the cost of a lack of physical human contact, this is the school’s decision:

All touching -- not only fighting or inappropriate touching -- is against the rules at Kilmer Middle School in Vienna. Hand-holding, handshakes and high-fives? Banned. The rule has been conveyed to students this way: ‘NO PHYSICAL

CONTACT!!!!!!’

School officials say the rule helps keep crowded hallways and lunchrooms safe and orderly, and ensures that all students are comfortable...a Fairfax schools spokesman said there is no countywide ban like the one at Kilmer, but many middle schools and some elementary schools have similar ‘keep your hands to yourself’ rules. Officials ...said schools in those systems prohibit inappropriate touching and disruptive behavior but don't forbid all contact.

Deborah Hernandez, Kilmer's principal, said the rule makes sense in a school that was built for 850 students but houses 1,100. She said that students should have their personal space protected and that many lack the maturity to understand what is acceptable or welcome" (Glod, 2007).

Earlier in this chapter, Lundry wondered at what price progress? Here we must wonder at what price safety and order. As structures are put in place to separate children from one another for an ordered ease, the effect becomes dehumanizing. The structured order of kindergarten serves to prohibit fully “vivid and highly charged” (from Mead, 1951) interactions with other children and their environment, and so interfere with children’s potential to act on spiritual-moral opportunities. This recalls the earlier discussion of Buber in Chapter II regarding the relational nature of the human spirit and cautions that nurturing the spirit-self is not passive or restrained, but that “the human child... gains his world by seeing, listening, feeling, forming. It is in encounter that the creation reveals its formhood; it does not pour itself into senses that are waiting but deigns to meet those that are reaching out” (Buber, 1958/1970, p. 76). “Reaching out” implies the freedom to do so.

As implied in the *Washington Post* article above, those involved in setting these norms do not seem to realize—or possibly care—that the consequences of imposition of these norms are the loss of the humanity and joy. It is for the “good of the child” that adults swaddle (constrain, protect, prevent, remove from one another and from the environment, the world). This brings to mind the words of Tommy Trantino as he recalled his own time in school in Chapter II:

I liked to be around the other kids and I used to look at the sky out the windows of my classes and smile at the women across the street looking out of their prison tenements and sometimes we’d catch each others eyes but they hardly ever smiled back and sometimes I would wave to them but the teachers would always say VERBOTEN. People were being kept apart and we were keeping ourselves apart and we were all hurting like a motherfucker but no one was telling (1972, p. 23).

Recall also, Upton Sinclair’s 1922 account related in Chapter I of the little boy who marched in line and talked in chorus, “saying the same thing as nearly at the same instant as could be contrived,” and how he “found that a delightful arrangement, for he liked other boys, and the more of them there were, the better.” This little boy and the little boy who was Tommy Trantino claim a need and a liking to be around the other children. And both end their tales apart from the others: being laughed at and having “a sense of triumph over other little boys” that one could laugh at such as “being kept apart” and “keeping ourselves apart”—all functions of the schoolroom.

### *Moby Gets Caught*

Mrs. Krinkle’s children “come to the carpet” for lessons. As in Mr. Scott’s classroom,

the children here have expected “carpet” behaviors—coming “ready to listen,” sitting down, facing the speaker and/or front—and in this class, the children have assigned places to sit on the carpet in three rows of 6-7 children. Another expectation on the carpet here is that the children stay in their assigned places—and so, apart.

Of course, though, the children do touch. Often it is with Mrs. Krinkle’s tacit approval, but usually it is not approved. On this particular day, the children were seated on the carpet in their rows facing Mrs. Krinkle’s chair while she cut one of the sweet potatoes the class has been growing in their garden.

Line

222. T: Are you guys allowed to bring knives to school?

223. (students): Nooooooooooooo

224. T: Knives are not toys; but they are a tool...

225. ((The children are passing around a potato and touching it and smelling it and squeezing it to see what it’s like.))

226. T: Bumblebee—did you get to feel the potato?

227. T: I am going to peel off the skin.

228. T: Is it hard like a brick?

229. ((While Mrs. Krinkle is cutting the potato—Jacob and Peter are on their knees; both swing their arms in wide circles—this escalates. Jacob shifts into using his fingers and right hand to make a “gun” and begins to pretend to shoot. Francesca (Mrs. Krinkle’s daughter who is helping out that day) says—“Stop Jacob”))

230. T: Please sit... look how nicely Clark is sitting. Thank you Clark.

231. ((Most of the children shift on the carpet, sitting straighter, placing hands on lap to await their chance to touch the potato making its rounds to touch; and then to receive their cut piece of potato to taste.))
232. T: Look how nicely Scrappy is sitting, too.
233. Moby: I want some potato.
234. ((Moby is at his proper space on the carpet but is on his knees. Mrs. Krinkle continues to slice off pieces of potato and hand to children, but not yet Moby.))
235. T: Sit down and you'll get some. Take a seat. Take a seat and you'll get one.
236. T: Oh I love the people I heard saying thank you.
237. Moby: Thank you!
238. ((There is a general murmur as children exclaim over their taste of potato and/or worry over when theirs is coming. Mrs. Krinkle gives a slice to Bruce Wayne and then runs out.))
239. T: hold on ((to Dora who was next)). Hold on ((to class, in general)).

Mrs. Krinkle walked away from the carpet toward the front part of the room near the door to get another potato. The classroom is large, and so Mrs. Krinkle's walk to corner of the room to take another potato from the bag where she had them placed was slightly out of earshot and—as long as she was walking away from the carpet and looking for the potatoes—out of eyeshot.

What occurred here and now was a striking example of the children's awareness of their teacher's presence and the impact of her surveillance (and lack of). Mrs. Krinkle had not taken more than six steps away from the carpet when the spaces between children

disintegrated and the rows collapsed into piles and bundles of children. Dre, Scrappy, Jacob and Peter wrestled each other; Cinderella, Princess, and of course, Briona – she of the too many touches—tickled each other and twitched and flinched as the others tickled them; and Gabriella, Tommy, Mr. Policeman and Bumblebee, still in their places with hands on lap, quietly watched them, Bumblebee with pursed lips of disapproval. New York, Leela, Dora, Bruce and Moby wrestled and rolled on one another on the corner of the carpet closest to Mrs. Krinkle’s corner.

The shift from the children sitting, straight, and silent to the state of crumpled, quiet, and intersecting was instantaneous. Nearly as one (except for the ones who watched and frowned), the structure of the carpet imploded. Mrs. Krinkle had her back to the children for less than 60 seconds and she continued to talk to them as she walked and bent over the bag. Those sixty seconds were full of action and interaction.

Then, as Mrs. Krinkle just began to turn back to the carpet, at that very moment—as if the children were one entity perfectly attuned to their teacher’s anticipated movements—the structure of the carpet reasserted itself.

Except for Moby. Moby, who was geographically the closest to Mrs. Krinkle from his assigned place on the front-door-side corner of the carpet, somehow missed the message of Mrs. Krinkle’s impending turn back toward the carpet. He continued to bury his head into Bruce’s stomach, joyfully kneading it. The other children merely sat straighter, some looking forward at the teacher’s empty chair—the others looking toward Mrs. Krinkle as she began walking to the carpet. Bumblebee shook her head even while looking straight ahead at Mrs. Krinkle’s chair.

Moby lifted his head from Bruce's tummy and smiled at him, puzzled. It was then that he must have noticed that all of the children had returned to their carpet state—and just as he began to form an approximation of a listening position, Mrs. Krinkle, three steps into her return—sang out, “OH, Moby...” and the rest of the children gave no indication of their participation in the break-down of the carpet.

Observing this moment was surreal. It seemed in slow motion—the tightly stretched, straight-lined carpet of children and then its collapse upon the moment of Mrs. Krinkle's from turned-back. Then the elastic seemed to snap back as she returned her attention to the carpet. Within this moment lay children's collective awareness of the teacher and her gaze; the willingness of children to risk that gaze in order to physically, sensually, and playfully connect with one another; the role of surveillance in children's opportunities to physically interact; the role of the compliants in the group interaction on the carpet; and the willingness of the class to sacrifice one on the outer perimeter (like a zebra herd to the lion) to the teacher's gaze.

#### Laying a Picture Book Text

Rhizoanalysis reconstructs a text by creating new and different understandings of it; and it does so by linking it with texts other than those we would normally use. For example, we can use rhizoanalysis to replot the links between an observation of a child and a child development text, a sociology text or a popular culture text. As did Kylie Smith (in MacNaughton, 2005) in her analysis of gender roles using Munsch's *The Paper Bag Princess*, here I “read” an observation of Moby and his classmates by linking it with popular children's texts to reconstruct my understanding of disobedience and compliance in that

observation. As I construct a rhizome of disobedience and compliance meanings in the observation, I rethink what it means to “do” disobedience at six years of age and how this might influence me to rethink the possibilities for responses (p.120).

Nicholas Burbules (1986, in Merriam & Associates, 2002) discussed building understandings of ideologies on models of literary texts, claiming that “the process of ideology analysis and ideology critique is akin to literary criticism; it includes an attempt to hold a portrayal accountable to social reality while recognizing that ideologies capture the popular imagination” (p. 330-331). He demonstrated this approach by laying texts of “school” beside texts of the classic 1945 children’s text, *Tootle*. In his analysis he sought to consider how the assumptions and values of a particular social worldview “underlie a seemingly simple and innocent text [and so] be better able to recognize them at work in other educational contexts” (p. 343) and argued that *Tootle* “presents an account of schooling that cheerfully endorses some of the most repressive aspects of the process by which schools restrict the impulses and aspirations of children” (p. 331). Like the character, Tootle, Moby’s “sensitive, emotional and relational qualities are not ‘relevant’ to their work as kindergartners and actually impede it, therefore, it is “clear which must give way” (p. 340). Burbules (in Merriam & Associates, 2002) asks, “What can we learn about ourselves and our culture by examining the kinds of books we produce for our children [and ourselves] to read?” (p. 331).

Engaging with this question via a more current popular children’s text, *David Goes to School* (Shannon, 1999), one finds the character, David as the joyful, spirited dissident, an autobiographically cartooned version of the author/illustrator, David Shannon. The cover depicts David standing in front of a classroom chalkboard, mouth open in gapped-tooth

laughter, preparing to toss a paper airplane. However, the back cover represents, in the Bart Simpson mold of school-coerced compliance, first-grade writing paper covered with the child-printed words, *I will not disrupt class* over and over again. The single *I will not disrupt class* in a field of correctly copied sentences was circled in red.

The author, David Shannon continued to represent the spare text in the same child-like print on depictions of first-grade lined handwriting paper, and begins: “David’s teacher always said... NO, DAVID! No yelling. No pushing. No running in the halls.” Even so, David, the disobedient child was represented in the pages of the book in variations of:

- Tardiness (“David! You’re tardy!”)
- Out-of-seat behavior (“Sit down, David!”);
- Gum-chewing (“Don’t chew gum in class!”)
- Talking out (“David, raise your hand!”)
- Touching the red-haired girl sitting in front of him (“Keep your hands to yourself!”)
- Daydreaming, off-task behaviour (“PAY ATTENTION!”)
- Cutting in line (“Wait your turn, David!”)
- Food fights (“I don’t care who started it!”)
- Mason-like delays in joining the class (“David! Recess is over!”)
- Noisiness (“Shhhhh!”)
- Having to go to the bathroom (“Again?!”)
- And vandalism via drawing on the school desk (“That’s it, Mister! You’re staying after school!”).

One might recognize the teacher in this book – although in *Peanuts*-fashion we never see her face. In fact, except for her voice, she is absent until the very end of the book, as we shall see. Her voice, however, may be almost any teacher’s voice. Her invisibility serves a purpose. The faceless power of the teacher contributes to the panoptic quality of her control. She may always be watching. As well, the reader may be enjoying David’s transgressions, especially as depicted by Shannon’s wildly joyful and scribbly drawings—and, if the teacher were to be shown, with the disapproving face and posture which surely must be the case given David’s perseveration in willful disobedience, we may resent her and so resent the voice of reason that must present the inviolate rule of order. Since we cannot see who is behind them, these unquestionable rules are “abstracted from any social context or set of conventions—they just are” (Burbules, 1986, p. 342).

The character of David’s naughtiness—his fully-present and active engagement with what he sees, feels, and desires in the space of his school and classroom—is a problem to be addressed via verbal admonishments; reminders of likely rules (I recognize “keep your hands to yourself” as one of the most common rules relayed in Chapter IV: “Keep hands, feet and other objects to yourself.”); and peer pressure toward Foucauldian normalization as on several pages, Shannon depicted the children in the class viewing David’s antics with disapproval. Examples of these normalizing behaviors included:

- The red-haired girl was depicted with stunned despair as she raised her hand while David called out;
- Children in the lunch line who were passed by as David took his turn before theirs were drawn with anger, shock and confusion on their faces;

- Children trying to read through David's pencil-tapping noise-making looked at him with down-pointing, furrowed eyebrows and frowning mouths;
- And finally, a punishment and reward.

After his act of vandalism, David stayed after school, and worked to please his teacher by washing all of the desks in the classroom. Shannon illustrated David's face and demeanor in this drawing as one seeking approval: eyebrows slanting upward, very slight smile, arms open and palms out as he held the sponge and quietly begged the teacher's attention to the shining desks. At last, the teacher was shown—actually only her blue-dressed torso—as she awarded David a sticker representing her gold-starred approval (“GOOD JOB, DAVID!”) and he is released.

*Finally* happy, David skipped home and passed on the sidewalk the red-haired girl who now deigned to smile and wave at him. His compliance had earned her approval, too. As Burbules (1986, in Merriam, 2002) concluded in *Tootle*, “It appears that the child's desire for a happy ending can be satisfied only when [he] learns to follow the rules” (p. 335).

The characters of *Tootle* and David permit us a peek into the complexity and norms within children's picture books. In order to further disrupt Moby's moment and consider the themes of surveillance and compliance that were among the limitless possible rhizomes to follow, we can lay the observational text next to another classic children's text, Dr. Seuss's (Theodore Geisel's) 1957 *Cat in the Hat*.

Throughout this story, the author shared a theme of unseen surveillance and so a kind of self-regulation. The children in the tale, a boy and a girl, were left home alone on a gray rainy—the mother went shopping and left them to their own devices. Unlike my child-

character heroes, who do their best work in the absence of adults—these children sat quietly looking out the window with the approval of their watchful goldfish.

Then, The Cat appeared—the cat who is like an adult and not like an adult—and disrupted the household (“You shook up our house,” said the fish) with his antics. The children never join him, but do not stop him either... and soon the Things came in, too.

Then those Things ran about  
With big bumps, jumps and kicks  
And with hops and big thumps  
And all kinds of bad tricks.  
And I said,  
"I do NOT like the way that they play  
If Mother could see this,  
Oh, what would she say!"

Then our fish said, "Look! Look!"  
And our fish shook with fear.  
"Your mother is on her way home!  
Do you hear?  
Oh, what will she do to us?  
What will she say?  
Oh, she will not like it  
To find us this way!"

"So, DO something! Fast!" said the fish.  
"Do you hear!  
I saw her. Your mother!  
Your mother is near!  
So, as fast as you can,

Think of something to do! (Geisel, 1957).

The mother has “gone out.” From the earliest page in the book, the adult in the situation absented herself – and so, like *The Little Rascals* and *Peanuts* characters again—the children are unobserved by the constraining and calculating (terrible) eye of the adult. However, as is the case in the Panoptic nature of carpets and school lines, the adult’s actual presence is not required in order to compel some compliance. In the story, the fish (like Bumblebee on the carpet, and the red-haired girl in the David book) worried about what “She” might see (“if Mother could see this; Oh, what would she say!"); Thing One and Thing Two (like the “bad” kids who do transgress against the rules of the carpet once the calculating eye of the adult is not actually present) did not concern themselves with this possibility; and the two children in the story (like the ones who watch with smiles and a sense of possibility for joining in) were paralyzed by the conflicting “goods” of Mother’s approval and the tricks of the Cat, Thing One and Thing Two.

### *Surveillance*

Enacting their understanding of surveillance, many children, especially “disobedient” ones, do not act (or fail to act) on the assumption that they are being watched when they are not. In this way, children are perhaps more savvy about surveillance than are adults. I think this may be related to their intense engagement with the geography of the classroom. Nesper (1997) wrote that while a teacher’s perspective is a problem of organizing, managing and controlling children’s bodies in classroom and school spaces, the children view the classroom and school as “negotiable terrain” (p. 131). As noted in the earlier discussion of highly-surveilled school spaces of lines and carpet, “there *is* [emphasis mine] surveillance, but it is

hardly suffocating” (p. 131). Teachers, adults cannot monitor most of what children do and children are acutely aware of this.

The disobedient ones operate under the latitude provided by this fact—that while much effort is made by the adults to carefully order the time and space of school to provide the tight and standardized control, and also to relax those rigid boundaries at expected times and places—the free spaces are there. Not much is required in time or space to take advantage. As demonstrated in Moby’s carpet incident, the public, teacher-controlled space of the carpet became a free space when Mrs. Krinkle turned her back for only a moment (“...your mother is out”), as the children acted out their resistance to "constraints placed on their spontaneous natures” (Pace & Hemmings, 2007, p. 4).

#### Laying a Pleasure/Sensing/Spirit Text

*The body:  
source of self;  
lived for self and others;  
encapsulating and encapsulated  
by social order and chaos.*

Virginia Oleson (Leavitt & Power, 1997, p. 39)

*I met a man in Nigeria one time, an Ibo who had six hundred relatives he knew quite well. His wife had just had a baby, the best possible news in any extended family. They were going to take it to meet all its relatives, Ibos of all ages and sizes and shapes. It would even meet other babies, cousins not much older than it was. Everybody who was big enough and steady enough was going to get to hold it, cuddle it, gurgle to it, and say how pretty it was, or handsome.  
Wouldn't you have loved to be that baby?*

(Vonnegut, 1999, p. 16)

As they enter the school building, children are to leave their bodies at home. School personnel lament the inconvenience of feeding, watering and elimination as the most difficult

portions of the school day to manage. And the functions and desires of the body—to move, to touch, to be touched is an anathema to the adults who are there to ensure that “nothing goes on.”

Poor Tootle, the train in Burbules’ (1986, in Merriam, 2002) text analysis of the children’s text, *Tootle*, he of the loud toots, meadow frolics, and races with horses off the rails...leads the children who read his story to infer from the lessons he learns from Bill and “The Mayor Himself”:

Attempts at independent judgment, sensual investigation, and peer-group formation are at best naïve; at worst, they interfere with the important task of becoming responsible and productive adults. Becoming an adult...means learning self-control and self-denial; it means foregoing childish pleasure; it means accepting tasks and constraints that one may hate; it means suppressing certain emotions and desires; it means abandoning play and learning to work in a compulsive manner; and it means accepting without question the discipline of externally imposed rules (p. 345).

The surveillance described above plays an important part in ensuring that self-control and self-denial is learned. The erotic, “the lure of human beauty that releases pleasure” (Browning, 1998, p. 96), in early childhood classrooms is public. In other words, touch is monitored explicitly with the implicit understanding that “sexuality exists in the classroom and is antithetical to compliance, obedience, and conformity” (Broadway, Leafgren, & Gilbert, 2007).

Decades spent in primary classrooms and elementary school hallways inform me of the pervasiveness of this theme. The ubiquitous rule, “Keep hands, feet and other objects (or

body parts, in some classrooms) to yourself” is an almost universal classroom rule. Beyond the direct admonishments and reprimands, teachers carefully prepare the time and space elements of the classroom toward separating and controlling the children and their bodies. Note that Mrs. Krinkle has assigned places in three straight rows on her carpet with sufficient space in between each child that touching takes an effort to do. “From birth, children construct themselves subject to the ‘civilizing’ controls of adults” (Elias, 1978).

There are notions of uncontrollability applied to young children, “thus we find young children and women locked in a daily battle to civilize children’s volatile bodies. By the time they reach kindergarten, children are to be moved from sensory-motor engagement with the world to abstract thinking, from unbridled expressions of bodily desire to socially sanctioned forms of play, from excessive pleasure to good clean fun” (Tobin, 2003, p. 19). Control means controlled by others’ demands and expectations. Recall that three of Mr. Scott’s students, including Mason, were named “out of control” on first glance by other teachers in the building. On probing, Mr. Scott reported that the three had been skipping or hopping in the hall and smiling. One was singing. Physical demonstrations of joy, evidence of energy and enthusiasm became signs of being out of control.

In the case of Moby, head buried into the soft belly of Bruce, he had gone too far. He not only missed the returning surveillance, but he crossed the invisible fences between children. Missed it by a mile. Like Mason, Moby was often off the beaten path of kindergarten, marching to his own drummer; but unlike Mason, Moby seemed to not be sure where the fences were. So rather than stretching and pushing them, he tripped over them or overshot them. For this, Moby sometimes sacrificed other freedoms; as his body

transgressed the boundaries of time and space carefully laid out by Mrs. Krinkle, he sat in the time-out chair or in places separate from other children. If Moby could not control his body, Mrs. Krinkle's decision to partition him away from other children who might touch or be touched would control it for him.

Moby's need to be physically close and engage in body play with other children, is as Buber (1958/ 1970) noted, the "reaching out" that permits one to relate and connect to the other. "Part of the aim of tactile stimulation and close, warm, gentle, caring affirmation and intimate communication in infancy and childhood is to eroticize the child, to arouse, to awaken, to turn the child on to life" (Martinson, 1994, p.11)

Elizabeth Grosz (1994) delineated what she terms "two kinds of approaches to theorizing the body" –one, 'inscriptive,' a Nietzschean, Foucauldian notion of the social body upon which 'social law, morality, and values are inscribed'" (p. 33). In this case, the children's teachers determine where each body should be and what it should be allowed to touch and do. Even lining up in girls' and boys' lines are practical and nominal only—the boys are named boys and the girls, girls not to delineate their sexuality, gender or interests, but to make two relatively even lines matched to restrooms named "boys" and "girls," too.

Grosz's second theorizing is the "lived body," which references the "lived experience of the body, the body's internal or psychic inscription" (p. 33). Grosz suggested that, while we are becoming adept at naming the inscriptive details of the body, we tend to shy away from the messiness of the corporal body—the lived experiences...especially sex. An assertion that:

Practically all children indulge or are prone to indulge in sexual activity; and that,

being...at the same time, “natural’ and “contrary to nature,”...posed physical and moral, individual and collective dangers; children were defined as “preliminary” sexual beings, on this side of sex, yet within it, astride a dangerous dividing line (Foucault, 1980b, p. 104).

Indeed, two of the most uncomfortable and confrontational times of my own teaching career were related to children’s sexuality. In each case: the incident involving two kindergarten boys in the bathroom; and the incident involving three girls in the classroom library where pillows and knitted blankets could be used to “hide,” parents, counselors, and agencies were activated to stem the possibility of crossing that “dangerous dividing line.” As Deleuze & Guattari (1987) described the body as “not simply as sign to be read, a symptom to be deciphered, but also a force to be reckoned with,” so did the children’s bodies and the connections made manage to “align themselves to other things produce what [is] called a machine...in itself, the body is not a machine; but in its active relations to other social practices, entities and events, it forms machine connections.” In this case, the alignments the children’s bodies made served to engage other entities (counselors, agencies, frightened/angry parents (“Does this mean he’s gay???”)) as surveillance machines imposed in the classroom to join the machine of the sexualized events in the school.

The body is thus not an organic totality which is capable of the wholesale expression of subjectivity, a welling up of the subject's emotions, attitudes, beliefs, or experiences, but is itself an assemblage of organs, processes, pleasures, passions, activities, behaviors linked by fine lines and unpredictable networks to other elements, segments and assemblages” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 120).

If we take one more backwards look at Mrs. Krinkle’s walk away from the carpet, her body’s distance and position was the catalyst linked by “fine lines and unpredictable networks” to the carpet—and like a Rube Goldberg machine put into motion the series of motions and interactions that included every child in the room –watcher or wrestler.

Moment of Disobedience: “Shoulder to Cry On”

*breathing in, I am so happy to hug my child*  
*breathing out, I know she is real and alive in my arms*  
 (Hanh, 1990b, p. 36)

The final moment of disobedience revisits the conflicted notions of “good and goodness” as introduced in Chapter I in the discussion of the moment of Reuben’s fall. In the space of the kindergarten classroom, a space where interactions with time and space are, to different degrees, highly restricted and a space where children are surveilled closely and kept apart from one another—there is also space for children (and their teachers) to act with generosity and kindness.

*Clark and Jacob Go to Time-Out*

On a day in this same classroom, during a time when the children were in various parts of the room working and playing, Jacob had committed an act of disobedience (which I did not witness) and so was sent to sit at a table for a time-out. He had been there for about four minutes, head down but eyes up, calmly surveying the room and waiting for a signal from Mrs. Krinkle that he could rejoin the others. I watched him. And so, I missed whatever had occurred that sent Clark to a time-out table, too.

Clark was a “new” boy. At the time of this incident, he had been a member of Mrs. Krinkle’s class for about two weeks and was adjusting slowly to kindergarten. He had been

living with his mother until the courts took him away from her to live with his father immediately before joining Mrs. Krinkle's class. Before moving in with his father, he reportedly had almost no interaction with anyone outside of his mother. He suffered language delays, according to Mrs. Krinkle; and in the classroom, everything was new to him. In my view, having everything seem new can be a very exciting prospect and Clark sometimes evidenced this enthusiasm in surprising circumstances. For instance, once while sitting in the front row on the carpet while Mrs. Krinkle read a big book aloud, Clark spotted a picture of a cat on the page. "A CAT!!" he cried... and rose to his knees to point to it. "LOOK!! A CAT!!" he said and rubbed it on the page. Mrs. Krinkle turned the page to read what followed, but Clark reached up to turn the page back to again touch the cat and murmur, "It's a cat..."

Jacob, in many ways, had the opposite relationship with the class as did Clark. Jacob seemed to know everything about his kindergarten class, his teacher, the university students who spent time in his classroom, and details about each child in the class. In the month that I spent there, he had transitioned from the boy who had soaked his paint shirt in blue and yellow (and so green) paint and seemed oblivious to the impact on the adults who witnessed it, to a perceptive child who moved with confidence through the classroom and to whom Mrs. Krinkle often asked for assistance. The children viewed him as a leader and Mrs. Krinkle understood that he could and did serve as an ally to her purposes. I noted this in my visits and asked Jacob to help me out more than once.

For instance, during one of my early visits, I asked the children to choose their pseudonyms that I would use in this document. I had planned to explain it to them, let them

think about it, and then get the names on my next visit. However, the children were excited at the prospect of having an alias and began calling out their new names instantly. I rushed to write down their choices and then checked against the class list for who was missing. One child, who later became “New York” was absent. On my next visit, I caught up with he-who-would-become-New York, and attempted to explain the process and ask him to name himself. He ignored me. I tried again. And he ignored me again.

I turned to Jacob. I asked him to help me out with he-who-would-become-New York, and Jacob said, “Sure,” and joined the boy at the library. At first, he just said, “Hey, you have to name yourself!” and the boy ignored Jacob, too. Without giving me a glance, Jacob persisted. “It’s easy,” he coaxed, “we all got new names. I’m going to be Jacob in the book.” And he proceeded to walk he-who-would-become-New York from child to child and told him their names. Jacob remembered the names from the previous visit, and was able to name the children as they had named themselves. Finally, Jacob held the boy’s hand, walked to me, and said, “That’s a good one. Tell her!” and New York said, “I’d like to be New York.” Jacob smiled and returned to his work at the table.

On this day, however, both Jacob and Clark had committed some misbehavior that sent them from the group. While Jacob dutifully did his time, Clark balked. He walked slowly away from where he had been in the block area toward the chairs and tables—but then stopped, frozen, and began to cry. Loudly and wetly. Mrs. Krinkle calmly said from across the room, “Clark, you need to go sit down at the table,” and continued working with the small group she had joined in the library.

*Jacob Leaves Time-Out*

Clark continued to stand exactly where he was and cry. Louder. Jacob, from his time-out seat had been watching, too. He rose from his time-out chair—no checks for surveillance, no request for permission—and walked to Clark and placed his arm around Clark’s shoulder pulling him tightly to his body. Jacob was tall and Clark was small. Jacob was Black and Clark was White. Jacob was highly experienced and knowledgeable about Kindergarten and Clark was inexperienced and knew little about kindergarten.

Jacob rubbed his hand up and down Clark’s shoulder and upper arm and said, “Hey, you don’t have to cry. It’s just time out. You sit down. You sit down for five minutes.... five months.... five somethings, and then you get back up. Come on. It’s not that bad.”

Jacob, a highly knowledgeable student of kindergarten understood “time-out” as part and parcel of the kindergarten experience. He explained that time—as it seems to in all aspects of school—played a role in this particular event. While he was not certain exactly the length of time (minutes, months, “somethings”)—he did know that it was relatively predictable—that it *would* end and that once again, the “bad” would re-join the “good.” Jacob was offering Clark hope and a sense of the future.

Clark, however—to whom everything is new experiences this “time-out” without faith in what will happen next—remained frozen and did not move from the spot where he had stopped, but his crying was a bit less loud.

Jacob finally checked—looking toward Mrs. Krinkle—who, while she must have heard and probably seen this exchange, and Jacob’s abandonment of time-out, did not offer any indication that she noticed—thus, her tacit approval. Jacob then shifted—he faced Clark and

placed both hands on Clark's shoulders. "Hey, buddy," Jacob said, bending his knees a little to look Clark in the eye, "I'll stay in until you get out. Okay?" He checked Mrs. Krinkle again. "Okay?"

Jacob shifted from comforter to teacher and informer, explaining to Clark the logistics of "time-out, to more directly offering his emotional support toward alleviating Clark's sadness and confusion. Jacob demonstrated a quality of care and regard early on—rubbing Clark's shoulder and arm as he comforted him with words; and then he extended his comfort to Clark by promising to remain with him for as long as he is required to stay in Time-Out.

Finally, Jacob let go and as he turned to return to his time-out seat, he repeated, "Okay?" and while Clark still stood on that spot, Jacob returned to his chair and lay his head down. His eyes remained trained on Clark.

Clark sniffled and finally, still in the same spot, sank to the floor. He had stopped crying.

#### Laying a Moral-Spiritual Text

*Is a leaf smart?  
Does it keep secrets  
Or  
Is there a secret I don't already know?  
No  
I know every secret  
That roams this earth,  
But one...  
The secret that breaks my heart.  
To not know what I did wrong.*

Eva, age 8 (in Kohl, 1998)

*Moral: Goods and Bads*

Watching Jacob, who had been “bad” and so sent to the time-out table, disobey Mrs. Krinkle by leaving his designated spot in order to comfort his crying classmate, Clark recalled for me the moment of Julian’s care of Reuben many years ago. As I had then, I troubled the notions of “good” and “bad” and what meaning the children may have made of those terms, those qualities, for themselves.

Vivian Paley has troubled the same notions in her long-term work with kindergarten children. In *Wally’s Stories* (1981), she shared excerpts of conversations she has had with children about how they understand their value as “good” or “bad” on the basis of the adult response to their actions. Here are a few of those excerpts:

Eddie: Sometimes I hate myself.

Teacher: When?

Eddie: When I am naughty.

Teacher: What do you do that’s naughty?

Eddie: You know naughty words. Like ‘shit’. That one.

Teacher: That makes you hate yourself?

Eddie: Yeah. When my dad washes my mouth out with soap.

Teacher: What if he doesn’t hear you?

Eddie: Then I get away with it. Then I don’t hate myself.

Wally: If I’m bad, like take the food when it’s not time to eat yet and my mom makes me leave the kitchen. Then I hate myself because I want to stay with her in the kitchen.

Eddie: And here's another reason I don't like myself. This is a good reason. Sometimes

I try to get the cookies on top of the refrigerator.

Teacher: What's the reason you don't like yourself?

Eddie: Because my mom counts to ten fast and I get a spanking and my grandma gets mad at her.

Deanna: Here's when I like myself: when I'm coloring and my mommy says, 'Stop coloring. We have to go out.' And I tell her I'm coloring and she says 'okay. I'll give you ten more minutes.

Teacher: What if you have to stop what you are doing?

Deanna: When she's in a big hurry. That's when she yells at me. Then I don't like myself (p. 54-55).

And in a later conversation:

Wally: In my old school, if you tore someone's picture you sat in the hallway all alone by yourself until you were good.

Teacher: Did it make you good?

Wally: Yes. Hey, you know what we did in the hallway? We tore off the pictures on the wall.

Teacher: Then being in the hallway didn't seem to make you good, did it?

Wally: They didn't know it was us (p. 55).

As Paley (1981) wrote, "Bad and good depended on the adult response. If the schoolteacher used a hickory stick, it meant the children were bad; the stick made them good.

An angry parent denoted a naughty child. To the adult, the cause of the punishment was obvious, but the child saw only the stick and judged himself accordingly” (p. 55).

In Mrs. Krinkle’s classroom, the children often discussed who was “good” and who was “bad”—and the basis for naming the subject of the conversation was the adult response to the child’s action, almost never the action itself. When Jacob had been sent to his seat from the carpet a few weeks earlier, Leela had clicked her tongue, shook her head, and said under her breath, “He’s so bad,” as Tommy nodded his head in agreement. I leant over and asked Leela what he’d done, and she shrugged and said, “I don’t know, but he’s always bad.” Adults are just as susceptible to this juxtaposition of cause and effect. One afternoon I witnessed the following:

241. T: Time to clean up! All join in but in their own way!

242. Clark: ((claps and jumps up and down))

243. ((the children busily move through the room, putting things away))

244. Dora: ((as she passes by the behavior chart, she notices that the only star under the cloud is the one with Moby’s name on it)) What did Moby do? ((loudly))

245. T: Nothing. ((to Moby)) Why did you move your star there?

246. (University student): ((moves the star back so that it lines up under the sunshine cut-out)) ((to Moby): If your name is there, it means you’re bad.

This exchange was striking in the “truth” of this arbolic logic: if you are punished, it means you are bad.

Clark and Jacob had been sent to time-out chairs for disobedient behavior. When Clark refused to go, and instead sobbed his sorrow and frustration, Jacob responded to his sadness

and committed another disobedience when he left the time-out table. Jacob's comfort was two-fold: he reassured Clark about the punishment itself ("It's not that bad.") and he demonstrated his regard for Clark even though he was "bad." If being punished means one is "bad"—Clark's tears may have been just as much a product of his sudden "badness" as it was due to the time-out punishment. Mrs. Krinkle, the adult in Clark's school-life, reprimanded Clark and so, in good/bad logic—named him, in his eyes, as bad.

Groening (1988) explored the notion of being good (or bad) in Chapter 19 Crime 'N' Punishment of his cartoon book, *Childhood is Hell*<sup>11</sup>, as Bongo engaged in conversation with himself:

B: Ok—what is crime?

B: Crime is when you break the rules.

B: What are rules?

B: Rules are the general guidelines to follow so nobody has to think. Parents dig rules 'cause they get to enforce them on you.

B: That's the one rule parents obey: Makin' the kids obey all the other rules.

B: And you know something? Most kids actually like to follow the rules.

B: That's 'cause, for better or worser, it's easier to obey a rule then to think for yourself.

B: Plus the rules give you this safe target for when you get mad. You get mad at the rule instead of the parents who made up the rule.

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<sup>11</sup> The full cartoon version of this conversation can be found in Appendix D.

B: but eventually, you wise up and begin to notice that some rules are stupid, pointless and crazy.

B: So then you gotta ask yourself: Why am I following this rule?

B: Does obeying this rule make sense or I am just being a little wimp? What happens if I break this rule? Will anyone get hurt?

B: If I break this rule, will I be happier?

B: Or I am just being a little wiseguy, trying to get even for some past injustice?

B: How much punishment will result from this crime? Can I handle it? Yes!! I can! I can!! I am free!!! Free, I tell you!!!

Mom: I thought I told you to go to bed.

Mom: ((turns Bongo over her knee and spans him)) You're so bad.

B: Now where was I? I know it was important.

B: Dang. I lost it.

B: I'm so bad.

And once more, the dominant (adult) naming of “bad” is convincing and final. As defense lawyers know, their clients begin with at least one strike against them: that many people (jurors) believe that if a person has been arrested, they must have done something to deserve it. Therefore the conversation shifts from what Dewey (in Gouinlock, 1994) referred to reflective morality of “goodness” to the customary morality of “good,” as had been carefully negotiated in Makarushka (1998)’s analysis of Bess, the protagonist of von Trier’s film, *Breaking the Waves*, in Chapter I. In this discussion, “good” meant “not to make waves, not to destabilize the ‘natural’ order of things, not to express deeply felt emotions, not to

experience pleasure” ...[else to be] interpreted as a flaw, an emotional deficit” (np).

Makarushka further notes that the “good” assumes an “external reference against which all choices and behaviors can be measured and assessed....If the ‘good’ is a static moral category that assumes compliance, goodness is “dynamic, transgressing, and, therefore, dangerous” (np).

Jacob’s generous act was also dangerous. Reading between the lines of the hundreds of discipline books, the words of thousands of experts on how to handle children, and the dozens of teacher websites, we realize that many teachers are fearful of losing control and of the chaos that will result.

*Spiritual: “Seeing” the Need to Act*

*Living is easy with eyes closed.*

~John Lennon

At a recent conference, William Ayers (in Pinar, Ayers, & Schubert, 2007) shared the premise of the 1998 Brazilian/French film, *Central Station (Central do Brasil)* in which Dora—a former school teacher who writes letters for illiterate people at Rio de Janeiro's central station, Central do Brasil—transports a young boy, whose mother has just died in a car accident, to Brazil's remote Northeast, in search for the father he never knew. However, later in the film, Dora finds out that she was duped and that she had placed the boy in danger.

Initially, Dora did not have a moral choice to make because she did not know about what happens to the children so transported. She was not aware.

Ayers used this plot line from the film to discuss social ethics. The film was striking in its portrayal of this incident due to the sequence of its progress. Dora, who sometimes throws away the letters she writes, and speaks denigratingly of some of the people she writes

for—is not aware that she is doing any evil by taking the large amount of money to transport the boy across the city. She is making an economic choice. Once she learns of the real circumstances in regard to the children who are stolen in her country—that they are killed and their organs harvested—she abandons her newly-purchased television and all else to get him back.

Ayers' point is that moral choice requires one to be aware. In the moment of Jacob's disobedience above, his ability to see Clark's pain required him to act. Jacob's presence and intense engagement with his own senses created for him a kind of conscious awareness—making explicit the moral commitment.

Noddings (2002), in her description of the state of the “carer” in a caring situation, names this special form of attentiveness as “engrossment.” Engrossment is a kind of attention that is “acutely receptive and is directed at the cared-for” (p. 28). Hay and Nye (1998) further discuss “seeing the need to act w/ kindness” as a spiritual awareness—a special kind of “attention” within a reflexive process—“being attentive to one's attention or ‘being aware of one's awareness” (p. 65)—what I might call a meta-awareness.

In many instances of non-compliance or disobedience, the child may not be responding to the teacher's demands or to the order of the structure of the room, but rather, they are responding to their attention/awareness to something or someone else. In Jacob's case, he did not attend to his teacher's expectation to stay seated in his time-out place, but instead evidenced an intense, irresistible attention to another child's needs.

As introduced in Chapter II, there is a deep connection between “attention” or “sensing” and morality, indicating that moral action “is not so much a matter of choice or

values, but a matter of seeing the moral context clearly... moral sensitivities develop from continuous attention to the moral aspects of experience” (Murdoch, 1970/1985, in Sherblom, 1997). Murdoch’s “sensing/attention” is similar to Eisner’s (1998) discussion of experience of quality, noting that while the sensory system is the instrument through which we experience the qualities that constitute our environment, the ability to truly experience these qualities requires more than merely their presence—it requires action.

Jacob, like Julian who saw and therefore acted, allowed himself to be fully engaged with the space that surrounds him. As discussed in earlier chapters, this intense awareness and wide-awakeness is associated with their spirituality. Within the ordered structures of school—structures that are very effective at separating children from one another, from nature, and from real interactions with space and time—it is often the children, in more consistently and actively resisting those structures are able to maintain their spiritual relationships. There are many instances of children and their teachers caring for one another in their settings. The students in Michael Scott’s class demonstrated a “spirituality of caring” for Flash’s hurt neck; Jacob did so for Clark; and Julian did for Reuben. Even Moby’s playful wrestling with Bruce came from a regard for him and a desire to connect his body to another’s. To feel alive and human:

*Spirit* is that property of being fully and wholly human that fuels our predisposition to transcend each and every condition in our experience. ‘Spirituality’ is a construction of meaning meant to inform the human way we engage in that process of transcendence. Margaret Chatterjee (1989) appropriately suggests that there ‘can be no spirituality shorn of community’ (p. 6). A spirituality of caring is a way of naming what it is we do

as a community to nurture and educate spirited young children for the invitations to transcendence presented by life; that is a human activity performed by and for whole people in a whole community (Kimes-Myers, 1997, p. 62).

Kindergarten classrooms are rife with moments of disobedience--moments in which children (and their teachers) push and transpierce boundaries of time and place; seek out the free spaces that allow the pleasure and comfort of a touch; and trouble to see one another in ways that allow deeper, fuller, spiritual and human connections. It is in these moments of disobedience that we may find our way into kinship and love.

*The thought manifests as the word  
The word manifests as the deed  
The deed develops into habit  
And the habit hardens into character.  
So watch the thought  
And its ways with care  
And let it spring from love  
Born out of respect for all being  
(Buddhist tradition)*

CHAPTER VI  
DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS: THE MORAL OF JULIAN

*We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world.*

Buddhist tradition

Introduction

In 1893, Emma Goldman was arrested for inciting a riot while advocating for unemployed workers. And in 1995, Julian, age 5, lost his recess for getting out of line to help Reuben, also 5, when he fell. When Reuben fell, Julian joined the ranks of those morally and spiritually unswaddled who practice disobedience even in the face of known consequences. I witnessed Julian's moment of disobedience many years ago and still "shudder" as I persist in a "truth process" (Badiou, 2001) instigated by this unexpected and yet expected event. This dissertation is an artifact of the many ways and contexts in which I have sought to rethink and retheorise the moments of Reuben's fall and Julian's disobedience.

The moral of this event for me is related to the complexity of each moment of interaction—and especially those moments of what we would categorize as moments of disobedience. While such events are typically named as "bad"—and so reacted to accordingly—these acts of disobedience are much more complex than those reactions imply.

Toward complicating teachers' understanding and interpretations of children's disobediences, this study provided a lens on two kindergarten classrooms, examining moments of disobedience as children interacted with children, their teachers, and the

space and time elements of the classroom environments. Rather than looking at these moments toward determining cause or solution, the purpose of casting a light on these moments is to disrupt the typical early childhood/classroom management understanding of children's school disobediences. Also examined in this study via a kind of "educational criticism" (Eisner, 1998) are the elements of "school," "kindergarten" and "teachers" within the spaces of their intersections with children. The data that included the moments described in this paper was collected over a period of two months in two kindergarten classrooms in two different school systems in the same county in a Midwestern state. The data sources included videotapes of each classroom (6-8 hours per classroom) and field notes maintained while taping, and during visits that were not videotaped. The function of a rhizomatic analysis in this study was to simultaneously sharpen and blur the view on children's moments of disobedience and so, to disrupt the typical line of understanding and response.

#### Limitations, But Not So Limiting

St. Pierre (1997) wrote about her work considering the concept of data:

I took very seriously a very ordinary concept of qualitative inquiry, data, a concept that we certainly cannot do without, and opened it up to different possibilities. As a result, I will never again be able to think of data in the same way. Indeed, I am no longer sure I know what data "means" or whether what it "means" can assume the importance it once did (p. 418).

In this study, I also took very seriously the concept of "data"—as I, too, struggled with the considerable number and variations of moments of disobedience, and infinite variations of

possible interpretations of the data generated during my time in those two kindergartens. I struggled with my own strong feelings about the data—the moments I selected to analyze, the texts I chose to include when discussing schools and teachers, the texts I selected to carefully lay over the texts of moments plucked from the kindergarten, and where I chose to lay those texts. From this experience with data, I, too, understood its “meaning” as fleeting and concurrently, rife with possibilities and limitations.

In making my data-related choices, I was aware of my intentions and purpose concerning this study and of the strong biases I have related to those intentions, and so, was concerned about the fairness and value of my choices. However, I found that aspects of Lather’s (1991) discussion of postmodern, emancipatory research provide some ways to think about ameliorating this concern. For instance, she recognized that “ways of knowing are inherently culture-bound and perspectival [and that] ideology is the stories a culture tells about itself...[and] something that people inhabit in very daily, material ways...which speak to both progressive and determinant aspects of culture” (p. 2). Therefore it was important to the study that I considered how my own values, my own ideologies served to permeate my inquiry and what function they may have served as I engaged with the teachers and children in the daily, material ways that we inhabited these moments together. Helpful in working through the role of my values in this project was taking into account the distinction between “‘coercive values’ racism, classism, sexism—that deteriorate objectivity and ‘participatory values’—antiracism, anticlassism, antisexism” (from Harding, 1986, in Lather, 1991, p. 3).

And so, as this research sought to rhizomatically challenge “coercive values” such as what I have named “compliance” and the rational-technical teaching practices that often go unexamined, I would claim that this work operated under “participatory values”—taking a “change-enhancing, advocacy approach to inquiry based on ... ‘enabling’ [as opposed to] a ‘blinding’ prejudice” (p. 3). I claim no positivist objectivity, but name my bias as one that advocates for children as spiritual, deeply moral people who deserve to spend their child-lives in places of comfort, joy and love.

This bias leads to some discussion of another of other assumptions about research related to the shifting, resistant possibilities of a critical social science. Van Maanen (1988, in Lather, 1991) termed “critical tales” as those which query “power, economy, history and exploitation”; and Poster (1989, in Lather 1991) wrote, “We live amid a world of pain, [and] much can be done to alleviate that pain.” This again, is an assumption I hold in common with Lather (and those she quotes). In discussing moments of disobedience as “possibilities”—as potential moments of humor, engagement, empathy, imagination and abandon—I challenged the unquestioned power of *techne* and the many “Wongs,” (as described in Chapter IV) and sought to alleviate the pain of the morally, spiritually swaddled kindergarten child in their tightly partitioned (although not as tightly partitioned as some might think) classrooms.

Lather (1991) discussed an approach to research that might “empower those involved to change as well as understand the world—[to have a] new relationship with their own contexts.” In considering how this research might influence children and teachers to “come into a sense of their own power” (p. 4), I purposely selected moments

and texts that would be familiar—even mundane—and yet, somewhat outlandish in analysis, so that perhaps in reading this work (as Lather, 1991, quotes Barthes, “in the text only the reader speaks” (p. xx)), *disobedience* may look new and strange—and so responded to reflexively.

Just as St. Pierre took very seriously the ordinary concept of data, so did I take seriously the ordinary concept of disobedience in kindergarten – yes, a concept we may not be able to “do without” and now opened up in a way that I will (and I hope the reader will) never be able to again think of it in the same way.

### *Roads Untaken*

Within those moments and within the walls of those school sites, there are many potential lines of flight in coming to understand the complexities of these moments of disobedience. Certainly obvious and not-so-obvious connections might have been followed related to race, economics and culture, especially given the contrast between the two sites when considering those three descriptors of a place. However, this study was not a comparative study of urban/suburban, Black/White, or economically advantaged/disadvantaged—but was, rather, a study of children’s disobediences as teacher of any child might see in any kindergarten classroom.

Ways in which gender connects to disobedience might have been pursued on an alternate line of flight. It was not a deliberate choice to focus the rhizomatic analyses on moments of boys’ disobedience; the acts themselves were what were selected—for their mundane-ness, and therefore, the likelihood they would be familiar moments to kindergarten teachers; and for their potential in laying texts. Boys’ acts of disobedience

were more common than were the girls', more obvious, and, often, more prolonged—so there were many more instances of disobedience involving boys. In this study, the gender of the child is not the issue, only that the child acts. As an opportunity to look at any child's spirit, vision, empathy, care, and joy through their acts of non-compliance to the norms of their kindergarten, I sought to focus on the moment itself and the child(ren) within it.

Even while focusing on the children, I have selected *any* of a wide variety of lenses with which to guide my line of flight—lenses of possibility—but which the limitations of language, pages, and one's capacities caused to be cast aside. There lie an infinite number of moments to pluck out of the rich soil of the kindergarten classroom, a limitless number of shoots to trace to an immeasurable variety of connections. Therefore, the limitations of this work, in large part, derive from the fact that there are few limitations to the ways in which the research question might have been answered. No matter which lines of flight I traveled, there were others I missed, and depending on which middle or fold of the line of flight I grabbed, other connections I might have made.

#### Educational Criticism

In support (and advance) of the research questions regarding children's disobedience as "disregarding or defying structured expectations of a particular situation," I found it necessary to investigate the institutional and structural constraints and expectations of school and kindergarten. I determined that seeking out practically- and intellectually-accessible sources of school expectations that are popular with teachers would provide insights into the zeitgeist of school and a sense of broad teacher perspective.

Although the initial purpose was to define and set a broad and particular context for children's disobedience in school, an emergent function of what became a component of the research was to engage in Elliott Eisner's (1998) *educational criticism*: "...an art of saying useful things about complex and subtle objects and events so that others can see and understand what they did not see and understand before" (p. 3). Eisner further advocates the moral obligation of action in conjunction with connoisseurship and criticism, aligning with Lather's (1991) proposal of a "collaborative, praxis oriented model for validating research in naming an emancipatory and advocacy model of validation": catalytic validity. My decision to provide a range of examples related to the institution of school that was derived from a multitude of sources did not come from a place of neutrality. Upon uncovering the pervasiveness of recurrent characteristics of *techne*' in the readily available and commonly-accessed readings for teachers engaged in every-day interactions with obedient and disobedient children, I found the explicit and implicit messages in these works to be compelling. In discussing these findings in a context of interrogating the complexity of a "given" such as disobedience, I hoped to offer the kind of "critic's observation" (Eisner, 1998, p. 112) that the reader might have missed without an opportunity to share in the experience.

Therefore, while the findings related to schools, kindergartens, and teachers as described in Chapter IV were not directly in response to the stated research questions for this study, they were integral to the meanings to be made from the research question findings; and, I believe, contributed to the opportunity to engage in the complexity of the questions regarding children's disobedience in kindergarten classrooms.

## Research Questions

In this section of Chapter VI, I share some conclusions, as such, regarding observations and analyses of moments of children's disobedience in kindergarten. The questions posed in Chapters I and III are repeated here, as I very briefly address the first two questions, and then continue to respond to them as I more fully address the final question in the subsequent sections of Conclusions. In considering the first two questions, "In what ways do kindergarten children disobey in the context of the kindergarten classroom?" and "In what ways are kindergartners' moments of disobedience representations and enactments of something more than merely disobedience?"—I focused in Chapter V on a few small categories of disobedience—ones related to time and space; to surveillance and touch; and to observation and altruism. It became apparent in the contextual literature review in Chapter II, and in contextual review of schools in Chapter IV, that the ways in which children used the time and space of the classroom, the ways in which they kept themselves available for viewing, and how separate they kept their bodies is a high priority for classroom teachers. The rules, consequences and rewards are based on how tightly children toed the figurative line of classroom and kindergarten expectations of time, space, contact and surveillance.

I found that as the kindergarten children disobeyed, they often did so in ways that allowed them access to one another and to the environment that spoke to the next question: "In what ways are kindergartners' moments of disobedience opportunities for responding to others in caring, ethical ways and acting out the possibilities that a spiritual childhood provides (such as reverence, awe, wonder, reflection, imagination and

thoughtfulness; and the sensitivities in: awareness sensing; mystery sensing, and value sensing)?" While only Jacob openly exhibited a kind of disobedience that could be considered "responding to others in caring, ethical ways"—as will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter—I believe that all of the moments of disobedience presented in Chapter V were acting out the possibilities that a spiritual childhood provides. Indeed, throughout my days at the kindergarten sites, I was witness to spiritual acts of reverence, awe, wonder, reflection, imagination and thoughtfulness as children daily engaged with one another and the environment in what Hay and Nye (1998) would term "awareness sensing, mystery sensing, and value sensing."

Mason, for instance, as he stretched the boundaries of his kindergarten space—was profoundly aware of the nuances of the classroom space and of the relationship he and his teacher had with time in that space. Because of this awareness, he was able to experience what one might consider the mundane, predictable, and everyday kindergarten day with freshness, surprise and a unique vision. Here then lies the mystery. Mason could look at the same carpeted area that all the children sat in every day and wonder what new possibility it would hold for him, if he tried a slide, a quicker exit or bringing a ball to it. Even while engaged with an exciting prospect like the "new" (to him) carpet—Mason demonstrated that he could hold a dual (at least) sensitivity for value-sensing. While the ever-shifting newness of the carpet and room lent a rich value to the "everyday" in Mason's eyes, he also valued his relationship with Mr. Scott and the class. His actions throughout—"I said it, too"; checking with "Scott" for approval, for notice, and because he wanted to share with him what he was finding—indicated that he valued deeply his

place in Mr. Scott's kindergarten classroom, even while pushing at the boundaries of that place.

### Implications

As different questions about educational research emerge, perhaps desires will shift from an insistence on the “meaning” of concepts like postmodernism to, as Linda Alcoff (1994, in St. Pierre, 2000) suggested:

An investigation of where our research goes and what it does there. This kind of inquiry, then, is always political, ethical, and material since it does not stray far from the lived experiences of those influenced by educational research. To this end, I believe our responsibility is to keep educational research in play, increasingly unintelligible to itself, in order to produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently as we work for social justice in the human sciences (p. 27).

In response to the challenge to produce “different knowledge” and to produce this knowledge “differently” in order to keep it close to the children's and teachers' lived experiences, a final question arises—one that is fundamentally connected to the stated research questions—“What are the possibilities in coming to understand and respond to the complexities and potential value of kindergartners' acts of disobedience?” This question will inform the implications of the study in the final sections of this chapter, one each related to (a) compliancism and swaddling, (b) teacher choice, and (c) democracy.

#### *Swaddling/Compliancism*

*Miss Juste's police whistle rent the air with two awful blasts. The two hundred little girls in green rompers stopped dead in their tracks. Two blasts meant line up. Line up like at the beginning of the period.*

*Obediently, the green rompers milled about and found their appointed places in regular lines the length and breadth of the gymnasium. With grim pleasure, Miss Juste watched the girls respond to her command. She had called them back, after once dismissing them, as a master might jerk her dog back on a leash... Standing at attention, her shapeless white sneakers side by side, her knees like two cauliflowers below the voluminous serge bloomers, Miss Juste waited till every movement in the lines should cease. As usual, it was Edith Polizetti who could not find her place. Edith Polizetti who, under the terrible eye of Miss Juste, tried to squeeze her way anywhere into a line and was mercilessly shoved out by the other little girls.*

(Highsmith, 1941/2002, p. 53)

*The education of young children (like religion) “...becomes demonically destructive when it goes by the book and tries to make the dancing order of nature conform to the marching order of law, and force this essentially wiggly universe to toe the straight and narrow line.*

Alan Watts

#### The “Privileging” of Compliancism

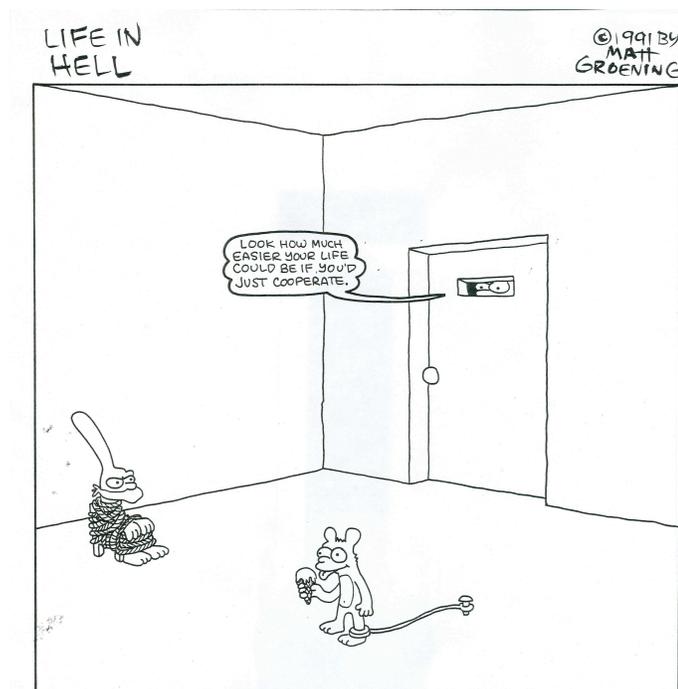


Figure 4: The “Privileging” of Compliancism (M. Groening, 1997, p. 34)

Here I revisit Matt Groening's cartoon from the book, *Life in Hell*, (Figure 4), astutely depicting the complexity of reward and constraint as the compliant character is ostensibly privileged over the non-compliant. In considering an ism such as "compliandism" as represented in Groening's work, but also throughout the context of the study—one can clearly see that, as with every privileged "ism," privilege only goes so far. Even the "privileged" compliant are not free.

Recall from the first chapter, Mead's (1951) description of the swaddled Russian child: "Hands that were tightly bound inside the swaddling bands could not explore... experiencing but never touching the teeming, vivid, highly charged world around it, being in it, but not of it." While the practice and act of swaddling may come about as an act of care and concern, a practice of security and control—the unintended consequences of the act, as Mead described, include a muted, disengaged experience with one's world.

In studying the child in interaction with Kindergarten, it is important to be aware of the impact of the normalizing, constraining, enclosing and structural orders inherent in the child/teacher relationships and even in the architecture of the school and classroom. Wrapped in the swaddling clothes of school procedures, rules and norms, the kindergarten child is similarly deprived of real association with the world, and so, also deprived of the opportunity to enact the freedom, joy, wisdom, silliness, hope, abandon, faith, beginnings, playfulness, verve, whole-hearted faith and intense awareness of what childhood might offer, given the space to do so.

We read in the previous chapters of children like Briona, Moby and The Toucher in the Other Teacher's line—who, in spite of (in response to?) the constraints and normed

order of school, threw off the swaddling clothes of the normalization and coercion. We also read of children like Tommy and Bumblebee, who perhaps enjoy the safety and security of those swaddling bands. For some, these predictable and presumed constraints may feel right and proper and may serve to:

...provide canopies under which identifications grow protected from the wild winds and harsh temperatures of our absolute aloneness only escapable, or at least, assuaged, by love. [These may] constitute ‘regimes of truth’ that protect the fragile human ego providing canals or routes of thinking, or rather, logos, to which we become emotionally invested in maintaining as it constitutes in part our being and the ways we commune with (love) those and that around us. Both help define “the situation” (regimes of truth), justify the status quo, and thingify (that is identify) what is and what is not that “we” are: the state of things (den Heyer, email communication, 2007).

As den Heyer’s message implies, within the discussion of the consequences of swaddling and the deceptive benefits of engaging in compliancism, one might find value and a range of meaning connected to compliance and the security of the rules, structures, beliefs, traditions, and sacred texts that swaddle us and keep us, in some ways, safe.

Palmer’s (1998) work mirrors den Heyer’s statement:

We collaborate with the structures of separation because they promise to protect us against one of the deepest fears at the heart of being human-- the fear of having a live encounter with alien “otherness”... We fear encounters in which the other is free to be itself, to speak its own truth, to tell us what we may not wish to hear. We want

those encounters on our own terms, so that we can control their outcomes, so that they will not threaten our view of world and self” (p. 37).

Palmer thus provides further explanation of the comfort and security of swaddling ourselves away from what might be fearsome. While Palmer and den Heyer lead us to understand, in gentle terms, the humanness of huddling beneath canopies of identity, I cannot help wondering what we miss while fearfully wrapped apart from the teaming possibilities from which we become separated. I presume that the same canopy that protects us from winds and temperatures also prevents us from seeing the stars and feeling the sun on our faces; and I worry about the means by which these safe places are maintained. Bunyard (2005) tells of the child protected from the messiness of childhood and so protected from his own “perfection”:

Probably every reader of this essay has had to deal with a small child and its mess. Of course the child was soon cleaned up, the floor swept, and the table wiped. The clothes they wore eventually got dumped in the washing machine and some semblance of order was restored. Day after day, this pattern was repeated and eventually a level of tidiness and cleanliness acceptable to adult eyes predominated for longer and longer stretches of time. Each correction or encouragement added to the apparent solidity of the practices of everyday life surrounding the child—adults and other children creating an increasingly well-defined reciprocal to the child’s own agency; and so the child grew up. This process is unremarkable, yet it presents society with two forms of danger. Adults, in wanting the best for their children, perhaps try too hard to shape them according to some image of perfection; children,

in wanting love, are perhaps too willing to submit (p. 292).

But aren't children wise? From the beginning of this paper, I claimed an ancient kind of wisdom for the child, although quite the opposite to what has been described in Hadot (1995) as some of the ancient spiritual exercises practiced by those seeking wisdom—practices which through an “annihilation of the will” is achieved, and so, a “detachment,” the “soul's detachment from the body” (p. 137-138). Rather, the children's wisdom derives from their intense engagement with the body and all that it can sense.

In naming children wise, I seek to queer the notion of children's innocence. While there may be “wise innocence” or “innocent wisdom” (that is for another paper), I share Thomas's (2002) concern that “the discourse of the innocent child defines children as being not only natural and innocent, but also socially incompetent and irresponsible and as needing surveillance and control” (p. 92). We adults often like to think of children as innocent, unaware and so susceptible to our needs and expectations.

Alice Miller (1983/1990) warned, “Accommodation to parental [adult] needs often leads to the ‘as-if personality.’” Just as education is a process of “improving” or making “better” children (Baker, 1998), the “as-if” person “develops in such a way that he reveals only what is expected of him, and fuses so completely with what he reveals that...once could scarcely have guessed how much more there is to him, behind his masked view of himself. He cannot develop and differentiate his ‘true self’ because he is unable to live it” (Miller, 1983/1990, p. 27).

In an earlier chapter, I shared a brief description of Herman Hesse's childhood and the way in which—after coming home from the boys' house “thin, pale and depressed”—

he became “much easier to manage” (Miller, 1983/1990, p. 121). Miller further explained Hesse’s childhood when she told of seeing an exhibit in Zurich commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> year marking his birth. In this exhibition was:

A picture with which the little Hermann grew up, since it was hung above his bed. In this picture, on the right, we see the ‘good’ road to heaven, full of thorns, difficulties and suffering. On the left, we see the easy pleasurable road that inevitably leads to hell. (p.120)

It thus is more than rules and structures that serve to swaddle—but also the normalizing pressures of customary moralities of “good” and “bad” (which are concurrently, in the case of Hesse’s picture, “bad” and “good”), and the desire to please. Under the judging gaze, the “terrible eye,” of the adult, the child learns her goodness and so her value. There is no need to actually wrap the child in swaddling clothes. She will wrap herself. In drawing this picture, the intent is to blur the lens—but also to focus it on the child within the moment of the gaze—not the child who is the object of our authoritarian gaze, not the child who is the subject of a rewarding or punishing action—but the child who is “our kin and our kind” (D. Jardine, 1998).

The children’s text introduced in Chapter V, *Tootle* (in Burbules, 1986) neatly portrayed a kind of world similar to the one in Hesse’s childhood painting. In this world, children and the adults responsible for them have very definitive roles and obligations toward one another. “Typically children fail by acting upon immature desires and habits; they must try to stop being ‘babies’ who do ‘silly’ or ‘dreadful’ things... responsibilities and expectations can be formulated as *simple* and *inviolable* rules that are absolute, not

accidental—facts, not mere conventions [emphases mine]. Follow the rules and your life will work out well. The paradigm of all rules is to “Stay on the Rails No Matter What”:

School is where lessons are learned, where inadequate [innocent] children (babies) become responsible and accomplished adults. These lessons are...immutable—learning to obey rules is essential to success... Teachers are kindly and benign; what they do is always for the child’s welfare... [even though some of their] techniques may be misleading, deceptive, or manipulative, such as assigning tasks without explanation of justification; using rewards and punishments to elicit desired student behaviors; relying on personal allegiances in order to motivate students to perform certain tasks; presenting incomplete, inconsistent, or inaccurate accounts of the world in order to make it uncontroversial and palatable; or avoiding conflict by presuming that consensus exists... These approaches are appealing because they *simplify* [emphasis mine] the school day for the teacher and for the student... An educational approach that calls into question the above goals and methods would vastly complicate the tasks of teachers and students in the classroom, making their activities and relations to one another much more problematic, controversial, and provisional... This is a picture that can convince teachers that their intentions are invariably good and that their basic endeavor can be unambiguously defined. Moreover, it can reassure students that the path to adulthood and success is simple and linear. Neither side has much stake in examining very closely why the Great Curve of the rails leads inexorably away from many of the warmest and most vibrant

impulses of childhood, or what is lost to those who do Stay on the Rails, No Matter What (p. 344-346).

The following section, “Choice: Making It Complicated” is intended to call into question the simplifying “goals and methods” described here and in Chapter IV, and seeks to greatly complicate the tasks of teachers and students in the classroom toward maximizing the common good.

*Choice: Making it Complicated*

*I have always done what they wanted me to do. Teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. Nothing else—nothing about dignity, nothing about identity, nothing about loving and caring.* ~ Ernest Gaines, *A Lesson before Dying*, (1993)

*How will you live your life so that it doesn't make a mockery of your values?*

~Bill Ayers, *Fugitive Days* (2001a)

In the moment of Reuben's fall as told in Chapter I, Julian saw a child's need, listened to the call of the situation and so, responded with an exhibition of care. I have grown to believe that if we look carefully we may see these qualities within the day to day actions and interactions of young children, and that many of these qualities may be present in the context of acts of disobedience. That sense of self that is often manifested outside of the normed order of the kindergarten is spiritual in nature, involving ways of seeing, hearing, being/becoming wide-awake, moving/using space, resisting and caring.

As explained in Chapter II, Hay and Nye (1998) discussed “spiritual awareness” as a special kind of “attention” within a reflexive process—“being attentive to one's attention or ‘being aware of one's awareness’” (p. 65)—as a meta-awareness. Julian, Mason, Moby,

and Jacob, through their actions of resistance and disobedience in their respective kindergarten classrooms, demonstrated a special kind of attention and awareness to “other.” Noddings (2002) suggested that a question we must put to ourselves as educators is whether this form of attention (engrossment) should be either invisible in our classrooms—or even more commonly, subject to correction. “Why do we so often fail to develop it and substitute instead an almost self-righteous belief in our own authority and the goodness of our coercive methods?” (p. 29-30).

Children who become “engrossed” in what they perceive around them are, ironically, often scolded for a lack of attention. Yet, as Macdonald related, the school offers only a “shoddy” experience to capture the children away from their engrossment. For example, Macdonald (1995) related an observation made in a classroom in which some children sat in a circle and took turns reading aloud to their teacher:

More often than not, having to be told where they were supposed to be reading when it was their turn; some sat copying a handwriting lesson from the chalkboard; and others were given worksheets so that they might “make new words out of double vowels such as ‘oo’ and work on endings such as ‘er,’ ‘ing,’ and ‘s.’” Of this observation, Macdonald finds nothing out of the ordinary in terms of the everyday life in schools, noting that “the hour was characterized by routine, boredom, and busywork (p. 110).

What Macdonald wrote next is the part of his essay that recalls some of my own conversations with classroom teachers, as observer and as a colleague. He wrote: “I have often asked teachers why they waste their own and children’s lives dealing with trivia and

meaningless tasks. I have even accused them of being immoral for doing so!” (p. 111).

Macdonald then claimed he was wrong, and should have been asking, “Who really makes the decisions, and in whose interests are these boring, routine, and busywork decisions made?” (p. 111). I don’t agree that Macdonald was wrong in asking teachers why they wasted a child’s life, or in accusing them of immorality in doing so, for while, certainly, teachers are likewise swaddled and coerced into compliance—they do have choices in how actively and enthusiastically they unquestioningly comply with “who really makes the decisions.” As did the children in this study, they could disobey.

A few months ago, I was struggling with what this dissertation might “do” for teachers. How might my rhizomatic (meandering, reversible, detachable) connections to moments of children’s disobedience mean anything to someone else? What would it mean to a teacher if she read it? And I almost quit. Then I caught a morning rerun of the medical drama series “*ER*” (Thorpe, 1996). It was an episode in which a little girl had been shot as a bystander by a pair of pre-teen gang-bangers. The mother of the little girl and the doctor who saved her life exchanged the following:

*Dr. Benton:* “ They have the guys who did it. They’ll pay for this.”

*Little Girl’s Mother:* “I don’t want them to pay. I want it to stop. We abandon these kids, we don’t educate them and then wonder when it goes wrong.’

*Dr. Benton:* “People make choices.”

*Little Girl’s Mother:* “Some people don’t know they have choices.”

And *that’s* what made it clear. *Some people don’t know they have choices.*

Recall what Hostetler (2005) wrote (as first related in Chapter I): “The presumption is not that people err with regard to well-being because they are evil. We err because we overlook something, misperceive something. All of us have blind spots. But we can improve our vision” (p. 20). We *can* improve our vision, if we are willing to hone our eyesight and move beyond the limited readings on each kindergarten moment than we are used to taking, and if we are willing to then, disobey.

Thoreau (1848/1966) asked us to consider those laws and rules of convention that are at times unjust:

Shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil (p. 231).

Thoreau was talking about making what people often perceive as unassailable, unquestionable convention into opportunities of choice. He asked that we consider that some conventions, rules, and laws are unjust and so to look more fully and carefully at what, who and how we obey and, I would suggest, what we require of children.

I think that many teachers do not know—or really *believe*—that they have choices. Therefore, an important aspect of this research was the careful analysis of children’s moments of disobedience in ways that make it obvious that the choices are infinite! Infinite, and therefore, concurrently, even more difficult to negotiate in the constraints that the children and teachers are a part of.

MacNaughton (2004) warned that these more complete readings are not easy. They are without the “simple roadmaps showing routes to certain destinations” –as those built into the path that the Wongs (1998) and others (see Chapter II and IV) have so blindingly lit up for us. Taking on the more complete and complex readings leads us to a path replete with “complex ethical choices, unpredictable twists and turns and never-ending possibilities.”

This path is not an easy one... and in avoiding it, teachers have a sometimes-ally in Macdonald (1995). When he asked who is really making the decisions in school, he, in essence, absolved teachers of their moral and ethical responsibility to nurture the spirits of the children in her care because they (the teachers) are compliant! Therefore, he implicitly placed the “blame” on those who make the decisions in a way similar to the way that the 1974 Milgram obedience experiments worked. By deferring to the “authority”—whether the authority of the doctor in the lab coat, the state senator, or a suit-and-tie principal, teachers choose to avoid the moral responsibility for their actions and interactions with the children in their care by claiming someone else is making them. Closing their eyes to their moral choice leaves them unaware and so free to not act on what is best and right for our children. I like Macdonald better when he takes teachers to task:

The schools are full of a ‘they won’t let me’ syndrome on the part of teachers...it is difficult to see how teachers who acquiesce to the authoritarian and self-serving milieu of the system could provide conditions other than those same ones in their own classrooms. ...Teachers often teach from textbooks, manuals and, if possible, commercial lesson plans. Teachers teach groups of children because it is *easier* to do

so, and have often acquiesced to ‘homogeneous’ groupings in schools primarily because they feel it is *easier* to teach this way. [emphases mine] Teachers often avoid controversial issues, deny the erotic aspects of the nature of human beings, and avoid the discussion of anything that is not planned ahead of time. Many teachers are consumed by the fear that they will lose control, that some situation will present itself in which they must operate as a responsive human being rather than as a status symbol of authority. Under these sorts of circumstances, it pays to get things ‘organized’ and develop managerial techniques whose primary goal is the maintenance of control” (Macdonald, 1995, p. 44).

The children in Mrs. Buttercup’s line did not believe they had a choice –and, thus, compliance absolved them of their responsibility. Perhaps the same children who obediently stayed in line, who did not question the “structure of oppression,” who did not see that there is a moral opportunity are the ones who will (or already have!) become teachers. If school “fits” the child, s/he may be more likely to wish to continue there. However, once one becomes a teacher and commits to the care and well-being of children, it becomes imperative to recognize and then confront that “part of the privilege of being a member of the dominant culture [the compliant] is a blind presumption that yours is the natural, preferred entitlement” (Whitelock, 2006, p. 172).

I appreciate Patti Lather’s (1991) use of “oppositional” in relation to approaches in research and teaching: “By oppositional, I mean those discourses/practices seeking to challenge the legitimacy of the dominant order and break its hold over social life” (p. xv). In challenging the dominant order, it is useful to consider Bakhtin’s (1981) discussion of

authoritative and internally persuasive as corollaries to Dewey's customary and reflective moralities. He compared the two by drawing parallels to two familiar "school" modes:

Reciting by heart and retelling in one's own words. In the psyche, reciting by heart is analogous to authoritative discourse. It is imposed; demands allegiance; does not permit one to argue with it, play with it or integrate it or merge it with other beliefs, values or knowledge. It cannot be represented—it is only transmitted: 'it is so to speak the word of the fathers' ... In contrast, asking or retelling in one's own words, internally persuasive discourse, is half-ours and half-someone else's [the I/thou!]; it is in this sense, 'double-voiced' or dialogic and therefore more finely interwoven with the texture of the everyday consciousness" (in Lightfoot, 2005, p. 98-99).

In order to engage in the possibility of making choices outside of the structured order of school, the teacher must not only be brave, but skilled, for "the enactment of democratic living in education requires the practice of professional deliberative judgments" (Henderson & Slattery 2006, p. 3). As a young teacher, I found myself engaging almost accidentally in resisting the dominant solutions of the day through perhaps a combination of deliberative judgment and serendipity.

Here is what happened in one instance of a teaching choice that I, at first, did not realize I had—because at first I did not "see" the moral choice, and so could not practice informed deliberative judgment. Andre' Hotten was a third-grader in my class who said, "I'm am!" nearly every time I asked him to do anything, but he never was! For several months, we argued. We would attempt the three-step (or, as in this instance, a five-step variation) response a' la Mehan (in Mulooly & Varenne, 2006):

1. I would tell him to do something or to stop doing something.
2. He would *not* do it or stop doing it [a break in the exchange]/
3. I would then repeat #1 or a variation, like, “NOW!”
4. Andre’ would say, “I’m am!!”
5. My response would be a variation of: “No, you’re not.”

One day, I watched him. And *really* saw him. After I had told him to clean up the toothpicks and clay he was using to make a model of the rabbit cage we were preparing to build, he continued to move the toothpicks into a variety of positions. But this time when I looked, I didn’t just check, I *watched*. And so, this time, I *saw* him. He had heard me tell him to clean up. And while he continued to manipulate the toothpicks, I saw/felt a shift: he was preparing to clean up.

As expressed in Chapter IV, it is expected in the disciplined relationship between teachers and students that the student responds immediately to what the teacher says. What is not said aloud is that the response must be visible or otherwise apparent to the teacher! Andre’ had been listening to me; he *had* been responding. The problem between us came about as it appeared to me that he was not responding. As I became interested in this particular realization, I attended much more carefully to Andre on the occasions of our “tell, do, evaluation” exchanges; I became much more attuned to the subtle shifts as Andre transitioned between activities. He had been aware that he was making those internal shifts (thus the insistent “I’m am!!’s”), but either not aware that I did not know, or more likely, he assumed that I would not believe him or would not care.

By choosing to see Andre’, I finally realized that I had choices in how to respond to

him. Instead of arguing with him when he claimed, “I’m am!”... I could:

- Ask, “Are you, Andre?”
- Say, “Okay, thanks.”
- Say, “I need to see it—it helps me.”
- Say, “Tell me when I can see it, Andre”
- Ask, “How can you show me that you are?”
- Say, “Cool.”

Looking more carefully, listening more clearly allowed me to see that I had a choice in how to respond to Andre’. I did not have to push against what I perceived as his pull. I did not have to punish him or nag him until he “listened” in a way that *I* could see it. I could trust in him and offer him two things: (a) my recognition of his efforts and difference, and (b) some lessons about ways to better respect other’s needs in relationships.

Just as it had been when I visited Edwin George and held his tomahawk (from Chapter II), my vision was impaired, offering only an incomplete picture of Andre’ and his ways. I did not see him fully and so allowed myself to base my responses on a limited reading of the moment. Looking—*really* looking—and really listening served to complicate my understanding.

As Pinar famously wrote: conversations should be complicated—“extraordinarily” so. There must be room for complexities and multiple realities in “complicated conversation across and within culture, class and place” (Pinar, 2004, p. 157). And what could better serve to complicate than to contemplate Deleuze’s (1987) “AND” logic:

“Think with AND instead of thinking IS, instead of thinking for IS” (p. 57)? Rather than thinking what it IS (or IS NOT) that we see, and so how to react—one could think with AND—and action rather than reaction. When Deleuze (in 2001), discussed Nietzsche he wrote, “Everywhere we see the victory of No over Yes, of reaction over action. Life becomes adaptive and regulative, reduced to its secondary forms; we no longer understand what it means to act” (p. 74-75). In the case of Andre’, I had been thinking IS/IS NOT. I said, “jump,” and saw he IS NOT jumping; instead, thinking with AND, I said “jump,” AND saw Andre’ did not jump AND saw he did jump AND saw his knowing AND *not* knowing what I saw AND... which led to my stuttered experience with our interactions. Stuttered and full of possibilities in understanding one another in new ways.

The complicated sensibility of this “conversation” resonates with Lather’s (2006) discussion of the value of “proliferation” as a good thing to think with in research, I would argue that the same “wild profusion” of aporia toward “estranging the basis of authority of the dominant” discourses, is present in what is now called “classroom management” or “discipline.” As long as the dominant view perpetuates the ideal of “good” teachers as those who hold tight control over their students; and that of effective classrooms as those that enact the dominant order, there is little space left for these “good” teachers to meaningfully engage with the children in their own wild profusion of ways to be in the kindergarten classroom. Lather (2006) noted in her article that Deleuze calls for “‘a thousand tiny sexes’ rather than the binary categories of homosexual and heterosexual” (p. 43). In a similar fashion, we teachers might view children and their actions in “thousands of tiny qualities” rather than the binary categories of “good” or “bad.” In this way, one is

compelled to consider multiple ways to respond because “such nomadic rather than sedimentary conjunctions produce fluid subjects, ambivalent and polyvalent, open to change, continually being made, unmade and remade” (p. 43).

Consider Jacob—leaving his timeout to help Clark. In what ways might any adult respond to such a moment of disobedience? Would he or she prioritize the ordered behavioral structures of the kindergarten and so enforce a consequence? Wong (1998) claimed that allowing children to get away with small infractions leads to chaos. This was echoed by Mr. Watts, the principal in the school studied in Jan Nesor's 1997 *Tangled up in School*, as he responded to parent's complaints about silent lunches: “When they [the kids] don't behave, I'm going to put them on silent lunch...bad *is* bad, and *we've got to make them pay for it* [emphasis mine]” (p. 125). Given this, *do* teachers have choices?

In the episode, *Shoulder to Cry On*, Mrs. Krinkle made the choice *not* to make Jacob “pay for it,” and so let him “get away” with the infraction of leaving Time-Out. This led not to chaos, but to kindness. Might she have seen this moment as an opportunity to better know this child/these children? Might a teacher experience a moment of joy in seeing a child step up to comfort a child in need?

#### *Mrs. Krinkle's and Mr. Scott's Choices*

While observing the children's interactions and moments of disobedience in Mrs. Krinkle and Mr. Scott's classrooms, I also had the opportunity to note choices made by these teachers—choices that indicated some evidence of resistance to the norm. The following are moments of interactions that allow some experience with teacher

disobedience—or at least, a degree of resistance or defiance to the structured expectations of a particular situation, place or person.

In the following descriptions of Mrs. Krinkle and Mr. Scott’s classroom “choices,” the two teachers seemed to be responding to what they *saw* as what the children involved *needed*. As Alfie Kohn<sup>12</sup> has pointed out, the structured expectations of School are not generally responsive to children’s needs. In this way, Mrs. Krinkle and Mr. Scott were disobedient.

*Mrs. Krinkle’s choice: Touching Briona.* A child who entered Mrs. Krinkle’s classroom as a “new” student partway through this study was Briona. Briona came from the kindergarten across the hall. I was aware of an escalating situation between Briona and her previous teacher due to my role as a university facilitator. I had biweekly interactions with Briona’s former teacher related to one of my students who had been placed in the classroom for field. In fact, the student had raised concerns in class regarding Briona and her disintegrating role in the classroom. Several times a day Briona was removed from individual children and from the classroom itself. The teacher had, in fact, come to me about this “difficult” child only weeks before. She described a girl who was disruptive and unmanageable—so much trouble, in fact, that by the third week of school, the teacher had already called an intervention meeting that included Briona’s parent, the school counselor, principal and a system psychologist. The teacher complained to me that the

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<sup>12</sup> Recall the questions posed by Alfie Kohn as reported earlier in this study: “Everything turns on the fundamental questions that drive classroom practice...*How can we get these kids to obey?...[or] What do these children need?*” (in Watson, 2003, p. *xiii*.).

suggestion for Briona was that she have more computer time. However, the teacher's unhappiness was not due to this inappropriate solution, but because she was "tired of the bad kids getting all the breaks." She told of her son—"a good kid"—who came home from school complaining about not getting computer time because the "bad" kids got it. And then she said, "and I know how he felt because I was always a good kid in school, too." The teacher reported that Briona was "always too close": too close to other children, too close to the front of the carpet, and too close to the teacher. She annoyed everyone, the teacher said. Three weeks later, Briona had been transferred to Mrs. Krinkle's classroom.

Briona continued to be "too close"—for some children. The following is a transcript of the videotape of the children as they took part in a whole-group lesson on Mrs. Krinkle's carpet. Briona is seated in the back row (recall, Mrs. Krinkle's student sit in rows on the carpet and have assigned places), next to Princess and very close to her, shoulder-to shoulder in fact. No one was sitting on her right.

Line

247. Princess: She's ...
248. Briona: No, I'm not
249. Princess: she is shhshhh... (0.2) she's touching me!
250. Briona: ((simultaneously)) only a little!
251. T: Princess, what?
252. Princess: She IS touching me
253. T: is she hurting you?

254. Briona: NO!
255. Princess: ((softly and slightly after Briona)) No...
256. T: then what should we do about this?
257. Briona: // I'll scoot over ((she exaggerates her movement to her right and ends up off the carpet and on the linoleum floor))
258. T: ((laughing a little)) what about you Briona, are you comfortable there?
259. Princess:                      She's good
260. Briona ((simultaneously)): // I like it here
261. T: Princess, is that good enough for you?
262. Princess: she's good
263. ((The lesson goes on for about 4 more minutes—and in that four minutes Briona has gradually scooted over closer to Princess, although not as close as before—and the girls have been whispering now and then—when there is another outburst from Princess.))
264. Princess: She's (     ) itting on me! ((Princess has a lisp which makes her sometimes hard to correctly understand))
265. T: where? How is she sitting on you?
266. Princess: ssss(ss ...)) itting!! ssss(ss ...)) itting!!
267. ((Briona looks at Princess with concern and looks at her body and the small space between them))
268. Princess: She's (0.3) with her mouth...(0.2)... sshpitting
269. T: oh! Spitting! Briona?

270. Briona: ((shrugs))

271. T: Were you talking to Princess?

272. Briona: sure. Sure.

273. T: Princess, Briona was talking to you. Sometimes when we talk, saliva can escape from our mouth. I am sure she would never spit on you on purpose.

274. Princess: ((looks at Briona))

275. Briona: I wouldn't!! ((hugs Princess enthusiastically while Princess cringes))

276. T: Princess, you can go to the washroom if you want.

Mrs. Krinkle did not ignore Princess's need for care. She acknowledged her complaint concerning Briona as valid; and yet, she also recognized that Briona's need for proximity was not "bad," and so Briona was not a problem for Mrs. Krinkle as she had been for her previous teacher. Briona's need and Princess's need were in conflict, and Mrs. Krinkle saw her responsibility to the two girls as helping them mediate the conflicting needs. In seeing the needs of both girls, Mrs. Krinkle made a choice with intentions to acknowledge Princess's need to be heard and Briona's need to be close.

*Mrs. Krinkle's choice: Jacob and the paint shirt.* Another instance that demonstrated Mrs. Krinkle's resistance to the norm in her role as teacher took place during my first taped observation of Mrs. Krinkle's kindergarten children. In mid-September, Mrs. Krinkle had set the children to mix yellow and blue paint with one of our university's field students in the hallway. Into the room came Jacob, holding at arm's length in front of him, his paint shirt, dripping with blue and yellow and looking to weigh at least ten pounds.

277. T: Jacob!

278. Jacob: It got wet.
279. T: Again?
280. Jacob: Where's my other shirt?
281. T: Jacob, Jacob, Jacob
282. Jacob:                had another shirt?
283. T: Hmm. Yes. ((Takes the shirt from his hands and holds it up – showing me how wet it is and shakes her head while smiling))
284. Jacob: oh yeah. //
285. Mrs. Krinkle:                oh yeah
286. Jacob:                .. get it?
287. Mrs. Krinkle: do you think it's dry
288. Jacob: *smiles slowly* okaaaaay... // should I clean this one?
289. T: go to it, sir
290. T: ((shakes her head again, still smiling—and holds the shirt away from her body, using only her thumb and forefinger, as far as her arm will reach))
291. Jacob: ((backs up a few steps and runs in place, vmmmmm, trots toward Mrs. Krinkle, snatching the wet shirt from her hand and stiff-legged runs to the in-classroom restroom—holding the shirt outstretched in the same hold Mrs. Krinkle demonstrated earlier)).
292. T: ((singsong to the field student in the hallway)): OH, Mr. Parker!!!
293. Peter: Yes? ((faint--from the hallway))
294. T: Can you assist Jacob?

295. Peter: ((peers into classroom—with puzzled look))

296. T: He is cleaning his paint shirt.

297. Peter: ((startled *OH!* Follows Jacob into the restroom))

298. T: He'll get it

I later asked Mrs. Krinkle whom she meant by “He’ll get it”: Jacob or Mr. Parker. She laughed and said, “I was talking about Jacob, but I guess it could apply to either one. Jacob has a lot of adjustments to make, and I am adjusting to him, too.” She said these words in a way that communicated not exasperation or annoyance—but that she was looking forward to these mutual adjustments to this year’s kindergarten.

Later I found out from Mr. Parker that when Jacob was holding his blue- and yellow-painted shirt under the water, he watched the paint run from his shirt: “Look!!! GREEN!!!”

Mrs. Krinkle’s choice in responding to Jacob with humor and guidance rather than annoyance and punishment offered some insight into her relationship with him. She was his teacher, and so saw her responsibility as his teacher to allow latitude for mistakes, messiness, and humor—and so, acknowledged Jacob’s energy and curiosity as valued.

*Mr. Scott’s choice: Jonathan<sup>13</sup> pinched.* Mr. Scott ([Scott]in progress) described the following event from his afternoon kindergarten in his as-yet unpublished master’s thesis:

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<sup>13</sup> The name “Jonathan” is used here in place of the child’s name “Jacob” in Mr. Scott’s thesis in order to avoid confusion. One of the students in the other kindergarten class in the study used the name “Jacob” as his pseudonym and I did not wish to override his choice once I decided to use [Michael Scott’s] story here.

Today Jonathan pinched Andrew coming in from the playground. I removed Jonathan from the situation, asking him to wait for me in the beanbag chair in the book corner. I then apologized to Andrew that this had happened. (The only sincere apology that I could offer Andrew was my own)...I told him that it is not ok for anyone to do this to him and promised him that we would make it up to him and would not allow it to continue...My goal is not to even the score for Andrew. My primary objective is to care for the injured child and help Jonathan find his role in helping.

I went to Jonathan and asked him what he was going to do to make it up to Andrew. Jonathan, now flustered and in tears, responded, 'I don't know how! What am I supposed to do? I wish I wouldn't have done it and I would make it up to Andrew if I knew what to do.'

I asked, "Do want suggestions from me or from the class?" Jonathan pointed to his classmates, who were working at their tables. I explained, "It will be your job to make it up to Andrew, but I'm sure that they will give you many good ideas to choose from." I called to the room, 'Emergency meeting! Everyone to the carpet! Jonathan needs our help!'

...I asked Jonathan to tell them about his problem. He said, 'When we were outside, it was Andrew. I pinched him. I hurt him. I made him cry. Now I have to make it up to him and I don't know what to do.'...Hands shot up with a variety of suggestions. The children suggested that Jonathan make Andrew a picture, write him a letter or make him a card...Some children advised that a hug or a gift would

help put a smile on Andrew's face....The children then returned to their table-work, leaving Jonathan and I at the carpet. Now, Jonathan was held accountable for his behavior. He had hurt someone, received advice from the class and it was his job to take action to fix the problem. Jonathan asked me to write the words that he wanted to say to Andrew. His letter read:

*Dear Andrew,  
I'm sorry Andrew when I pinched you. Tomorrow I am going to give you a present.  
If you don't like it; I'll give you another present.*

*Jonathan L*

Next, Jonathan took the pen, signed his name and drew a truck on the apology letter because Andrew 'really likes trucks'...I asked him to wait at the carpet, while I took the rest of the class to gym. Then, I walked Jonathan to room 11. I waited in the doorway and watched as he approached Andrew, handed him the letter, said he was sorry, mentioned the possibility of a gift and gave him a hug (np).

In this circumstance, Mr. Scott's thoughtful response to Jonathan's and Andrew's needs – and his recognition that both children were in need, offered a rich counterbalance to the ritualized and scripted "apology" as described by one of the premiere character experts. In contrast to Mr. Scott's efforts to offer guidance as Jonathan seeks ways to "make it up to Andrew," Lickona (1997) offered the following directed model as a "great way to teach conflict resolution skills":

When one child has hurt another, Ms. Skinner teaches a reconciliation ritual that fosters the virtue of forgiveness. She instructs the offending child to say 'I am

sorry—will you please forgive me?’ If the victim judges the apology sincere, that child is instructed to respond, ‘I do forgive you’ (p. 57).

In direct contrast to Lickona’s efficient and popular example of “instructing” regrets and forgiveness, Mr. Scott viewed the time and effort expended in teaching Jonathan that *he* can find ways to offer his regrets to another child as a moral responsibility. In the following, final example of his deep regard for children, he once again determines that time can be invested in the needs of children.

*Mr. Scott’s choice: Flash’s neck.* In late September, on one of my last visits to Michael Scott’s classroom, I was witness to an event that we both call “Flash’s Neck<sup>14</sup>.” I was happy to have been witness to this day in a kindergarten classroom. Happy because the children in this class were afforded the opportunity to act in generous and generative ways toward one another—especially to a child who was in need. The story began as the children were seated in a circle on the carpet for a morning meeting in which Mr. Scott provided time for the children to tell their classmates something interesting:

Line

299. T: Anyone has something interesting to say, we’re in a circle; we can see everyone and we’re ready to listen. (0.3) Flash has something to say. Let’s listen to Flash!

300. Flash: My neck hurts.

301. T: Flash says his neck hurts. Questions for Flash?

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<sup>14</sup> Actually, Mr. Scott doesn’t call it “Flash’s Neck,” he calls it by the real name of the boy who is the protagonist of this story. And he laughs that this child named himself Flash, since his general demeanor and style is not “flashy” in any sense (quick or shiny).

302. ((And the children begin offering suggestions for why Flash's neck hurts.))
303. Billy Bob Joe: Maybe his neck is more stronger. Up here when that hurts  
((grasps his bicep with his left hand)) that means it's getting more muscle...  
it's because it's getting stronger
304. Flash: No my arms are strong, it's my neck that's hurting
305. Cupcake: ( ) when you put your head back.. ( )..
306. T: Did you hurt it when you were sitting in your chair?
307. Flash: I think I didn't.
308. Fred: I think it's just hurting because it hurts
309. Ariel: Maybe his neck is hurting because he's coughing
310. T: Is it a sore throat, Flash? Ariel says you've been coughing
311. Flash: Maybe I did have a frog throaty but that's not....
312. N'than: One time I bumped my head when I was sleeping
313. Flash: So did I
314. Eric: This morning—probably he fell down and hurt his neck
315. Flash: Not right now... I haven't fallen for a long time.
316. Emily: We could trace his steps back
317. T: Hmmm
318. Emily: So we can figure out what happened
319. Flash: Maybe I did fall down.
320. T: What can we do to help Flash?
321. Emily: Call the doctor...tell his mom... so she can call the doctor.

322. T: Is there anything we can do here today to help our friend, Flash?
323. Fred: (indistinguishable)
324. Ariel: Mr. Scott, my thing fell out of my earring
325. T: No worries, we can take care of that ((he places Ariel's earring and earring back behind him on the counter)) And now we're helping Flash.
326. Corn-on-the-Cob: We can bring a blue chair over for him
327. T: Would that help Flash? Having a chair when we come to the carpet ((gets up and gets a beanbag chair to take to Flash on the carpet))—so when we're on the carpet, this seat right here can be for Flash.
328. Cupcake: ( )
329. T: I can't hear Cupcake
330. Cupcake: ( ) pillow under his neck....
331. T: Here we go Flash; Cupcake has suggested this purple pillow might help you. Does that help? (2.0) Another suggestion that's making our friend feel better.
332. Emily: I can't see him
333. Eric: ( ).. some water so...( )... his neck.
334. T: Eric, come here, bud... I have cups up here. ((he walks to the side of the room and reaches up for a large plastic storage container)) can you please go to the drinking fountain and get Flash a small little cup of cold water.
335. Fred: You're big. You're really big. ((this because the storage container was placed very high up))

336. Emily: I can't see him.
337. T: ((to Eric)) Can you please go to the drinking fountain and get Flash a little small cup of cold water?
338. The Mummy: If he has to go potty, and he's in the chair, ( ) ((could not hear, but it must have then segued into something regarding an ice pack))
339. T: Flash, do you need an ice pack?
340. ((Eric returns with the little small cup of cold water))
341. Fred: Eric is back. Eric is here.
342. ((The children are looking at Flash as he sits in the blue beanbag chair, with a pillow behind his head and drinking a cup of water.))
343. T: The Mummy, I have a job for you, friend come here ((T is writing on paper while calling over The Mummy))
344. T: Boys and girls, The Mummy suggested that maybe an ice pack might help... I wrote on this paper, "Can we please have an ice pack?" ((to The Mummy)) Do you know where the nurse's office is?
345. The Mummy: ((shakes head))
346. T: The Mummy needs a helper—I need a helper for The Mummy

Here, I ran out of tape, and by the time, I retrieved a new tape from the car, and loaded it, the children had moved into center time—where they took the opportunity to make pictures for Flash and to bring him books (some children read to him) and toys—and were in the process of transitioning into snack time. Flash was still in his beanbag chair, with the pillow behind his head, laying stretched out—legs crossed at the ankles in

front of him—with his ice pack and not only the “little small cup” of water, but a dozen or so snacks from the other children, a stack of drawings they have made for him and two girls on either side of his “throne” – Sally reading a book to him and Ariel holding his water when he is not drinking it.

As the snack time progressed, the children moved to their own tables to eat, but Flash was never alone. Children, sometimes without a word, walked to him and handed him a snack, Sally moved her snack to sit beside him on the floor; and Emily brought him a jacket to cover his bare legs. (It was still very warm in September). When it was time to clean up, Flash had to move a pretzel, a bag of gummies, two drink boxes, baggies of Cheetos, a chocolate chip cookie and a wrapped apple off his stomach before he could get up which he did in order to use the restroom. While he was gone, Bravo, Cupcake and Mr. Johnson<sup>15</sup>, with no discussion, cleaned up Flash’s significant mess.

This event of Flash’s Neck consumed a good part of the morning – albeit with a great deal of problem solving, reading, writing, verbal communication and community - building involved. However, I have to wonder how the Wongs and other techne’-experts would fit such an event in their ideal of the highly predictable and efficient classroom. In direct opposition to the expected order of the kindergarten, Mr. Scott chose to spend an entire morning (and since this was a half-day kindergarten—their *whole* day), making one child feel cared for, and *all* of the children feel important and proficient in caring for another.

*Choices: Making the familiar strange.* Kimes-Myers (1997) engaged in considering

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<sup>15</sup> Mr. Johnson is a child—this is the pseudonym he selected.

the joyful and freeing quality of choices by sharing a description of the Sunday newspaper cartoon, *Calvin and Hobbes*, opening as the characters of Calvin and Hobbes set on exploring an old field from a new perspective:

Calvin pushes his way through newly fallen snow on a bright January day.

Snowdrifts almost reach his waist as he plows forward into a large, snow covered field. Faithful tiger Hobbes walks in Calvin's track, carrying a toboggan. Calvin exclaims, "Wow! It really snowed last night! Isn't it wonderful?" Waking to the excitement of the experience, Hobbes brightens. Catching snowflakes with his extended paws, he suggests, "It's like having a big white sheet of paper to draw on!" [Like Mason's everyday new experience with the carpet. Perhaps he sees it as a big orange sheet of paper to draw on, using his body as the pen.] All that is familiar is covered with snow and the world appears "brand new." There is a freshness in the air as Calvin concludes, "It's a magical world."

Together Calvin and Hobbes climb on the toboggan and push off down the slope. The little cloud of words over Calvin's head reads, 'Let's go exploring!' There may be trees to dodge, drifts to stumble into, and hidden rocks that will slow [us] down, but like Watterson (and Calvin and Hobbes), we can make a conscious choice to explore old places in new ways (p. 56-57).

### *Democracy*

*You measure a democracy by the freedom it gives its dissidents, not the freedom it gives its assimilated conformists.*

~Abbie Hoffmann

“Democratic living is a particular loving way of being—a celebration of the diversity and humanity underlying the complicated equality of an inclusive ‘you and me’ and transformative curriculum leaders understand that their responsibility is to cultivate this ‘Eros’” (Burch, 2000). Jonathan Kozol took on this responsibility to cultivate this “loving way of being” while appearing on a panel of educators and politicians on PBS’s *Children in America’s Schools with Bill Moyers* (Hayden & Cauthen, 1996). He challenged the other members of the panel and the audience to provide better places for children to attend school, not because it was “good for America,” or “would get results” but because, as Americans, *we love our children*. I wonder about this. I think he did, too, really. And was, perhaps, trying to shame us all into thinking about whether we really *do* love *all* of our children.

In considering the zeitgeist of schooling as represented in Chapter IV, I would ask, as Macdonald (1995) did, “...whether school essentially reflects service to democratic ideals and individuals,” and offered in response, McLuhan’s (1968) words from *Education as War*, that the educators and schools are aggressors who “simply impose on them [children] the patterns we find convenient to ourselves and consistent with the available technologies” (in Macdonald, 1995, p. 45).

It is apparent that the standards by which methods and techniques are promoted for and by teachers, the words, “easy” and “quick” would seem to represent a greater appeal than “complex” and “deeply-encountering.” And yet, I am moved by Maxine Greene’s sentiments in *Teacher as Stranger* in which she wondered if teachers might, in Calvin and Hobbes fashion, enter the schoolroom as if a stranger—seeing it for the very first time

(like a child!) and wondering what's to be done there. I share her goal in wanting my work to "make teachers' lives 'harder,' not easier, not more ordinary" (Greene, 2000, p. 88). Perhaps we can imagine teacher as "philosopher," engaged in the "conflict between the life one should live and the customs and conventions of daily life [in] an effort to love and think according to the norm of wisdom (a never-ending progression)" (Hadot, 1995, p. 59).

When engaging in the philosophy of love and wisdom, who is included in our regard? I sometimes think we teachers do exercise loving/wisdom skills—but only on an extremely limited basis, considering the "common good" of our family or a lover. Or, in the classroom, the teacher may engage in loving regard for the children who are obedient, and so meet her needs; but exclude from this regard and care, the children who do not. Badiou (2001) takes Hannah Arendt to task for "defining politics as the stage of 'being-together', [noting that such a] definition is merely a fairy-tale—all the more so since the being-together must first determine the collective" (p. 65). While Arendt's ideal of the political self as engaging in public-spirited endeavors is toward the "common good," I share Badiou's skepticism that political or "state" togetherness can truly engage the most common good. I contrast this with a spiritual "being-together," a kind of "together" that is not of the dominant structure or "the state of the situation" (Badiou, 2001, p. ix).

This is the reason I was so taken with Mason's fluid and flexible engagement with school as "structured in dominance" via the absolute time and space divisions of Kindergarten. In a place already complicated with people, rules, structures and cross-

purposes, Mason's fluidity served to make it even more complex—and so was dangerous.

Schools are, in fact:

Far less transparent, far more complex, and far more subject to serious debate about both ends and means than they appear to their students or to the adults who remember their school days. New teachers routinely find, to their deep dismay, that teaching is much more difficult and complicated than they anticipated...they are likely to be overwhelmed and to fall back on inadequate and idiosyncratic personal resources (Metz, 2006, p. vii-viii).

In resisting what is “there,” unquestioned and unassailable, we might engage in strategies of resistance—ones like Mason's and Jacob's, which were natural responses to the place and events; but also ones with more purpose and design—ones that may cause us to abandon our current identities as the dominant/compliant in order to engage in the “common good.” Infinito (2003) recommended “the articulation and practice of bringing to being a “self” is meant to resist existing modes of power that normalize it, as well as produce human freedom (Infinito, 2003, p. 70). Foucault (1979) admired “vagabonds who refused to live as others expected them to live, anarchists who challenge authority and so on” (p. 291-292).

I wonder if by turning over Henderson & Kesson's (2004) Deweyian problem of how to “teach for Subject matter understanding while facilitating democratic Self and Social growth” and one could make, instead, a problem of how to allow/create space for Self and Social growth and participation—which then *requires* Subject matter understanding. In building this space, I wonder if rather than “democracy,” there is a need

for the anarchy as Macdonald calls for in one essay, rejecting democracy as a viable alternative to the predominant pattern of autocracy in schools, and suggesting instead an adult controlled “bounded anarchy” (p. 151).

Inspired by thoughts of anarchy and resistance, I join Macdonald in asking “to what extent might the idea of democracy as a moral way of living be, in fact, limiting—erasing unwritten transformations of which we can not yet even dream?” and wonder whether “any discourse of ‘cracy’, be it democracy, theocracy, or technocracy [might be] inevitably totalizing?” In a Badiouian lens, I would suggest that consideration of erocracy—meaning, ‘governed by/though/via love’ —even while wondering if this is a Haraway-like juxtaposition that cannot be reconciled.

In a Deweyian world, each person would be best served by a democracy “created to maximize the common good.” Such a condition would necessitate relatedness. In Kimes-Myers (1997) words:

A spirituality of caring assumes the condition and process of interrelatedness as necessary for a whole approach to young children. This means that a spirituality of caring is political... We recognize such consequences in the ways children are stunted or invited into the world... and we are responsible for the political and social decisions that [in recognition of relationality] mediate the claims of the individual and the community. Ours is a humbling responsibility (p. 98-99).

And one that requires not ease and convenience, but great “power of thought.” In Dewey’s (1910/1978) words:

Genuine freedom, in short, is intellectual; it rests in the trained power of thought, in

an ability to “turn things over” to look at matters deliberately, to judge whether the amount and kind of evidence and requisite for decisions at hand, and if not, to tell where and how to seek such evidence. If a man’s [or woman’s actions] are not guided by thoughtful conclusions, then they are guided by inconsiderate impulse, unbalanced appetite, caprice, or the circumstances of the moment. To cultivate unhindered, unreflective external activity is to foster enslavement, for it leaves the person at the mercy of appetite, sense of circumstance (p. 232).

In contrasting democracy with fascism, one author noted, “If the major emotional sources of fascism are fear and destructiveness, Eros may be seen to represent the emotional currents of love that a democratic culture obviously requires” (Burch, 2000, p. 182). These emotional currents of love are essential to the development of deep democracy and the quest for democratic goodness.

#### Where to Go from Here: Love, Comfort and Joy

*Hello, babies. Welcome to Earth. It’s hot in the summer and cold in the winter. It’s round and wet and crowded. At the outside, babies, you’ve got about a hundred years here. There’s only one rule that I know of, babies - ‘God damn it, you’ve got to be kind!’*

(Vonnegut, 1965, p. 129)

To the late Mr. Vonnegut, the only possible escape from the madness and apparent meaninglessness of existence was human kindness. The title character in his 1965 novel, “*God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*,” summed up his philosophy: “God damn it, you’ve got to be kind!”

In considering my own choices in how to respond to this research, my readings of what I observed and learned leads me toward a pursuit of spaces in school for love, comfort and joy. I worry that the harshness of our culture is mirrored too accurately in the places where our children live. It matters to me that children are nurtured as our kin; that they have spaces to move, touch and connect with one another; and that they are cared for and have opportunities to care for others.

I have come full circle in this decision. In one of my very first doctoral classes, only three weeks or so into the course, my professor said to me, “Your problem is that you don’t think there’s enough joy in school.” I was stunned at that time—a little taste of *aporia* again—and realized he was right. I had never thought of this, but found that when naming my “issues” with school, with teachers, with the system, most could be traced to a lack of joy.

At times, this lack of joy translates into a harshness that is uncalled for; into a humorlessness that would appear to be the least likely characteristic of a place in which children come to stay; and into yawning chasms among those who share the space—distances larger than the arm’s length between or the imaginary “bubble” which serves as force fields to prevent touches. All of this, even while we likely know that “if we want to develop and deepen the capacity for connectedness at the heart of good teaching, we must understand—and resist—the perverse but powerful draw of the ‘disconnected’ life” (Palmer, 1998, p. 35).

This brief conversation early in my doctoral career shifted my lens toward more sensuous, spiritual perspective on what happens in classrooms among the people and

things that share the space. I seek to make in this conclusion connections to not only instances of joy, but of comfort (learned from Julian and from other children whose generosity was stunning), and of love.

*Comfort*

*The opposite of freedom is not determinism, but hardness of heart. To be free is to be able to enjoy the fruits of life in a just, caring and compassionate community.*

(Rabbi Heschel in Purpel, 2001, p. 126)

Recently James Lawson, a renowned 1950's and 60's civil rights activist who was a student of Gandhi and has since worked tirelessly toward non-violent solutions and methods, spoke at my university. At the end of his talk, a member of the audience asked what he would have done if he had been the one to respond to the 2001 destruction of the Twin Towers. Lawson replied that he would have comforted those who experienced pain and loss and reflected on the way to heal.

Lawson's answer would find a home in a world where thought and deed spring from love and we would see one another's needs and respond to the messages sent—and thus resonates with the generous and generative ideals of a Deweyian democracy. His response also stands in stark contrast to the response made by those who *were* in the position to respond to this outrageous tragedy.

I have witnessed this sort of generous spirit in the children and in their teachers—acting with heart, with feeling, as they make room for one another's needs. I saw this spirit in Mrs. Krinkle as she worked with Briona and Princess to share the space on the carpet as one needed to touch and one needed not to be touched. I saw it in Jacob, rising

from time-out, to place his arm around Clark whose need was great and even when he was inconsolable, Jacob remained generous in his care. And I saw it in Mr. Scott and his children as they tended to Flash's sore neck with attention and regard for his needs and feelings.

In acting with heart—comforting, in joy, with love—these children (and their teachers) resisted the dominant structures of state that are in place in school. Spending the entire kindergarten morning in comforting a child with a sore neck is not efficient; moving joyously through the classroom in one's own time is not orderly; seeking contact with another child through playful touches is not appropriate; and no permission was given to lovingly share an arm and some kind words to a crying child. In these inefficient, disordered, inappropriate and presumptuous moments, children and teachers gave and received comfort, joy and love.

In my last year of teaching in public school, my kindergarten children were naming the kinds of jobs they might do to contribute to the well-being of the classroom. After eighteen years of “hiring” board-washers, rabbit walkers, greeters, sharpeners of pencils, gardeners, and messengers, I was joyfully astounded when one child, Aisha, suggested the job of “comforter.” In naming the job, she was required to explain what the job would entail and did so with words that approximate these:

Sometimes people are sad. They come to school sad or they get sad once they are here. They don't always cry, but you can tell that they are sad anyway. If someone had the job of comforter, we could be sure that no one stays sad because the comforter's job would be to notice them.

Aisha, 5 years old, who, according to developmentalists, would be incapable of this kind of high-level moral thinking, said, “*It would be the comforter’s job to notice them*”!! She, at five, understood *seeing* the moral opportunity in order to act on it!

Noddings might view Aisha’s idea as opportunity to support moral life: “We want schools to be places where it is both possible and attractive to be good...And so it becomes part of our everyday moral obligation to develop and maintain an environment in which moral life can flourish” (Noddings, 2002, p. 9).

In looking back on those sometimes comical, often touching moments of the children learning to give and receive comfort, I wondered where they might have learnt it. Even in my classroom, where we bent, folded and mutilated many of the expected structures of school, giving and receiving care was merely incidental. Most classrooms are not places in which “moral life can flourish,” and as much of the comforting was physical, there is little experience in touch to be gained by spending time in sterile spaces of school. Even the teachers do not touch. As Alison Jones (2003) wrote, “The good teacher today ‘touches without touching’ (p. 103) [and] ‘remove themselves from an physical intimacy with children because of increased awareness of the risk, of the inappropriateness of touch’ (p. 109).

I am torn, though—do children need us to “teach” them the moral life? To comfort? Or do we need them to teach us? It seems they do this in spite of how we distance ourselves from them. A pop culture reference may illustrate this point. The child characters on the ribald sitcom, *My Name is Earl*, demonstrated that moral life can flourish even on a dark-comedy sitcom. The two boys’ father/stepfather, Earl, attempted

to take them to Fun Land (he had broken a promise to do so, attending an AC/DC concert instead and in a nod to Karma, sought to make it up to them), and on arriving at the spot, discovered that Fun Land had been closed down and demolished. He lamented that he could not cross them off his Karma list (they were #98), and said, “I don't know what I am supposed to do. This has never happened before.” And one of the children said, “What if we just forgive you?” Earl, shocked, asked, “What???” And the other son answered, “When someone tells the truth and says they are sorry, you just forgive them” (Buckland, 2006). Earl was comforted, not only because his sons forgave him—but also because he re-learned from children, that every trespass and every mistake does not require compensation or restitution.

Comfort can be given to those harmed, but also to those who do harm. This is a lesson that may be learned on a television show, but not in school where transgressions are measured, documented and assigned a consequence. If we educators wish for children to experience the feelings and skills necessary to comfort and be comforted, we must learn to engage in comforting the meek *and* the strong, too.

### *Joy*

*Divine laughter is helpless laughter. The recognition that all social constructions are but frail, weak, and finally ineffectual...calls forth an irrepressible belly laugh.*

(Gilbert, 1996)

*Small things- the morning, perspective - can be lost in the bowels of the earth, in tunnels where trains convey bodies, human beings with purposes, human beings surviving.*

(Wenner, 2004, p. 3)

I worry about small things being lost. Children are not just “small things”

themselves—they are great appreciators of small things: a silly joke, a fly crawling on the window, a ray of sunlight, a tickle fight, a secret. Yet, in most early childhood classrooms, the lives of young children and their teachers “are made up of a series of moments that are missing not necessarily because they are disturbing but because they are too quiet for us to hear, too small for us to see, so apparently uneventful that they fall beneath our threshold of attention” (Tobin, 1997, p. 13). But *are* these moments too quiet or too small? Or are adult’s eyes and ears desensitized and misdirected?

Awareness sensing, value sensing, mystery sensing—all require something to be sensed. Children who are swaddled, who are put into classrooms, seated one foot apart and told to face front and “keep hands, feet and other objects to yourself” find little to encounter – or certainly not to deeply encounter within those tight constraints. As Alice Miller, the Swiss psychiatrist who is a champion of children – those who are children now and those who once were children—is saddened to remark:

How these attentive, lively and sensitive children who can, for example, remember exactly how they discovered the sunlight in bright grass at the age of four, yet at eight might be unable to ‘notice anything’ or to show any curiosity...it appears that over time and in the space of school...they have all developed the art of not experiencing feelings, for a child can only experience his feelings when there is somebody there who accepts him fully, understands and supports him. If that is missing, if the child must risk losing the mother's love, or that of her substitute, then he cannot experience these feelings secretly ‘just for himself’ but fails to experience them at all (Miller, 1979/1990, p. 25).

We tell children what they are feeling (“Oh, You’re not hurt”); what’s wrong with what they are feeling (“Don’t be a baby.”); that they are feeling too much (“It’s not that funny!”) and not to feel at all (“Suck it up!”). As Tobin (1997) wrote:

The core of the problem is not that we are civilized but that we have gone too far. In our contemporary educational settings, under the guise of helping children let their feelings out, we interrupt and then attempt to eliminate expressions of pleasure and desire that we find grotesque, silly, sexual, or sadistic (p. 17).

In Mr. Scott’s classroom, I recall the children in the library center—one of the “hidden” spaces, who were surreptitiously snickering over the pictures that revealed a butt-crack or even a whole “heinie”! I recall the teachers in my former schools who would not read or have in their classrooms a copy of Maurice Sendak’s brilliant work *In the Night Kitchen*, because on one page, Mickey floats out of the milk bottle naked! They asked me how I could show it, knowing that the children would giggle when we came to that page. I told them that children’s giggling was one of the reasons I used the book.

*Love*

*I vow to live fully in each moment and to look at all beings with eyes of compassion.*  
(Hanh, 1990b, p. 3).

*Look at things not with the eyes in your face but with the eyes in your heart.*  
(Crow Dog & Erdoes, 1995, p. 1)

*Spirituality is what we do with the fire inside us, about how we channel our eros.*  
(Rollheiser, 1998, p. 11)

If we govern by the people, and call it democracy, might we govern by love and call it *erocracy* or *philocracy*, or *agapearchy*? If we cannot govern by love at large,

perhaps it is a thought for the smaller culture of school. *Cor* (cordial, core) is heart in Latin. I wondered about this translation while considering terms such as “core curriculum” and “core knowledge.” Is what we name as common and fundamental in our schooling “from the heart”? If a “core” pedagogy were defined as from the heart, would that mean enacted *with feeling*?

Sadly, though, the word “love” is rarely mentioned in educational circles. I think back to the teachers’ conversations on *teachnet.com* in Chapter IV—ones in which “it was worth it to see the shocked looks on their faces,” and in which the children are “trying to get across the ocean safely without being disturbed by the sharks” of disrespect and bad behavior. One admired teacher was published in the front page of the town’s newspaper saying that she is “killing herself trying to get them to where they should be.” The teachers seem to be angry with the children, and not to be looking on them as, what Jardine (1998) sadly lamented as “our kin, our kind.”

Long ago, I read the almost all of the Don Juan books written by Carlos Castaneda. Reading Castaneda was a rite of passage in the 60’s and 70’s and one particular lesson in his tales made an impact that I never forgot. Don Juan told Castaneda to do the following toward the living of a good life:

Look at every path closely and deliberately. Try it as many times as you think necessary. Then ask yourself, and yourself alone, one question: Does this path have a heart? All paths are the same: they lead nowhere...If it does have a heart, the path is good; if it doesn't, it is of no use. Both paths lead nowhere; but one has a heart, the other doesn't. One makes for a joyful journey; as long as you follow it, you are one

with it. The other will make you curse your life. One makes you strong; the other weakens you (Castaneda, 1968, p. 75).

Surely the path with a heart is one in which we carefully consider our choices and our actions with children with love, as if all children were our kin and our kind. For aren't they?

### Conclusion

Martin Luther King's actions and activism were manifestations not only of his moral character and courage, but also of his frustration and his view of what was unjust—not right. He wrote of a kind of maladjustment, in which he refused to adjust to what was unjust (in Kohl, 1994). I believe that moral emotions, such as empathy and moral indignation may impel action where a more intellectual, even rational attitude may not. In the passionate words of Mario Savio:

There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part...and you've got to put your bodies on the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus and you've got to make it stop! (in Goines, 1993, p. 361; a clip of Savio's speech was shown in the 2006 film, *Half Nelson*).

King and Kohl each wrote with passion of a maladjustment to what must be refused due to injustice; Mario Savio fervently exhorted that a time comes when “you've *got to* put your bodies on the gears.” It's as simple as Badiou's (2001) statement, “Something must happen, in order for there to be something new” (p. 122). It is in response to the feeling of urgency for “something” to *happen* for children that my voices as a researcher,

advocate, teacher, and teacher educator join together in one loud hue and cry—for in engaging in the “something new,” one can (must!) act in any combination of roles and from any position. Beginning with the moment of Reuben’s fall, something has happened, and it takes all of my selves—*our* selves—to respond to the call to make something new. To make it *stop*.

In engaging the *cor* to “make it stop,” I call on Behar’s (1996) work to close this part of my journey. She closes her passionate book of “the vulnerable observer” like this: “Call it sentimental, call it Victorian and nineteenth century, but I say that anthropology [and I’ll say curriculum] that doesn’t break your heart just isn’t worth doing anymore. And I mean it. Really mean it. Because my heart is broken” (p. 177).

I mean it, too.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
CONSENT FORMS

September 25, 2006

Dear Parent,

My name is Sheri Leafgren. I am a faculty member and doctoral student from University, as well as a former Public Schools teacher. I want to do research and learn more about how kindergarten children interact with one another, their teacher and the environment of their classroom.

I would like your child to take part in this project. If you decide to give permission, your child will be videotaped during the course of their regular kindergarten day for approximately 5-8 hours per week for 2-4 weeks. If you do not consent, your child will not be videotaped. Children with consent and without consent will engage in their typical kindergarten day.

On the first day, I will show the children brief excerpts of the tape to show them that I am only taping what they normally do as they work and play in kindergarten. After that, the only person to see the tapes will be me. I will be watching them in order to take a fresh look at how children interact in a kindergarten classroom. Children's real names will not be used in any written or verbal versions of the findings. The tapes will be kept in a secure place until they are erased upon completion of the project. Confidentiality will be maintained to the limits of the law.

Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against your child if you decide not to provide permission, nor is there a reward for those who do participate. Your child's status in the class will not be affected by your decision. If your child does take part, he or she may stop at any time. I would appreciate receiving the form back either way. There is a place to indicate that you do consent or do not consent.

If you want to know more about this research project, please call me at \_\_\_\_\_ 0641  
 or Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ -0618. The project has been approved by  
 University. If you have questions about \_\_\_\_\_ University's rules for research, please call  
 Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, Vice President and Dean, Division of Research and Graduate Studies (Tel.  
 -2704). You will receive a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Sheri Leafgren

CONSENT STATEMENT

YES --I agree to let my child \_\_\_\_\_ take part in this  
 (CHILD's NAME)

project. I know what (he or she) will have to do and that (he or she) can stop at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Date

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NON CONSENT STATEMENT

NO-- I do not agree to let my child \_\_\_\_\_ take part in this  
 project.  
 (CHILD's NAME)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Date

September 25, 2006

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Sheri Leafgren. I am a faculty member and doctoral student from \_\_\_\_\_ University. I want to do research and learn more about how kindergarten children interact with one another, their teacher and the environment of their classroom.

I would like for you to take part in this project. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to allow me to videotape you and the children in your class during the course of your regular kindergarten day for approximately 5-8 hours per week for 2-4 weeks. In addition, I will be seeking your assistance in setting the environment in such a way that I will only be videotaping those children who have given consent and have the consent of their parents. I will also be asking your assistance in contacting parents and collecting consent forms for the children.

Once we begin (and after we all watch brief excerpts of the first days taping) only I will see the tapes, and I will be watching them in order to take a fresh look at how children negotiate interactions within the kindergarten day. Your real name and children's real names will not be used in my analysis or in any written or verbal versions of the findings. The tapes will be kept in a secure place until they are erased upon completion of the project. Confidentiality will be maintained to the limits of the law. Confidentiality may not be maintained if illegal action or abuse is presented or if any participants indicate that they may do harm to themselves or may do/have done harm to others.

If you decide to take part in this project you will be engaging in your regular kindergarten day. The only difference will be the presence of a camera as I videotape parts of the day and the minor shifts in grouping the children to accommodate consent issues. I will be sharing with you and with the children in the classroom a "story" of my findings. I will also discuss my progress with you, and will offer you the option of reading/obtaining a copy of the study (dissertation) itself. No real names will be used in any writing or telling of this work.

Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against you if you decide not to participate; nor is there a reward if you do choose to participate. If you do take part, you may stop at any time.

If you want to know more about this research project, please call me at \_\_\_\_\_ -0641 or Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ -0618. The project has been approved by \_\_\_\_\_ University. If you have questions about \_\_\_\_\_ University's rules for research, please call Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, Vice President and Dean, Division of Research and Graduate Studies (Tel. \_\_\_\_\_ .2704).

You will get a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Sheri Leafgren

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CONSENT STATEMENT

Yes. I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

---

NON CONSENT STATEMENT

No. I do not agree to take part in this project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

VIDEOTAPE CONSENT FORM  
Kindergarten child

I agree to video taping of my child, \_\_\_\_\_ at  
Elementary School on some Mondays, Wednesdays and/or Thursdays during September and  
November and that Sheri Leafgren, a researcher approved \_\_\_\_\_ University, may use  
the tapes made of my child for this research project, titled Analysis of Moments of Interaction  
in a Kindergarten Classroom.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

VIDEOTAPE CONSENT FORM

Classroom teacher

I agree to video taping of my interactions with kindergarten children at Elementary School on some Mondays, Wednesdays and/or Thursdays during the weeks of October 2, October 9, October 16 and October 23 and that Sheri Leafgren, a researcher approved by \_\_\_\_\_ University, may use the tapes made of my child for this research project, titled Analysis of Moments of Interaction in a Kindergarten Classroom.

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Signature

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Date

(COVER LETTER)

(Date)

Dear Families,

Our classroom has been invited to participate in a research project. Sheri Leafgren, the person from \_\_\_\_\_ University who supervises our \_\_\_\_\_ field students, is the researcher and she has chosen our class to study how kindergarten children learn to interact in a kindergarten classroom.

For the protection and well-being of the children involved, Ms. Leafgren has to follow strict rules to follow when researching. It is very important that parents are informed and that they know that they can give permission or not give permission.

Attached to this letter are two sets of consent forms. The first is a letter which explains the consent process for your child to participate in the study. There is a place to sign if you give consent and there is a place to sign if you do not consent. Please sign the form to show us whether or not you consent and return the form (either way!) by \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

The second form is for those who gave consent on the first one. It lets us know that you not only consent to your child being a part of the research, but also that you consent to the videotaping. If you signed "YES" on the Consent Statement, please sign this form and return it, too.

Sheri Leafgren and I will be here to answer any questions you have before and after school tomorrow and on \_\_\_\_\_ (dates).

Sincerely,

Classroom Teacher

**APPENDIX B**

**DISCIPLINE AND MANAGEMENT PLANS**



## From the Desk of



Greetings Parents,

I apologize that you did not receive a Friday news letter by Email. I have managed to do something "bad" to my laptop and could not access your Email addresses when I got home from school. Therefore, a paper news letter for Monday!

We have had another busy week in Room One, working with the letter of the week, T. In math, we have made two class graphs: How we come to school and Who Has Lost a Tooth. We continue to graph the weather each day and count the days we've been in school.

These first three weeks, we have talked a lot about the school rules and routines. We are having some difficulty with some of the rules such as sharing, keeping hands to yourself, waiting to be called on to speak, etc. On Monday, I would like to start a class discipline chart. It is a simple stop light sign, with each child's name on the green light. If a child has difficulty with school rules, he or she may have to move their name to blue, or yellow and finally red. At the end of each day, the students will color in a square on a weekly slip of paper, showing what color they were in at the end of the day. At the end of each week, if the student has stayed in green all week, he or she may choose an item from the "treasure box". The slip of paper is sent home on Friday, for you to see. Other teachers have used this program in the past and it has been very effective. We will start this on Monday!

Thank you for all of the snack items that have been sent in. We have enough now to get us well into October. The art teacher, Mrs. N had asked us, if each child could send in a paint shirt. An old adult T-shirt works fine.

The letter this week will be P! We'll be making funny feet and fingerprint people. Thank you for the wonderful homework papers that have come in with pictures and drawings of the letter of the week.

Hopefully, my laptop will be repaired this week and I'll be Emailing you by Friday. Thank you,

Sample

--	--	--	--	--

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
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Green = Great Behavior      Yellow = Was redirected 2x's  
 Blue = Was redirected 3x's      Red = Was extremely disruptive

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Week of \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Behavior Report

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Today in room 205, your child \_\_\_\_\_ moved his/her star  
 \_\_\_\_\_ to the cloud  
 \_\_\_\_\_ to the thunder, resulting in no star on the hand  
 or \_\_\_\_\_ spent time in another room for a third disruption of learning to  
 think about proper behavior

for disrupting the learning process in the following ways:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Talked out in class without raising his/her hand
- \_\_\_\_\_ talked when asked to remain quiet (excessive talking)
- \_\_\_\_\_ disturbed class during instruction time
- \_\_\_\_\_ did not follow the teacher's instructions
- \_\_\_\_\_ was disrespectful to the teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ was disrespectful to others
- \_\_\_\_\_ did not use time wisely
- \_\_\_\_\_ did not keep hands to self
- \_\_\_\_\_ did not use good manners in the lunch room (loud talking,  
 throwing food, did not stay in seat, annoyed others)
- \_\_\_\_\_ did not respect the person supervising the group or class
- \_\_\_\_\_ poor conduct in the restrooms or areas outside the classroom
- \_\_\_\_\_ other (specified below)

Such behavior greatly distracts from everyone's learning in the class.  
 Please speak to your child concerning this poor behavior and help teach the  
 responsibility that your child must accept. Feel free to contact me  
 concerning this matter.

---

Please sign and return this letter the next day.

Parent signature and comments \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Classroom Discipline Plan

*This is the Classroom Discipline Plan that I use every year. This plan is written out for the parents and they are required to discuss the plan with their child and sign a form of agreement.*

### Rules:

When you create rules for your classroom, remember two things-- first, limit your rules to 4 or 5. Second, make sure your rules cover a broad range. Here are the classroom rules I use in my class.

- 1. Follow directions.**
- 2. Raise your hand.**
- 3. Remain seated.**
- 4. Respect others.**
- 5. Try your best!**

### Consequences:

Students are given consequences when they do not follow the rules. These are the consequences:

- First Warning: Verbal warning
- Second Warning: Writing Assignment
- Third Warning: Removal from free time/learning center time/ story time/ crafts or games and note, phone call to parent.
- Fourth Warning: Parent Conference

### Discipline "Contests"

There are a few ways that the students and I monitor their behavior throughout the day. I will use one method for a month or two (or for a marking period) and then change to another method. This provides variety for the students and will keep them motivated and excited throughout the year.

### **Discipline Plan**

The following rules have been established in my classroom to ensure a productive learning environment for all students.

**Rules:** 1. Always follow directions and listen carefully. 2. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. 3. Raise your hand and wait to be called on. 4. Remain in your seat until you have permission to get up. 5. While in the building use in-door voices.

**Consequences:** The following will be used to reinforce positive behavior:

1. Positive remarks
2. Recognition
3. Stamps or Stickers
4. Treats

The following guidelines will be used if the student does not follow rules or is displaying misconduct.

1. The child will receive an oral warning.
2. Each child will have a ticket with ten happy faces on it. The second warning will result in losing a happy face.
3. Additional warnings will result in a loss of a happy face.
4. All ten happy faces must be left to receive a blue ribbon and a treat and at least five happy faces must be left to receive a treat at the end of the week.
5. If a child consistently loses happy faces I will have them sit by themselves for five minutes, notify the parents, and if the behavior continues the student will be referred to the principal.

<http://hs.sabetha441.k12.ks.us/ses/kindergarten.htm>

### Montview Kindergarten Discipline Plan

We firmly believe that life's successes depend on self-discipline. We have developed a classroom discipline plan that affords every child the opportunity to manage his or her own behavior. Your child deserves the most positive learning environment that is possible for academic growth. Therefore, this plan will be enforced at all times.

#### Classroom Rules:

- We listen to each other
- Hands are for helping not hurting
- We use "I Care" Language
- We care about each other's feelings

Students are encouraged to follow class rules by the use of an apple tree. Each child will begin each day with 3 apples (green, yellow, red). These apples can be lost for misbehaving in school.

#### Rewards:

- A prize from the surprise box if five consecutive days of green apples
- Daily stickers
- Daily small candy or suckers
- Hold the Class Compliment Chain\*
- When the Class Compliment Chain has ten links, the class will have a popcorn soda party

\*When the class is complimented by an adult on their behavior, they receive a link in the Class Compliment Chain.

## Consequences of Misbehavior:

No Violation		Green Apple
1st Violation	Student Receives a Warning; Name is Written on Chalkboard	Maintain Green Apple
2nd Violation	Student Receives a Warning; Student is Placed in Time-Out for 5 Minutes	Yellow Apple
3rd Violation	Student Receives a Warning; Student Loses Recess Privileges	Red Apple
4th Violation	Student Receives a Warning; Parents are Contacted by Note or Telephone	No Apple

*Excessive behavior problems will not be tolerated.* Each student will have a behavior folder, which will be marked with the above "apple code". We ask that you look at, and initial it each day. Help your child to manage his/her behavior by discussing any behavior problems with them. We discussed this plan with your child at the beginning of school, and will continue to discuss it with them throughout the year. We thank you for your support in helping us to enforce this plan.

<http://www.hsv.k12.al.us/schools/elementary/MontES/Kindergarten.htm>

## How was my day?

yellow - so so A  
green - great! \*

red - very bad

blue - bad

> lose free choice activities  
no star

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Month \_\_\_\_\_



Dear Parent,

I am excited that your child is in my class this year. We can look forward to many fun educational experiences as the year progresses. In order to provide the best instructional environment, I need to insure that no child infringes upon the right of another child to learn. As I firmly believe that life long success depends on self-discipline and developing life skills (Effort, Responsibility, Cooperation, Friendship, Respect), I have developed rules and guidelines. These go along nicely with our Character Education Program here at Pleasant Grove Elementary. Daily Behavior Reports will be sent home in a folder for parent's initials.

#### CLASSROOM RULES:

1. Respect others and their property.
2. Following directions the 1st time given.
3. Keep hands feet and objects to yourself.
4. Raise your hand to speak.
5. Stay in your work space.

#### CONSEQUENCES

1. Verbal Warning
2. Pull Green Card.
3. Pull Blue Card and lose a privilege.
4. Pull Yellow Card and have 10 minutes time out.
5. Pull Orange Card and no ice cream for the week.
6. Pull Red Card and removal of student to another classroom or office visit as appropriate to that child. Notice sent to parents.

Please review the above with your child and return the attached slip. Please feel free to contact me at any time. <http://www.henry.k12.ga.us/pges/ingram/Information/discipline.html>

### The Friday Fun Discipline Plan

This is my second "most-requested" piece. If you are looking for a discipline plan that has been tested on first and second graders, this may be the one for you! The system is based on using number strips to record student behavior, and a thirty-minute indoor recess period as a weekly reward. It's simple to maintain. Best of all, it makes sense to the kids!

On Monday, every student receives the SECOND HALF of a strip of thirty numbers. These are made using a spreadsheet program. It ends up looking SOMETHING like this

1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

Numbers 16-30 appear in the first row of cells. An individual student's initials appear in the second row of cells. This pattern is repeated for the entire page. Number strips are cut apart and taped to each student's desk early Monday morning. I use a different color each week. Here's how the top part of the page would look, showing the first three students

1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J
1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z
Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z

If a student gets down to number 16, she/he receives the FIRST HALF, numbers 1-15, and a reminder to WATCH HER/HIS BEHAVIOR!

I explain to the students that the thirty numbers on their number strips stand for thirty minutes of "Friday Fun." If we use our time well all week, we earn a special indoor recess time each Friday. *HOWEVER*, if time is wasted with misbehavior, the student or students responsible will need to "give me a number."

Let's say LuAnn ran in the hall, yelled during class, and forgot her pencil. Her number strip now looks like this:

1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

A student "gives me a number" by tearing off the biggest number. His/her initials are automatically torn off with the number, so I have a record of lost numbers. So far, I've never had problems with a child tearing off another child's numbers, but keeping the pieces available is an automatic "checks and balances" feature. I tried using a chart of numbers posted on the wall, with the teacher crossing off the numbers, but I have found that the very act of tearing off the number and presenting it to me is a way of "redirecting" a child's behavior. I also have the chance to whisper a message when the child brings it up (*I know it's hard for you wait for your turn to talk but I need to listen to ---- right now*) OR just a pat and a reassurance (*I don't think you'll loose any more numbers today. You just needed this one reminder.*)

On Friday, the fun starts at exactly 2:45. Students who have all thirty numbers on their strips bring their number strips to me and make their choices. (A list of Friday Fun activities appears below.)

At 2:46, I announce that "the twenty-nines" may make their plans for Friday Fun. The students bring up their number strips and make their plans.

The first few weeks, I continue to announce the numbers until all students have joined Friday Fun.

Once the students have experienced a few weeks of Friday Fun, they can easily keep track of their own numbers. At the proper time, they bring me their number strips and join in the fun. In the meantime, I am free to walk around the room and observe, chat, compliment art projects, or run the class store.

If a student has lost ALL of his/her numbers, he/she may spend the Friday Fun time out in the hall, or even in the principal's office. This doesn't happen too often!

The key to making "Friday Fun" and number strips functional is to make it very matter-of-fact and low-key. No lectures. No fussing. No negotiating. Lost numbers = lost time. Period.

I always assure the "low number" kids that I believe they'll have a longer Friday Fun *next* week. Usually, the kids wait patiently at their desks until it is their time to join in the fun. I do allow them to talk quietly or read. If time was lost during the week because of incomplete work, that work is done before joining Friday Fun. (Students often lose numbers because they are playing during workshop. If this happens a lot, I will assign a job to be completed before joining Friday Fun.)

<http://www.fortunecity.com/millennium/taunton/1037/teacher/frifun.html>

## DISCIPLINE PLAN



In my class, every child has an apple on the apple tree pocket chart. Every apple begins each day on the tree. The goal is for each child to “keep” their apple on the tree throughout the day. However, if a child does not follow classroom rules, he or she may be asked to move his/her apple to the colored pockets on the trunk of the tree.

- **Green**—Sit out for 5 minutes
- **Yellow**—Sit out for 10 minutes of recess or centers (depending on time of day)
- **Orange**— Miss Half of Recess and/ or Centers (depending on time of day)
- **Blue**—Time Out—ALL of Recess and/or Centers
- **Red**—Office

The positive side of this behavior plan is that every child’s apple starts out each day on the tree. At the end of each day, those children whose apples are still on the tree will receive a penny stamp in their piggy bank. On Fridays, the “class store” will be open, in which they can “purchase” prizes with their savings. This system uses positive reinforcement as well as introducing the concept of money.

**Class Piggy Bank**—We will also have a “class piggy bank” in which the kids will earn pennies for class incentives. These pennies are earned by receiving class compliments for hallway behavior, specials classes and cafeteria behavior. Each of these class prizes cost \$1.00—therefore, 100 pennies must be earned. Prizes include: pizza party, popcorn and movie party, pajama day, etc.

<http://asscmail.hayscisid.net/~boothm/Discipline%20Plan.htm>

## The World's Easiest Token System

*A classroom behavior management plan that's simple  
for you and motivating for kids*



What's so great about this system? It **does not** require:

- you to keep track of each child's behavior in order to penalize or reward.
- the entire class to 'behave' in order to be rewarded
- you to punish those who did behave due to the actions of those who didn't
- the same behavioral standards for everyone: all students have equal opportunities to be rewarded for their own accomplishments
- only behavioral improvements to be rewarded: those students who consistently follow the rules will be rewarded more often, rather than being overlooked
- any money to be spent on candy or prizes
- the staging of elaborate rewards
- a complicated class helper system, because tokens assign many job privileges
- class time that should be spent on academics
- a lot of maturity in students: even preschoolers can participate

Here's how to get the system set up:

- Find some chips, tokens, cubes, or whatever else you can access. Even small laminated slips of paper will work. 10-20 per child should be enough.
- Assign PIN#. Each child in my class has a personal identification number (PIN#) used for filing papers and so on. If yours don't have one for other purposes, assign one for this. You could use the children's names, but then you have to make a new tokens each school year and whenever new kids transfer.
- On each token (or whatever item you are using), write a PIN#. Each PIN# needs about 10-20 tokens. Keep each group of tokens sorted into separate containers of some sort, like a tackle box or craft supply organizer, to keep them separated by number. This will take about a half an hour; you will never have to invest any more time in this system for as many years as you want to use it.
- Find or make a box or bag to put the tokens in when they are awarded. I use a sparkly purple and gold drawstring bag I found from a dollar store a few years ago. You only need one for the whole class.

Here's one way to introduce it to your class (first grade and above):

- Explain to your class that each teacher has a method for rewarding good behavior in students. Ask them to recall some of the ways other teachers they have had rewarded them (stickers, play money for a class store, paperclip chain to earn a pizza party, etc.). Be prepared to limit the discussion, as it will be a very popular topic!
- Discuss with the kids how they might have earned those rewards in previous classes. They may mention being 'caught being good', or when a compliment was given from another teacher, or when an especially good job was done on a project. Encourage specific responses. This is also a good way to set behavioral expectations for the year, and check prior knowledge. You may want to list their ideas, or write down just the ones that you will be rewarding them for. Decide ahead of time whether you will also reward academics with this system or if it will be purely social/behavioral.
- Explain that this year, in their new class, tokens will be awarded to the child(ren) who exhibit the behaviors listed or other praise-worthy actions. Stress that tokens may not be awarded every single time, but that you will surprise them and they never know when they will have a token added to the bag. This is an important point so that they do not wait to be rewarded each time they follow directions. You might also want to mention that if a child asks for a token, s/he will not be given one, no matter how good of a job s/he did. You are the only person who determines when tokens will be awarded.
- Show the token organizer and your special bag or container for the awarded tokens. Explain that when a token is awarded, you will take a token with the child's PIN# on it and place it in the bag.

- **Demonstrate how you will award tokens. Tell a child that you liked the way she came in this morning, so you will take a token with her PIN# on it and put it in the bag. Tell another child you noticed he walked quietly in the hallway, and make a big show of putting in a token for him. Specifically praise each child in the class and add a token for each to the bag. Tell the students that they will have opportunities to earn tokens every school day, all day long.**
- **Demonstrate how you will pull tokens and give rewards. Emphasize that tokens will be pulled whenever you have a special job in the classroom you need someone to complete, and how you might pull a token at any time throughout the day. If you will also pull tokens at a set time or day, or to give specific rewards or prizes, explain that as well. Begin pulling tokens for classroom privileges right away. If you go to music class right after the discussion, you could pull a token to determine who will line up first, or who will carry the recorder money down to the music teacher. Pull lots of tokens during the first few weeks of school so the children can learn how the system works and make connections between their behavior and privileges.**

#### **How to use and maintain your token system:**

- **Whenever you see behaviors you would like to encourage, award tokens.**
- **You can pull tokens from the bag anytime you have a natural opportunity to reward students. If you need someone to pass out art supplies, or run down to another teacher's room, or substitute for a classroom helper who is absent, work a problem on the board, participate in a role play, or any other situation in which you need to select a student for a privilege or special responsibility, pull a token. This prevents you from having to recall who has 'behaved' recently, and whether you are calling on students equitably. The higher the incidence of good behavior, the more likely they are to be given extra responsibilities and privileges. It also simplifies your helper system- you don't have to assign every conceivable job to a student, because occasional tasks can be assigned using tokens.**
- **You can pull a set of number of tokens on a certain day or time, such as every Friday at dismissal, to distribute additional rewards. If you give your students candy or prizes, this would be a good way to do it, but this system does not require any tangible rewards or expense on your part if you don't want it to.**
- **After you pull a token from the bag, put it back into your tackle box or organizer, rather than back in the bag.**
- **Empty out the bag every week, month, or quarter, depending on how many tokens you have and how often you want your class to have a fresh start. Any grade level of kids should be able to sort the tokens by number back into the organizer for you during indoor recess or other down time.**

#### **Alternatives and ways to extend the system:**

- **You may want a Token Helper to put the tokens in the bag for you so you don't have to worry about it, once routines are established. The Token Helper could also**

be that responsible child who reminds you in the classroom to add a token that you awarded at recess or in the hall.

- You can also have children put in their own tokens for especially great accomplishments. This can become distracting if done when a token is awarded during instructional time, so I would not recommend it as a regular routine.
- Students can nominate each other for tokens. During your morning meeting or at dismissal, for example, you could ask for two volunteers to tell about how someone in the class was a good friend or role model, and have that child put a token in the bag for his or her classmates. This has lots of benefits, from encouraging the children to look for appropriate behavior in their friends to applying a little positive peer pressure to follow the rules.
- You may want to tell your specials teachers about this system so that they can note the names of any kids who they think have earned them. I told my students that if I heard another teacher or administrator compliment them, I would add tokens when we got back to the classroom. My grade-level team always knows my behavior mod plans and they make sure to comment when they see exceptional behavior at recess or in the hall.
- You can make tokens that say “Whole Class” to occasionally reward excellent group behavior. Whenever a ‘whole class’ token is pulled, a special reward can be given instead of the purpose you pulled the token for. (If you pulled a token to see who would run an errand, it would not be feasible for the whole class to do it, anyway. Announce the whole class token, then pull another token to select who will run the errand), The whole class token could mean:
  - \*five minutes of free time at the end of the day
  - \*extra recess or computer lab time
  - \*extra singing or finger plays during the next morning meeting
  - \*ten minutes of self-selected reading with friends or their choice
  - \*time in class to begin homework, or
  - \*any other reward you are comfortable giving every day that you pull the ‘whole class’ token and that the whole class enjoys. Again, no tangible rewards are necessary, unless you prefer to give candy or toys. 49 ideas which do not involve tangible rewards can be found at this link to CanTeach.
- Assign a Star of the Week for when you are too busy to pull tokens and when you are out of the classroom. Sometimes at recess or in the hall or at an assembly, a child needs to be chosen for a small task, such as taking a note to another teacher or retrieving something from the classroom. Your Star of the Week, or VIP, or whatever name you choose, can serve this role. There may also be an unassigned task that pops up during a lesson, and rather than distract the class with tokens, just ask the Star to do it. This seems fair to children and they do not question it. Each child usually gets to be Star twice a year, and gets to hold his or her regular monthly job during the Star week. I like assigning the Star job for a week so that I can remember who it is, which would be hard if it changed daily. The Star can also share favorite

books and poems, bring in an item from home (like a show-and-tell), eat lunch with you, or any other special activity that draws attention to that child and builds self-esteem.

**Examples of Tasks That Can Be Assigned Using Tokens**

**Calling students to line up**

**Running irregular errands**

**Doing problems on the board/ overhead**

**Choosing read-alouds**

**Completing small tasks for other teachers**

**Monitoring behavior when you are out of the room**

**Helping Star of the Week**

**Bringing you something from another part of the room/school**

**Carrying things**

**Holding posters and charts while you teach**

**Sitting in a special seat**

**Reading from texts to the class**

**Sharing journal entries**

**Group leaders for activities**

**Any other spontaneous task that you have to choose a student to complete**

**<http://www.mspowell.com/tokensystem.html>**

## 3 Strikes, You're Out!



Each time you break a class rule, you get a strike. Your teacher writes down how many you have. On Friday, a Weekly Evaluation will be sent home so your family can see how you have behaved.

**Strike 1: Warning (counts towards your total strikes for the week)**

**Strike 2: No Brain Break time**

**Strike 3: You're Out! (sit alone)**

After 3 strikes, you're out. If you keep breaking rules after the third strike, you will LEAVE our classroom and work by yourself in another teacher's room. You will also have to write a NOTE HOME to your family explaining what you did.

### CLASS RULES

1. Respect yourself.
2. Respect others.
3. Respect your school.

### CONDUCT GRADE AND WEEKLY EVALUATIONS

Every Friday, you will receive a Weekly Evaluation which explains how your child's behavior and work habits have been during the week. The Conduct grades are based upon the striko system I use to track behavior. When students misbehave, they are given a strike next to their name on my recording sheet. (Some offenses, such as fighting, lying, stealing, and extreme disrespect automatically get 3 strikes).

#### Consequences for Each Strike:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Strike: Warning (counts towards total strikes for the week)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Strike: Loss of Brain Break time
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike: "You're Out": removal from group (sit alone)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Strike: Removal from class (work alone in another classroom) and Note Home

Note: Repeated and consistent offenses will follow the school-wide discipline plan and can result in required parent conferences, referrals to the guidance counselor, referrals to the principal, suspension, and expulsion. The behavior of students who continually disrupt and interfere with the learning process will not be tolerated.

At the end of the week, I total up how many strikes each student has and assign them a Conduct grade using this key:

#### Conduct Grade Key:

- A= 0-2 strikes
- B= 3-5 strikes
- C= 6-8 strikes
- D= 9-11 strikes
- F= 12 or more

APPENDIX C

DISCIPLINE AND MANAGEMENT POSTING

# classroom management

## **Give Me Five**

from [Education World®](#)

### **In Front of the Class**

#### **Give Me Five**

Discourage inattention by teaching students the "Give Me Five" technique. Whenever you say, "Give Me Five," students go through the following five steps:

- Eyes on speaker
- Quiet
- Be still
- Hands free
- Listen

#### **Three Strikes!**

Every Monday, provide each student with three index cards with his or her name printed in large letters on the blank sides of the cards. If a student misbehaves, he or she writes, on the first line of the lined side of the card, the date and the behavior, and drops the card into a fishbowl at the front of the room. Reward students who still have three cards at the end of the week, and assign consequences to those who have two, one, or no cards left. The next week, give back students' cards back and start again. The cards also serve as a record at report card or parent conference time.

#### **Don't Be Late**

Discourage tardiness by inviting students who are not in their seats when the bell rings to go to the front of the room and sing a song.

<http://www.nea.org/classmanagement/ifc051025.html>

**Post: nonstop talking**

Posted by 2nd grade on 11/08/07

I've been teaching for 17 years and I have never had a class like this one. They will not shut up. They talk from the minute they hit the door til the time they go home. They have been kept in at recess, their parents have been called, they are not allowed "fun" things...what else is there to take away?

I've switched my talking to be positive , I've tried "Mystery Prize" if you can behave.....I'm at my wits end!!!!!!!!!!!!

Oh....these are 2nd graders!!!! They just don't care!

<http://teachers.net/mentors/discipline/topic1449/11.08.07.14.16.36.html>

**Post: Kids Who Lie and Fun Fridays**

Posted by Kat on 12/02/07

Hi, everyone! I have been teaching 3rd grade for almost 10 years now, and I have to say that this year's class is my most challenging-discipline wise. I have children in my classroom who will LIE LIE LIE, even when I have credible witnessess that tell me they are lying! We discuss bullying ALL THE TIME. We talk about being HONEST nearly every day. I have also discussed how even if you are in trouble and you tell the truth, you may have a consequence, but I and others can still TRUST you because you have told the truth. There are 2 kids in my room that I absolutely cannot trust. They get into trouble during times of the day that I am not there: recess, specials, lunch, etc. I would like to set up a Fun Friday program, where ONLY the WELL BEHAVED kids can participate!!! So, my question is two parts:

1. What do you do with those children that you KNOW are lying, but they will NEVER admit it?
2. Does anyone do Fun Fridays, and what is your criteria? Can I exclude kids who cause trouble and lie about it???

HELP!!!!

<http://teachers.net/mentors/discipline/topic1461/12.02.07.13.55.26.html>

**Post: Out of Control Class...Going To Get Canned...Help...**

Posted by Michelle24 on 11/04/07

Hi! I teach elementary at a ghetto parochial school. I have a very difficult class with many problems. There is every kind of problem imaginable in my classroom. Lately my problematic five do not want to learn. I have one with A.D.H.D. who runs around the classroom and starts to take various objects and fling them across the room. I had to grab him and physically retrain him. I have another with a divorce issue who mouths off to me and won't do his work. I have two others who run around the room who believe they can do what the other child is doing. I have a very non-supportive principal who probably wants to "Can" me because she herself doesn't know what to do with me. She has made me sign improvement papers. I am not aloud to send kids to the principal anymore. I am not aloud to call parents during the school day. I am not aloud to send kids into other classrooms. I am not aloud to send out more than one child out of the classroom for disciplining. I am not aloud to have other people discipline my kids too. I am not ,not, not, not.... Ok, what am I supposed to do? I am starting from scratch on Monday and I am re-teaching procedures, rules, how to answer adults yes maam, yes sir, and am adding rewards to the mix by using poker chips. What else can I do. I am really fed up.

<http://teachers.net/mentors/discipline/topic1447/11.04.07.06.21.58.html>

**Re: Want to "restart" my school year!**

Posted by tough group! on 11/24/07

Doing a raffle backfired in my class, because the kids felt like they were good, but didn't get the reward. I gave out play \$ and kept it in my pocket at ALL times. They could then buy things with it. It worked ok as well. I also used to teach ss for 1 hour a day.. it was very hard with the students not having the consistency all the time.

Seriously, the best thing that ever worked to quiet my students down was pretzles and goldfish crackers. Each child had a dixie cup and I would drop in crackers when they were quietly working. It sounds terrible, I know but it worked. Maybe only do this once in awhile.

Most of all, you need to keep consistent about the routine and your expectations.

<http://teachers.net/mentors/discipline/topic1453/11.24.07.14.39.47.html>

Post: **Child won't transition on her own- Ideas please.**

Posted by Shana on 11/30/07

I have a student in my room this year that will not stop working and move when everyone else in the room does. I have to take her by the hand and lead her back to the carpet everytime. At first she was cooperative and would go with me, but now she fights and yells. I assigned her a student helper and that lasted a while, but she won't accept the help any longer. I practice 1/1 with her. I used a point chart (she had to earn 3 points in the AM, 1 point for each transition she made on her own) that she worked towards for her choice of reward (she wanted chocolate. That didn't work very well. Any suggestions? She does have some other troubles. She is very clingy and she wants to sit on my lap and she wants to be held and hugged often and if you don't give her a hug she cries and throws a fit. She is a smart girl.

<http://teachers.net/mentors/kindergarten/topic54798/11.30.07.17.03.05.html>

# classroom management

## **Behavior Management Tips**

### **In Front of the Class**

*by Linda Starr, Education World®*

#### **Round 'Em Up**

First you have to get them there. Discourage absenteeism by randomly choosing one student's desk or chair each day and placing a sticker beneath it. The student who arrives to find the sticker under his or her seat gets to choose a small prize. If the student is absent, of course, the prize is forfeited.

#### **I Spy**

Create character "tickets" by writing the words I Spy, along with a list of positive character traits, on slips of paper. When you see a student demonstrating one of those traits, circle the trait and write the student's name on the paper. At the end of each month, count the papers and name the student with the most tickets "student of the month." Display his or her picture on a classroom bulletin board, and at the end of the year, reward all students of the month with a pizza party or another special treat.

#### **Encouraging Reflection**

Looking for ways to help students reflect on disruptive behavior and learn to correct it? Let them write about their actions on contracts, questionnaires, and in journals, and then review the documents with them. A student who writes up himself or herself can identify the behavior and its cause, explain why the behavior is a problem, and propose a way to correct the situation. It also allows the student to express his or her viewpoint about the incident.

<http://www.nea.org/classmanagement/ifc051004.html>

# classroom management

## Reward Systems That Work

### In Front of the Class

by Linda Starr, [Education World](#)®

**Display on a classroom bulletin board a stoplight with four colors:** green, yellow, orange, and red. Surround the stoplight with numbered pockets, one pocket for each student. Into each pocket, place a strip of green paper. If a student breaks a class rule, replace the green paper with a yellow paper. A second behavior problem on the same day, results in an orange paper. When a student receives an orange paper, have him or her complete a Time Out Record describing their inappropriate behavior and explaining how they plan to correct it. Send the Time Out form home to parents to be signed and returned. Severe discipline problems result in a red paper, which earns a phone call home or a trip to the office. At the end of each day, everyone goes back to green. On Friday, give every student who keeps his or her green paper all week a Bonus Ticket. At the end of each semester, hold an auction and allow students to spend their Bonus Tickets.

**Display a Velcro® penny board on a classroom bulletin board.** Every day, give each student five pennies with a piece of Velcro® attached. Each time a student misbehaves, take away a penny and return it to the board. At the end of the day, reward students who have kept all their pennies all day with a cardboard nickel. When a student has accumulated 10 nickels, allow him or her to shop at the classroom store.

**Provide each student with a "checkbook"** and reward them for good behavior with "deposits" in varying amounts, depending on the behavior. Allow them to use their checks to purchase items at the classroom store. (Don't forget to also "fine" students for poor behavior choices!)

<http://www.nea.org/classmanagement/ifc060207.html>

# classroom management

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## **Group Rewards**

### **In Front of the Class**

by Linda Starr, [Education World](#)®

## **Behavior Puzzle**

**Rewards solve the puzzle of good behavior.**

Cut a poster into ten puzzle-type pieces and place the pieces in a large envelope. Attach the envelope to a bulletin board labeled with the caption, "Good behavior puts it all together." Each time students behave well as a group, work well together, receive a compliment from another teacher, or demonstrate some other exceptional class behavior, take a puzzle piece from the envelope and attach it to the bulletin board. When the puzzle is complete, award the class a special treat -- and begin another puzzle!

## **Surprise!**

**You'll be surprised at how well they behave.**

Pick out a surprise activity, such as an extra recess or a small treat, then write "SURPRISE" on the chalkboard. Throughout the day, if students get noisy or get out of their seats without permission, erase a letter starting at the end of the word. Add back missing letters when everyone is behaving well. If the word is complete at the end of the day, students get the surprise.

## **A Silent Cheer**

**Celebrate in silence.**

Reward students for good work and good behavior with a silent cheer.

<http://www.nea.org/classmanagement/ifc060516.html>

**Banana Bucks**

10-04-2007, 09:45 AM

I was wondering if any one has used the management program in their classroom called Banana Bucks or a similiar program using a money system. I was thinking of implementing this program and wondered what success teachers were finding with it. Any specifics you can tell me about how you use it in your classroom would be appreciated. How much money do your students start with? What can they buy with their banana bucks? How do you organize the banana bucks with the students? Thanks.

**I use Tiki Dollars**

10-11-2007, 07:45 PM

Hi:

This year, I had a polenesian adventure them in my classroom, so I decided to use Tiki Dollars. I laminated a large poster board and taped plastic cd sleeves that are clear to it in rows. Each cd sleeve has a pocket that is large enough to put each child's name. When the students do something good, like follow directions without being told twice, do something nice for someone else, or are showing uncharacteristically good behavior, I give them a dollar. If the entire class was good with the substitute, they get a dollar. If they break rules, forget supplies, etc...they get dollars taken away. I keep a large supply of pre-laminated and cut dollars that I created with clip art on MSWord in an index card box next to the chart.

After two weeks, students must have three or more dollars to visit the treasure box. I set a price for different items like lollipops, cool pencils, key chains, toys, etc...that I bought at the dollar store.

<http://www.proteacher.net/discussions/showthread.php?t=59521>

**Kids running their fingers along the wall...**

11-27-2007, 06:07 PM

Why does it drive me crazy when the kids run their fingers along the wall while we are walking in a line? What makes kids so compelled to do this? I use the excuse that we must respect school property but my frustration seems much too strong for such a little thing.

**This year, I've tried this....**

12-02-2007, 12:09 PM

When we go out in the hallway, I ask them all to put their hands

- A) Behind their backs
- B) Folded in front of them
- C) At their sides with fingers crossed.
- D) One in front, one in back

It's different every day. They're so concentrating on doing the hands right, they don't touch the walls, and they don't talk, either. It's the best thing I've come up with yet.

P.S. We only tried putting their hands on their hips once. It looked a little strange, and the other third graders laughed at them. I scolded the other third graders publicly, but admitted to my class that we weren't going to use that one again, because it looked a little silly.

<http://www.proteacher.net/discussions/showthread.php?t=64384>



## Discipline

Our classroom is a small community where teamwork and good relationships are expected. We will spend time learning class procedures and practicing them. Each student is expected to act within our standards of behavior. To establish good order and help the children learn self-control, they will be guided to respect themselves and their companions through specific directions, positive reinforcement, suggested new activities and responsible actions.

Our classroom discipline system includes a colored card system. The first time a child breaks a rule, he will be given a verbal reminder. Nothing further will happen as he reflects on whether that behavior was a good “choice”.

Every child will begin the day with a green colored card in our Behavior Chart. If the child chooses to break a rule after a verbal reminder, his card will be changed to yellow. Continued misbehavior will result in the card changing to blue and finally red. The student can earn his green card back by improving behavior for the remainder of the morning or the afternoon, meaning he will begin the rest of the day or the following morning with a “clean slate”. Children who are doing a GREAT job will have their cards changed to PURPLE for positive reinforcement and setting an example for the rest of the class.

The rules, consequences for the card changes, and the rewards for following our rules are listed below.

Rules: 1. I will raise my hand to speak. 2. I will stay in my seat. 3. I will listen and follow directions. 4. I will keep my hands and feet to myself and my own property. 5. I will be kind to others. Consequences:

*Excellent Behavior:* Card will be changed to PURPLE. *First Offense:* A verbal reminder as a warning. *Second Offense:* Change card on behavior chart from green to yellow. Miss five minutes of playtime or recess. *Third Offense:* Change card to blue and miss ten minutes of playtime or recess. *Fourth Offense:* Change card to red and miss all of playtime or recess. Parents will either receive a phone call or a note.

Rewards: Children with a purple card will get a treat from the treasure chest. Those who maintain a green card for three days each week will also receive a treat.

## Discipline program

By Cathy

Our fourth grade team uses a program that is simple but easy to follow through with. There are three sections of 4th graders and they are departmentalized. One student in each class is assigned to carry a folder with him

or her. In this folder is a sheet with the 5 classroom rules we follow and a blank checklist. The rules they must follow are pretty basic: Follow directions the first time given. Come to class prepared with all materials. No teasing or swearing. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself. Display an academically positive attitude.

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If a student shows up to my class without homework, I write his or her name on the rules checklist. If he proceeds to the next class and doesn't have that teacher's homework, he or she receives another check mark. When the students get back to homeroom at the end of the day, the homeroom teacher records any check marks on a master sheet that is kept for the month. At the end of the month, any student who has more than X amount of check marks does not attend the end of the month activity. (Relay races in the gym, kickball tournament, movie and popcorn, ice cream sundae party, dance in the gym, etc...) We schedule each activity on the last day of the month and those students who are out of the activity sit in the office or another teacher's classroom. Our activity is usually held during the last two periods of the last day of the month. We make a big deal out of this activity and constantly remind the kids of what it will be. They especially loved the make your own sundae party.

Starting in September, they are allowed 10 check marks. In October, they are only allowed 8 check marks, etc... until we get down to 5, where it stays for the rest of the year. If a student receives more than two check marks in one day, I call the parent to let them know and ask for their help. If the student is out of the activity, we send a letter home to notify the parents that their child has received X number of check marks and therefore, will not be able to participate in the monthly activity. The parents must sign and return the letter.

This ended up sounding more complicated than it really is!! Sorry so long. If you have any specific questions about our system, e-mail me

Cathy

## Classroom management

By Lashawn

You are definately in need of some classroom management. What grade do you teach? If I had to guess it is older students. I know the older students "look" as if they would know how to behave because they are in adult bodies,

but you have to remember that they are still kids in their heads. I teach 5th grade and we have a system that seems to get them motivated to act the way they should. It is a compliment and complaint system. This is how it works: We have 4 classes of 5th graders, so we send a checklist of everyone's name to each class.

[File by: 6/20/2008](#)

[School-Wide Discipline](#)  
Common sense approach to discipline that gives teachers time to teach

[www.classroomboundary.com](http://www.classroomboundary.com)

[Give tips on this page](#)

If a student receives one check(warning), two checks (office). At the end of the class, the class as a whole recieves a compliment if they are good, (ex. Great Class! Had all homework!) or a complaint(ex. Loud lining up today! Loud when a visitor is in room)Any teacher in the school can give our kids a compliment or complaint and it counts! At the end of the day, each teacher tallies how many compliments or complaints their homeroom has. Complaints cancel compliments so kids have to get them. Whichever class has the most compliments after 3 weeks gets a prize (ex. popcorn, icecream, etc.) The kids love the competition with the other classes and we really got them pumped up about winning. It really helps our kids become teammates. My homeroom was horrible at the beginning of the year, but now they are the best, and have won the compliments/complaints 4 times this year! it really works and it's also a lot of fun. You really can't expect your kids to just DO what you want without some kind of adult motivation. This is a good way. I really hope I helped you out.

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## Systems

By Teri

One teacher at school has magnets on the student's desks. They are shaped as a star and the points are numbered. They start on point 1. If she sees them misbehaving, she rotates their start from 1 - 2 and so on. It's

very private, but at the end of the day, she can monitor. They can go up also.

[Add to Google](#)

I have them keep up with their "checks". If they are misbehaving, then they'll get a check. Then, at the end of the week, if they have less than the appointed checks, they get to go to "Success Club". They also evaluate their behavior

**School-Wide Discipline**  
Common sense approach to discipline that gives teachers time to teach.

[View this strategy on my site](#)

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at the end of the week. Hope this makes sense. It's a little confusing to write down, but it works for me and makes the students responsible for their behavior.

Tag : 2002 : July : 01

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**FISH**

By Deb S.

A couple of years ago I did a fish theme. For a behavior board I had "Don't be a fish out of water" I drew a large fish bowl and made a fish for each child. Their fish were all at the bottom of the bowl. Everytime they broke a rule, their fish would go up higher in the water and there would be a consequence. The last step would be out of the bowl with the most severe consequence. Kids who were able to stay at the bottom of the bowl all week got a small reward of some kind. I used velcro on the backs of the fish and at various spots in the bowl so that I could move their fish easily. Hope this helps.

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## Fish Idea

By Kim

I too LOVE the ocean . . .

3  
rd

I am not sure this is what you are looking for but this is what I have done . . .

I make a simple red fish for each child. I write their name on the front of the fish. The back of the fish is black. I pin all the fish (one for each student) in the shape of a huge fish (the tie in is to Swimmy - can't remember the author).

Ads by Google

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or

But at the beginning of each day all the fish are in formation - a large 'school' of fish. After your first warning you flip your fish over - you are still a part of the school.

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&

but you have been singled out due to the black.

At the next incident you are removed from the formation and pinned behind the large fish.

th

At the fourth incident, you float to the top and note goes home.

..

The kids like it and it worked for me. If this does not make sense, e-mail me and I will try again.

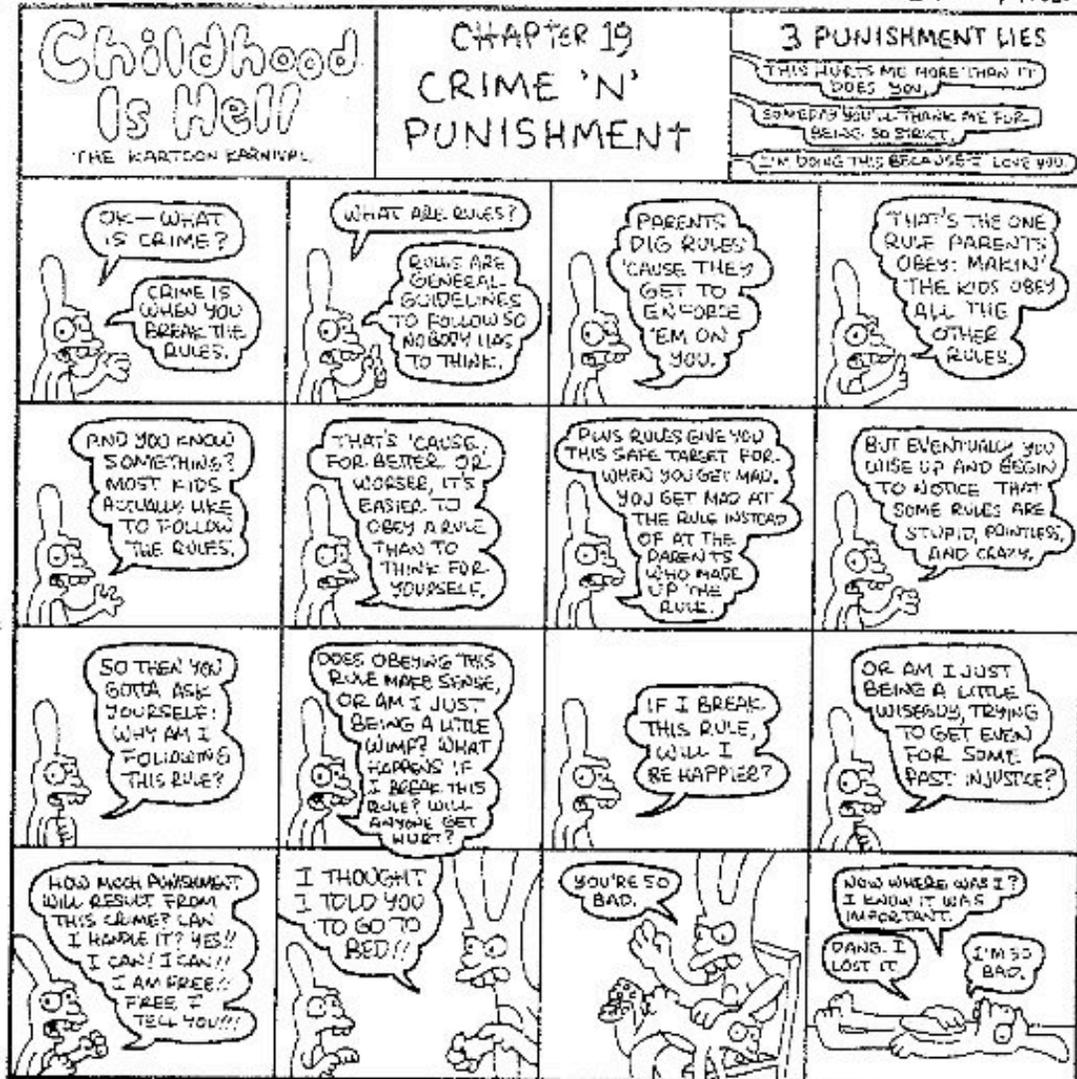
Good Luck

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APPENDIX D  
BONGO'S CONVERSATION



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## REFERENCES

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