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Desire and Discipline in Primary Education

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This paper, based on a three-year participant observer study in a southwestern inner city elementary school, holds that understanding the dynamic nature of the struggle between desire and discipline in an elementary school setting is crucial because those competing forces and the ensuing struggle are a major force in a child's secondary socialization. Our observations suggest that even very young children acquiesce to and resist authority in many ways, and in doing so learn lessons often more complicated than most of our assumptions will allow. We argue that these lessons, which are often contradictory, are born out of the tension between institution and inclination, between deference and autonomy, and between respect for authority and self-respect—a tension that is not resolvable, but that can be collectively lived with in better and worse ways.

INTRODUCTION

The following study is based on data which were gathered as part of a three year participant/observer project in an inner city school in the southwestern United States. A good portion of the time was spent with Mr. Stevens, a dynamic, socially committed European-American primary grade teacher in his late 20s. As far as the school administration was concerned and by most institutional measurements, such as school, district, and state standardized tests, he was an effective and successful teacher, albeit a very traditional one. Observations were conducted weekly for 1-3 hours. Field notes, video tapes, observations of Mr. Stevens and other teachers (both in the classroom and out), interviews with children, with Mr. Stevens and his colleagues, administrators and school personnel, written reports from the school and the district, examinations, samples of student work and student records, and statistics as reported in the newspaper, by the school, and by the district are all part of the data base.

In this paper, we isolate three scenarios from the data and analyze them in terms of what Jacoby and Ochs (1995) call micro-ethnography, which is a close analysis of "...bounded, situated activities not only as microcosms of larger cultural structures, but as loci and media for the interactional engendering of these structures" (p. 175). Before we talk further about what we are hoping to do, perhaps it is important to specify what we are not attempting. We are not addressing

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the topic of various literacies, assessing educational practices or competing pedagogical strategies, discussing the hegemonic effects of hidden curricula or evaluating teacher effectiveness. We are not recommending any particular course of action, nor are we claiming that we have discovered a panacea for, or even a way to ameliorate the myriad of problems that admittedly plague inner city schools and linguistic minorities. Our aim is considerably more modest. We are simply attempting to explore how the complex dynamic between desire and discipline (Foucault, 1972) operates within three classroom situations seen as discursive social spaces of power. In doing so, we attempt to answer the following question: What lessons might children learn about how to learn (Bateson, 1972 [1942]) as the result of being caught between what Foucault (1972, p. 215) describes as "ritual forms" prescribed by our institutions and what is variously experienced as an excess, as dangerous, wayward impulse, or as deviation from one's role that is nevertheless complexly tied to that role (inclination)?

INCLINATION VS. INSTITUTION

Foucault calls the interactions just described "dynamic" (p. 217) because we experience the effects of each (institution and inclination) only through the various ways they become related to one another, that is, the various ways they call each other forth, structure each other, and keep each other in play, both in our everyday practices and through processes of socialization. The tension between inclination and institution that Foucault uses to frame his lecture *Discourse on Language* (1972) also connects with his later discussions of power (1979, 1980, 1982). Language and power are not, in his view, human attributes or social media, though our language sometimes leads us to treat them as if they were. Instead, language and power are historical, institutionalized, and interrelated sites of struggle, areas of social activity where much is at stake. As such, they are bounded on one side by ambiguous expectations of autonomy, and on the other by the ways our activities get normed or institutionalized (e.g., into roles, procedures, job descriptions, etc.). According to Foucault, then, a great deal hangs on precisely how we understand and resist the undesirable effects of institutionalized discourse and power (i.e., isolation, subjection, loss of agency, and the uncritical reproduction of institutional roles) given that we cannot escape the conditions that produce these effects.

POWER AND CHILDREN

The concepts of *desire, institution,* and *power* may seem more appropriately applied to adult activities, to Foucault's own dilemmas, or to corporate or prison life than, say, to the lives of school children. However, our observations indicate that the tension between desire and discipline operates in a first grade classroom in much the way that it does in "adult" contexts. Moreover, the ques-

tion of how this affective tension affects the site of secondary socialization is an especially inviting one (Worsham, 1992-1993). According to Berger and Luckman (1966), secondary socialization, which begins to take place in school, is the "...acquisition of role-specific knowledge, the roles being directly or indirectly rooted in the division of labor" (p. 138). This type of socialization includes the acquisition of lexical items specific to certain roles, the "internalization of semantic fields structuring routine interpretations and conduct within an institutional area" and "affective correlations". It also includes "the rudiments of a legitimating apparatus" and "identification with a role and its appropriate norms" *inter alia* (pp. 138-139). The lessons that children learn at this time, therefore, should not be seen as local or limited because they serve to position children within a social field that ultimately delimits how they will see and appreciate (Bourdieu, 1984) what is possible, almost possible, barely possible, or not possible at all.

Secondary socialization within institutionalized education is for the most part unavoidable, and it may even be preferable to most available alternatives, but institutionalized education is also permeated by forms of power. It therefore has a profound effect, which is not always positive, on children, and, in less obvious but equally real ways, on those who teach them. The teaching strategies willingly or unwittingly employed, the ways work and play are divided, the ways private thoughts and feelings are pulled onto a public stage, and the ways authority is exercised or dismissed, bounce children back and forth between actions that elicit desire and reactions that control and channel that desire. The elementary students we observed, who otherwise struggled in so many ways, nevertheless were quick to develop a repertoire of behaviors for coping with the twin forces of individuation and institutionalization. In fact, their competence in this area provides support for Foucault's arguments (1979, 1980, 1982) that institutions and the forms of power they embody, such as structures of authority, management tactics, forms of subjection and submission, are not unqualifiedly oppressive. They are always there with us. We are always in and a part of them. We simply learn together to live with them in better and worse ways at different times and under different exigencies. Our observations suggest that it is certainly possible for even very young children, as well as the adults who work with them, to position themselves and others in ways that tend to "redirect the unfolding of discourse such that individual understandings, human relationships, and the social order might be changed" (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995, p. 178); that is, to reproduce institutional relationships with a difference (Butler, 1992).

Co-Construction of Institutional Roles

Our observations lead us to believe that institutionalized roles with their attendant desires and disciplines find a proper home on both sides of the fence, in teachers and in students, even though only the latter will be the concern of this paper. In other words, we have observed that teachers and students co-construct (in the sense of Duranti & Brenneis 1986; Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991; Jacoby &

Ochs 1995; Rymes 1995, 1996 and sources cited therein) both the desire/discipline dynamic and corresponding relations of power. It then follows that the tangle of desire and discipline we are discussing shapes both institutional roles, student *and* teacher, as well as the scope of their interactions and possibilities for resistance and change.

DEUTERO-LEARNING

Over fifty years ago, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson warned that perhaps students learn more than just reading, writing, and arithmetic in their classroom lessons. Bateson (1972 [1942]), in a response to Mead, argued that students also learn how to learn, or how to perform similar tasks in the future. He called this "deutero-learning," and he defined deutero-learning as "a sort of habit which is a by-product of the learning process" (p. 164). It is "...that class of abstract habits of thought which are acquired by a process which we may equate with learning to learn," (p. 166). Put differently, deutero-learning is "...a habit of looking for contexts and sequences of one type rather than another, a habit of punctuating the stream of events to give repetitions of a certain type of meaningful sequence" (p. 166). Bateson felt that "the states of mind which we call free will, instrumental thinking, dominance, passivity, etc., are acquired by a process which we may equate with learning to learn" (p. 166) and that these habits or dispositions are acquired in a number of complex ways.

Deutero-knowledge, then, would include ways of seeing things, perceiving and organizing experience, constructing categories, selecting what is background and what is foreground (Goodwin, 1996; Koshik, 1996), seeing what is important and what is not, in short determining what becomes a functional aspect of our world and what does not. This notion of deutero-learning resonates with Bourdieu's habitus (1977), "a socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures" (p. 76), a structured tendency to behave and perceive, to experience and organize experience in particular ways, although we would have to stipulate that deutero-learning, if it can be equated with habitus at all, is that aspect of habitus acquired as a by-product of *early* formal learning *per se*. Deutero-learning also resonates with aspects of "stocks of knowledge" (Schutz, 1962), "mutual knowledge" (Giddens, 1979), "mundane knowledge" (Pollner, 1987), and "common sense knowledge" (Garfinkel, 1967), especially in so far as those notions are acquired "on the way to" learning. In other words, deutero-learning subtly changes a person's social trajectory as it alters, shapes, and constructs the social field within which one's sense of self, agency, and possibilities for action emerge. Deutero-learning slips into Ochs' "deep culture" (personal communication) and thus is no longer visible, "suspended" as one is in "webs of significance which he himself has spun" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). It is also not up for question or scrutiny because it becomes part of business as usual, of how things are done (Hilles & Lynch, 1992). Deutero-lessons are obviously an important part of secondary socialization, espe-

cially, as we argue here, those born out of the institutionally structured tension between desire and discipline.

FORMS OF POWER VS. RELATIONS OF POWER

For the purposes of this paper, we will crucially rely on a distinction, again taken from Foucault (1979, 1980, 1982), between *forms* of power and *relations* of power. Most of us are used to thinking of power in terms of *forms* rather than *relations*. In other words, questions of power usually call to mind the concepts of domination, exploitation and (since Foucault) subjection, all of which are forms of power, rather than the field of social action, or as Foucault describes it, the "dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions without being exactly localized in them..." (1980, p. 96) and which constitute *relations* of power.

Forms of power often derive their force and legitimacy directly from the institutional setting. They manifest themselves, for instance, in uncritically assimilated institutional roles: in going along with how things have always been done, in simple reprimands, in prescribed curricula and mandated materials (McCormick, 1994), in unexamined teacher lore (Harkin, 1991), and in the ways teachers learn to divide, distribute, and pace student learning, etc. Forms of power tend to isolate people, vertically as well as horizontally. They isolate teachers from students and employers from employees, but they also isolate students from students, teachers from teachers, employers from employers, and employees from employees.

Relations of power, by contrast, are less obvious, even to the academically trained eye. Relations of power tend to connect people. They ally, and they are more flexible, ambiguous, and reversible than forms of power. Relations of power still involve power, of course, which is to say they are actions taken on others' actions, or on the field of possible actions (Foucault, 1982, p. 220). They thus manifest the same risks and dangers that mark all social life (cf. Duranti, 1988), but since they pass "through institutions...without being exactly localized in them," relations of power, as Foucault conceives them, harbor possibilities for changing our social conditions. Relations of power are also fragile, though. They rely on our careful efforts to consider how what we do positions others to act or react in more or less productive ways, and on our willingness to let others affect us as much as we affect them (though not always in the same ways). This way of conducting ourselves, of being with others, or of being responsible to others prevents relations of power from calcifying into forms of power. Forms of power resist change and constitute and maintain the status quo. Relations of power, on the other hand, which might be manifested as making unexpected alliances, fashioning and refashioning institutional roles, playing parts of institutions or institutional roles off each other, etc., permit change within established institutional settings. If Foucault is right, and if learning is fundamentally about change, the implications for the classroom are obvious.

CONFLICTING DEUTERO-LESSONS ABOUT AUTHORITY AND AUTONOMY

Much of what goes on in any learning situation is necessarily about authority; authority is both a given and a site of negotiation. Students arrive at school already familiar, to varying degrees, with what authority is and how it operates, and yet they still resist it in various ways. More importantly, they must be able to do so, if they are to become active, self-motivated learners, "real players," albeit players within the limits set down by the social fields they have inherited and upon which they play and later will be playing.

In the example that follows, Mr. Stevens works with one of the least proficient children in his class. It is the last week of school. The child is working on a one place multiplier and a two placed multiplicand. He can do all of the subroutines alone, but he can't put them all together by himself. He can, however, accomplish the task while working with Mr. Stevens. This is a prime example, to our mind, of working with a child in Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (1986). For us, it exemplifies both what is best and what is most questionable about the exercise of authority.

(1)

((Children are working silently and individually on a math work sheet. Mr. S is walking around the room monitoring children's work. Something appears to catch his eye in C's work. He walks to C's desk.))

S: **eight one time. what's eight one time**
[
((points to problem, pulls hand back))
C: ((child writes))
S: **ka:y. five two times**
[
((points to problem, pulls hand back))
C: ((repeats to self)) **five two times**
S: **five and five**
((puts one hand down on the table and then the other with
fingers spread out as a memory cue))
C: ((writes))
S: **nine one time**
((points and withdraws hand))
S: **seven two times**
seven and seven ar::e
[
((child [starts writing))
[good=
=five three times=this is a five=this is a five=this is a five.
count by fives.

C: **five, ten, fifteen** ((begins to write))
((Mr. S leans back and watches as child writes))
[
S: [**nuh uh=**
C: =((turns over pencil and erases. Mr. S watches. As soon as child finishes writing S begins again.))
S: **Six two times=six and six are** ((hits table in rhythm children have used as a memory aid))

The little boy is ostensibly getting a lesson in math, but at the same time he is getting a deutero-lesson about learning as a social activity and this lesson is embedded in both institutionalized forms of power (teacher/student roles) and in the possibilities inherent in the relations of power that cut across classroom spaces, for instance, when collaborative practices modify an otherwise strict teacher/learner relationship.

Such practices notwithstanding, almost all child/adult activities in Western society involve an uneven distribution of power because those with more status, knowledge, and experience, and those with institutional authority inevitably exercise their power. Indeed, two of the constitutive elements of a zone of proximal development (or in any novice-expert activity) are the one who has more knowledge or skill and the one who has less. This sort of relationship is unquestionably an effective way to teach children in Western societies (but see Heath, 1983; Ochs, 1988; Phillips, 1983; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984) and may be essential to Western, middle-class cognitive development (Rogoff, 1990); it also may be an essential step in the child's forming some sort of agency, and an interim step to the child's taking the task in hand and performing competently without the presence of someone more experienced. Nevertheless, activities structured around the novice/expert axis also impart deutero-lessons about learning *qua* activity and agency. They may demonstrate to the students, for instance, that learning is something best done in the company of authority, and that agency, their agency, is grounded in that authority.

In the scenario we are examining, the student is learning that before one acquires the necessary knowledge to act "freely" with respect to two-place multiplicands, one must allow one's desire to be constructed and channeled according to an external plan. Taken to its extreme, the deutero-lesson being learned is that knowledge resides with and is dispensed by a legitimately constituted authority and that acquiring knowledge, and agency with respect to that knowledge, demands that one enter into relationships that co-construct the self as a novice and the other as an expert, thereby delimiting one's active understanding of what knowledge is and the agency it produces. We hasten to add that we are not claiming that such relationships are damaging in and of themselves or that they are always taken to such an extreme. We are certainly not saying that they are avoidable or should always be avoided. We are simply pointing out there is more being learned here

than how to multiply. The student's possibilities for autonomy are tied to and managed by initial acts of submission, under this approach, and what is more, the dynamic authority/submission/autonomy must be co-constructed, not imposed from without, if knowledge is "to happen."

In Mr. Stevens' traditional classroom, the role of "teacher" is very clearly co-constructed as the central authority within an institutional context, and from our observations, much of what students learn beyond their daily lessons involves the dynamics of authority and autonomy. Authority, as we have seen, can be taken as the primary source of legitimate knowledge and agency. It is also the source of the most perspicuous uses of power. Students learn early, for example, that authority has the right to control their bodies and their possessions. They must ask and obtain permission before going to the bathroom, before speaking, and before leaving their chairs. They must sit down, stand up, line up, eat, play, and put their hands up and their heads down, when, where, and in the manner that they are told. If a child is "playing" with something the teacher deems distracting or inappropriate, the teacher may take the possession away from the student, at least temporarily. Moreover, in this classroom, establishing legitimate autonomy as a doer of multiplication problems, for instance, occurs only under the aegis of that central authority. It is a procedure that requires one be kindly regarded by and subsequently assisted by that authority, the dispenser of knowledge and necessary catalyst for agency. Nature may lend a hand in a teacher's kindly disposition toward the young (Gould, 1980), but negotiating some sort of autonomy and agency in such an environment is problematic, to say the least.

Authority also has the right to control the children's attention. Mr. Stevens' students quickly learn that they must be, or at least appear to be, focused as his authority directs. They must pay attention to the teacher, to the story, to the book, to their math problems, etc. They are required to focus their attention on whatever the teacher tells them to, and failure to do so is sanctionable ("Bobby, what are you looking at? Eyes up here, Samantha!"). In the segment above, the child's attention does not wander once. He looks either at his paper, at his fingers to count, or at Mr. Stevens. He doesn't look away until close to the end of the interaction, when he disengages his gaze and rubs his eyes and yawns. He is beginning to show signs of wear. Mr. Stevens' prompts have been relentless, and the child finally seems worn out. Having already adjusted to the role of authority in the learning process, he offers no overt objection to continuing. Instead, he rubs his eyes and yawns. At this point in the video, it appears he simply can't pay attention any longer, and Mr. Stevens also seems to read him this way. He appears to conclude that the child is no longer capable of attending and moves on.

This interaction between teacher and student has ambiguous results, though. On one hand, the student's actions could be construed as showing signs of agency: he has escaped the scrutiny of authority. At the same time, however, he loses his connection with the teacher *as a relation of power*, a connection with risks, but also with possibilities to offer. As a result, the student-teacher interaction, because

of how the situation is set up and the various conflicting deutero-lessons already absorbed, slowly shifts, from a relation of power toward a form of power.

At this point it might be prudent to reiterate that relations of power are always moving along a continuum. Suspended as they are within forms of power, they always risk encroachment by those forms. Relations of power are not absolute, in other words, nor absolutely assured, particularly in the types of situations we have been observing. The teacher remains the teacher, the student the student. The forms of power and the assumptions, norms and procedures that the roles, teacher and student, prescribe, are always present and operative, but the possibility for developing, maintaining, and extending relations of power also remains present, especially when working within the Zone of Proximal Development or under Guided Participation (Rogoff, 1990). In fact, as an anonymous *ial* reviewer pointed out, "it is our self-consciousness about this process that can lead to using the inherently collaborative and practice oriented nature of knowledge to resist...forms [of power] or move toward relations [of power]."

Recall that relationships of power also require that one position others and take actions which structure others' potential fields of action, in a manner that increases the range of possibilities others can see and appreciate. In the closing moments of the segment we are discussing, the teacher's action does not seem to extend the student's power. The same is true of the student's actions. It appears that the student is finished. It seems clear that he does not want to continue, yet he has no real, productive way through his relationship to the teacher to straightforwardly conclude the lesson.

If we have interpreted the situation correctly, the student's choices regarding his own desire to end the activity are exceedingly limited. He can continue the session even though he doesn't want to and submit himself to further questioning; or he can refuse to submit, but most likely Mr. Stevens (or others, probably even the child himself) would not see this as an institutionally acceptable course of action. Amazingly, the most felicitous course of action seemed to unfold all by itself: the child became tired and *unable* to continue. Understand that we are not saying for a moment that this is a conscious choice on the part of the child or that his actions are duplicitous, although they very well may be. It is impossible to know; it is also unimportant because whether he has become tired so he won't have to continue, or can't continue because he has become tired is irrelevant. In either case, the deutero-lesson is the same. Covert resistance (being too tired to continue) rather than overt resistance (refusing to continue) or overt submission (continuing even though one does not want to) is thoroughly efficacious.

Interestingly enough, the child's behavior positions Mr. Stevens in such a way that he too now has less room to maneuver. He must let the child off the hook and move on; after all, the child is not being willful or rebellious. He is not refusing to continue. He has done his best, and now he is tired. One cannot fault him for that, so Mr. Stevens and the child find themselves moved to end the lesson, and by doing so, their actions fold neatly back into their institutional roles.

One cannot help but notice the conflicting deutero-lesson here about autonomy and authority, as it is born out of the tension between desire and discipline. Passive, covert resistance is the only possible lesson one can learn from a situation in which autonomy itself is covertly made dependent upon authority (as the deferred outcome of "initial" acts of submission). Put otherwise, one can exercise power and agency by diminishing one's own power and agency, but this is only a short-term solution. Rather than leading to more power, it only narrows the range of choices for all concerned.

Part of what many hold to be true about American schools in general (and Mr. Stevens could certainly be counted in this group) is that they teach students to think for themselves. This may be true to some extent; however, students also learn they can only do so within set limits. Even if a student were to decide for herself that she is finished with an activity being guided by an authority, she would not be able to openly assert her agency and declare the activity finished in all of the classes we observed; subterfuge would be required to negotiate the outcome. Put otherwise, we as a culture profess to value openness and honesty; we abhor manipulation, subterfuge, and hypocrisy. At the same time, we teach such behavior as one of our most basic deutero-lessons. Being in a position to balance these two apparently conflicting imperatives may be an extremely important skill in attaining competence in this culture. Perhaps that is one of the reasons we teach it so well, and so early.

CONFLICTING DEUTERO-LESSONS ABOUT COMPETITION AND PLAYING BY THE RULES

One of the children's favorite activities occurs toward the end of the school year when math exercises turn into a game in which tables compete against each other for points. On these occasions, Mr. Stevens may take on the persona of Feather Man, Cowboy Bo, Viking Man, Hassan, or any other number of characters he creates with the aid of a special hat or mask which he dons while the children have their heads down. Once he is in costume, children can look. When Mr. Stevens has adopted one of his personas, he chooses a child from each table to go to the board. The delegated students then compete to see who can get the correct answer to the problem Mr. Stevens puts to them. The children appear to enjoy the game, as is indicated by their cheering and hooting for the representative of their respective tables. The students also squeal and shout as the activity begins, which indicates that, despite the control Mr. Stevens continues to assert in his disguise, a new dynamic between desire and discipline is emerging, one that tolerates, even calls forth, and channels desire and its expression in a new way that feels, by contrast with what came before, more expansive.

All of the persona games begin in the same way. The children are instructed to put their heads down while Mr. Stevens changes into his costume. In addition to providing time for (not much of a) costume change, the act of telling the children

to put their heads down and their doing so also provides the key that frames the activity to follow as make-believe (Goffman, 1974). Putting their heads down is a behavioral sign that a significant structural change in their activities is about to occur. Paradoxically, or perhaps not so paradoxically, the break between work-work and work-play, that is, the shift from a more serious mode of teaching/learning to one that incorporates some degree of play, is bodily inscribed and thus managed through a relatively explicit, if not ritualized, exercise of authority, the initiating command to put heads down and not to look. The degree of effort it takes students to control their desire to look thus reveals the price that is expected for moving into a less structured activity. Once heads are down, Mr. Stevens might don the costume of any of several personas, a fact that both stimulates the children's curiosity and causes them some anxiety. The following excerpt is from the very beginning of one of the persona games.

(2)

01	S:	**heads down samantha**
02		((looks around room))
03		**heads down ned, I see your eyes** ((turns back to class and
04		opens cabinet door. C2 lifts her
05		head, looks back quickly at S., and puts head back down.
06		S takes off glasses, places them on top of cabinet, and puts on feather
07		mask. He goes to his desk and opens drawer))
08	C1:	**I wonder which one**
09		((S. looks in his desk, then removes a large feather from
10		his feather mask and looks up sheepishly at camera))
11	C3:	**I wonder too**
12		((unintelligible sounds of children talking))
13	C2:	**not feather man. I hate feather man** (xxx) **feather man stickers**
14	S:	((in a loud stage voice)) **Va:::t**?=
15		=((children's heads pop up and children begin to scream and squeal))=
16		= ((S. tickles C2 under the nose, then begins making a high-pitched
17		sound to accompany tickling)) **chi chi chi chi chi chiu** ((children squeal-
18		ing and screaming))
19	S:	**you hate feather man**? ((resumes tickling C2))
20		**gu:::chi=guchi=guchi=guchi=guchi=guchi=gu**. ((S. begins to skip
21		away to other side of room with arms down at his sides))
22	C2:	**cause you never choose me**
23		((S skips around the room, children shouting, squealing, laughing))
24	C4:	((off camera)) **I hate feather man**
25	S:	**feather man only picks people who are ready**

We can observe several things regarding power and authority in this scenario: first, in the transition space between the normal classroom activity and the Feather Man game, we see how one student, C2, is learning to negotiate the demands of desire and discipline; second, in the form of the personae game itself, we see a new social space of power relations emerge with new possibilities for action

and change; finally, we again discover conflicting deutero-lessons arising out of the tension between desire and discipline that structure the student's experience, even though this time they are lessons about learning as competition and learning to play by the rules.

One of the first lessons the children learned in the setting observed is that learning and competition are connected (Hilles, 1996). C2 shows signs of having learned this lesson well, perhaps too well. In line 4, C2 quickly lifts her head and looks back at Mr. Stevens to see if she can get a jump on the other children by finding out which character Mr. Stevens is going to transform himself into. She wants to know "which one" before everyone else, but she doesn't want to be negatively sanctioned. She can only sneak a quick look, however, because children are being censured in lines 01 and 03 for just this very act. C2 has in this way learned the value of being competitive, of being first, but also the value of being (or at least perceived as being) a "good girl," which is also a kind of competition, and another way of being first. At the same time C2 is demonstrating some pluck. She has the courage to buck authority, though only for a moment. Such are the constraints on this particular line of action. She knows that she is running the risk of censure, but she minimizes the risk by being fast and not openly defiant. She takes only a brief look and then puts her head back down before the possibility of getting caught becomes too great.

In these few seconds, C2 demonstrates several of the aspects of institutionalized power that we have been talking about. Her actions are caught between the expected push toward autonomy and the pull of submission. They serve both to individuate her and to integrate her further into her institutional role as a 'student.' They also serve to demonstrate conflicting goals: to be first and yet to follow the rules. She has struck an amazing compromise, in other words, between desire and discipline, competition and accommodation, autonomy and authority. Her behavior also returns us to an effect we observed in scenario (1). It is sneaky. This, we would like to argue, seems to be a frequent and understandable result of conflicting deutero-learning. C2 knows she must be both independent *and* submit to authority. Indeed, when she "desires" to win she merely heeds a call that surrounds all the students, a call that "just happens" to conflict with another institutional imperative, the demand to play by the rules. In short, her desire is both elicited and managed by the activity she is involved in: she sneaks a peak, but only a quick one to avoid getting caught just as the little boy in (1) "becomes tired" rather than simply refusing to continue. Both escape further acts of domination, an institutionalized form of power that limits the choices they are able to see and appreciate. Their strategies are inventive, given the conflicting deutero-lessons they must juggle, but they are also limited and limiting, for themselves and for others.

In line 08, C1 voices what is on the mind of probably all the children in the room. He wonders aloud which of the personas Mr. Stevens will assume. In line 11, another child echoes the same curiosity. In 13, C2 says that she hopes it's "not feather man" and then tells why: "I hate feather man." The point is echoed in line

22, where she explains that she hates Feather Man because he never chooses her to go to the board. She hates Feather Man, but she hates him because she wants to be chosen by him and has not been. She thus aligns herself with the authorized activity and submits to authority. Yet, at the same time, her stance toward Feather Man remains independent, even contentious. We should note the role the context plays in this effort to resolve the tension, however. She hates Feather Man because of the way his actions position her (or don't), and in this one particular instance, she is able to say so with impunity. The persona game makes this possible because it creates a special, carnivalesque environment with complicated social relations and a greater possibility for indirect behavior (cf. Bakhtin, 1984).

Cheating (even if it is just sneaking a peek when heads are supposed to be down) is thus an individuating act that negotiates authority in different ways, depending on how it is done, and is itself the result of having been positioned in certain ways. Both the little boy in (1) and the little girl in (2) have been positioned by the competing "voices" (Foucault, 1972) of inclination and institution in such a way that they must somehow resolve the demands of their conflicting deutero-lessons. They are caught in forms of power played out by and within the framework of institutional roles: the teacher, who has the most obvious, formal resources of power and knowledge, and the student, who, for all intents and purposes, has none.

The persona games give both teacher and student a way to explore different aspects of their institutionalized roles. We observed that during the games students engaged in a broader range of actions than they otherwise did, as did Mr. Stevens, for that matter. The statement "I hate feather man," for instance, signals a significant change in teacher-student relations. (Compare the probable effects of C2 saying, "I hate Mr. Stevens!") Yet, these relations, altered and more flexible as they are, nevertheless remain teacher-student relations, relations of power passing through forms of power. Neither Mr. Stevens nor the children shed their roles, in other words. Nor are they suddenly free from the institutionalized acts of domination that permeate their relations and regularly push them to reproduce or reenact those relations, not for the sake of learning, so much as for the smooth and proper functioning of the school itself. They have, however, changed how they relate to each other by changing how they relate to their roles, in a way that, among other things, permits C2 more latitude for expression; more importantly, this change permits her more latitude to express herself in a way that might have an effect on Mr. Stevens' future behavior. In other words, it allows her to express herself in a way that increases her agency, because her agency, like his, is dependent on him, on the other students, and on how they all co-construct and renegotiate their roles over time.

Recall that Foucault (1982) defines relations of power as ones in which we are sensitive to how our actions position others to act or react in more or less productive ways. What room did C2's (predictable) act of peeking leave C2 and the teacher to act? If she had gotten caught, what room would the teacher's (pre-

dictable, required) re-action to her action have left her to act? When caught in forms of power that operate uncontested, unexpected and unanticipatable actions are precluded; no one, neither the one in authority, nor the one who submits, has the unqualified opportunity to think or behave differently. This dynamic is played out with quite different results, though, in the social space that is cleared by the Feather Man persona game, which to some degree frees both teacher and student, *not from*, but within their respective roles. The Feather Man game also encourages students to expect more from others, to expect, for instance, that they will move beyond the easy bounds of their roles, as, say teachers and students, and thus *can* modify the questionable effects of the other conflicting deutero-lessons being absorbed.

PROVIDING CHOICE

Finally, in the last scenario, we see another example of how a teacher's power is manifested as actions taken on others' actions or on a field of possible actions, that is, how it operates within an institutional setting that can move more toward relations of power or more toward forms of power, depending on the quality of the interaction and on the real concern for reciprocity (Shor, 1992; Schilb, 1991). In this case, we observe an action that opens up or keeps open possibilities for a student, allows him to "save face," and thus embodies a thoughtful, responsible way of acting. As is always the case, though, even this action is not without its ambiguities and unpredictable twists and outcomes. As Blumenberg (1984) reminds us about saving face:

> To allow someone...to "save face"...coincides to a large extent with the precept, implied in the metaphors of roles, that one should not force the focal person of a transaction intended to bring about a change in that person's behavior to leave the identity of his role... (p. 440)

Allowing someone to save face, in other words, can function as a form of power, by providing an easy way to stay within the bounds of our institutional roles and thus to avoid change. In the scenario we are about to discuss, though, the possibility of saving face seems less to preclude change and more to open up the student's range of possibilities.

Mr. Stevens' ways of dealing with his class frequently include establishing and maintaining, to some degree, what we have been calling, after Foucault, relations or relationships of power, which may be one reason why Mr. Stevens is so effective as a teacher even though his methodology (on a macro level) is quite traditional, reflective as it is of institutional forms of power. On a micro level, he often treats his students as genuine interlocutors: they have the power to affect him, all in a moment, or slowly over time; they make him laugh, and there were a number of ongoing class jokes and routines that Mr. Stevens and the students forged

together. Perhaps one of the most unusual aspects of his relationships with students is that he dealt with them not as one usually interacts with 6-year-olds, but rather with a marked non-accommodative demeanor (Hilles, 1994). He treated them with a respect usually accorded adults, and in the following example, his respect is particularly evident. Mr. Stevens allows a young reader, S1, who can't quite figure out what he is publicly reading, to "get it right," and to save face while doing so. The child cannot process a syntactic construction he has never seen in writing before: the object of a preposition followed by an uninflected verb. He takes two runs at it and continues to be puzzled. Rather than allowing the child to lose face by simply telling him the answer, or by calling on another child to "help" or by problematizing the child's behavior, Mr. Stevens draws attention away from the uncomfortable situation *at the same time* that he tries different strategies, strategies that continue to position the child as competent. The first two strategies, we will see, don't seem to help with the problem, but the third go-around is successful.

(3)
01 S1: **look at that goose? (.) go (.) go?**
02 Mr. S: **why don't you start from look again. start from look again.**
03 S1: **look at that goose. go?** ((puzzled)) **(2.) its? (4.)** ((quietly)) **go:?**
04 Mr. S: **its:?**
05 S1: ((mumbles sentence to self quietly)) **fat one**
06 Mr. S: **ok read that one more time, with fee::ling** ((said with humorous stage accent))
07 **lookit=that=goose=GO:::**
08 S1: **look at that goose go**
09 Mr. S: **good.**
10 S1: **its a big one and a fat one too.**

The child appears to be puzzled, which in itself is encouraging, for we often observed other students in similar situations who were embarrassed, terrified, indifferent, or hostile. Mr. Stevens' posture is also encouraging, for he has several responses, all of which position and reposition the child with dignity and face, so that he may continue to engage the problem. Mr. Stevens' first attempt to deal with the child's difficulty in line 02 is to suggest that the child start again, rather than to sanction the child outright. The child's next attempt also meets with frustration. In line 03, he is speaking quietly and still seems to be puzzled. Once again, Mr. Stevens intervenes, but this time with a prompt. In 04, he encourages the child to finish the line, which he probably assumes the child can do. The syntax is familiar, a compound sentence with an adjectival subject complement in each. The child finishes the line, but quietly and hesitantly. He still appears puzzled by the illusive syntax of the problematic sentence.

In his third attempt to help the child, Mr. Stevens tries yet another strategy. He invokes the standing class joke about reading plays "with feeling" because "they are great actors," which always evokes at least a smile and often a giggle

from the class. He then models the sentence for the child, almost, it would appear, as an afterthought. This is the strategy that finally does the trick and allows the child to perform competently and at the same time to save face. Being in a situation that does not further tighten up with each successive effort has given Mr. Stevens more room to maneuver, and more importantly, it allows him to position the child so that he can continue to be a competent member of the group of readers. Allowing a child to save face in western society is an unusual act of respect (cf. Taylor, 1995a; 1995b). Actions and reactions either matter, have an effect and purchase, or they do not. For actions to matter, we are arguing, there must at least be an observable, tangible degree of reciprocity, as well as attention paid to how one's actions position others and increase rather than decrease their future possibilities for action.

CONCLUSIONS

Foucault argues that agency becomes limited to the extent that we get caught oscillating between being tied to our institutional roles and being tied to our inner, private selves (1982). If C2 in scenario (2) is caught "cheating," she becomes labeled a "cheater" and an institutional apparatus begins to encircle her thereby further formalizing that aspect of her active life. If she is not caught, but the circumstances that elicited the "cheating" behavior persist (are reproduced uncritically), she is then forced back into her private sense of self. She identifies herself with the desires and motivations that led her to "do what she did" (which she may not identify as "cheating" because to do so is to externalize it in institutional terms, that is, to prepare herself for institutionalization as a "cheater" who has not been caught). Her only recourse is to identify with an "inner self" that is not properly expressed by her role as a student, an inner self effectively cut off from the field of action at hand, except, as said, in so far as it can be prepared for some future role, if not as a "cheater," then as someone who "needs counseling or psychiatric help," or, alternatively, as someone "with a promising revolutionary spirit."

The little boy in (1) has already lost much agency as a learner. He has not been caught cheating, necessarily, but has been positioned by the institution as "one of the least proficient students in the class." Not surprisingly, he is also "a trouble-maker and a discipline problem." This is a stock character in any classroom, and, we would argue, the student, the teacher, the principal, the other students, perhaps his parents and friends all work together (under varying interpretations of their actions) to maintain and perpetuate his role as a "not-too-bright discipline problem"; it will soon be a part of his traveling resume. As we have seen, though, one possible way to resist such effects is to strengthen relations of power against forms of power.

The little boy in (3) has by far the most options even though at the macro level this is still quite a traditional interaction. It reproduces institutional roles and

procedures in the most transparent way, in that it is not substantially different from a reading lesson one might have seen in an American classroom 40-45 years ago.[2] In spite of the form of the lesson though, Mr. Stevens maintains a substantial degree of flexibility and is alert to the effects of his actions. He reacts to the child's actions by loosening up their roles, but he does so without isolating the child (by catching him between his role as student and his private, in this case, hesitant, uncertain self). Their relationship takes on a more malleable quality that does not ignore the fact that they are a teacher and student, but that maintains their dignity and possibilities for action. This becomes a positive deutero-lesson, therefore, within what could have been a very negative one about how to act on others' actions, a lesson that may in time mitigate the stultifying effects of institutional power and the many conflicting deutero-lessons the child has been learning. It appears, paradoxically, that the less room one leaves others, the more one undermines both their and one's own long term agency and power, since a fully mechanical operation, that is, one with only one option, finally leaves everyone without choices.

It is important to reiterate that one is never truly free of forms of power. We thus are not suggesting that forms of power can (or should) be abandoned, or that relations of power can somehow erase the differences between Mr. Stevens, a European-American, adult, English-speaking male of middle socioeconomic status (SES) and the children, all members of linguistic and ethnic minorities and of low SES. Instead, we are suggesting that in the institutionalized setting of elementary schools, children every day are learning deutero-lessons regarding power, not all of which are "empowering." At the same time, we are suggesting that they are also learning how to resist, again in more or less productive ways, and, indeed, that their chosen or adopted modes of resistance themselves often become sites of struggle, especially as students invent and reinvent their roles and correlate patterns of resistance, all within an institution that pretends not to tolerate such behavior yet at the same time it incites it, prefers some to others, co-opts it, and searches for ways to redefine and manage it.

There is in this sense a precarious balance within the construction of desire in primary school children that in turn sets up an odd dynamic for the teacher. The teacher is often pulled in two directions: first, toward greater discipline, toward shaping students' behavior by insisting on their attention and deference to authority, the need for structure, rules, etc.; and second, toward the need to deal with the excess of desire that these young people suddenly display and toward the need to respond to it by, for instance, using play or more flexible teaching strategies (such as the persona games) that allow the desire to emerge in new ways that can be productive for the children as students.

The dynamic between desire and discipline always seems to leave us with a more or less limited range of possible strategies: we can enforce discipline and try to repress desire, we can encourage desire and try to minimize discipline (while maintaining some kind and degree of order), we can do both (which as we saw is

most common), or we can continually strive to relate ourselves to one another in ways that keep the desire/discipline distinction suggestively ambiguous. We can oscillate between work and play (classroom and recess), or we can integrate work and play by moving between classroom work that is more disciplined, classroom work that is more playful, play time that is more disciplined, and play time that is less structured. It is less a question of suppressing or eliciting desire, then, than a question of keeping desire on the move.

Elementary school is an early site of secondary socialization and the struggle to develop agency in an institutional setting. It is also the place where we learn early on, not just how to cater to, capitulate to, appease, mollify, etc. authority, but where we also learn that agency and power are the result of resisting the twin forces of individuation and institutionalization: there is no resistant social action without authority, just as there is no authority without resistance. There are only times when the possibilities for resistance or the opportunities to exercise authority stand out in greater or lesser relief. Forms of power melt into relations of power, only to re-form as forms of power again. Desire and discipline emerge as two sides of a long chain of deutero-lessons, with each being incited and managed, each a contested ground, each harboring the potential to reproduce critically institutional formations, and each requiring a structured, structuring social space within institutionally prescribed roles and relations that become, or can become, an opening in which to thrive.

NOTES

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[2]We are greatful to an anonymous IAL reviewer for pointing out to us that this is a very traditional recitation lesson and therefor its form is not at all likely to engender relations of power.

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