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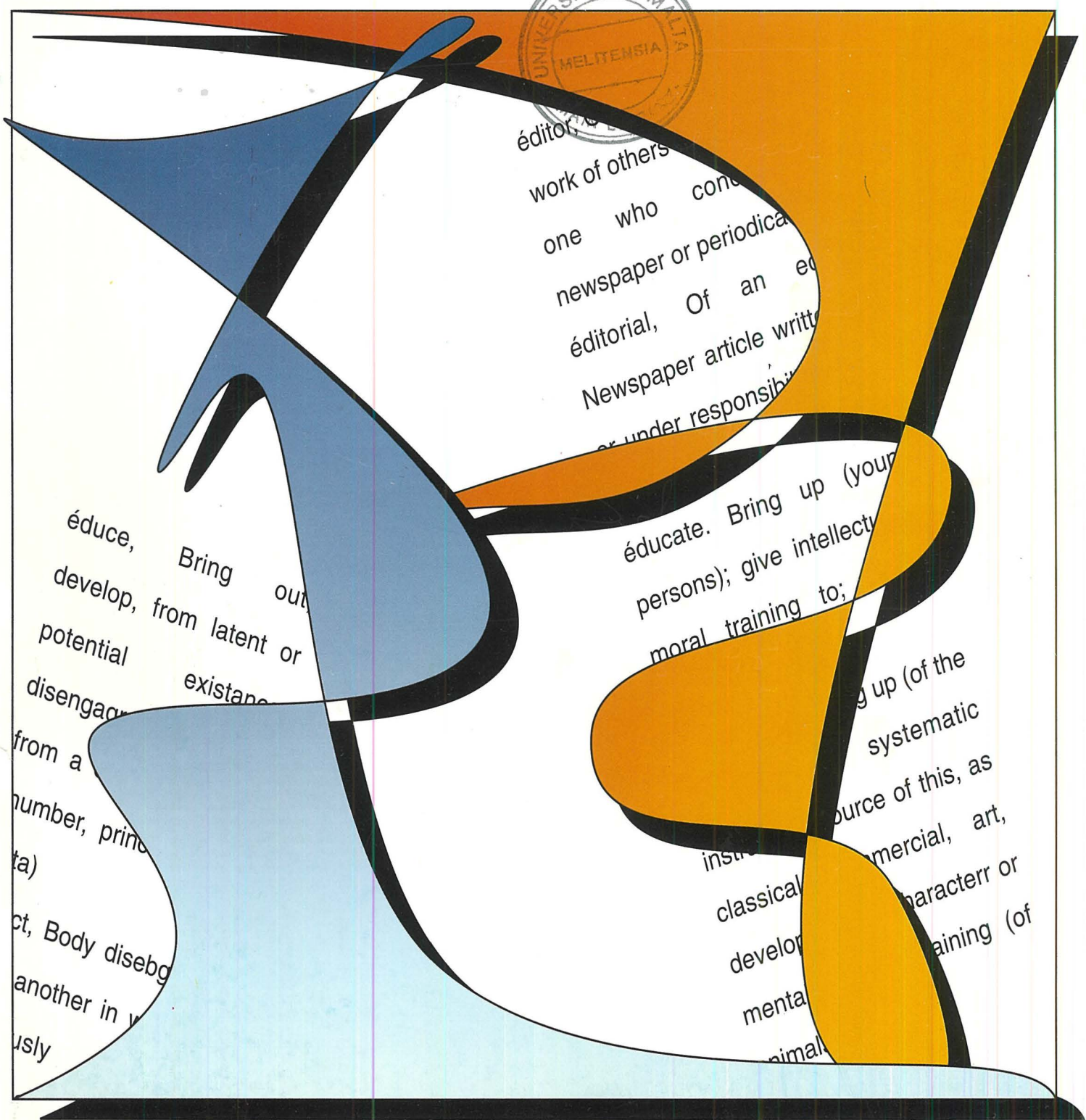

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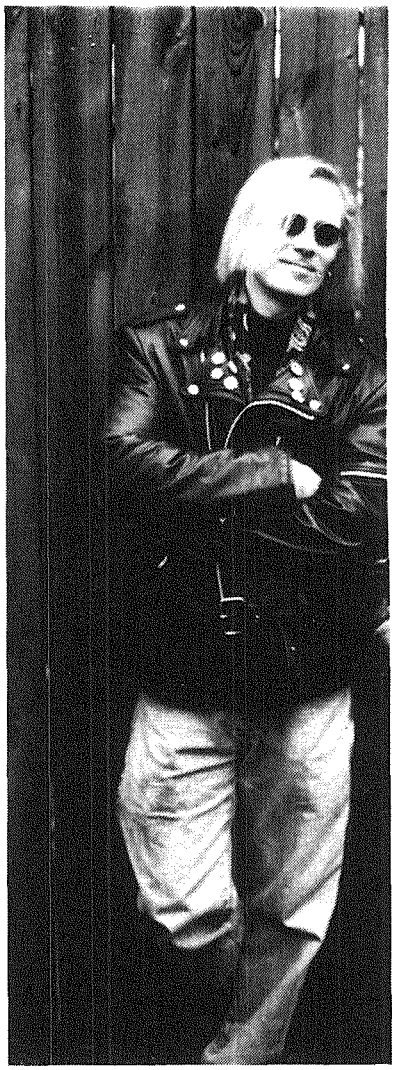
Revolution and Reality: An Interview with Peter McLaren

Carmel Borg, Peter Mayo and Ronald Sultana

You are on record as having argued that the most important ethical question you would ask is not 'who are you?, a question we would have been tempted to ask, but 'where are you?' How would you answer the latter question?



McLaren: The significant distinction between the questions 'where are you?' and 'who are you?' was brought to my attention by a contemporary Irish philosopher, Richard Kearney. Both of us are obviously quite influenced by philosophers Emmanuel Levinas and Paul Ricoeur, as some of my commentators and critics have pointed out. I use this distinction a lot in my speeches and I take it right out of some of Kearney's writings on the ethical imagination. The question 'where are you' demands an ethical decision: 'here I stand'. I am here and I am here for you. In other words, the "other" demands of us an ethical response - the unalienable right to be engaged as a human being. The phrase 'who are you' takes in epistemological and ontological concerns. They are important but before you ask somebody who they are I think you need to establish the possibility of solidarity with them first. As others have pointed out correctly, this characteristic of my work has been influenced by liberation theology. Which disturbs some of my critics who have noticed numerous references to Santeria and Umbanda in my recent work - but that's another story for another interview. Let me say that a praxis of solidarity entails, in Kearney's view, the correlative priority of praxis over theory, ethics as having primacy over epistemology and ontology. I'm always reminded of this when I visit South Central or East Los Angeles, or the ghettos of Mexico or the favellas of Brasil. This summer a group of graduate students brought me to Brasil to teach a course and they actually arranged a lecture tour for me in Florianopolis, Porte Alegre and Sao Paulo. I remember visiting a favella, called Chico Mendez, in Florianopolis with a radical Catholic priest. Father Vilson did not ask people for their identity papers before he gave them assistance. They could be drug dealers, prostitutes or people dying in their shacks of AIDS. He was committed to all of them. People knew he was there for them - they knew where he stood. I noticed in meeting again with Freire - this time in Sao Paulo - that he reflects where he stands in even the subtleties of his thinking about ordinary events. But let me emphasize that ethical responses are in no way indiscriminate. Our unconditional stance is with the powerless, the dispossessed, the disenfranchised, the immiserated, the wretched of the earth. Those who suffer and who long for comfort. We cannot avoid as educators, as agents for liberation, standing before the concrete other who is in need of our help. When I say, 'here I stand' I am implicating, as Kearney notes, a "we" in the "I" and a "there" in the "here." "I stand" takes priority over "I think." The "other" is always a precondition for "I stand" whereas "I think" betrays no responsibility to the other. Kearney points out that the "I" in "I stand" has no significance outside of the call "where are you?" We need to develop an ethical imagination in which others take priority over ourselves. I like to think that in my work I stand on the side of the suffering, the lonely, the desperate, the victims of the global capitalist marketplace. The anguished victims who call out to us - from the classroom corridors, from community 'half-way houses', from the streets of our cities. They even call

out to us from the boardrooms of corporations, from the marketing agencies, from the business and church hierarchies, if we would only listen to their cries. We need to know where we stand when they call upon us for assistance. They, in turn, need to know where we stand. I've been gready influenced by the lives of Che Guevara and Paulo Freire, as you might gather. Both have spoken of the impossibility of revolutionary consciousness or practice without a love for the people. But a praxis built upon love distilled only into empathy is ultimately too think for the transformation I am talking about. Empathy is not enough unless it is accompanied by a political agenda to critically intervene in relations of exploitation and domination.

What are some of your key concerns as a citizen, educator and cultural theorist?

McLaren: My concerns shift in time, space, geopolitically and otherwise, but I shall venture to state, broadly speaking, that my key concerns stem from a struggle to understand the mystery of existence in its historical, material, ethical, and spiritual dimensions and not only to put these dimensions under erasure in some sort of deconstructive enterprise but rather to resymbolize, reframe, recode and reshape such existence in a real material way in the service of liberation and the elimination of needless suffering. I want to hold democracy accountable and responsible for its shortcomings and challenge it to live up to its ideals. I want to contest the anarcho-fascist politics of the splayed postmodern will. So that we can live in a society that can respect the challenge of Teresa Ebert's refrain: "From each according to her ability, to each, according to her need." Freedom from necessity is the key here. My goal as a citizen and educator and cultural theorist is to make the world less exploitative, less cruel, less inhumane than if I had never been born. My goal is to struggle against economic marginalization and abandonment of hope, against ethnoracial power wielded unjustly by whites or any other group, against the unequal global distribution of resources and the suffering of the people brought about by the international division of labor, against the global proletarianization of the worker and against labor relations brought about by relations and practices of imperialism. And if that gives me the label of a "dangerous man" then so be it. Economics is more than what Bataille refers to as the expenditure of desire. It is about material relations of exploitation and domination. Too often I see criticalists trying to romanticize critical pedagogy or exoticize the precious singularity of the "other" - of that unknowable alterity that escapes representation - and they forget about the politics of collective struggle. They avoid looking at society as a totality for fear that they are entering the realm of universal master narratives. So they stick to particularities. Teresa Ebert notes that the alternative to local knowledges is not abstract universalism but rather collectivity. My biggest theoretical struggle now is to avoid overestimating the importance of experience outside of a theoretical language for explaining and transforming such experience. I meet students or colleagues who prefer to "speak from experience" rather than "from theory." I think experiences are important - experiences as women, men, as Latinas, as Chicanas, as Asians, as Maltese, as Americans, etc But equally as important is the way we interpret those experiences in light of how such experiences have been shaped by the system of social production that produces what we take to be "common sense." I think it was Toni Morrison who said "language is not a substitute for experiences but arches to the place where meaning lies." That statement is the key to the title of one of my speeches, "Building an Arch of Social Dreaming. " Some critics have found my metaphor "arch" to be rather confusing but it makes sense to me in light of Morrison's insight about the relationship among language, experience, and meaning. Joan Scott expresses a similar insight to that of Morrison: "Experience is a subject's history. Language is the site of history's enactment." Liz Bondi also speaks to this issue which I raise again and again in my work when she says: "the flaw [within hyphenated feminisms] was to remain too close to liberal humanism by assuming that knowledge flowed directly from experience and that experienced ensured the authenticity of knowledge." Of course, experience is important and needs to be affirmed. To deny experience is to deny voice. And to be without voice is to be powerless, without agency. Experience may be relevant and valid but that doesn't mean that it is the arch of foundational truth. Critical social theory and experience must be dialectically re-initiating or recursively linked - that's the issue I've been trying to emphasize. You don't necessarily learn from experiences. You only learn from experiences that you learn from, as Myles Horton once put it. Experiences always exhaust the capacity of language and language always exhausts the capacity of experience. The experiences of the subaltern should not be essentialized but understood dialectically in relation to theory. The point is to read the perspectives of the nameless subaltern along those of the ethnocentrism of the discourse of bourgeois humanism in order to articulate a counterstance that goes beyond immanent critique, that is, that goes beyond the philosophical and political norms of the dominant culture. The

racism of Proposition 187 (a California law voted in recently that denies medical care and education to illegal immigrants) is founded upon a modernist, bourgeois ethics of law (these are illegal aliens!) but this must be set against an ethics of liberation articulated from the perspective of the oppressed and the victims of this Draconian measure (we are human beings; we are here; we need your help; our children are sick and wanting). Such a perspective reveals the law to be complicitous with racism and the exploitation of the unfree labor of the migrants. You asked me about my pivotal concerns. One is to try to fathom the intricacies of subjectivity and historical agency: How can human beings reconcile their lives in a system that fetishizes their dreams, commodities their wills, and puts a price tag on their souls? I've always been amazed - whether it's been during my years in Toronto, in Cincinnati, or in Los Angeles - at why more people don't run through the streets howling with rage, in the throes and thrall of madness? How can we live with so little outrage against the evil of global capitalism? How can we willingly adapt - and sometimes gleefully - ourselves, and our families, and our children to a system that exploits people on the basis of their social class, their race, their gender, religion, sexuality? My work has tried to fathom how the process of motivated amnesia works on a national scale, through local circuits of subject formation tied together by national myths, so that people refuse to confront their complicity in relations of domination and exploitation. Recently my work has focused on the topic of critical multiculturalism, a topic which is featured throughout my new book, *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture*. Here I try to distinguish different species of multiculturalism: conservative, liberal, left-liberal and critical. My work in Mexico and also my interest in border culture has led me to formulate a new conception of identity that I call 'order identity.' I've used Gloria Anzaldua's concept of mestizaje identity and recently Margaret Montoya introduced me to Francoise Lionnet's concept of *metissage* which refers to a type of creolization of subjectivity, a combination of the dominant language with outlaw languages of subaltern groups. Here we are encouraged as teachers and students to redefine and re- invent the language of identity, the language of theory, and the language of research from the perspective of the oppressed. This idea is tied into the concept of how whiteness colonizes the definition of the normal at the level of everyday life and the idea that whiteness serves as a principle of pure exchangeability that tries to become the universalism that white people purport to represent.

Who do you draw your inspiration from as you confront the world, that is to imagine a world that could or should be? On which bases do you construct your "arch of social dreaming"?

McLaren: Nietzsche once wrote: 'What does not kill gives me strength." This to me serves as a fitting testament to those revolutionary workers whom I admire, especially those who struggle with young people for a better future. I need to draw inspiration from history, even though history is created retroactively in the context of the present. Last month I went on a march of about 100,000 people in east L.A. We were marching against Proposition 187 which subsequently passed and will force teachers into the role of informers for the Immigration and Naturalization Service. If teachers do not report suspected illegal immigrants (those who have brown skin!) they could be fined or lose their jobs. If this proposition becomes law, illegal immigrants will not be allowed to attend school and will not receive medical benefits except in the case of emergencies. I hope that this mean-spirited and Draconian proposition will be declared unconstitutional. I am ashamed to be living in a state that overwhelmingly supported this measure. It doesn't take much of an imagination to think back to an earlier time when people were scapegoated and citizens had to report them to the authorities under threat of serious penalty. So in the face of such challenges I draw inspiration and inner strength from many individuals: Amilcar Cabral, Memmi, Subcommandante Marcos of the Zapatista Army, Trotsky, Fanon, Malcolm X, Althusser, Foucault, and even from some of the ideas of bourgeois thinkers like Jacques Lacan.

I continue to draw inspiration from the works of Tina Modotti, Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, the Situationists, the life and works of Paulo Freire, Che Guevara, Myles Horton, and El Salvador's Archbishop Romero. The writings of bell hooks and Cornel West figure prominently in my work. I could fill up the page with the names of people that I admire. I find some strong thinking in the work of Maxine Greene, for instance. I draw a great deal of inspiration from numerous individuals. My work in Mexico and Brasil has had a strong effect on my work, obviously, but my visits to Cuba, to Argentina, to Poland, and to Malaysia have also had a powerful impact, both spiritually and politically. My references to Santeria and to Umbanda have not gone unnoticed by readers. Not many people know this but when I was a young man I seriously contemplated going into the priesthood, or entering a life of spiritual contemplation. Having abandoned this idea I was drawn, much later, to liberation

theology and I felt that, if necessary, priests and ordinary citizens should take up arms to defend oppressed groups. My intellectual life was at that time rich but undisciplined. It wasn't until I started working as a public school teacher that I began the journey into pedagogy that has taken me to the present. It has been a journey towards revolutionary consciousness, and it is a journey that always seems to just be beginning. It is always and perhaps inevitably a series of beginnings. Modotti's photo entitled "Misery" - her famous depiction of two peasant women passed out in front of a pulqueria - represents for me a metaphor of the material consequences of capitalism. Capitalism is like a leaking nuclear power plant wrapped in a velvet ribbon. I am not against a market economy but I am against a capitalist economy. The nature of investment should not be at the mercy of supply and demand, for instance. The workers need a more active role in controlling investment decisions. You could say that my arch of social dreaming is built upon the strength and power of the imagination and the courage to face the real. To face the real is to recognize that our actions are the consciousness of our dreams. They constitute our unconscious as it dreams us into consciousness. In our unconscious we are capable of the most brutal and horrific acts of violence. Unless we recognize this - unless we recognize the other side of our otherness - we cannot not be other than we are. And who we are now is what we see. We need to build our arch of social dreaming in the liminal, subjective mode of being. We need to transcend who we are so that we can become otherwise and discover where we have always been. I am not trying to be cryptic but I can only answer such a question in the form of positing paradoxes. More concretely, the arch of social dreaming that I continue to dream helps to politicize youth against the seductively violent thrall of capital, to menace passive consciousness like a surly stranger.

In her book, *The Struggle for Pedagogies*, Jennifer Gore remarks that there are few references in your writings, post-*Life in School* - to your own teaching or to testing out your theories of critical pedagogy. Can you comment on this remark? We are particularly interested in learning how your movement from the Jane-Finch corridor to the predominantly white/middle/upper-class Miami University of Ohio has influenced your works.

McLaren: I have met several times Gore and like her personally yet I remain perplexed by her book. I consider feminist theory to be among the most sophisticated critical theoretical work currently being done and the most urgent. I was looking forward to Gore's book, even though I was a little apprehensive since I had already encountered some difficulties with one of her previously published articles. I readily admit the aporetic status of critical pedagogy, and I also will admit to many gaps, inconsistencies and confusions, and this certainly includes my own work. It's true that my work - anybody's work - is always incomplete and I have often modified my ideas in reaction to good, sound, critique, regardless of who is making it. I have learned much from feminist theorists and writers such as bell hooks, Chandra Mohanty, Rey Chow and others. Por instance, hooks' new book, *Teaching to Transgress* is a powerful collection of writings. In comparison, I was very disappointed by Gore's work. Back to your question: I don't know if Gore has actually read much of my post-*Life in Schools* work at all since, if I recall correctly, there aren't many works of mine actually referenced. What works is she talking about? If she had actually read my other books and articles - and there is no indication that she has gone beyond a rather cursory examination of *Life in Schools* - she surely would have found some insights in other works such as *Schooling as a Ritual Performance* - considered by many critics to be my best work prior to *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture* - to contradict some of her criticisms. Is there a motivated amnesia here? I can't really say. It is curious that Gore left out any references to my writings with Canadian feminist critic, Rhonda Hammer. But I'm still happy her book is out there because it may provoke some good, productive debate and I hope perhaps generate in the long run some alliance-building. Now to the point of your question about empiricism. I went to Miami University, having been denied a full-time contract at Brock University in Canada due to some controversy over my leftist politics. Frankly, it was the only job I could get and I was delighted at the opportunity to work with Giroux. The student body was indeed white and upper middle class. But, after all, critical pedagogy is not just a pedagogy for the poor; it's also a pedagogy for the middle class and for the affluent. In fact, it seems to me that if you can reach the hearts and minds of people that have a good chance of occupying positions of power in the social order, then you are doing something worthwhile to contest the reproduction of hegemonic relations of domination and exploitation. I am now at UCLA working with Chicano, Asian, and African-American students, but a great deal of my students are still white and upper middle-class. I prefer this kind of diversity to that of Miami, obviously, given my ties to Latin America and to my revolutionary politics. But I don't regret working with

white students nor the work I did at Miami. Don't forget that many of the teachers in my classes worked not only with affluent students but with Appalachian students in rural areas or black students in the inner-city of Cincinnati, and they deserve a critical pedagogy, too. And what kind of empirical test does Gore want? Since there is no direct methodology to my work, since it cannot be reduced to a formula, it's hard to measure it empirically. The best empirical test would be perhaps to visit my former students and find out what they are doing in their classrooms. Are the students developing a sensitivity to social issues? Are they exploring the relationship between capital and labor? Are they trying to interpret their experiences and identifications in the cultures that surround them? And are they transforming their experiences? How are they accomplishing these tasks and in what directions? Are they developing a social ethics? A cultural ethics? Is the world less oppressive and less exploitative than it would be if they had not been born? I believe my students are doing some wonderful things. I think it's important to remember, too, that I didn't work only with bourgeois white students at Miami. I also had students from other countries and states in the U.S. who came to work with me and with Henry - students from Chicago, California, Argentina, Brasil, and Ireland - and they have all returned to their home countries or states, ready to take on the struggle against exploitation and social injustice and to prepare their own students to do so. I'm proud of the work I did at Miami of Ohio. And I'm proud of the work many of my former students are doing in critical/feminist pedagogy.

The Regan-Bush years have witnessed an intensification of the New Right onslaught on public education, with the emphasis being placed on new vocationlism, learning the 'great books', the market ideology in education, the assertion of a dominant white culture at the expense of subordinated, subaltern cultures, etc. We know that people like Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, Stanley Aronowitz, Maxine Greene, Ira Shor, Kathleen Weiler and yourself have been in the forefront of the struggle for greater democratic spaces in education. Considering that some of the most important policy making in the United States occurs at the state rather than the federal level, is the Clinton government likely to accomplish anything significant in the way of fostering greater democratisation in American education?

McLaren: We are now witnessing the end of democracy as we once knew it and are entering the era of teledemocracy within technocapitalism. Clinton was just crushed politically in the elections in November, 1994, and the Republicans now control almost everything. I am amazed at the absolute stupidity of this kind of voting. The Republicans have somehow convinced the American public that nationalized health care is the government - Big Brother - legislating health care. So what is the alternative: Health care remains so privatized nobody can afford it? Republican governments always have more bureaucracy but they manage to camouflage this from the American people. It's democracy through image production, through spin doctors. Issues don't make much of a difference. It's now democracy through the organization of affect, of emotional economies. The Right does this better than anybody. Clinton will now become more centrist and move towards the right of the Democratic Party. One good thing - he did speak out against Proposition 187 but it didn't make a difference. I hope he can withhold federal funds from California if the law takes effect. I don't expect Clinton to move much on education; he's about where Bush was with his Education 2000 plan except Clinton is more committed to Head Start programs and federal funding initiatives. After the recent Republican win, Republican Congressman Bob Doran predicted: "Back to God, family and country." The Republican vision is that of the carceral society: more prisons for black males, and more orphanages for children of the destitute. Some school boards run by the Christian right are eliminating breakfast programs for starving children on the gounds that eating at school is anti-family. I think a few ideas of Iris Marion Young can be helpful here. I agree with Young when she argues that we need to move away from interest-based and deliberative democracy - discursive democracy in other words. We need to move towards a communicative democracy. Interest based democracy is involved with one's own individual interests and preferences which are usually expressed in a vote. It doesn't really put pressure on engaging in dialogue with others collectively in debate and discussion. Look at Proposition 187. Deliberative democracy is a bit better because it is directed towards agreement by force of the better argument. Of course, we now have video democracy and argumentation can't match images on the television screen of rioting blacks in South Central L. A. Communicative democracy - a bit of Habermas here - is developed by Young to be based within a communicative ethics that includes standpoints of the concrete and generalized other. This is situated in the transformation of people's preferences and an openness to persuasion. Just norms are not transcendentally grounded but are

arrived at freely and by maximizing the available social knowledge. Within a communicative democracy, according to Young, social understanding occurs from a multiplicity of social locations, where the politics of greed and self-interest gives way to a politics of social justice. Majoritarian democratic procedures often perpetuate social injustice towards minority groups. This is because social and economic disadvantage prevent many minority social groups from available political resources. Cultural imperialism has enabled Euro-American values to become the accepted social norms. Take Proposition 187 as one example. We must analyze this proposition as it has been developed as a viable social alternative in this particular conjuncture, at this moment in the social formation. We need to understand this in terms of the way majoritarian democracy occludes the structure of racism within it. Balibar calls this an age of "crisis racism" and it is marked by the denial of class solidarities and the fact that class divisions no longer determine different attitudes towards the Other. Social pathology is condensed into a single cause - immigrants! What often appears as a democratic consensus - as in Proposition 187 winning in a landslide vote - really amounts to a form of exploitation - it's really an empty, artificial consensus brought about by procedural democracy. We need to start our struggle for equality from the position of social justice in a context of social, economic and cultural equality - a context of qualitative fairness rather than quantitative fairness. The majority of Californians voted for Proposition 187 but it is not a qualitatively fair proposition. It will go down in infamy. It is shameful and inhuman. As Balibar notes, racism is the absence of thought, an oligophreny in the extreme - and that reflection upon it is not enough; rather, it requires a change in the modality of thinking.

Your work as well as that of your former associate at Miami, Henry Giroux, is often regarded as being couched in the language of post-colonialism. What would you regard as the basic tenets of a post-colonial education?

McLaren: It's quite true that both of our work is characterized this way. Speaking about my own work on post-colonial education, I would say that for me the crucial issue is what Negri refers to as the imperialistic process of capital, the ways capital can circulate on a global basis, and the opening up not only of ways of exploitation but also ways of contesting such exploitation. This involves the struggle for spaces of hegemonic rupture out of which new democratizing possibilities may be won. It involves a challenge to Eurocentric, totalizing, and essentialistic notions of identity and the official knowledges of colonialism. I try to locate schooling within the formation of Western forms of metropolitan power and representation. Post-colonial pedagogy, at least as I am attempting to formulate it, sets out to challenge global transnational capitalism and the forms of cultural pluralism that have resulted - forms which I argue really serve to camouflage what I call the neo-colonial cultures of whiteness. Basically it's a pedagogy of anti-imperialism. It's really operative in my work at this stage more heuristically than substantively. It ties into my work on multiculturalism. Schooling tries to commodify black rage, Latino militancy, Asian resistance, and to hellify their world by constantly cannibalizing representations of them and providing prison as the most realistic educational alternative for them. Courses begin at Chino, Folsom, Tehachapi.

In what ways is the ideology of colonialism being reproduced in the US educational system and why is it important for educators to unveil the foregoing ideology?

Labor power as the source of value in our society has nearly been masked completely. It has been veiled by the multivalent power of the image to reorganize desire into hegemonic blocs in ways that are tied to ideologies and discourses of representation carried over from colonial times. Euro-American concepts of agency, value, self-worth, and citizenship are often not very hospitable to other cultural articulations of identity and subjectivity. The autonomous, stable, ideal self of modernity is profoundly Eurocentric in its attempt to speak from a particular standpoint and for all of humanity. This creates the pre-condition for both the affirmation of the subject of history and its eventual demise as it is put under erasure by the counterstance of cultural workers in the margins and periphery of the dominant culture. Ethics and democracy have become sundered from each other. The commodity form is now internal to the meaning of democracy and democratic citizenship, mediated through the vestiges of colonial sensibility and racial typology. Subjectivities have been created in forms serviceable to the slave-form of capital. Subjectivity has actually become capitalized just as our idea of nature is now seen as the incarnation of capitalism. Human nature is now capitalist. Its power is imprinted on the body, regulates the investment of affect, organizes intricate and often contradictory economies of desire, and creates value from market functions and state powers. It wears a crooked top hat; with iron fists inside velvet gloves, it grasps the throats of its dark-skinned victims, attempting to suffocate the last breath of hope; it has the blood

of the workers dripping from its fangs. Labor and the division of labor have not disappeared. The class struggle, as Etienne Balibar and others have noted, is a determining structure affecting all social practices: the antagonistic forms of class struggle may appear in different forms but they have not disappeared.

Given the so-called 'post-Fordist' milieu, in which most educators in the US are operating, how is it possible to build a movement of "critical subjectivities" that is loud enough to bring about substantial transformation?

What is the ground zero of subjectivity but the movement in which absence is transformed into presence. The internal divisions of fractured, decentered subjectivity have been reuinited by the call to nationhood, by myths racialized and incanted in the campaign slogans of the New Right. Racism has become respectable again, as a new book on the genetic inferiority of African Americans in terms of intelligence gets great airplay in the media. Illegal immigrants are to be turned out of schools and medical clinics. Counties in California are planning to evict the homeless. Even attempts to transgressively challenge the confines of control is predatory on the very mechanisms of control one is trying to resist. Management and labor depend upon one another. Resistance rarely evades the larger circuit of production and consumption. At the most we have school reform measures that simply transfer domination from one site to another. The problem has been the centrisms - Anglocentrism, Euro-American centrism, and the discourses and practices of whiteness. But the countermovements? Take the case of Chicano centrism or Afrocentrism. There is a major problem here. I think that bell hooks and Paul Gilroy have made some good criticisms in their claims that many articulations of Afrocentrism are distinctly European, such as the mythic construction of Africa with Isis and Osiris as superheroes. Some forms of Afrocentrism are grounded, for instance, in 19th century Eurocentric forms of nostalgia. hooks also notes that this is similar to Rousseau's notion of the masculinized public sphere with the household transformed into an opaque space for culture to reproduce itself. Neo-black nationalist views on Afrocentrism, according to hooks, often deny that gender is problematic creating a fiction of our social reality that avoids recognizing that black women and children will constitute 75% of the black poor in the near future. But the most dangerous centrism right now is white, Euro-American centrism which has colonized most of the other centrisms. The cultures and logics of whiteness shape the very contours of what counts as normative in the United States. Actually, I'm against all and any centrisms. I believe we need to think of difference differently - not in essentialist ways but discursively and materially. Whiteness tends to define all other groups as it claims to be both everything and nothing - a principle of pure exchangeability. Whiteness should not be the regulating principle of everybody's identity. It needs to be unmasked as linked to forms of ethnicity. White people tend to believe they have transcended the 'lowliness' of ethnicity. Everybody else is ethnic/cultural. They are beyond ethnicity as pure reason, pure rational consciousness. I believe that racialized categories and categories of gender are not linked to the tropic slippage or immanent laws of signification that we hear so much about from the trendy, bourgeois poststructuralists but rather are linked to the division of the labor and the regime of the commodity. We can't locate difference outside of the social relations of production which produce exclusion and exploitation. We need to locate difference in a historically materialist way - within a material system of exploitation.

In your work, as well as that of other writers committed to the area of critical pedagogy, we notice an emphasis on multiple forms of oppression. This strikes us as being the trend in a lot of left wing literature on education coming out of North America. We consider this to be commendable and necessary in the interest of a radical and truly emancipatory democracy. It prevents us from being trapped within an essentialist, reductionist vision of oppression. Yet, judging from the literature emerging from North America, don't you think that we've reached a situation where class analysis is increasingly being placed on the back burner? Furthermore, isn't there a need for coalition building among the various movements and groups struggling to confront different forms of oppression and what role should intellectuals like yourself play in this process?

McLaren: Yes, in a new global order where societies are being subsumed by capital, and where the state has expropriated all forms of production, the analysis of class is on the backburner among educational theorists, as some of my previous remarks have strongly indicated. Class antagonisms thrive although their forms and contexts differ within practices of flexible specialization than they do in contexts of Fordism or peripheral Fordism or Taylorism. But class antagonisms also need to be seen in terms of the way they intersect with practices involving racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia. Today's political climate

favors neoliberal ideology. Private power is now being glorified over governmental power. Society is to be organized pursuant to the powers of special interests. Responsibility must, neo-liberals argue, rest in private hands and stay out of the hands of the government. Cultural homogeneity is valued above all else. In such a context, it is difficult to organize coalitions - more difficult than with Fordist workers, for instance. The antagonisms among the state, the economy, and the worker, have a different aspect to them in the current context of deregulation and other current realities. Yet, in an important way, the xenophobia reflected in Proposition 187 has sparked resistance across the country and not only in California. Recently I spoke at Harvard and on my way back from my lecture my spirit began to swell as I witnessed hundreds of students in Cambridge demonstrating against Proposition 187. Did you know that here, in California, more students are leaving schools to march and demonstrate than during the Vietnam war. I think that the anti-immigration discourses that are developing at this particular historical juncture will provide the basis for a new social movement primarily by Latinos. Many teachers have or will join them. I am one of them. We can only truly build the necessary revolutionary coalitions needed to challenge the power of capital by our continuous experience of resistance and struggle in organizing countervailing powers both strategically and, more importantly, tactically so that proletarian power can consolidate itself. We need to seize on the constitutiveness of the agent and the possibilities in building community. New alliances must be made, must be grasped in new and innovative ways. And here I follow Gramsci, Negri and Foucault in stressing the relation between power and knowledge and how knowledge as an ethical practice can play a central role in the struggle for liberation. The role of the intellectual is important and I applaud much of what Gramsci has said about the role of the "organic intellectual" and Foucault has said about the "specific intellectual." I am also concerned with what I call the "border intellectual." The border intellectual refers to new forms of the social production of subjectivity brought about by determinate antagonisms that can be traced genealogically through the development of modern capitalism. Following Negri, we have entered a new crisis in which deregulation, unemployment, forms of social control through technological means, and global competition have led to the terroristic transformation of subjectivity. Most postmodernists have simply celebrated heterogeneity in such a context and have not, according to Negri, fully explored the possibilities for the constitution of the revolutionary subject from confronting the proliferation of new antagonism brought about by the new crisis of postmodernism. The border intellectual is attentive to such a crisis, and the role information and communication plays in the hegemonic production of subjectivity and in terms of controlling the means of production by controlling the way subjects are produced through antagonisms with respect to the formation of common sense. This involves the educator as border intellectual effectively promoting new forms of agency through the transgression of linguistic, cultural, economic, global and local boundaries - the periphractic values of the cultural dominant - from the radical perspective and vantage point of a plural self, a non-unitary self, a *mestiza* self, and interspecies self that Gloria Anzaldua writes about. It is obvious how much Anzaldua figures in my work by taking a look at my writings on border identity over the last several years. Subjectivity is produced materially and collectively and that is something I have taken from Negri's work.

Peter, you will recall that, at the 1992 AERA Meeting in San Francisco, one or two people from the audience raised the issue of the "difficult", often incomprehensible language in which the work of some writers, in the area of critical pedagogy, is couched. We are sure that this accusation is levelled at you and your colleagues time and time again. That day, as well as on other occasions, you quoted a piece of advice given to you by Paulo Freire, namely that you should always 'be simple but never simplistic.' To what extent do you follow this advice in your work?

I'm not surprised by this question. This question and I have become good friends and I have reached the point that I am almost disappointed if it is not asked during an interview such as this. I have always tried to prevent my writing from being imperialized. As is often remarked, I occupy a strange site of enunciation in my work. My work is like an urban hallucination. Half the time I don't know what it means until long after I have put my thoughts to paper. I think it's irresponsible of a writer to claim to know what she is saying before others engage the work. I am a restless thinker. Rarely do I allow myself to be stabilized in one disciplinary domain, trope, genre, or style of writing. I write in order to be otherwise. Some people think I'm just trying to be 'highfallutin' or that I am unwittingly imprisoned by the patrician conceits of the bourgeois metropolitan intellectual and sometimes fellow marxists admonish me or activists decry my academic prose. And then again I have received letters from leftist intellectuals whose

work I admire very much - intellectuals and artists who share a similar admiration for my writing. Writing is an avenue of self-examination and a means to articulate necessary counter-pressures; for me it's an attempt to find a discursive terrain - whether this means treating criticism as a literary artifact or cultural object, or both - in which I can reinvent myself in ways that take into account a deeper reading of social life so that I can be a more critical agent of social change. Some of this has to do with redemption and self-projection, moral rectitude, and the flight of the spirit into different worlds of meaning. It is an attempt to keep social evil at bay. Writing is a social practice, a political practice, a form of cultural criticism. It enables me to reunite the discourse of critique and joy. My own writing helps me to view the world critically from multiple perspectives - from a grounded aesthetics - that seeks emancipatory transformation of both the world and the word. It is a form of individual self-fashioning for communal emancipation. It would not be wrong to say that I am attempting to create and occupy new subject positions that appear closed off to the majority of educational critics because of the way educational critics choose to represent themselves that trivialize the political realities at stake. Realities that have to do with human suffering, with exploitation and oppression and racism and hatred. We are now glorifying in the media the authors of Proposition 187 and other states now want to get rid of the immigrants. Supporters of this proposition are at this very moment trying to cut off food for illegal pregnant women and school lunches for illegal immigrant students. All under the banner of being American. Being American is a discourse which has nearly completely displaced an ethical discourse, a discourse of compassion. We have capitulated to an occidental separation of democracy and culture, ethics and aesthetics, criticism and utopian dreaming. For the most part, I hate reading the educational literature. It depresses me. Most of it is junk. Not only does it refuse to admit its ideological presuppositions, it cannily installs you in its ensemble of pre-set identities, and situates you within ideas about gender, race, and class that are formulated in advance - ideas that bear more than just the blemish of patriarchy but which are ravaged by the discourses of white supremacist patriarchal capitalism. It's all about pre-programmed historical agency and the reinscription and reinstitution of soveriegn subjectivities which I consider to be a zombification process. It puts you into an arena of expression that chokes the spirit. And where do I get this spiritual inspiration? From the spirit of the jubilee. From the will to resist. From examples set by my *companeros* and *companeras* in struggle. From my trips to East Los Angeles with my Chicano/a brothers and sisters, from the strength of character exhibited by South Central L.A. homeboys and homegirls, the viscera of the struggles of the Chicanas in the sweatshops - the *constueras* - who struggle on behalf of the International Lady's Garment Workers union, from my work in Mexico, Brasil, Argentina. And visits to places in Europe and Southeast Asia where the revolution is far from dead. From memories of Toronto. The most inspirational moment in the last few years was receiving a photograph of subcommandante Marcos sent to me by some members of the Zapatista army in Chiapas. In all of this I ask myself: What are the possibilities of the self? What are the cultural formations and social relations necessary to realize these possibilities? What kind of politics is necessary? What kind of revolutionary struggle? Now when I am working with teachers in, say, Mexicali, Mexico, or in Los Angeles I try not to sound like Derrida. I need to recognize my audience. If I do use some academic terminology, I try to translate this terminology respecting the contextual specificity in which the teachers find themselves in their classrooms and communities. *Life in Schools* is a textbook and that was not a book I really wanted to write but it was, I feel, an important political project. I didn't want to summarize theoretical positions but rather advance them and push them further. But I felt that there was a political necessity for a textbook in critical pedagogy. And so I tried to be as creative as possible with that book and because it is a very pedagogical book it sells - not surprisingly - more than many of my other books put together. Although it is not as sophisiticated as, say, *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture* or *Schooling as a Ritual Performance*. I am trying to avoid the traps of white man's journalism, which informs most educational writing, and I do believe that the assault on experimental academic prose really is the same kind of assault that we see on the Black or Chicano vernacular. It's an assault on difference. On the other hand, there is a lot of very bad writing going on in the academy.

How can theory help cultural workers in their struggle for justice, given, as Roger Simon remarks, the fear that they are often believed to harbor with respect to such theory? We would also argue that certain cultural and community workers often seem suspicious of academics and theorists in our field, as was manifest in New York during the December 91 meeting which commemorated Paulo Freire's 70th Birthday. 'Get real' is the exhortation normally heard.

McLaren: That's an important question. I think

a lot of the criticism is populist elitism - people feel that closeness to the oppressed is the key and that academics read in isolation from the real world too much. Theorizing doesn't guarantee one's politics but neither does brushing shoulders with the oppressed. You need to be careful of your audience and your constituencies. You need to translate when you have to in order to be understood. Theories - reason and rationalities - undergird everything we do - they shape the contours of our social and institutional life. They inform our personal and political lives. Theories are agents, they are constitutive of tradition and prevailing forms of common sense. They organize peoples' responses to and in the world. They formulate our public and private 'gaze.' But they can also serve as subversive transformative and counter-hegemonic agents in the struggle against domination and exploitation. The key is to make the theories real - to ground them in the contextual specificity of real life and human suffering as well as happiness - to anchor them affectively in people's dreams and agonies, visions and mundane routines. We need to take theories out of the monoculturalism of academic life, out of the monovalent center of the academic mainstream, in order to get democracy off the ground in the streets and in the classrooms. Theories need to help in the mobilization of material resources and not just describe social life in endless forms of deconstructive textual analyses.

You have been criticized for speaking with a voice of authority. What is your reaction to such criticism in view of your pedagogical politics and your location as white, male, middle-class, Anglo-North American?

McLaren: Let me try to answer that by saying that the voice of authority is something that has been given to me, not something I have sought. This voice has been constructed historically through my writings and international work and, even if I denounce the authority of such a voice, it only paradoxically reinforces its authority. So if I am stuck with being a voice of authority or exhibiting an authoritative style in my work then I will try to make the most of it strategically. And how is this possible at a time when the white, North American man is held in such suspicion? Let me first say that I am uncomfortable in the role of the authority. Not because I am white or male and feel guilt about it, or because it carries such a tremendous responsibility, but because it suggests in this climate of expediency in thinking and especially in political thinking, that I - or anyone - can provide expedient solutions to pressing social and educational problems. Many people who have read my work but do not know my ethnicity often assume I am Latino or African-American. I've been at more than one conference when somebody has remarked: "You're white!" I've just been invited to be a member of the Chicano Studies faculty here at U.C.L.A. - one of the few Anglos, if not the only one, as far as I know. I've been asked to be an advisor to the Frente Grande in Argentina. So there is something going on here that transcends my location as a white male scholar-activist. The only serious criticisms I've had have been from bourgeois white feminists, some of whom consider me apparently to be a "macho Marxist" I still have that working-class sentiment to my work, that of a fighter, I was working class until my father landed a managerial job when I was young- and that turns some people off I guess. It's in my tone. I sometimes use the "royal we" and have tried to temper than somewhat where I feel it's not helpful to my arguments or to the agency I am trying to develop. But as long as I can remember I have always been involved with different disadvantaged ethnic groups. I would argue that I am more than my whiteness, more than my maleness, more than my Canadian-ness or my adopted American-ness, or my ancestral Scottishness. The key, I feel, is to remember the privilege that being a white male affords you and to use such privilege to fight against exploitation and economies of power and privilege. I know what being patronizing is all about, what exoticizing otherness is all about, what patriarchy is all about. It's not so much who you are but where you stand and for whom. People who know me well know I don't equivocate on this.

In *Schooling as a Ritual Performance* you distinguish between 'street corner knowledge' and 'knowledge acquired in classroom settings'. How can schools accommodate 'street corner culture' without simply coopting it?

McLaren: It is impossible not to co-opt cultural knowledge in some sense. Those who co-opt such knowledge are not unaffected by it. Knowledge always turns into something else. Street corner knowledge is important because it is felt knowledge and occurs in the asignifying dimensions of experience - that is, it occurs on the affective plane and often is supplementary to academic knowledge. In other words, it occurs in the gap between ideology and the body. It is visceral; it is laced with emotional investment - with what Larry Grossberg calls "affective investment." But it is problematic because of the suffusion of capital into mundane and quotidian social relations. This has caused a generalized commodification of desire; de-

sire has been transformed into the performativity of the purchase, of the aquisition of the image. In their attempts to escape the subject positions of adulthood, they try to find a space of their own which, unbeknownst to many, has already been written for them as well in the spectacle of youth anger and alienation. Informed by the necrophiliatic drive of predatory culture rather than the plural versality of being, youth today occupy identities that are crusted over by empty images, like stench-ridden landfill sites. What holds many students together is their collective inability to feel outside of texts of identity that have been already written for them. They are literally decomposing and want to aestheticize their emptying-out of anything meaningful - anything that can be felt. Students need spaces where they can talk about and come to critically interrogate the constant fracturing of their agency, so that they can somehow put life into motion. Teachers absolutely cannot reduce their identities to some unholy criteriology or typology. They need to understand how student identity is constructed at the site of the popular and the national popular. They need to acquire a theoretical language that can help students understand how their desire has been manufactured along with their consensual attitude towards their empty futures. Students need courses in media literacy, in critical social theory so that they can ask the following: What is it about the way the world has made me that enables me to resist myself and the world?

In countries like the U.S. and Canada, which are characterized by a strong racial mix and which provide the conditions for the emergence of anti-racist education, one is often confronted with the term 'multiculturalism.' From the experience which two of us had with the Maltese community in Toronto, we have realized that multiculturalism is nothing but a means of keeping the Maltese community entrenched within its own traditional cultural boundaries, boundaries that breed ghettoisation and which foster an inorganic sense of the community's traditional cultures. This inorganic sense of Maltese cultures is what feed into the present hegemony in which a dominant group (Anglo-Canadians) is presented as the invisible norm presupposed by the existence of the 'insular' other. Is this experience unique to the Maltese community? If not, isn't all the talk that we hear, concerning 'multicultural education', problematic?

McLaren: That's an important and urgent question. No it's not unique to the Maltese community. Multiculturalism is a word rightly viewed with suspicion by non-dominant groups. It's become a code-word for absorption and/or containment. Whiteness is the privileging norm, the invisible norm that is able to hide right out in the openness of everyday life. It not only hides in the light - it is the light. Whiteness, as I have said, is equated with rationality while non-whiteness is considered irrational and the less white you are (the darker you are) the more irrational and more ethnic you are considered to be. White cultures are able to maintain their invisibility and also control of economic, social and cultural relations. Whiteness is not just about skin color but is entwined in systems of intelligibility enmeshed in colonialism, imperialism, Eurocentrism. I know some African-Americans and Latino who are white, who have accepted the terms of enfranchisement which means to become culturally stripped and deracinated. Whiteness is an invention - a socially constructed way of looking at others, at oneself from a position of structural advantage and cultural privilege; it is, in short, an inscription into ideological relations that are imbricated in economies of power and privilege also linked to class, race, and gender relations. The issue is not for people of color to simply reverse relations of power so that they assume the same proprietary position as whites but to create new spaces of intensity, new forms of ethnicity, new democratic social relations and zones of sociality. The notion of pluralism is really an empty notion because pluralism is often just an adding-on of different cultures into a mosaic in which whiteness is the architect. Recently Christine Sleeter and I edited a book called *Multiculturalism and Critical Pedagogy* in which we explore this question in depth. I've also recently co-edited a book with Barry Kanpol entitled *Critical Multiculturalism*. Right now I'm looking at a way outside of identity politics to foster a program of revolutionary struggle. I believe that we need to respect difference but that we also have to understand how differences are deployed by systems of social production within global capitalist relations. How is difference the product and outcome of material and historical practices - that's the issue that we, as educators, need to explore. As revolutionary cultural workers, we need to become driven by a visceral movement of the spirit, by a ethico-political consciousness, by a commitment to fight against exploitation and oppression in all of its contemporary guises. But unless we are guided by a wisdom born through struggle and love, strengthened by hope, all of this is mere foolishness.

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Forgetting Foucault? Anonymity, Death and the Author

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The title 'Forgetting Foucault?', minus the question mark (a very important omission, of course), is one I have borrowed from Baudrillard's famous paper of 1980 which tries to cut Foucault's thesis about power\knowledge down to size but fails to tell us exactly why Foucault should be forgotten'.[1] Racevskis describes the Baudrillard article as 'a fairly abstruse poetico-philosophic essay that indicts Foucault for collusion with prevailing myth-making strategies. Foucault,' Racevskis continues, 'is shown by Baudrillard to have become infatuated with the imaginary force of his own discourse, and his genealogy is depicted as a system satisfying a certain hegemonic logic of reason.'[2] In effect, not only has Foucault not been forgotten, the contrary is the case; a Foucault industry has grown over the ten years since his death with a Centre for Foucauldian Studies set up in Paris. What were Foucault's own views about his posterity? Why would Baudrillard want us to forget Foucault and what is this continuing presence his memory constitutes?

The second question perhaps could be the subject of a hermeneutical study of Baudrillard's paper; Racevskis reads it as 'confrontation', as 'a violent challenge to the principal tenets of Foucault's epistemology' which 'attempts to turn on its head its implicit claim to radicalism.'[3] This analysis is not something I want to do here though, undoubtedly, the exercise would be an interesting one; the subject of this paper is not Baudrillard. Instead I want to turn to the first question and the part of the second which takes us into debate on the subject of 'continuing presence' of the 'figure' and, thus, into the heart of the question whether Foucault should be forgotten or remembered, and why? Perhaps one could couch the question of his 'presence' in terms of the enduring power of Foucault and of his writings?! About this subject, the subject of the author in relation to the text, particularly about 'anonymity' there is much that Foucault has said or written, much which could also be germane to the question about how he regarded his own posterity.

At the same time, Baudrillard's thesis about Foucault is undoubtedly odd, for Foucault has rarely ever been characterised as a conservative, though Habermas who labeled him a postmodernist and accused him of being against reason did start a trend in that direction.[4] Indeed, the more usual way of depicting Foucault is as an anarchist, or even a nihilist.[5] In one of the interviews he gave, Foucault himself interrupted his interviewer Gerard Roulet, who was going on about how 'Habermas has taken up this term in order to criticize it in all its aspects...', the term, of course, was 'postmodernity', with the question (tongue-in cheek? At any rate Roulet took it seriously and answered it exhaustively): 'What are we calling postmodernity? I'm not up to date?'[6] Foucault complained that even the term 'modernity' perplexed him.[7] Nor, he said, did he see any 'disappearance of reason' occurring - 'I can see multiple transformation, but I cannot see why we should call all this transformation a collapse of reason.'[8]

At the same time an 'epistemology' is precisely one thing Foucault claimed not to have, even if Archeology of Knowledge (regarded by many as having been Foucault's least successful book) did represent archeology as the 'successor subject' to epistemology. The force of Rorty's criticism in this case was that Foucault was still perpetuating a hegemonic tradition originating with the Enlightenment which views philosophy as the foundation of culture. But Rorty then refers approvingly to the later Foucault's Nietzschean turn to genealogy which, in its negativity, cannot certainly be characterised as an epistemology or a method.[9] At the same time, Baudrillard was not referring to the Foucault of the Archeology when he accused him of hegemonic intentions but precisely to his genealogy.

But the truth is that Foucault was, from the beginning, as much against hegemonies, against the imperialism of 'method', as are Rorty and Baudrillard. Hence his rapid abandonment of the method of archeology. Rorty lauds genealogy because it is negative rather than positive. In other words it has nothing to do with setting up theories or searching for 'origins' or with discovering an episteme within an archive, as does archeology. It has to do instead with 'unmask-

ing', with the tracing out of 'descent' and 'emergence' (two Nietzschean metaphors) of some regime of knowledge\power. As an analysis of descent, genealogy, Foucault says, is 'situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body.'[10] Emergence, on the other hand is about 'the moment of arising'; it 'seeks to establish the various systems of subjection; not the anticipatory power of meaning, but the hazardous play of domination'[11] - it is, therefore, about 'struggle'. But, Foucault says, about that struggle, 'no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice'.[12] Is the interstice where one finds Foucault? Does his 'negative' genealogy, indeed, qualify him as an anarchist or even nihilist? Would Foucault himself want to be remembered as such?

Let us put aside Baudrillard's challenge for the time being and ask, which would be the best way to remember Foucault? The question is evidently an ambiguous one; in one sense it could be about method, in another it could be about approach or style within a particular method, in another still it could be about characterisation, about how to actually represent Foucault. Methodologically, one obvious way to remember someone is, indeed, to do what I am doing now, namely write a paper about him/her. There are obviously other possibilities also (like having a soiree or a service, or opening a prestigious centre of studies, like the one in Paris, with an international conference), but writing about a writer seems the best way to remember him/her, and Foucault himself privileged writing above other forms of expression. The more interesting question seems to be, how does one go about the business of writing about Foucault? MacIntyre argues that the lecture is an inappropriate way to remember genealogists, who all, including the earliest among them Nietzsche, feel rather uncomfortable playing the role of philosophy professors.[13] Genealogists are happier writing narratives and aphorisms than philosophical papers, happier telling anecdotes and stories rather than giving lectures. But Foucault was a bad genealogist in this sense, for he continued to give courses, like any other philosophy professor, at the College de France, until the end of his life. Nor were aphorisms and anecdotes his preferred mode of writing, though he could, on the other hand, nay should, be described as a writer of narratives.

A universally acknowledged way of writing about an author is to do a critical study of his or her works, and Foucault, in this respect, has had more than his fair share of critical studies. But is writing a critical study of his work the way he would have wanted to be approached? How about writing a biographical sketch of his life? Of course, it could always be argued that it is irrelevant what he would have thought about the matter. That response, however, whoever it is made about, counts only for those who may not feel the figure of a writer, a writer's presence; those who simply see the writer as a piece of public property to be appropriated and put aside, or who cannot relate to the writer in any personal way; those who merely see the writer as a subject for study or entertainment but who do not feel any presence in his or her works. If one feels the presence of the author one is also respectful of that author's opinion. Writing a critical work on Foucault is treating him as a subject for analysis, finally it is coming up with a theory about him and about his work. Writing his biography is telling a narrative about his life something he himself repeatedly refused to discuss. In either case, one is trying to pin him down, make him more accessible to oneself and to an audience. Perhaps a good clue to the question of how one should write about Foucault, if one wants to write about him in his own terms, would be to see how he himself wrote to 'remember' another, dead, author, Raymond Roussel, though the situation is not the same since Roussel, at least at the time Foucault wrote about him, was a relatively obscure writer?![14] Perhaps one could write a genealogy of Foucault?!

It turns out, in fact, that one of the difficulties of remembering Foucault in writing lies in deciding how one should write about him. In a sense, this is not simply the problem with Foucault, it occurs with all authors who somehow have the power to retain a presence, who somehow seem to live as strongly outside their work as they do within it. Foucault himself was certainly interested in the question why we need to retain any kind of presence at all, any 'figures' in our culture, particularly why we have an interest in retaining the figure of an author. And I could, of course, since this is precisely what I am doing, writing about an author, turn the question on myself. Why am I writing about Foucault? Maybe because I find Baudrillard's suggestion that we should forget him intriguing? Or maybe because the tenth anniversary of his death is a good excuse to write a paper about a writer who is still very popular (or, at any rate, whose name is still very popular)? Maybe, I am one of those who harbours a hidden ambition to pin him down, to respond to his own challenge, to the gauntlet he seems to throw down to the reader!? Responding to these questions would mean writing not about Foucault but

about myself! Maybe I should write what I think my prospective readers would want to know about him? But that would involve me in a hermeneutic of the reader which assumes, in turn, that I know the reader, his/her interests and motives, which I do not, or that the reader is, at least accessible to me, which s/he is not.

I could speculate that some readers would want to know about him, personally, as a personage, as a figure. Others may be more interested in what he wrote and what he said, what his views and concerns were about different things. Yet the question arises, but why do you want to know these things? And what, of what he wrote and said, would you regard as relevant to his memory? Maybe you want to hear about Foucault's work because you think that you will find it interesting, or uplifting, or enlightening, or different, or because it will add to your knowledge of contemporary philosophy, or because it will add to your intellectual baggage, or maybe because you are just curious? Those of you who are students may only want to know more about Foucault because his works are prescribed for your course of studies, in which case you would be particularly interested in the question whether he is worth remembering as an assessment of his worth! This is a not a good motive, though it may be a pragmatic one. What about curiosity? Is that a good motive? What kind of curiosity is curiosity about a writer?

Whatever the answer, curiosity about Foucault is very understandable. After all, over the years, he has become a celebrity, a canonical figure of academic and intellectual life; knowing Foucault, or at least knowing something about him, is still very academically and intellectually up-market. In some corner of some seminar about him one is almost bound to hear someone whisper, maybe even loudly, 'perhaps to show-off some familiarity with his name, that 'Foucault died of aids didn't he?' How does that fact, or any other fact about how an author dies, affect how he or she is remembered, or whether he or she should be remembered?

One may ask a similar kind of question about, say, Van Gogh. Why is it that someone like Van Gogh continues to fascinate so many people? Is it simply the quality of his work that does it? Is it the eccentric creativity of his expressiveness that fascinates? Or is it his eccentric 'life'? I am thinking, for instance, about the numerous films made about Van Gogh's life. Van Gogh is another who, like Foucault, retains a presence. As with Foucault's sexuality (Foucault himself pronounced sex boring!) what fascinates many with Van Gogh is, of course, his madness. I am sure that at one time people must have whispered that Van Gogh committed suicide in the same tone of hushed awe or sensationalistic matter-of-factness that some people use today when they refer to Foucault's 'aids'.

But nobody really needs to worry about having any alibis, of being accused of sheer curiosity by the ghost of Foucault. Why would Foucault worry that people want to know about him out of sheer curiosity? Did he not himself, after all, describe his own interest in life and in philosophy as a matter of curiosity?! To what extent do the circumstances of his or her life contribute towards our evaluation of an author? Would it have made a difference to the way we regard his work had Van Gogh not been mad and committed suicide, or Pollock an alcoholic who smashed himself in a car? Would it make any difference if Foucault really did die of a brain tumor after all - except in a technical sense, that is? And, to return to the question, why should the motivation of the reader be any more important than my own motivation as a writer in determining how I should write about Foucault?

In his own writing about the relationship between art and madness, in the early years of his career as an author, Foucault said: 'It is of little importance on exactly which day in the autumn of 1888 Nietzsche went mad for good, and after which his texts no longer afford philosophy but psychiatry: all of them, including the postcard to Strindberg, belong to Nietzsche, and are all related to *The Birth of Tragedy*. But we must not think of this continuity in terms of a system, of a thematics, or even of an existence: Nietzsche's madness - that is, the dissolution of his thought - is that by which his thought opens out onto the modern world.'[15] The interesting paradox Foucault was to return to again and again throughout his life is already at work in this passage; the identification of authorship with the life of the author goes together with the necessity of the author's dissolution through the act of authorship itself. Nietzsche's madness needs to be considered as his 'opening out onto the (modern) world'. But must madness be the filter through which the author opens out in this way? How does Foucault himself 'open out', since he was not mad? Where does Foucault open out onto the (modern/postmodern?) world? Through his homosexuality? Why did the author of *The History of Sexuality* pronounce sex boring?

What does Foucault understand by authorship? This is, indeed, the question. In his essay on the

subject of the author, he asks what should be ascribed to Nietzsche as author: 'what about the drafts of his works?' he asks, 'Obviously. The plans of his aphorisms? Yes. The deleted passages and the notes at the bottom of the page? Yes. What is, within a workbook filled with aphorisms, one finds a reference, the notation of a meeting or of an address, or a laundry list: Is it work, or not? Why not? And so on, ad infinitum. How can one define a work amid the millions of traces left by someone after his death?'[16] It seems impossible, then, to do a genealogy of the author because genealogy 'requires patience and a knowledge of details, and it depends on a vast accumulation of source material'.[17] But what is the source material for a genealogy of a dead author and how do we accumulate it, and when do we know that we have accumulated enough? This is the issue Foucault is raising here for those who would want to remember an author. In short, doing a genealogy of Foucault as an author does not seem on, at least on his own terms!

But, is this not also the case, then, for writing his biography?! How does one write Foucault's biography, supposing one elected, in fact, to remember him by writing his biography? Maybe what is interesting about the writing of biographies about authors, particularly authors who are also figures, is not what they tell us about the authors but what they tell us about ourselves. This being the case, I don't think one can simply ignore the question raised a bit earlier; why do we want to retain the presence of an author at all? Why is the biography of an author more important for us than the biography of John Smith? Why is the figure of the author required in our culture, why isn't the work enough? Is it a good sign if, say, in our culture, having moved away from a hegemony of theories and epistemologies we are now moving towards a hegemony of personalities, of figures, of heroes, and what would that 'moving away' mean to us? Are biographies, some of which have already appeared, the way Foucault would have wanted to be remembered, supposing he really wanted to be remembered? For it may well be the case that Foucault actually agreed with Baudrillard! That Foucault himself wanted us to forget Foucault...!

This thought struck me as I was reading Walzer's fortuitous comparison of Foucault with Kafka. Kafka left instructions with his friend Max Brod to destroy his work when he was dead. It most certainly seems that Kafka wanted to be forgotten otherwise why leave such instructions? Or did he want to be forgotten? 'Foucault is not the Kafka of the prison or the asylum; his account is neither surreal nor mysterious.'[18] Evidently Walzer mentions the two together by way of contrast rather than comparison and in a very different context of discussion from the one I am pursuing. But the comparison of Foucault with Kafka on this point is intriguing. It would appear to have made no sense for the already much published and much publicised Foucault to have repeated Kafka's gesture. Foucault himself specifically took up Kafka's gesture in association with Roussel. Roussel left a posthumous book 'How I wrote Certain of My Books' which held forth the tantalising suggestion of a hidden 'secret' in his work; a trap to lure the reader. In fact, whatever else it was that Roussel wanted in life it was certainly not anonymity. Foucault comments, 'In a way, Roussel's attitude is the reverse of Kafka's, but as difficult to interpret. Kafka had entrusted his manuscripts to Max Brod to be destroyed after his death - to Max Brod, who had said he would never destroy them. Around his death Roussel organized a simple explanatory essay which is made suspect by the text, his other books, and even the circumstances of his death'.[19] Roussel's 'tantalising secret' was his way of ensuring his immortality! But Foucault himself, like Kafka, expressed the wish for anonymity while he was alive!

As early as 1969, in fact, he was saying things like, 'I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write.'[20] How serious was he about 'writing to have no face'? In effect, throughout his career he deliberately and notoriously made the business of pinning him down, of characterising him in any way, difficult, by constantly shifting position, by constantly affirming his privacy and his unwillingness to be taken for granted, by constantly revising the state of his oeuvre, re-describing it in different ways, sometimes radically, in terms of the current focus of his work and of the methodology he was using, his archeology his genealogy, his ethics, by writing in a manner that carried him through the fields of philosophy, cultural history, sociology, medical history, and literary criticism.

Thus, *Madness and Civilization* (1961), was about 'return(ing), in history, to the zero point in the course of madness at which madness is an undifferentiated experience, a not yet divided experience of division itself.'[21] It was an archeological search for 'origins'. In 1977 he said, 'When I think back now, I ask myself what else it was that I was talking about, in *Madness and Civilisation* or *The Birth of the Clinic* but power?'[22] In 1981, he proclaimed that 'The goal of

my work during the last twenty years has not been to analyse the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects.'[23]

In his very last interview before he died, asked whether, in view of his recent courses on the hermeneutic of the subject 'your present philosophical research is still determined by the poles, subjectivity and truth.' He replied that 'in fact this has always been my problem, even if I have expressed in different terms the framework of this thought. I have tried to discover how the human subject entered into games of truth, whether they be games of truth which take on the form of science or which refer to a scientific model, or games of truth like those that can be found in institutions or practices of control.'[24] On being asked whether there is any complementarity between power\knowledge, the axis of relationships that had engrossed him in his earlier work, and subject/truth, which was his present interest, he explains how he sees the assimilation of his former work, including his work on power/ knowledge within his central project of narrating how the subject enters into a certain game of truth.

At all times one must come to terms with a deliberately elusive Foucault; one who is changing tack, sometimes out of sheer devilry, all the time, deliberately laying a false track, refusing to stand still long enough to be labeled or, as Walzer put it (though Foucault first used the metaphor for himself), 'situated on the chessboard of available positions', consciously, disconcertingly perverse. Rorty's ideal figure, in effect, of the ironic 'strong misreading poet'? Perhaps, nevertheless, the truth is that the Foucault who taunted his reader in *Archeology of Knowledge* with 'No, no, I'm not where you are lying in wait for me, but over here, laughing at you,' actually found it necessary periodically to identify continuity in his work, to focus it in some way.[25] Couzens Hoy interprets this tendency in this way: 'Foucault himself continually reflects on his own development and offers his own interpretations of it, often with honest self-criticisms.'[26] But how does this periodic rationalisation of his work's 'progress', this need to see his work over time as consistent, coherent, developmental, cohere with the anarchic, literary, Foucault - the strong poet? Why was he so intent on viewing his work as a project? There seems to be another paradox at work here somewhere! My view is that it is only explained through understanding what he meant by 'ethics'.

In the foreward to the 1970 English edition of *The Order of Things* Foucault complained bitterly against 'certain half-witted commentators' in France who had dubbed him a structuralist, though, at that time, some aspects of his work very evidently were so.[27] One feels the sheer annoyance behind his terse statement. Subsequently he was to insist repeatedly in his interviews that he was never a structuralist, or indeed a Freudian or Marxist. Why?

In *The Order of Things* Foucault went one better than his mentor Nietzsche in predicting not the death of God but that of man. He augured, in the very last lines of the book, 'that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.'[28] What did he mean by that? In effect, what it sounds like is an echo of Heidegger's pronouncement about the end of 'humanism', the postmodernist sounding the death knell for modernity's anthropocentric culture. It accords with Rorty's observation that what is really at issue in this version of anti-humanism is not so much the idea that culture should be centred in 'man' but, more radically, whether it needed any 'centre' at all, in 'God', 'Science', 'man' or in anything else. Foucault's response to it was typically radical - the process of cutting the king's head had to be complete everywhere not just in politics, and the head of the 'author' had to fall with the rest; it had also to be erased by the sea. The archeological 'structuralism' of his work at the time, which projected discourse as something autonomous and self-sufficient, probably satisfied that anti-humanist ambition. His disclaimer against being labeled a structuralist was no reflection on structuralism on his part, any more than his rejection of the label of Freudian or Marxist was part of any polemic he had against Freud or Marx. His problem wasn't with any of these positions as such it was, as I said earlier, with being situated in any position at all, with being turned into 'a subject' by anyone but himself!

At the same time, one feels inclined to question Foucault's motives in claiming to want anonymity. What is its true explanation? Is the claim to anonymity the renouncement of the hegemony of the author as I have just suggested, or the tongue in cheek buffoonery of one who knows full well that anonymity is the very last thing he could claim for himself, one wonders? He who had even made the front cover of *Time Magazine*, who had granted interviews almost indiscriminately to other popular journals, who had encouraged his own presence with every means attainable? Was it because he knew, in effect, that it would be impossible to forget him that he claimed to want anonymity? How serious, in short, was Foucault about

his anonymity? If Kafka's real desire for anonymity is in doubt what about Foucault's? In effect, it is interesting that Foucault did, eventually, imitate Kafka's gesture. In 1977, he told a friend (Jean Pierre Barou) 'When I die, I will leave no manuscripts, and when he was actually close to death, he ordered another close friend, Herve Guibert, to destroy the drafts of the final volumes of *The History of Sexuality* and all the preparatory material connected with them. Foucault, in fact, appears to have had little sympathy with Brod's decision to preserve Kafka's manuscripts against the writer's wishes and himself expressed the wish, in his last note, for no posthumous publications.

Yet one cannot avoid the suspicion of Zarathustrean irony whenever one deals with Foucault! Even with his final acts. Particularly since, in this instance, he could not have been insensitive to the popular acclaim he had received as Sartre's successor, as philosophical guru, as 'the superstar of French thought'; the 'intellectual' par excellence.[29]

But, the word **intellectual** strikes me as odd,' he once responded to a question by an interviewer. 'Personally I've never met any intellectuals. 'Writers, painters, doctors, teachers, composers, economists', he says, tongue in cheek, he's met, and 'people of whom I have never really understood what they do. But intellectuals, never. On the other hand, I've met a lot of people who talk about "the intellectual",' he adds, on a sinister note. But listening to them is not very reassuring because they blame the intellectual for pretty much everything: 'And I catch a glimpse of a radiant city in which the intellectual would be in prison or, if he were also a theoretician, hanged, of course. We don't, its true, live in a regime in which intellectuals are sent to the rice fields. But have you heard of a certain Toni Negri? Isn't he in prison simply for being an intellectual?'[30] This is, again, the disconcerting Foucault; the 'unmasking' Foucault who is seeking out motives and who discovers them in the exercise of domination over a self. The Foucault who would ask us, as I indicated earlier, what are your motives for wanting to remember me? Don't you mean your biographies and critical studies to discipline me?'

But in an entirely different mood from this one, and in other interviews, Foucault expressed his preference for the 'specific' intellectual, the individual pragmatically fighting out specific battles within contained contexts of power, in the 'interstices', 'where their own conditions of life and work situate them', in his/her own name, as opposed to the 'universal' intellectual with emancipatory 'theories' about justice and right, speaking for a collectivity.[31]

But fighting for what? The question finally leads up to the complaint which led his critics to classify him an anarchist. Foucault, as I said earlier, would identify himself with no political position, would admit to no allegiance. Since he didn't even have a theory of freedom to contrast the appropriation of the self he unmasked with, what did he want us to fight for? What is there to fight for without some vision of emancipation, of a better life and a better world? It was pretty clear what he wanted us to fight against; the 'normalization' of the self through the different forms of biopower typical of modern life was his great quarry; the objectifying and subjectifying processes that turn the individual into a 'subject', the panopticon society with its gulag type institutions justified, galvanised, and rendered more efficient by the human and social sciences. We also know which battles he fought as a specific intellectual, against the penal, mental, and other disciplinary institutions of our times. Walzer comments .that 'Foucault's political theory is a "tool kit" not for revolution but for local resistance'.[32] Walzer is also critical of Foucault because 'despite his emphasis on local struggles, he is largely uninterested in local victories.'[33] This is broadly what causes him to characterize Foucault a nihilist. Did he need a theory of freedom or emancipation for his fight? Can one fight without such a theory? 'I've always been a little distrustful of the general theme of liberation', he says elsewhere. The danger, he continues, is that the discourse of liberation can lead to the belief in the existence of 'a human foundation which, as a result of a certain number of historical, social or economic processes, found itself concealed, alienated or imprisoned in and by some repressive mechanism'.[34]

Rorty argues that there is an alternative to having theories of emancipation; writing utopian narratives.[35] In Foucault's case, however, the narratives, or 'fictions' he relates are purely dystopian. *Madness and Civilization*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, and, most particularly *Discipline and Punish*, could easily fit within this genre together with the classics of dystopian writing. As Walzer himself admits with reference to these works, 'it is impossible to read them, whatever disagreements one has, without a sense of recognition.'[36] Put in another way, Foucault's narratives 'disconcert'.[37] As Couzens Hoy also points out, 'Foucault paints the picture of a totally normalised society, not because he believes our present society is one, but because he hopes we may find the picture threatening.'[38] Is the dystopian writer who disconcerts but refuses to project an alternative utopia necessarily

a nihilist? I think not. Is Foucault a nihilist, that's another question.

Isn't 'nihilist' simply one more label to be rejected for Foucault? It is time to return to the question: isn't 'author' itself, innocuous as it may sound, a label Foucault would have wanted to reject? Is the honest yen for anonymity compatible with authorship? Can the 'particular' intellectual claim for him/herself the role of author? Roussel's major preoccupation was to be remembered, to be a figure, an author. Foucault doubts Kafka's honesty with Max Brod when the former asked for his writings to be destroyed. Many of Foucault's own views about a variety of things were expressed in the interviews that he gave rather than in his writings. Today, these interviews are included in a number of printed collections as part of his general oeuvre; i.e., they are treated as writings. The transient quality of the interview is thus subverted. Indeed, there are no signs that Foucault was ever moving away from being a writer first and foremost.

In the interview I referred to earlier Foucault's reply to the question about his continuing wish for anonymity was that 'in our societies, characters dominate our perceptions. Our attention,' he continued, 'tends to be arrested by the activities of faces that come and go, emerge and disappear. Why did I suggest that we use anonymity?' he continues, 'Out of nostalgia for a time when, being quite unknown, what I said had some chance of being heard. With the potential reader, the surface contact was unrippled. The effects of the book might land in unexpected places and form shapes that I had never thought of. A name makes reading too easy.'[39] Did he have his own relationship with Roussel in mind when he was saying these words? Probably. The wish to assert oneself as an author, he went on to suggest, proceeds from the author's own vanity.

Less than nine months before he died Foucault was interviewed about his book on Raymond Roussel. The surrealist writer died in 1933, roughly, as it turned out, when he was of the same age as Foucault himself when he died.[40] The book itself is not one of the most referred to in the literature on Foucault, as he himself remarks. But the interview, printed with the English version of the book provides a clue about a way he would have liked to be remembered which is, at the same time, compatible with this wish for anonymity. Foucault says that curiosity was what first made him interested in Roussel, whom he had never heard of until 1957. He became curious about the writer when he picked up one of his books by chance while he was waiting to be served in a book shop: 'I was like all other students of philosophy at that time, and for me the break was first Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, a breathtaking performance'.[41]

Beckett was followed, Foucault says, by other novelists and writers, but, clearly, Beckett's play remained especially significant for him! Meanwhile, harking us back to some of the comments I made earlier, Foucault was asked in his interview whether it was Roussel's psychological problems' (Roussel was constantly under the influence of drugs and had attempted suicide not long before his mysterious death) that had attracted him to the writer. He answered no, though, in effect, in the book itself he had made a lot of Roussel's 'madness'. 'The private life of an individual,' he continued to say in the interview, 'his sexual preference, and his work are interrelated not because his work translates his sexual life, but because the work includes the whole life as well as the text.' Then he went on, in a manner again reminiscent of his earlier comments about Nietzsche in *Madness and Civilization*, 'the work is more than the work: the subject who is writing is part of the work.'[42] 'The subject of the writing is part of the work'!

In the first page of 'What is an Author?', Foucault quotes a line from Beckett's play which, he says, 'formulates the theme' of the author for him The line goes: '"What does it matter who is speaking", someone said, "what does it matter who is speaking." In this indifference,' Foucault continues, 'appears one of the fundamental ethical principles of contemporary writing'. Foucault continues to explain why he uses the word 'ethical': 'because this indifference is not really a trait characterizing the manner in which one speaks and writes, but rather a kind of immanent rule, taken up over and over again, never fully applied, not designating writing as something completed, but dominating it as a practice.'[43] This 'immanent rule' can be illustrated through two of its major themes: (a) having 'freed itself from the dimension of expression', writing is now about 'creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears', and (b) 'writing's relationship with death... The work, which once had the duty of providing immortality now possesses the right to kill, to be it's author's murderer, as in the case of Flaubert, Proust and Kafka. That is not all, however,' Foucault concludes, '...using all the contrivances that he sets up between himself and what he writes, the writing subject cancels out the signs of his particular individuality... he must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing.'[44]

Two insidious notions continue to interfere with this happening; one is the notion of 'a work', the other is that of 'writing'. These, 'intended to replace the privileged position of the author actually seem to preserve that privilege and suppress the real meaning of his disappearance'.[45] Also, 'it is not enough to keep repeating (after Nietzsche) that God and man have died a common death. Instead, we must locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distributions of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings that this disappearance uncovers.'[46] One problem with the 'author function' for Foucault, in fact, is that it is hegemonic and ideological, it 'marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning.'[47] So death to the author as well as the king and the universal intellectual! These are the figures Foucault wants eliminated from our future culture.

The author is effaced by indifference; not everyone has the privilege to go mad! A more accessible form of dissolution, of 'opening out onto the world'. With the author's death 'all discourses, whatever their status, form, value, and whatever the treatment to which they are subjected, would then develop in the anonymity of a murmur.'[48] We would be left, to return to the suggestive image with which Foucault ended *The Order of Things*, with the soft sound of the sea; a sea of 'polysemous texts' functioning within a different 'system of constraint' which, like some future utopia, 'will have to be determined or, perhaps, experienced.'[49] Foucault, in fact, does not advocate the end of writing but that of the author; what he advocates is a culture of authorless, unappropriated, polysemic texts - 'an anonymous text posted on a wall probably has a writer - but not an author.'[50] But is he serious? A faceless culture of anonymous texts! Is this a scenario for utopia or another futuristic exercise in dystopian writing?

How does his cultural and political anarchy coincide with Foucault's final turn to 'ethics' in his last phase of writing. Ethics', Foucault says, is about 'ascetical practice...not in the sense of abnegation but that of an exercise of self upon self by which one tries to work out, to transform one's self and to attain a certain mode of being'.[51] Ethics is about care of the self, it is about self-creation, about constituting one's self as a self, one's life as a work of art.[52] For Foucault, this constituting of one's self as a self is to be achieved through writing: '...it is better to try to understand that someone who is a writer,' he said in his Roussel interview, 'is not simply doing his works in his books, in what he publishes, but that his major work is, in the end, himself in the process of writing his books.'[53] Care of self, he concludes in his final interview, perhaps effecting the last conscious synthesis of his work with his life, is 'like a movement to articulate one's existence to the point where there would be nothing else before it but the possibility of death.'[54] This is the kind of articulation, he says, that Roussel himself succeeded in effecting towards the end of his life. Roussel's gesture of suicide in Palermo should be read as his statement that 'the work must be set free from the person who wrote it.'[55] So, what conclusion with regard to our question about remembering/forgetting Foucault? Foucault said that 'by treating him as an author like others', he would have felt that he was 'betraying Roussel, normalizing him.'[56] Obviously, not having wished it on Roussel, this is not a fate he would have wanted for himself; anonymity is always preferable to normalization. Noting the comparatively scarce interest the book on Roussel had generated among his commentators he said, 'No one has paid much attention to this book, and I'm glad; it's my secret affair. You know, he was my love for several summers... no one knew it.'[57] Forgetting Foucault? Yes, if this means granting him the kind of anonymity he wanted; i.e., that of not being 'studied' or being represented as a 'figure', as an author. No, if he could be retained as 'a secret affair'; as a clandestine lover.

Footnotes

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Sex Differences in scholastic attainment from year 3 to form IV: A study of trends

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INTRODUCTION

The role of pupil sex as one of the major determinants of scholastic performance is amply demonstrated in the international literature.

Studies of primary school children carried out in the UK and the USA generally indicate that whatever sex differences exist in scholastic performance these tend to emerge clearly and consistently after age 11 (cf. Badger, 1985; Fairweather, 1976; Shackleton & Fletcher, 1984; Shuard, 1982). Studies by Ross & Simpson (1971), Thompson (1975) and Wilson (1972), for instance, show that in verbal abilities like reading and spelling no clear cut boy-girl differences appear before this age.

Studies by Kellmer Pringle, Butler & Davie (1966) and Pidgeon (1960) similarly suggest that this is also the case for arithmetic skills and mathematical ability. In a comprehensive review of the literature on sex differences, Maccoby & Jacklin (1974) conclude that up to age 11 boys and girls are very similar in verbal and mathematical abilities. At age 11, however, their abilities begin to diverge with girls becoming superior in verbal abilities and boys in mathematical abilities.

Borg & Falzon (1995) propose a plausible explanation for the little or no consistency in the occurrence and direction of sex differences. They argue that this may lie in the nature of the items making up the assessment instrument. Indeed, in a report on mathematical performance at age 11, the Assessment of Performance Unit (1980) found that when the examination paper is analysed in its component parts rather than as a whole paper girls perform significantly better than boys in certain areas such as computation while boys perform better in other areas like the spatial (e.g. length , area, volume and capacity). Borg & Falzon (1995) postulate that this may also well be the case in language subjects so that it is quite possible, for instance, to find girls performing better in one specific language area and boys in another. Hence, differences and directions may well be the product of the weighting of the various abilities assessed by the instrument.

Although these UK and USA findings on sex differences may be important and interesting and may have serious implications for educational policies and practices it is here argued that they are not, or should be, directly transferable to the local situation. Cultural differences as well as differences in parental practices, educational philosophies and classroom practices warrant that sex differences in performance in school subjects should be studied in the local context. A small number of Maltese studies have begun to address this need.

Falzon & Sammut (1976), for instance, found that amongst Maltese Form I and II pupils in comprehensive schools[1] girls consistently score higher in Maltese, English and Maths, with the greatest differences occurring in the two languages. Moreover, Ventura (1992) reports that whereas in Forms I and II girls outperform boys in Integrated Science, in Forms III and IV there are no sex differences in performance in Biology and Chemistry; in Physics, however, the boys perform better.

METHOD

Aim of study

The aim of this study is to draw together the most recent findings on sex differences among Maltese children (cf. Borg & Falzon, 1991, 1995; Borg, Falzon & Sammut, 1995; and Borg, 1995). It will seek to present a complete and comprehensive picture of sex differences in performance in Maltese, English and Maths from Year 3 of the state primary school to Form IV of the state junior lyceum. The trends in girl-boy

differences across these eight years of state-provided schooling in what are generally considered to be the core/tool school subjects will be investigated.

Settings

The study was restricted to the primary sector and secondary junior lyceum sector of the state school system. This offered ideal conditions for the purpose of the study as it has national end-of-year examinations, as well as a highly centralised system of education with a clearly defined common curriculum.

Schooling is compulsory from age 5 to 16. Primary schooling is co-educational and spans the 6 years up to age 11. In Year 3 children were streamed on the basis of their performance in school-based annual exams in Maltese, English and Maths held at the end of Year 2. (Since 1989 streaming has been postponed and is now restricted to Years 5 and 6.) Streaming in the subsequent primary years was based on end-of-year national exams in these three curriculum subjects as well as performance in Social Studies and Religion. English is taught alongside Maltese from the first year of compulsory schooling. Towards the end of Year 6, most pupils take their 11-plus Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination which will determine their placement in one of two types of state secondary school: the grammar type 'junior lyceum' or the 'area secondary school'. Junior lyceums and area secondary schools are single-sex schools.

Subjects

The sample consisted of:

- 4123 pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, making up 33.2 percent of the combined pupil population in these three grades (31.7 percent, 34.6 per cent and 33.3 percent of the population in Years 3, 4 and 5 respectively);
- 3460 Year 6 pupils from state and private schools who sat for the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination; this figure represents 78.2 percent of the 4425 candidates;
- 816 pupils in each of Forms I, II and III of the junior lyceum, making up approximately 63 percent of the population figures in each grade;
- 770 pupils in Form IV of the junior lyceum, making up 60 per- cent of the population figures.

Results in the three core subjects in Form IV are not entirely derived from the same sample. Due to strike action by teachers none of the junior lyceums had a complete data set in the three subjects; in each school, at least one of the exam papers had not been administered. Hence it was decided to select the largest possible sample, but a different one, for each of the three subjects. It should also be noted that in these three samples there are predominantly more girls than boys, as is the case in the Junior Lyceum population.

A breakdown of the sample by grade and sex is set out in Table I.

TABLE I
The sample by grade and sex

Grade	Boys	Girls	Total
Year 3	688 (51.2%)	656 (48.8%)	1344 (100%)
Year 4	776 (53.9%)	663 (46.1%)	1439 (100%)
Year 5	719 (53.7%)	621 (46.3%)	1340 (100%)
Year 6	1659 (47.9%)	1801 (52.1%)	3460 (100%)
Form I	408 (50.0%)	408 (50.0%)	816 (100%)
Form II	408 (50.0%)	408 (50.0%)	816 (100%)
Form III	408 (50.0%)	408 (50.0%)	816 (100%)
Form IV:			
Maltese	276 (35.8%)	494 (64.2%)	770 (100%)
English	325 (42.2%)	445 (57.8%)	770 (100%)
Maths	234 (30.4%)	536 (69.6%)	770 (100%)

Measures

The present data set consists of the raw scores in Maltese, English and Maths. Exam papers were scored out of 100; the English and Maths papers were in English. The exams are, like typical school exams, of the omnibus type, that is, essentially heterogeneous in content. The raw scores making up the data set represent therefore a composite assessment of performance in various skills in each of the curriculum subjects tested. None of the three exams was piloted or standardised before administration. The exam papers were as follows:

- Years 3, 4 and 5: national end-of-year exams (Borg & Falzon, 1991 & 1995)[2];
- Year 6: the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination (Borg, Falzon & Sammut, 1995)[3];
- Forms I, II, III and IV: national end-of-year exams (Borg, 1995)[4].

The end-of-year exams and Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination are organised and administered by the Test Construction Unit of the Department of Education under strict examination conditions.

Procedure

The data pertaining to Years 3, 4 and 5 and Forms I, II, III and IV were collated from the record sheets of classes in all the 8 junior lyceums and 12 primary schools selected at random from schools in Malta and Gozo. The Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination scores were drawn from the data base of the Test Construction Unit.

RESULTS

Before considering the major results, some caution must be exercised when interpreting the results. The results in Years 3, 4 and 5 are based on data obtained from boys and girls in state primary schools. About two-thirds of primary aged children attend the state school sector and it is not clear in what ways these children are different from those who attend the private/church school sector. Hence, the trends reported hereunder for children in the state sector may not necessarily be repeated in the population of children in the private/church primary sector.

With regard to results in Forms I to IV of the junior lyceum two important points need to be made. First, the junior lyceum population is a 'survivor' population; a population of children who was successful at the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination. Hence, they are also a relatively homogeneous group in scholastic attainment. Second, in the junior lyceum population there are proportionally fewer boys than girls. For instance, in the present scholastic year, out of the combined pupil populations in private/church and state secondary schools 48.3% were boys. However, in the junior lyceum population only 39.7% were boys. Although, a proportion of boys as well of girls would opt to attend one of the private/church schools it is clear that far more boys than girls attend these schools (54.2% and 45.8% respectively). Although there is no evidence that the boys and the girls who enter private/church schools are the high achievers one can safely assume that at least they must be among the best achievers to have been able to pass the exams for entry in these schools. In which case the remaining boys' sample in the junior lyceum may lack much more of the best elements in that sex group than the girls' sample. Hence, the boys' sample may be somewhat biased. In any case, as indicated above, the trends reported hereunder for pupils in the junior

TABLE II

Sex differences in scholastic attainment: summary of MANOVAs at Year 3 to 6 and Form I to III; summary of t-tests in Form IV.

==Year 3

Univariate F-tests with (1.1336) df:

Variable	*F-value*	*p <*
Maltese	28.613	0.001
English	28.512	0.001
Maths	6.638	0.010

== Year 4

Univariate F-tests with (1,1431) df:

Variable	*F-value*	*p <*
Maltese	54.512	0.001
English	45.438	0.001
Maths	11.995	0.001

== Year 5

Univariate F-tests with (1,1332) df:

Variable	*F-value*	*p <*
Maltese	72.263	0.001
English	44.948	0.001
Maths	16.167	0.001

==Year 6 (Junior Lyceum Entrance Exam)

Univariate F-tests with (1,3452) df:

Variable	*F-value*	*p <*
Maltese	126.538	0.001
English	95.797	0.001
Maths	0.224	0.640

== Form I

Univariate F-tests with (1.808) df:

Variable	*F-value*	*p <*
Maltese	5.321	0.025
English	1.180	0.280
Maths	4.880	0.030

== Form II

Univariate F-tests with (1,808) df:

Variable	*F-value*	*p <*
Maltese	14.803	0.001
English	0.777	0.380
Maths	40.582	0.001

== Form III

Univariate F-tests with (1,808) df:

Variable	*F-value*	*p <*
Maltese	16.677	0.001
English	3.345	0.070
Maths	6.430	0.015

== Form IV

Independent t-test with df=768:

Variable	*t-value*	*p <*
Maltese	5.10	0.001
English	7.73	0.001
Maths	5.33	0.001

lyceum sector may not necessarily be repeated in the population of pupils in the state area secondary school sector or the private/church secondary sector.

Table II, which sets out a summary of the analysis, shows the following results:

- in Years 3, 4, 5 and Form IV there are statistically significant sex differences in Maltese, English and Maths;
- in Year 6, there are statistically significant sex differences in Maltese and English only;
- in Forms I, II and III there are statistically significant differences in Maltese and Maths only.

Figures 1, 2 and 3, illustrating the mean scores for girls and boys in the three core subjects in Years 3, 4 and 5, respectively, show that girls perform significantly better than boys in Maltese, English and Maths.

At the end of Year 6, in the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination, girls outperform boys in Maltese and English (figure 4). There are no significant differences in the sexes' performance in Maths.

In Forms I, II and III, the performance of junior lyceum girls in Maltese and Maths is significantly better than that of junior lyceum boys (figures 5,6 and 7). There are no significant sex differences in English.

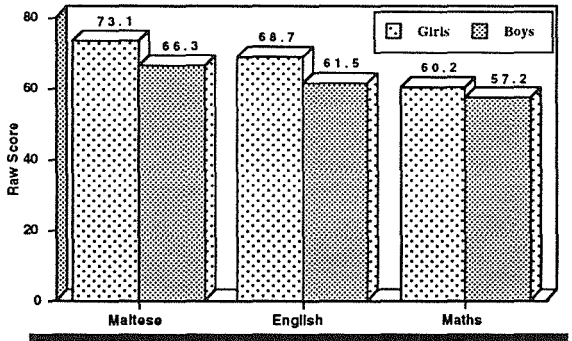

Fig 1. Sex Differences in scholastic attainment at the end of Year 3

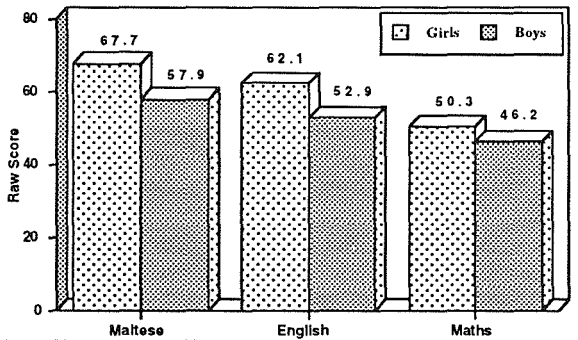

Fig 2. Sex Differences in scholastic attainment at the end of Year 4.

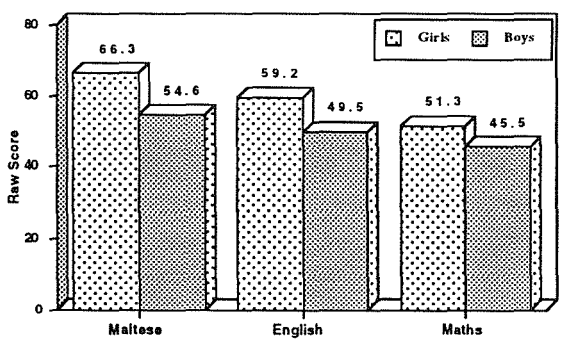

Fig 3. Sex differences in scholastic attainment at the end of Year 5.

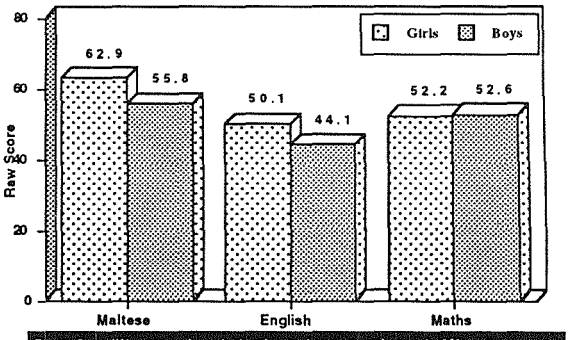

Fig 4. Sex differences in scholastic attainment at the end of Year 6 (Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination).

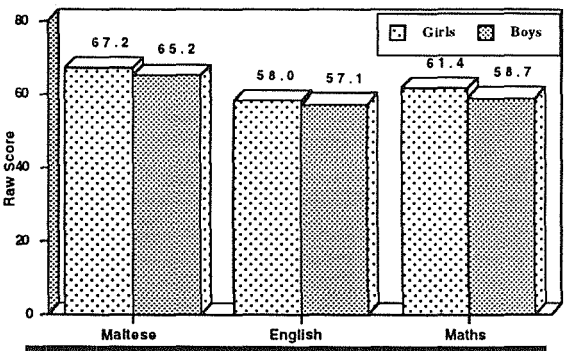

Fig 5. Sex differences in scholastic attainment at the end of Form 1 of the Junior Lyceum

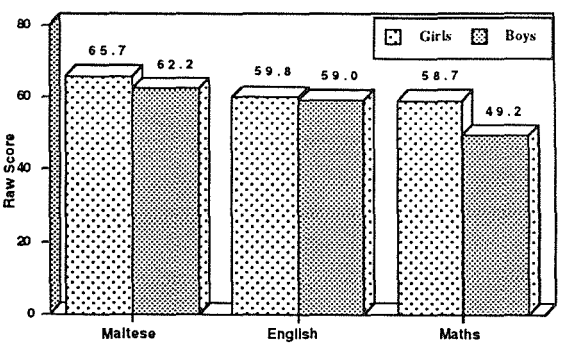

Fig 6. Sex differences in scholastic attainment at the end of Form II of the Junior Lyceum

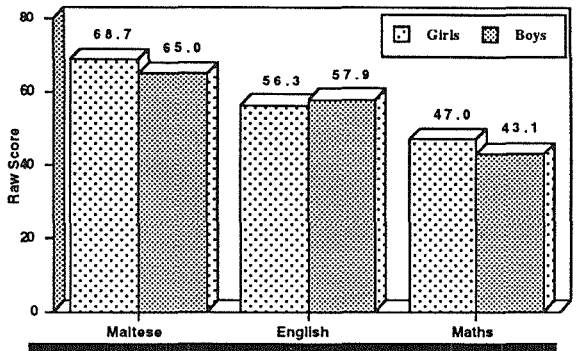

Fig 7. Sex differences in scholastic attainment at the end of Form III of the Junior Lyceum

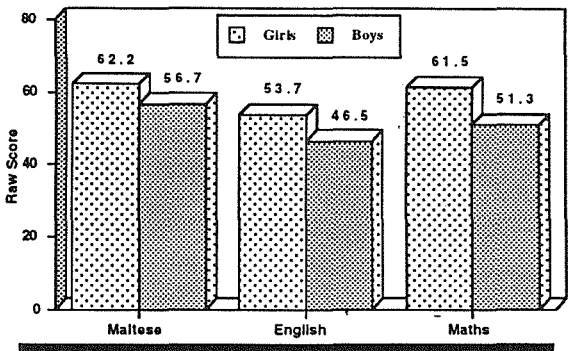

Fig 8. Sex differences in scholastic attainment at the end of Form IV of the Junior Lyceum

Figure 8 shows that at the end of Form IV of the junior lyceum, girls outperform boys in Maltese, English and Maths.

To investigate the presence of any trends in the magnitude of the sex differences the mean boy-girl difference in each curriculum subject in Year 3 to Form IV was expressed in terms of the pooled standard deviation (i.e. the standard deviation in each respective sample as a whole). This was done irrespective of whether the sex difference was statistically significant or not. Table III shows that out of a possible 24 girl-boy comparisons in only two instances did boys perform better than girls. It is also clear from these results that differences are most marked in the two languages; they are generally most accentuated in Maltese and least accentuated in Maths.

Figure 9, illustrating these girl-boy differences in Maltese, shows that the general trend is for differences to increase in magnitude from Year 3 to Year 6, and from Form I to Form IV.

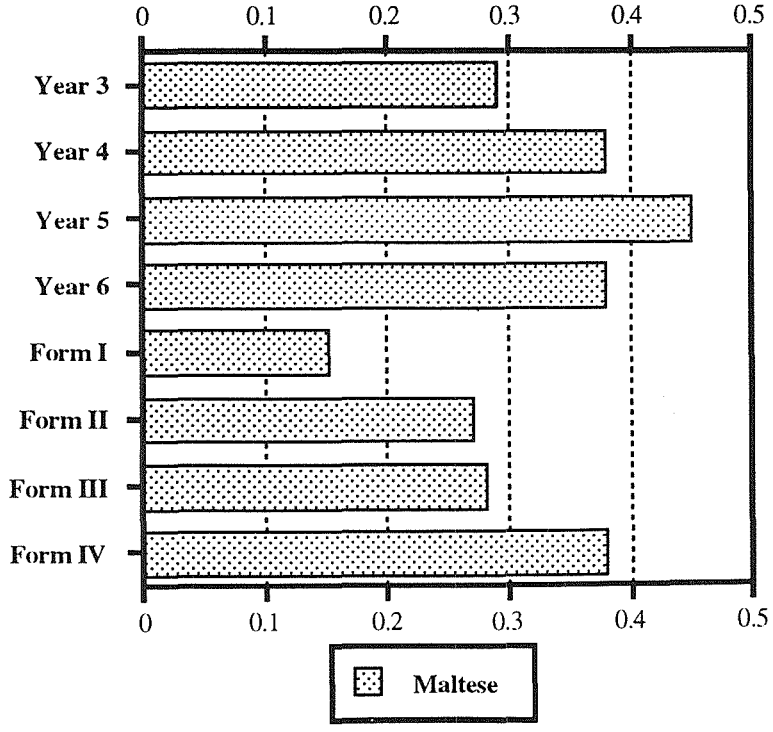

Fig 9. Sex differences in Maltese: trends from Year 3 to Form IV

Although, as is evident from Figure 10, this trend may also be said to be repeated in English from Year 3 to Year 6 the trend over the secondary years is not clear. Indeed, whereas girls perform better in English in Form I, II and IV, the converse occurs in Form III with boys outperforming girls.

In Maths, results show that from Year 3 to Year 5 there is an increase in the magnitude of the sex difference (see Figure 11). Generally speaking this is also the case over the secondary years. In the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination at the end of Year 6, however, boys outperform girls.

DISCUSSION

This paper highlights some important sex differences in scholastic performance: generally speaking, girls tend to outperform boys in English, Maltese and Maths. Most notable is one unequivocal trend throughout: girls consistently perform better than boys in Maltese in each of the eight grades investigated. Except for the results in

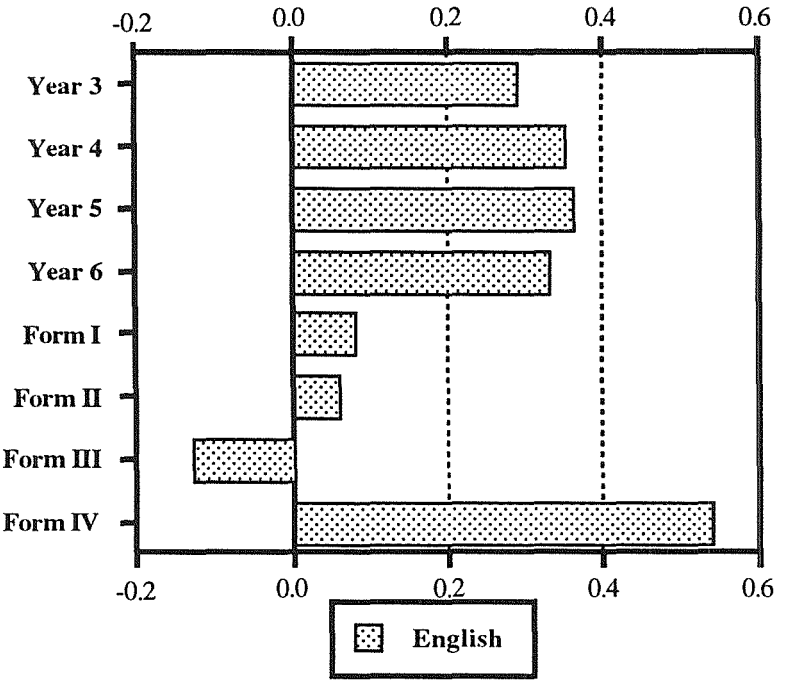

Fig 10. Sex differences in English: trends from Year 3 to Form IV

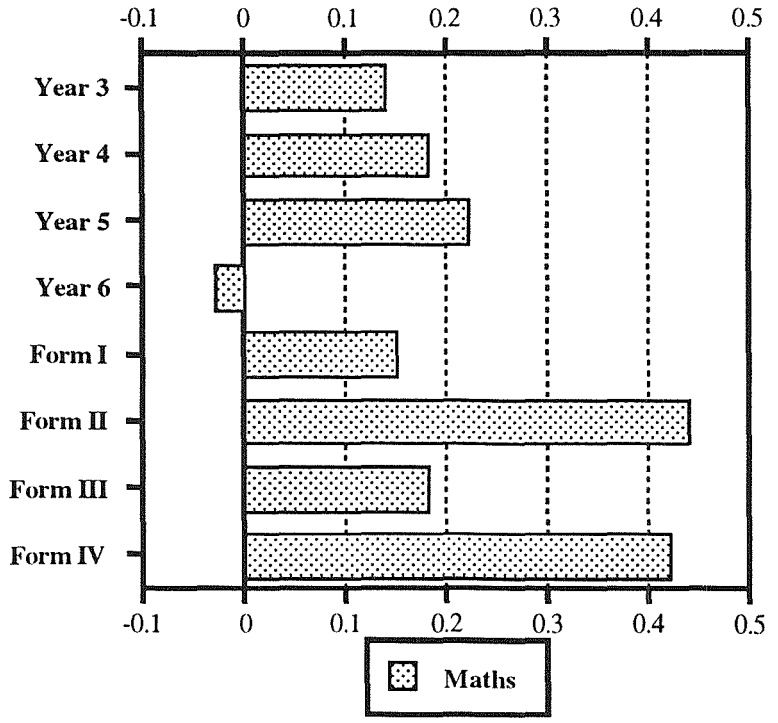

Fig 11. Sex differences in Maths: trends from Year 3 to Form IV.

Maths of the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination, girls also outperform boys (in Maths) at all grades investigated. In English, the trend favours girls in the primary years, whereas in the secondary years there are no consistent sex differences.

The present finding that generally speaking girls outperform boys in school subjects is in agreement with those reported in other researches carried out in the UK and USA (cf. Maccoby & Jacklin 1974). There is, however, one important departure from the general trend in these studies: Maltese girls tend to manifest their superiority in the languages earlier on in age - as early as age 8. Their superiority in Maltese is consistent and becomes amplified over grade level within the respective primary and secondary sector. With regard to the latter sector, sex differences in Maltese are in concordance with those reported by Falzon & Sammut (1976) for Form I and Form II comprehensive schoolchildren.

The girls' superiority in English is not so pervasive: they only manage to re-establish and consolidate their superiority as late as Form IV. This is in contra position to the findings in the subject as reported by Falzon & Sammut (1976).

With regard to performance in Maths, findings are in contra position to those reported in UK and USA studies (cf. Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). There are two important points of departure here: first, sex differences emerge clearly and consistently from as early as age 8; second, in the junior lyceum, it is the girls rather than the boys who are superior in Maths. The results also show that the girls' superiority in Maths generally becomes more pronounced from Year 3 to Form IV.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has provided empirical evidence which unequivocally shows that the formal examination system in the state primary school sector and the

junior lyceum sector of secondary education clearly 'favour' the girls. It is the girls who from as early as age 8 outperform the boys in all or some of the core/tool subjects. This trend is, of course, in sharp contrast with the general findings reported by UK and USA studies, as pointed out earlier in this paper.

Borg & Falzon (1995) argue that the marked and consistent sex differences in Years 3, 4 and 5 may be the indirect outcome of classroom practices in our state primary schools. It is argued that since here it is often the case that compliance with adult demands is generally encouraged and valued, girls, who tend to be more compliant (cf. Maccoby and Jacklin 1974), are likely to find school a more congenial place than boys. Hence, this situation may be reflected in an improved scholastic performance on the part of the girls. This may also very well be the case in the junior lyceum, although one must bear in mind that the boys' sample may lack some of its best elements such that the present findings at this level may be an artifact of this practice.

FUTURE RESEARCH

One problem with the findings reported above is that the magnitude and direction of sex differences are possibly influenced by those aspects of the curriculum subject that are actually being assessed. As pointed out above, the raw scores on which the present findings are based are in reality a composite score rather than scores in specific, clearly defined, abilities. This, of course, leads to the possibility that certain sex differences in a specific skill, as for instance computation, may be subsumed or canceled out because of the heterogeneous nature of the items making up the Maths paper. It is here acknowledged that it is difficult to interpret results when these are based on an analysis of a composite assessment. There is the need for research which investigates sex differences on specific, narrow abilities separately, rather than using global measures. This writer is currently engaged in such a project.

Notes

1. In the 1970s all state secondary schools in Malta went comprehensive. In the early 1980s the grammar school was re- introduced.
2. This data set was collected by Marie Therese Attard-Montalto, Alfred Debattista, Jonathan Mifsud, Renzo Mule-Stagno, Joseph Saliba and Margaret Vassallo for their B.Ed.(Hons.) dissertation.
3. This data set was drawn from the data base of the Test Construction Unit.
4. This data set was collected by Natalie Muscat and Sharon Sammut for their B.Ed.(Hons.) dissertation.

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TABLE III

Sex differences in Maltese, English and Maths: trends from Year 3 to Form IV.

	Means Girls	Boys	Difference between means	Pooled SD	Difference in terms of pooled SD
Maltese					
Year 3	73.11	66.32	6.79	23.67	.29
Year 4	67.66	57.89	9.77	25.77	.38
Year 5	66.33	54.64	11.69	25.56	.46
Year 6	62.93	55.83	7.10	18.93	.38
Form I	67.17	65.21	1.96	12.22	.16
Form II	65.71	62.17	3.54	13.29	.27
Form III	68.70	64.99	3.71	13.15	.28
Form IV	62.17	56.72	5.45	14.45	.38
English					
Year 3	68.67	61.52	7.15	24.92	.29
Year 4	62.13	52.95	9.18	26.44	.35
Year 5	59.17	49.49	9.68	26.54	.36
Year 6	40.13	34.06	6.07	18.55	.33
Form I	58.02	57.05	0.97	12.82	.08
Form II	59.79	58.98	0.81	13.23	.06
Form III	56.30	57.88	-1.58	12.51	-.13
Form IV	53.72	46.46	7.26	13.35	.54
Maths					
Year 3	60.21	57.20	3.01	21.97	.14
Year 4	50.26	46.22	4.04	22.90	.18
Year 5	51.26	45.50	5.73	25.96	.22
Year 6	52.17	52.60	-0.43	25.50	-.02
Form I	61.40	58.69	2.71	17.58	.15
Form II	58.71	49.24	9.47	21.73	.44
Form III	46.96	43.06	3.90	22.02	.18
Form IV	61.47	51.31	10.16	24.76	.41

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Factors determining career choice

Rosanne Borg

The answers that people provide to these questions: why do people work? why do they decide on the fields which they choose? and what factors affect their decision? are very important to career planning and subsequent satisfaction during the adult years. After all, work affects most persons between the ages of 16 and 61, and the decisions adolescents make about their work, occupations and careers will significantly affect their future social relationships and leisure-time activities.

It is evident then that work is a major part of human experience. Many young people appear to sense that it is through work that they must ultimately validate their adult status and acquire a measure of power and self- determination. Work is so central to most of people's daily existence that their entire outlook is affected by it. In essence, a vocational decision implies a lifestyle decision. For choice of career is not an event which can be located at one point in time. It is a process which stretches back into childhood where basic personality characteristics begin to be formed (Stephens, 1970; Gothard, 1985). In making a choice, the individual will seek a career which s/he sees as desirable, as one in which s/he will have the best chance of realising the various needs, hopes and expectations which at the moment of choice s/he believes to be important.

The transition from school to work therefore is a crucial stage in the life of an adolescent. The student may have to decide whether to find a particular job, whether to follow a course or whether to go to university. In a relatively limited period, the student must, for the first time in her/his life, bring together the internal resources and those gained from adults at school and at home, in order to make a wise choice. Undoubtedly, this choice is the most important one, since it will have deep implications for her/his future.

The Diversity of Influences

Educational and vocational decisions are affected by many diverse factors, some of which are easily recognised, while others are more subtle. Factors such as the influence of the family, that of peers and of the school itself, the information available through school visits to places of work, and work experience of students, the availability of occupational information and of the demands for jobs; the difference in age, gender and personal characteristics influence the choice of a career in different ways. Several studies have shown that among the most important influences are those of the family. Arnold et al. (1988); Cherry and Gear, (1987); Mortimer and Kumka, (1982) have stressed how families are seen by most young people as extremely influential when it comes to making decisions or taking advice about their own careers. And according to West and Newton (1983) the family appears to be one of the most important categories of sources of information and help for young people, in their transition from school to work.

Purpose amd Procedure

The present study sought to examine the perceptions of a sample of Maltese fifth form students, with regard to issues relating to career choice. The study, took the form of a questionnaire survey in all Junior Lyceum State Schools in Malta and Gozo, that had fifth form students during the scholastic year 1990/1991. They were chosen on the basis of their similarity, in that all are state schools and all intakes are on the basis of an entrance examination. Moreover, all are single-sex schools and take students from 10+ to 16. At the time the present survey was conducted, Junior Lyceum Schools had 1331 fifth formers which is roughly 61.79% of all maintained State Secondary Schools. A random sample, one in four of these students, 292 in all, represent 13.56% of all Junior Lyceum and State Area Secondary Schools.

A pilot study was carried out in a mixed youth centre with a group of 20 sixteen to seventeen year old adolescents.

This study is part of a larger study investigating factors influencing career aspirations of Maltese fifth form pupils. The collected data was used to consider possible answers to the following questions:

1. Do Maltese parents project their wishes on the sixteen year old (or so) school leaver? or do they leave it to the child's own choice?

2. Do schools help students to make their choices?
3. Which are the life and work goals of Maltese fifth formers attending Junior Lyceums?

Questionnaire

The format of the questionnaire and the items used were developed following a review of the research literature. The interviews with school leavers devised by Moor (1976) and Grant (1987) were taken as a basis. Obviously, these interviews were adapted to the local situation with its socio-economic problems. The listed work and life goals were derived from Super in Kinnane (1971) and Hahn (1984). The occupational classification has been reproduced and adapted from Annual Abstract of Statistics (1988) covering the various types of occupations grouped in six categories.

Results of Question 1

Because of the known influence of home background on young people's ideas, attitudes and aspirations concerning career choice, it seemed worthwhile to discover how much or how little families talked about their own jobs.

Table 1 (i)

Has anyone in your family suggested any particular type of work to you?

	girls (N = 186)	boys (N = 106)	totals (N= 292)	statistical significance
yes	145 (78.0)	76 (71.7)	221 (75.7)	N.S.
no	41 (22.0)	30 (28.3)	71 (24.3)	

Table 1 (ii)

What type?

	girls (N = 186)	boys (N = 106)	totals (N = 292)	statistical significance
A Professional and managerial	13(7.0)	23(21.7)	36(12.3)	< 0.01
B. supervisory and technical	65(35.0)	23(21.7)	88(30.1)	< 0.05
C. shops and clerical workers	60(32.2)	19(17.9)	79(27.1)	< 0.01
D. personal service (manual and non-manual)	7(3.8)	5(4.7)	12(4.1)	N/A
E. others (skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled workers)		6(5.7)	6(2.1)	N/A
F. no response	41(22.0)	30 (28.3)	71(24.3)	N.S.

Examination of the data reveals that in nearly all the students' homes, work was certainly discussed, in fact only 3.8% of the students said that the subject was never raised. Furthermore when asked whether the family did suggest particular types of occupations to them, the findings reveal that a greater proportion of girls than boys (35% vs. 21.7%) was advised by their family members to take jobs in the business world such as accountant, designer and other executive grades. Again, more girls than boys (32.2% vs. 17.9%) are desired by the family to group themselves in the C category (shop and clerical). Nearly the same number of boys and girls were asked to follow the D category (Personal Service Occupation), while the E category which includes skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers was suggested to boys only. Furthermore, the data demonstrates that families expect boys more than girls to occupy higher positions in the professional and managerial occupations, in fact, the difference is statistically significant at the .01 level.

One of the several points made in Kelly's (1989) paper which considered the development of career preferences was the strong influence of perceived parental wishes on young people's plans. It is interesting to note that when asked to state what occupation they wished to take when they left school, a surprisingly high proportion of students in this study, 65 out of 88, (73.8%) in the B category have selected the same employment as suggested by their families, and 20 out of the 36 students (55.5%) in the A category expressed a similar preference. Occupational suggestions by members of the family then do affect the vocational goals of youth by influencing their aspirations similar to those held by their parents. This conclusion was also reported by Kelly (1989) and has also been observed by other researchers in this field (e.g. Moor 1976; West and Newton, 1983).

In exploring the social context of their career decision, students were shown a list of 13 possible sources[1] of help and were asked to specify who had mostly encouraged them in their decision. Examination of the data shows that parents and siblings and other relatives are people to whom students mostly turn when involved in vocational planning. The sources cited as being least influential are parents' friends and neighbours. The assistance of school friends however, is shown to be more popular amongst girls than boys. Vacancies advertised is rated equally by both sexes. Guidance teachers are shown to be a better source of information for boys, in fact, they view guidance

teachers more as an effective source of help than do girls. For girls the necessity of self-direction seems to be more important than the advertisement of vacancies, while boys give equal importance to these two sources.

The students knowing that their parents are influential in their career plans turn to them for help with career planning more than to anyone else. This finding among Maltese students reinforce the report made by Siann et al (1990) that most young people consult with their families when making their career choices and give some thought to the impact that their career choice may have on their families.

Schooling as a Factor Affecting Vocational Choice

As indicated previously choosing a career is one of the most important decisions of anybody's life since this is a break into the adult world - a world of decision-making and choices, of options and preferences, of responsibility and self-help (Dibden and Tomlinson, 1981). No less important than family and neighbourhood in affecting vocational choice is the school (Grant and Sleeter, 1988). As early as the age of 13[2], students have to make a decision by selecting the subjects they will study in the next three years leading to any school leaving certificate. Kelly (1988) reports that decisions made after this point have a direct and important influence on later occupational choices. Although not recognised as such by the pupils, perceived support from parents and teachers is found to be an important predictor of children's option choice at school. In many cases, what happens is simply that certain subjects are either excluded because the student shows no proficiency in them at the time of choice, or are rarely chosen by either sex. To some extent this process has a restricting effect on the range of occupations school leavers can hope to enter (Gothard and Goodhew, 1987). On the other hand, the fifth formers who has pursued her/his favourite school subjects may find that they are the wrong mixture for the course s/he now wishes to follow[3].

Results of questions 2 and 3

Subject Options

The present study (as in Grant's [1987] and Darmanin's [1991] surveys) shows that interest in the chosen subject/s and their future occupation are considered to be the two most important reasons for both girls and boys when choosing options. In fact there was general agreement among the Maltese students that the subject option they chose at the end of form 2, will help them in the future of their career. Significantly (.01) more girls are of the opinion that their subject choice will be of great help.

It seems that girls are more likely to have a job in mind when choosing options ($p<.05$), while more boys seem to give greater importance to their aptitude at the subjects ($p<.05$). This finding conforms with Darmanin's (1991) survey result which showed that more boys felt that they were good at the subject than girls (50% boys as opposed to 40% girls) when they were asked to give the reason for their subject option.

While 69.8% of the boys and 65.5% of the girls were determined not to change their subject option, even if they had the opportunity to do so, 32.9% of the sample felt a desire to change their subject. The percentage of students who wished to drop their subject in relation to the total number of students in that particular subject was 34.8 in sciences, 28.0 in commerce, 21.4 in arts, 42.5 in languages and other subjects.

Career Guidance Provision

Table 2
The way guidance teachers talk to students

ways	girls (N = 186)	boys (N= 106)	totals (N = 292)	statistical significance
individually	8 (4.3)	12 (11.3)	20 (6.9)	< .05
together in class	98 (52.7)	35 (33 0)	133 (45.5)	< .01
individually and together in class	61 (32.8)	36 (34.0)	97 (33.2)	N.S.
no response	19 (10.2)	23 (21.7)	42 (14.4)	< .01

When questioned about the views regarding the kind of help guidance teachers offer, quite a high percentage of students answered that they do receive help in the choice of their careers. However 14.4% of the sample said that they received no careers education whatsoever.

Perhaps the most worthy finding from this data is that 34.2% of the students reported that they talked matters over with their guidance teachers only once, while another 36.3% said that this is done every term. It should be noted (Table 2) that 52.7% of the girls and 33% of the boys reported that communication between them and the guidance teacher is restricted to the class with the whole group of students present and the difference between sexes is significant at .01 level. Whereas about the same proportion of girls and boys said that the guidance teacher speaks to them indi-

vidually and collectively in the classroom, only 11.3% of the boys and 4.3% of the girls said that s/he speaks to them individually and again the difference is significant at .05 level.

Evidence gathered suggests that more boys than girls (on their own accord) ask guidance teachers for help, and again more boys than girls view them as an effective source of help. Over 55% of the total sample, do not seek the assistance of guidance teachers. Perhaps not surprisingly, guidance is viewed by students as invaluable in careers decision. The majority of students (girls significantly more than boys at the .05 level) said that they would welcome more careers information, in fact there is also an expression of need for suggestions of new alternatives.

Table 3

The ways that schools help students with career planning

ways	girls (N = 186)	boys (N = 106)	totals (N = 292)	statistical significance
visits to work places				
i. provided	89 (47.8)	54 (50.9)	143 (49.0)	N.S.
ii. not provided	97 (52.2)	52 (49.1)	149 (51.0)	
visits to higher sec. schools				
i. provided	77 (41.4)	40 (37.7)	117 (40.1)	N.S
ii. not provided	109 (58.6)	66 (62.3)	175 (59.9)	
provision of films/videos				
i. provided	8 (4.3)	10 (9.4)	18 (6.2)	N.S
ii. not provided	178 (95.7)	96 (90.6)	274 (93.8)	
provision of pamphlets				
i. provided	78 (41.9)	49 (46.2)	127 (43.5)	N.S
ii. not provided	108 (58.1)	57 (53.8)	165 (56.5)	
talks by people in different industries				
i. provided	61 (32.8)	52 (49.1)	113 (38.7)	<.01
ii. not provided	125 (67.2)	54 (50.9)	179 (61.3)	

As Table 3 indicates schools are providing some kind of help to the students in their career planning. But it is significant that in each way of this help, the percentage of 'not provided' is always higher to that 'provided'. Interestingly enough, it is to be noted that the help provided to boys is always higher than that to the girls except on one item, that is visits to Higher Secondary Schools.

Student's Occupational Values

What an individual values in work itself, as well as the rewards it offers, is presumably internalised in her/his vocational development and influences her/his choice of occupation. So a person's selection of a vocational field depends generally on the degree of importance s/he places upon life goals. In contrast with previous research in England (Rauta and Hunt, 1975; West and Newton, 1983) which indicates that job security was the most important factor in the choice of

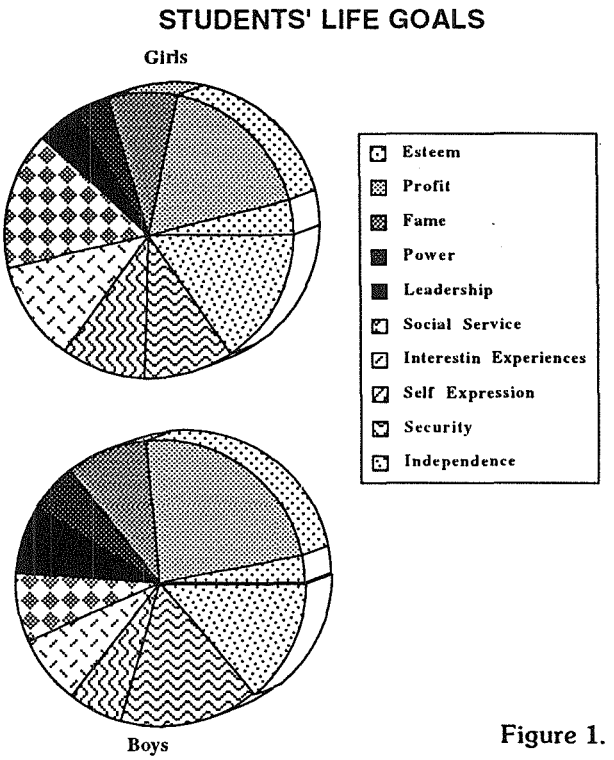

Figure 1.

a job for all groups in their sample, in this study the money aspect is considered to be the prime motivating factor in career selection for both sexes. This is followed by opportunity for helping others and having interesting experiences for females, and job security and independence for males.

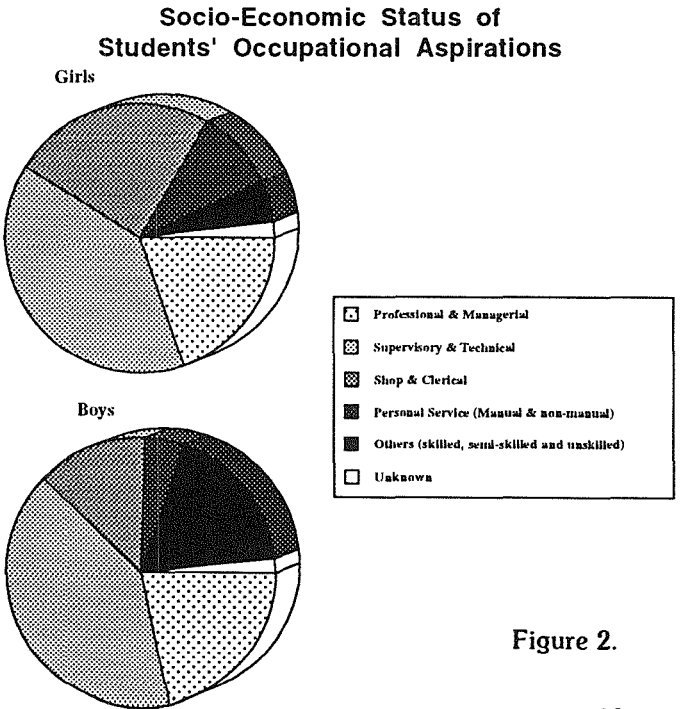

Figure 2.

Esteem and power were viewed as being the least important by both girls and boys in the career planning process.

Girls tended to rate fame and leadership lower in importance than did boys, but only in leadership is the test significant at the .01 level. Expression of oneself appeared to be more favourable to the girls.

Students' Aspirations

Occupational values held by students in this sample, constitute an essential and important element of their motivational structure and it may provide invaluable insights into the decision-making process.

When asked to state what future occupation do they intend to follow when they left school, only 6 out of the 292 students indicated that vocational choice is still an area of indecision. The majority of students of both sexes restricted their ambitions to the supervisory and technical occupations, while a substantial number spread their jobs to the other categories. It is often pointed out that girls limit their career plans to a narrower range of occupations than boys (Furlong, 1986; Darmanin 1991). As Fig 2 shows, this pattern does not result in this study. Maltese girls are recognising today that life may hold more for them than homemaking. This may be due to two factors: girls have better opportunities to pursue a higher level of education; and a wider range of jobs is available to girls.

The findings show that young women are becoming career-oriented, in fact, the girls in this study seem to be deviating from the traditional feminine role in that they have long-term career goals which are central in their future plans. This can be partially explained by the emphasis females place on further education as an important consideration in job aspiration, and also by the way girls (though still in the minority) plan to pursue the traditional male-oriented careers of accountancy, journalism, computer programming and computer engineering.[4]

The reverse is not true for boys, whose future aspirations do not show any tendency towards 'female' choices. No boy out of the 14 who chose category C (Shop and Clerical) think of becoming secretary, neither did any boy out of the 45 in category B (Supervisory and Technical) chose to be a nurse or school teacher of the primary level.

Figure 2 illustrates that many more males than females wish to enter skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations ($p < .01$). In other words, this might suggest that girls' aspirations are higher than boys'. The present results, however, still highlight the fact that boys would more likely occupy higher positions in the occupations than girls, in fact, only 18.3% as compared to 22.6% of boys, aspire to the higher administrative, professional and managerial careers. One remarkable feature in the professionat jobs is the absence of dentistry and the insistence of working in a bank by both sexes.

The percentage of students aspiring to the last two categories D and E (Personal Service Occupations and Skilled, Semi-Skilled and Unskilled) is small, but still it points that the proportion of girls aiming for personal service jobs is greater than that of boys.

Students' Life Goals

In an attempt to explore the reasons for choosing their particular future occupation, students were asked to choose one (or more) of the three given motives - enjoyment of chosen work; job security; good wages - and to give any other reason if they wished to. Results show that the main criterion for both sexes was the interest in their future work and the feeling of being good at it. Next in importance for boys came good wages, job security and other given reasons. On the other hand, girls attached more importance to job security and they ranked reasons of their own above good pay.

When describing in their own words why they wished to take up the career or occupation they chose, students generally gave reasons which were expressed in positive terms. By far, the most frequently mentioned reason given by girls was the opportunity to be useful to society. Other reasons included meeting people and haivng interesting and exciting work. As far as boys are concerned, most gave different reasons.

Trial Work

Work experience plays a most important part in the lives of many school leavers, since they gain a better appreciation beforehand of what the various types of work involve. When questioned whether they have done casual jobs 28.4% of the respondents in the survey said that they did at some stage. Girls were less likely to have had work experience than boys with 19.9% of girls and 43.4% of boys having done part-time jobs before they were interviewed. Of these students, 5.8% claim that their part-time job has some connection with their aspired future employment.

Conclusions

In concluding it is worthwhile to mention that Malta has experienced changes in both education and availability of work. Besides, Malta had to pass through political changes along with their social consequences. The Island became Independent in 1964, was declared Republic in 1974, and has applied for membership in the European Economic Community in 1990. All these changes affected and will affect Maltese families, according to their members' age group.

The primary objective of this report was to demonstrate that among the most important influences on the educational and vocational decisions of school leavers are still those of parents. This conclusion is corroborated amongst others by Siann et al., 1990; Arnold et al; 1988; Risk, 1987 and Bratcher, 1982. Due to the impossibility to give - within this frame of presentation - a complete picture of all the findings of the project, only some major trends have been described. From the present study it has been proved that parents, and particularly the fathers regarding boys, are the main source of influence in the choice of a career among the fifth form students attending Junior Lyceums during the scholastic year 1990/1991. This is confirmed by a study on the philosophy of adaptation in education in Malta. In fact, Calleja (1988, p. 31) writes that "Faced with this situation ..the family begins to assume an important role in decision."

As regards the importance of the school and the students' work and life values, the above data reveals that the future occupation was viewed by the majority of students in this sample with the criteria of profit. In the case of boys the difference of proportion test was significantly higher to that of girls (<.05). Although guidance teachers gave priority to good pay in their information to all students, yet, the motive for choosing a future career was indicated by both sexes as the enjoyment of work. It seems that although there is a trend of independence among students still they are expecting more help from their schools. According to the respondents more time should be spent on careers advice and work experience. Students seem to be in dreadful need of a more adequate system of vocational counselling and vocational preparation. The following facts are also to be given due consideration. During the period of the survey, the first career exhibition was introduced by the guidance unit.[5] It seems therefore, that an effort of harnessing human potential is being suggested by widening the circle of people investing in education. The whole community should be included and not just the school and the parents (Bro. Sciberras, 1988).

Preparing young people for employment, involves providing them with knowledge of the world of work in general and also more detailed information and advice about specific job opportunities. Educators therefore, can affect students by recognising their dreams, acknowledging their very real attempt to make sense of the immediate world in which they live (Grant and Sleeter, 1988). Maltese guidance teachers are today encouraging young women and men to enter the occupation they so desire and thus, are helping to eliminate the non-traditional occupational choices. By doing so, they help students to reject the stereotypical idea that males are better at certain subjects than females, and vice versa, which might discourage boys or girls from entering a certain profession.

Moreover, on account of the drive against the discrimination of sexes, more openings are being provided for females in their future occupations. Rejection of sex stereotyping indubitably enables both male and female youths to consider, as stated earlier in this study, a wide range of careers when making their vocational choices, as well as giving female adolescents more encouragement and guidance in preparing themselves for a wider array of vocations in fields from which women have histoncally been excluded.

Work experience, if co-ordinated with school work, has educational values and becomes a valuable part of the total school experience (Bent et al. 1970). In this study, it does not result that this has been the case. Such an experience, or 'trial work' where for example a two week is set aside during each term for adolescents to work in employment of their choice, definitely widens the range of their adult friendships, and provides a down to earth opportunity for learning to get along with people - peers, superiors and subordinates. Work experience visits give students a much more acurate picture of the world of work and makes the transition from school to work easier.

Furthermore, the present study indicates suggestively that among future groups of fifth formers the criteria of profit will be further strengthened. The choice of their career will be not the social status of a profession, but the productivity of their occupation and its financial aspect.

Perhaps the most important conclusion of this study is that parental influence, expressed either con-

sciously or unconsciously, is quite strong on any youth's choice of career. In their everyday life, parents cannot avoid placing values on different occupations and the young school leaver comes under this influence. In fact in accordance with Nielsen (1987) the present study indicates that although one may think that youth's vocational decisions are more powerfully influenced by their educational experiences than by their families, yet statistics show otherwise.

Therefore, parents must see to it to provide their child with as many experiences as possible so that s/he can try out her/his abilities and discover where her/his potential lies. As Palmer and Cochran (1988) rightly say, they, as parents, have the advantages of greater knowledge of their children, and so they are to give personal attention to help their siblings, sort out ideas, information and values. They must realise that the period of transition between school and work is a time when adolescents need particular guidance and encouragement. For when choosing a career one is, in effect, choosing a means of implementing a self-concept. From the personal interpretation of the data it is hoped that the result of this study will be enlightening in regard to future policies. Future policies have to consider the changes in society and its adaptations to these changes.[6] Undoubtedly, the educational system is not restricted to the eductional institution. So, radical changes must come about through means other than changes in the educational system.

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Notes

1. Father, mother, siblings, other relatives, guidance teachers, other teachers, school friends, other friends, father's friends, mother's friends, neighbours, vacancies advertised, self.
2. As from June 1994 students have selected subject options at the end of Form 3, at the age of 14.
3. Although theoretically few doors are closed to women today for an individual can, of course, enter a career taditionally associated with the opposite sex, such as engineering for females and couriers for males, still s/he may face discrimination both in receiving training and in getting a job (Darmanin 1991).
4. Today's 16 (or so) year olds have the choice of a wide variety of courses of higher education and of careers to which they may lead.
5. Free pamphlets intending to help parents and teachers with advice on career choice and to help students to get to know more about specific careers are being published.
6. The introduction of the family law in Malta will influence the new generations on their outlook of work.

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A Small State perspective to education? A Review Article

Godfrey Baldacchino

BRAY, Mark & Steve PACKER (1993) Education in Small States: Concepts, Challenges & Strategies, Oxford, Pergamon Press (Volume 13, Pergamon Comparative & International Education Series) ISBN 0-08-041033-2, xxix + 245pp + Bibliography + Index.

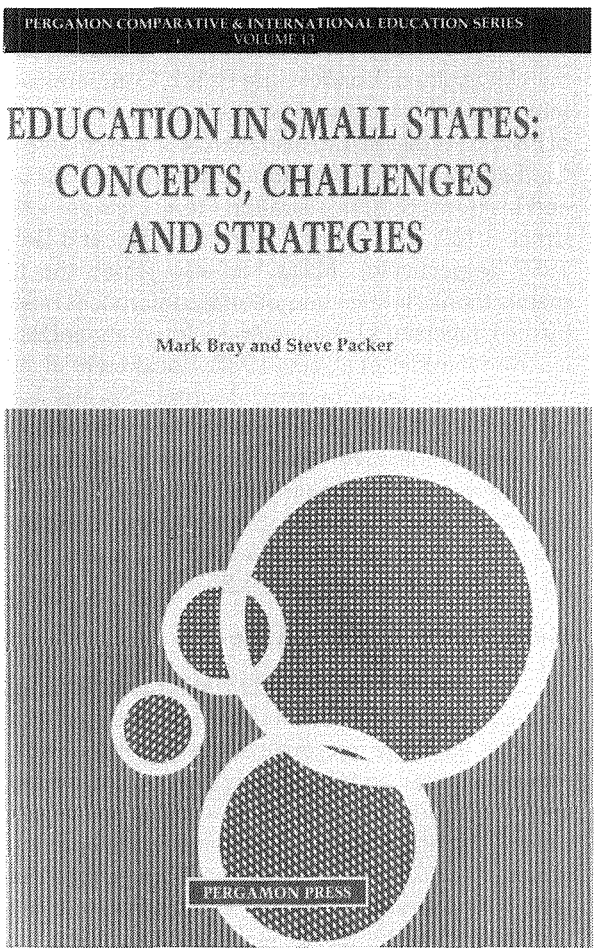
Even a cursory glance at this neat hardback volume with a 400- plus item bibliography is enough to confirm that concern with the condition of the world's smallest, and arguably least significant, states has definitely come a long way. From the flotsam and jetsam of empire, the world's contemporary small states and territories have managed to generate substantial interest in their own predicament to erode the fallacy that out of sight is invariably out of mind.

A Bountiful Population...

If there is anything not controversial about small states, it is that the world is full of them. Irrespective of what constitutes small - a definitional problem which is bound to remain contentious because of the relativity of the term - any classification would carry along with it a bountiful collection of jurisdictions straddling the globe. There are some 36 politically independent small states with a resident population of less than one million on the world's political map today; and there are over 40 other small, still politically dependent yet administratively distinct, territories with an equally small population. Evident concentrations occur in the Eastern Caribbean, the South Pacific, the Persian Gulf and the Western Indian Ocean.

...But Sparse Consideration

Nevertheless, in spite of such bounty, there has been a fairly obvious sociology of absence at work here, a subtle yet pervasive historical process of negation which manifests itself in the absence of the consideration of the predicament of small states and territories. The reasons for this are various: Marketability dictates and print run considerations obviously penalise the marginal and peripheral unless depicted in accordance to some tantalising stereotype; remoteness and isolation makes communication between



such territories financially prohibitive, so that they have little opportunities to cultivate comparative research or dialogue; and a strong cultural disposition towards the metropole (typically the former colonising power) makes such small territories and their policy-makers rather indifferent to the plight of similar small states elsewhere.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, to find that the main agencies willing and able to carry out such an exercise of ventilation, of a country-specific or comparative kind, have been international bodies committed to promote the interests of their members, of which small states typically constitute a significant and vocal sub-category. These have included the International

sub-category. These have included the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of UNESCO in treating educational policy and planning - (e.g. Atchoarena 1993); The United Nations, particularly via the secretariat of its standing conference on Trade & Development (e.g. UNCTAD 1985a,b); and the World Bank (given its involvement in country programmes concerning economic development strategies). Other notable and sustained contributions have been forthcoming from the Institute of Education of the University of London, the British Comparative & International Education Society, the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, Canberra and the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration - (e.g. Lillis ed. 1993; Brock 1980; Throsby & Gannicott 1990 and Baker 1992 respectively). Malta has also joined the lists mainly thanks to the international conferences hosted by the University's Foundation for International Studies (Kaminarides et al. eds. 1988; Lockhart et.al. eds. 1993; World Development Journal, Special Issue Vol.24 No.2, 1993). But probably the most sustained and prolific initiative of all has been the Education Programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The wealth of data and comparative insight emergent from this programme are acknowledged as 'central' to the Bray & Packer volume(text p.25).

Remedying the Balance

The Bray & Packer 1993 volume comes across as a commendable contribution to the sparse comparative literature on small states generally, with a focus on issues pertaining to education. As declared by the authors, the text is conceived as an invitation towards a rectification of the dearth of international inquiry on small states generally. It brings together a series of papers which its two authors had published previously, alone and in conjunction with others, over a span of some 7 years in a variety of international journals (Attwood & Bray 1989; Bray 1990, 1991; Bray & Fergus 1986; Bray & Hui 1989; Packer 1991). These are supplemented by new material, both of a conceptual and of a case study inclination, making the text stand easily on its own as a compendium on small state theorisation grounded in a wealth of data. It would be fair to state that the collection represents the most exhaustive consideration of the issue of education in small states to date, with a bias in favour of former British colonies. The two authors after all can not only boast of vast personal experience in most of the world's small states and territories but also an impressive set of publications to their credit in the field, mainly through their involvement in various initiatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat (e.g., Bray ed. 1991; Bray et.al. 1991; Bray 1992; Packer 1989).

Layout

The book is organised in four main sections. The first proposes an overview of small states from the perspective of key organising themes: The definition of size, statehood and international relations, economic development, social relations and political order. A similar outlook colours the second section which, taking education as the key category, sets up a framework for the appraisal of its provision and administration, with implications on curricula, examinations, certification, aid management and regional cooperation. The third section is devoted to case studies: Formerly published but updated material on Brunei Darussalam, Montserrat and Macau is joined by two new country reports, on Bhutan and the Solomon Islands. The concrete and specific are used to good effect to operationalise the conceptual baggage concerning educational issues teased out earlier; while respecting the unique historicity of each country's situation. The fourth and final section reviews from a comparative perspective, the concepts, challenges and strategies suggested by the earlier arguments as informed by their empirical deployment.

Key Concerns

The concern which seeps through the Bray & Packer volume is distinctively twofold. The first is to present the population of small states and territories as distinct ecologies, with an idiosyncratic cluster of advantages and disadvantages which cry out loud for evaluation on their own terms. This is an important principle: The authors may have felt obliged to prop up the allegation, now an established Commonwealth Secretariat slogan, that small states "have an ecology of their own" (see text p.230). Bray & Packer(1993) is possibly the first volume to address this statement head on, meticulously justifying the conceptual validity of the population of small states and territories. Prior to the publication of this text, one might easily have entertained the thought that this assertion (and its associated universe of cases) was mainly a political and diplomatic expediency, given that, out of 50 member states of the Commonwealth in 1993, 28 had populations below 1.5 million (text p.24).

The second concern of the authors, and following on from the first, is perhaps best illustrated by referring to their concluding remark: "Smallness should not be unduly romanticised; but neither should it be

unduly condemned" (text p.247). Indeed, there are competing and confusing stereotypes which laud microstates with the wonders and tastes of paradise or damn them as prisons and labour camps (e.g. Lowenthal 1992; Naipaul 1972) . Baffled, if not frustrated, microstate citizens refer to the endless stream of international, albeit one presumes well-meaning, foreign advisors who drum up business by proposing ready-made solutions to small states (text p.181). With similar deductive presumption, small states has now been made synonymous with beauty (Schumacher 1973); considered as hopeful candidates for practicality (Bray et.al. 1991); possibilities (McRobie 1981); subject to vulnerability (Commonwealth Consultative Group 1985) and danger (Harden 1985).

This volume bravely strives to break loose from this arrogance. The text comes across as a celebration of patterned diversity. There is no premeditated conclusion as to whether the balance will tip in favour or against the small state's factor endowments; as with Selwyn's (1975) contention, there are clearly both economies and diseconomies of scale.

A Distinct Category?

The authors' key assertion that "small states are of undeniable importance" (text p.xxviii) may indeed prove to be so, particularly to the microstates' own citizens. This may certainly help to justify the *raison d' êtr*e of such a text to the large proportion of readers of this book. These will, more likely than not, have little first-hand knowledge of small states and territories. It may however prove too much to claim that small states and territories constitute a distinctive conceptual category.

Claim for methodological exclusivity reduces the spill-over effect of concepts and tools of analysis which, while patiently culled and developed in the context of smallness, may prove applicable to milieux not limited to the world's lilliputs. The authors actually allude to such spill-over possibilities when considering the (after Benedict 1966, 1967) distinction between small **size** and small **scale**; Demos(1982) and his documentation of multiple role interactions across multiple role sets or Smith (1990) and his attempt at extrapolating small state analysis to the analysis of educational administration in the outer islands of Scotland (see text pp. 37). Such invitations to go beyond the small jurisdiction to small-scale (albeit large-size) settings elsewhere is so far an untapped research domain which is unfortunately not taken up in the theoretical synthesis of this volume.

Indeed, such an extrapolation appears to have been set by the authors in their defence of political sovereignty as not being a significant variable in entertaining the effect of smallness on education. They readily lump together politically dependent territories with politically independent states into the cauldron. The fusing may be debatable, particularly in considerations of international diplomacy and development strategy (e.g. Baldacchino 1993). But it appears strategically wise to down-play this distinction, as Bray & Packer do, especially if the idea is to move beyond and explore whether smallness doesn't only have lessons for itself but also for what is differently small as well... Administrative autonomy, isolation, insularity and peripherality suggest themselves as environmental contours which shape or influence the management and organisation of educational policies and practices, *inter alia*, in a comparable manner, irrespective of juridical status.

A Systemic Vice?

The text nevertheless finds it impossible to escape completely from hypothetical-deductive assertions which stubbornly determine the assessment of small states' assets and liabilities. In spite of the penchant concern for an own ecology, the normative orientation governing such a concern is not exactly home-grown. There remains a strong orientation towards a tabulation and weighing up of pros and cons. This I would consider a common critique of most international organisational focus on small states which, as the authors correctly point out (text p.244), are mostly conducted outside small states rather than within them. The exercise thus seems unduly consumed by the "challenges and strategies" rather than the "concepts"; it is too fervently taken up by the imperative to transform and upgrade. The orientation is definitely towards change and development, rather than understanding (Commonwealth Secretariat 1989, p.2). Nothing wrong in that; except that, in so doing, it is parameters, blindly accepted as globally relevant and bred beyond the small state, which are the implicit benchmarks.

The claimed ecological distinctiveness does not, it seems to me, spill over beyond the strategic. The broader environment is a given, much like a functionalist, systems analysis. What ought to be is often dictated by dispassionate and aloof impressions and interpretations which fail to appraise fully the social, economic and political logic of smallness. This is in part a consequence of considering small states as 'problems' (Bray 1987); as well as, let us admit, a receptor

cultural orientation which so often makes the microstate policy-maker all too keen to accept, indeed to demand, the prescriptions of international 'experts' in good faith. Hence the urgency to reform easily takes precedence over the challenge to come to grips fully with what is.

The odd outcome of such a process is that there are deeper levels of analysis, behavioral rather than institutional, processual rather than structural, which have so far remained largely unresearched and even unacknowledged within the microstate literature. So many prescriptions seem to make sound common sense, from a policy perspective; but these are unlikely to work in practice as conceived on the academic drawing-board because they fail to take into consideration the rich repertoire of reactionary behaviour by policy transmitters (such as bureaucrats or politicians) and policy targets (workers, citizens, consumers); they are not confronted by what is apparently a different blend - that is, practical, empirical, coherent, good sense - at the microstate level which 'infects' the deployment of 'sound' policy formulations.

Is it the transnational, comparative nature of the grand project which inhibits research pursuits in this direction? Or else, are the incumbent researchers oblivious of such levels of investigation? Or again, have they failed to conceive of such levels as idiosyncratic to, or associated with, smallness? The most astute and sensitive would even perhaps be fully aware of these lilliputian characteristics but decide, unconsciously or otherwise, that they had best remain undisturbed. The morality adopted is systemic and policy-driven rather than inclusive of the pursuit of the microstate actor's interest maximising behaviour.

Environmental Wisdom

In spite of manifesting themselves as locations of widespread cultural vulnerability, the behavioural practices of citizens in small states and territories have yet to prove vulnerable to external, especially big-state, researchers. Strategies and challenges cannot presume validity if they fail to take account of 'environmental wisdom': This is the rich, making-sense action repertoire of individuals, in small states as elsewhere, who daily make history by negotiating survival. The potential challenge for both theory and practice in this field is actually to become aware and explore how this behavioural syndrome is developed and deployed. Only then, and in relation to such behaviour, would strategic considerations bear a worthy and privileged relevance.

Examples of such a discrepancy between neat policy rhetoric and practice include: The alleged limitations of economies of scale; the recommendations for a generalist rather than a specialist orientation in education; the imputed ease of communication in small territories; the presumed liability of professional isolation...

Respectful of the 'Mdina defence syndrome' (Chircop 1994), I will not elaborate here on other examples or on the details of how the policy pronouncements may read as dogmatic. Consider my decision as an invitation to the academically curious to seriously take up the investigation of the human geography or anthropology of smallness; while saluting all those who instinctively understand what I mean, even though they may not be capable of putting their finger on it other than in terms of personal experiences, vague and uncorroborated impressions or simply cultural words of wisdom.

Perhaps it is my ascribed status as a microstate citizen which invariably forces me to come to terms with my {small} world as is, prior to rushing to elaborate on what constitutes its challenges (text pp.237) in progressing towards how someone, somewhere, has decided that the goal or model should be. It appears more important (to me at least) to aim first for a domestically and inductively-based sensibility of the environment, as much part of the ecology of smallness as its purported set of merits and demerits.

An Invitation to Peripheral Comparison

There is therefore much to be said for a research methodology which invites Maltese and other microstate policy makers, administrators, practitioners and even clients of the local educational system to consider the experiences not of the United Kingdom, the United States, France or Italy for a change, but the 'periphery of the periphery': The Portugese colony of Macau in South-East Asia; the landlocked Himalayan state of Bhutan; the oil-rich Malay Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam; the small British Caribbean island colony of Montserrat; and the archipelagic independent state of the Solomons in the South Pacific. So many readers may be coming across these names for the first time. The insights to be drawn are as instructive as they are surprising.

My thanks to Mark Bray and Steve Packer for reacting to an earlier draft of this review article. Of course this does not mean that they agree with its tenet.

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Let me dream! Transforming educational futures.

A response to Les Terry, Helen Borland Ron Adams (1993) "To Learn more than I have: The Educational Aspiratons and Experiences of the Maltese in Melbourne (Victoria, VUT Press).

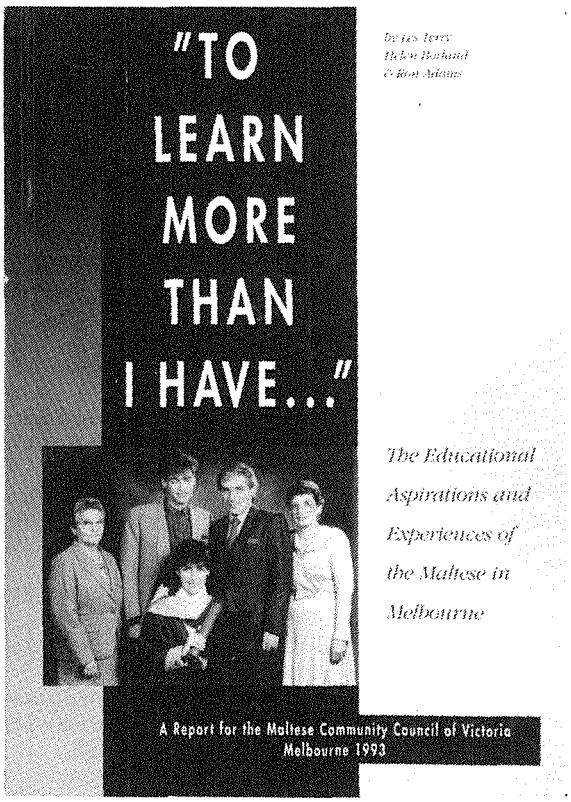
***Ronald G. Sultana**

Introduction

The issue of under achievement in education has preoccupied educators over the past century at least. And yet, there has been little progress made in addressing the problem, to the extent that large groups of students fail to flourish intellectual in a school by environment. Moreover, whether we are looking, at the United States, Europe, or Asia the groups of students who underachieve and who drop out of the educational enterprise have a similar identify. They generally share one or more of the following aspirations: namely, they have what can be broadly called a working class background, are migrants or children of migrants, and/or come from an ethnic "minority" background.

The report I will be critically engaging with in this paper, namely *To Learn More than I have: The Educational Aspirations and Experiences of the Maltese in Melbourne* (Terry, Borland & Adams, 1993) looks squarely in the face of these facts, reflecting on the issue as it applies to one particular group of students who underinvest in education, namely children of Maltese migrants. What I will attempt to do in this paper is to weave a narrative, drawing on the Terry *et al.* study as well as on my own research and experiences in education, to make sense of the lived realities of this group of people. Needless to say, this is in my ways my story, my interpretation, informed as it might be by many interaction with people and ideas. I cannot claim to represent the voices of the subjects we are considering, namely Maltese background children in Melbourne. That would not only be pretentious, but undignified. All that I can offer are some critical reflections which could be of some use to the Maltese community in Victoria as they seek to empower themselves and their children.

My paper is structured in the following manner. I will first present some bio-data about myself. I do that to bridge the gap between me as writer and you as reader, a gap which traditionally constructs me as



expert and you as a recipient of my knowledge. Nothing can be further from the truth. Both you and I have expert knowledge to share, to reflect upon, to confront critically and, often, painfully, as we struggle to dream for better futures for ourselves and our children, in a context of social relations which are, much too often, marked by injustice and imbalances of power. I refuse to construct our interaction as yet another instance of that imbalance, and will, hopefully, speak to you in such a way that your voices, experiences and interpretations can emerge, so that finally, our story of what happens to these children in schools will be constructed democratically and co-operatively. Once I have introduced myself to you, I will then reflect with you on two key questions: "Why do Maltese-background children fail or underinvest in

* *This is a slightly revised text of an address given in November 1993 at the Victoria University of Technology, where the author was Distinguished Visiting Scholar.*

schools?" As we will discover, there are many possible answers to this question, and to the one which logically follows it, namely , "What is to be done?" Lest I raise your hopes too high, only to dash them as you read through what I have written, I must immediately point out that there is no one answer to these central questions. Much in the field of the social sciences is tentative, exploratory in nature, and results of research can be generalised only with great difficulty. At best, what I can offer, in conjunction with the excellent ethnographic study of the Victoria University team, is knowledge which helps illuminate the context we are focusing upon, as well as progressive educational ideas and practices which activists have tried, with some measure of success, elsewhere.

Bio-data.

I am a lecturer at the University of Malta, with research, lecturing, and publications experience in Malta, the U.K., France, the United States, Italy, New Zealand, and now Australia. I have received awards for my work, and in some ways I could, I suppose, be considered to be the fulfillment of the dream expressed by many parents interviewed in the Terry *et al.* study. My parents, both Maltese, are proud of me, and their dream of having one of their children "make it" in the professional/academic world has come true.

But for a long number of years, that dream was quite close to a nightmare, for my parents and for myself. Let me explain, for some of my experiences connect, I believe, with the way school life is lived by the underachieving students who constitute our present focus, and the dark threats I highlight from the tapestry of my past are, for these students, the woof and the wrap of their daily existence.

I remember the rude transition between primary and secondary schools, feeling lost and inadequate because Maltese was no longer used as the medium of instruction. Fields of knowledge which I had grasped now slipped away from me into the mists of a language I was not comfortable with. In the meantime, my class mates, sons of the professional managerial elite, whose home language was English despite the fact they were Maltese, zoomed ahead. I was considered to be, and soon considered myself to be, "slow", less intelligent, a problem student. I remember that catch-all word used so often to distracted me, "describe". And of course, I was considered to be totally responsible for that failing - a mind which, somehow, failed to focus on the important issues at hand. In the second year of secondary school, waiting for that magical birthday which was to transform me into a "teenager", I can still feel the pain and humiliation of failing most of my test paper, and my parents being told that I was not coping, and that I should perhaps be transferred to another school.

I got over that, and struggled, with the help of my parents who, incredibly enough, believed in me and not in the Jesuit fathers, to master English, and to beat everybody else at the cruel game called "schooling" to come first in subsequent years. At University I faced fresh challenges: being apprenticed to British academics who often looked down on, or perhaps worse, did not even acknowledge our difference, taking their world of meanings and their cultural and linguistic frameworks to be the unquestioned referents to which all of us were supposed to approximate. Of course, we never did win that unequal game, and I remember the times I wanted to ask questions, debate, challenge, but the communicative context in which these activities were to take place was alien, and therefore, for most of us, quite inaccessible. A first class honours in English got me a scholarship, only to be told in Britain that my way of speaking that language was quite incomprehensible, and that I had to modify my accent. Of course, when I finally made it to New Zealand, others there were claiming that their way was **the** way to speak the language!

Educational failure, the linguistic medium of instruction, and the relationship between these two have been very much at the core of my experiences of schooling, as they are at the core of the issues considered by the report I am responding to. They remain central to me as I watch my sons start their journey through educational systems, struggling with a linguistic legacy which is both enriching and challenging. My wife is French. She speaks her language to my two sons; I speak English. They learn Maltese from me, my grandparents, and at school. They are becoming familiar with Italian through television. How they survive and do not give up on language - and on us - is beyond me at times. But they, and the personal experiences I have drawn upon are useful in considering the two key questions we have before us.

Why do Maltese-background children fail or underinvest in schools?

Let us turn to the first: Why do Maltese-background children fail or underinvest in schools? As I indicated earlier, this is a complex question. The Victoria University research team has done well to emphasise that we cannot reduce the answer to a

simplistic, reductionist one where "Maltese culture", however that is conceived, is to account for the empirical facts under consideration. The members of the research have done well to insit on a qualitative research methodology which provides us with a fine-grained picture of the complex way in which class, gender and ethnic backgrounds and histories interact dynamically to determine life chances for groups of people. We do need to know the boundaries of the problem - and statistical data will tell us the extent of the under-representation of ethnic minority students in senior schools, for instance. But we also need to know the geography of the problematic terrain we are exploring, and to do that we have to cross borders, as it were, by talking with students and parents as they go about constructing their understandings of the complex realities they experience in different social sites, and particulary in schools.

The results of the research team coincide with those of many others carried out over the past three decades the world over, and suggest that there is nothing particularly or intrinsically "wrong" or "deficient" with students of Maltese origin, even when these feature highly in the "low retention" and "low participation" statistics of the State. Of course, there could be collective experiences and recollections that the Maltese have brought with them from their homeland which influence their perceptions of education. One cannot, for instance, ignore the potential influence of the fact that secondary education for all was only introduced in Malta in 1970, and that tertiary education has always tended to be exclusive and elitist (Sultana, 1991, 1992). These and other experiences, however, will not suffice to explain the statistics presented in the Terry *et al.* report. Let us look at the way such statistics have been explained in the past, and the political and educational implications of each position.

Students as deficient

For a long number of years - roughly between the end of the 19th century when social Darwinism and the theories of race and intelligence were first being formulated and given scientific legitimation, and the 1950s - differential achievement in schools was explained by pointing the finger at the monadic individual (Bisseret, 1979). He or she failed because he or she was intellectually deficient when compared to a number of others who made up the "norm". On this basic understanding of intelligence was constructed an educational edifice which differentiated between the more and the less able students. Intelligence tests, school exam results, teachers' reports and so on legitimised this set-up, until research pointed out that there were curious, regular patterns in the statistics reporting on the social ascription of those who achieved and those who failed at school. Those who failed were, very often, from working class backgrounds, and/or from ethnic minority group (Jencks *et al.*, 1973; Halsey, Heath & Ridge, 1980.) The contention of some was that these groups were somehow deficient in intelligence, either because of poor genetic stock of that particular race, a deprived cultural environment, poor diets or poor parenting. We can easily understand how useful such theories were to those who sought to legitimise their colonial, imperial, class policies by referring to "objective", "scientific" findings!

Such constructions of the problem to explain differential achievement carried with them a logical "solution", namely compensatory programmes which sought to make up for the deficits of the child or its environment. "Head Start" in the U.S. is only one example of such programmes, all of which have generally failed. That failure is to be explained by the theory on which such programmes were based, as we will see below.

The Victoria University team contest aspects of this deficit view explicitly, and, in my view, correctly. While they do not problematise the issue of "race", which today, even from a biological, genetic view, is questionable given the mobility and interchange between different stocks of human beings, they do question the way we think of ethnicity. Their approach lays the foundation for a more sophisticated and democratic undertanding of culture, seen as an ensemble of tools of discourse that groups employ towards exchanging information, states of consciousness, forming bonds of solidarity, and forging common strategies of action (Bowles and Gintis, 1988, p.22). Cultures, in this sense, cannot be deficient, except from the pretentious outlook of the dominant culture which posits itself as an invisible norm by which other ethnicities are judged, often as deviations.

The Victoria University research confirms studies carried out by many others, including myself with working class parents in Malta, namely that parents, whatever their class location, are generally interested in their children's education, and make great efforts to provide support, or to use family and other networks so that such support is given (Sultana, 1992; Wolfendale, 1992). Working class, ethnic minority parents might not always know how to do this in effective ways, and their knowledge of the way the school works is not always complete. But often these

deficits are socially constructed, in that schools and teachers do little to familiarise such parents with the expectations of the system. Needless to say, few schools go out of their way to debate educational matters on parents' own terms.

Modern Psychology and intelligence

I would like to take this further. The ideology of meritocracy - that those who have intelligence and ability, and who make the effort succeed at schooL work and life generally - is so deeply entrenched that few stop to problematise it. This to the extent that parents and children often end up blaming themselves for their lack of success (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). There is always a degree of responsibility that we carry for what happens to us in life, of course. But life-chances are far from being equitably distributed, and sociological research confirms what everyday observation of life around us points out, namely the extent to which society organises life to the benefit of the few privileged and to the detriment of the many others. The latter, identified by their class, gender and ethnicity, have to carry burdens which make a mockery of the meritocratic myth, for we do not all run the same race under the same conditions. Let us then not be too quick to condemn our children who soon realise the extent to which the dice are loaded against them, and loose heart. Let us instead use our frustrations, anger and disappointment creatively and constructively by looking at the system which, I will argue together with the Victoria research team, is the root cause of children's failure.

Some of you might still be thinking: but surely it is the children's fault, or that of their parents, if our students fail. If only they were more intelligent, or more motivated, or made more efforts, they would become the "best professors in Australia", to cite what one of the parents told the Victoria research team. Let me then share with you a simple idea which should help dispel these thoughts, a simple idea which is nevertheless revolutionary in its implications. Modern psychology, which has learnt a lot from the advances in knowledge and understandmg made by sociology, today no longer holds the traditional conservative and limited view that there is a limited "pool of talent" in a sea of mediocrity, there is no "normal" curve of distribution where a few are brilliant, and most fall in the middle range of ability.

It is moreover argued today that we barely develop a tenth of our intellectual ability, and that the unfolding of human capacity is limited mainly by external circumstances - such as social hierarchy and cultural attitudes - rather than by the grey matter we carry internally. "Given the right motivation which", argue Brown and Lauder (1991, p. 15) "is socially determined, at least 80% of the population are capable of achieving the intellectual standards required to obtain a University degree...This view is supported by comparative evidence which shows significant differences in the proportion of students from different advanced industrial societies participating in higher education." Such differences need to be explained in terms of the social, cultural, and institutional differences between nation states. It is often "social hierarchy and the world views associated with it that restricts the unfolding of human capacity, and not the limitations of natural endowment" (Sabel, 1982, p.244). In this context, for example, how are we to explain the fact that 40% of all Maltese background children enter Universities in neighbouring New Zealand? (Dalli, 1993, television interview).

I am not arguing that there are no differences in intelligence, or in types of intelligence, or in learning styles. Some will learn some things faster and more thoroughly than others through the use of one type of pedagogy. Rather, what I am arguing is that we know so little about intelligence that it would be foolish for us to go about measuring it (remember the Jesuit fathers who tried to do that to me, and, may I point out, failed!). It would be equally foolish to underestimate children's ability to learn. A student who fails to learn in one particular situation, with a teacher using a particular pedagogy, will "miraculously" grasp the concept in another situation, within or outside of school. In other words, children flower in different ways, but all have it in them to bloom. That is the key lesson taught to us by Vygotsky who, unlike Piaget, thought of failures in learning as failures in pedagogy rather than deficits in learners.

Unfortunately, however, school systems are generally organised on the premise that few are capable of significant practical and academic achievements, of creative thought and skill, and of taking responsibility for informed judgements. Rather than focusing on the individual's attributes - intellectual, cultural or otherwise - to explain underachivement and underinvestment, we need instead to look at the institutional and social contexts in which the learning process is taking place.

The institutional and social contexts of learning

If we are to explain, therefore, why Maltese backgound children in Melbourne are underinvesting

and underachieving in schools, we cannot, I have argued, talk about deficits in intelligence, in parents, or in ethnic cultures. Rather, we need to talk about deficits in the institutional contexts of learning, in the inability of monocultural schools to develop what Bob Walker (1988), in his superlative study of similarly underachieving students in Sydney, refers to as "touchstone discourse", that common ground of communicative openness where students' class and ethnic experiences, language, lifestyle, values, and preferred learning style are not only recognised and acknowledged, but valued and catered for.

I would like us to consider these issues not only coldly and rationally, but also to get angry and emotional about them - as much as I would get angry and emotional if somebody were to hurt my boys physically. For schools which do not value their students, which fail to recognise, let alone develop the potential that lies in children, are guilty of one of the worst forms of violence, what Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) have referred to as "symbolic violence". This is the violence perpetrated by systems which unilaterally impose themselves, representing as they do the dominant frame of reference, on one and all. You either accept that curriculum, that pedagogy, those world views, that language, or else you are labelled a failure. It is violent because, so powerful are the people who do the labelling, that we end up internalising those labels, and become deeply convinced that we are, indeed, not capable. It is a powerful form of violence because the rules of the game are set by the system itself according to its own criteria, and thus it becomes difficult to resist. I can easily get angry and emotional about this because I too was a victim of this labelling. My five year old boy, who has to juggle four languages and who has to do a lot of integrating before he can handle reading and writing, has also been labelled a "slow learner" by his caring, if misguided teacher. But it is not sufficient to get angry and emotional. It is important to channel these feelings constructively and strategically so that schools do become those places where our children can develop and fulfil their potential.

Our strategies for change have to be based on a thorough understanding of how schools work, for it is only then that we can find those cleavages that allow us to enter and make our voices heard. It is imposible, of course, to make that kind of analysis in this context. I do think it is appropriate, however, to make a few suggestions.

(1) First, I suggest that we need to understand that schools are bureaucratic institutions, with all the good and bad associations that the word "bureaucracy" can conjure up. They process people, often impersonally, and have set rules and procedures which have a tendency to fossilise over time, and which acquire a legitimacy and solidity that hardly ever seem to need justification. Like other bureaucracies, school are organised hierarchically, and the bearers of the roles in this hierarchy often find themelves burdened by a ready-made "script", so to speak, of actions, values, judgements and so on. Innovations, creativity, spontaneity, responsiveness to new situations and groups are all limited by this fact.

If the Maltese, or any other ethnic/class group are to make their voices heard in such a bureaucracy, they would be well advised to have a guide - preferably from among them - so that interests are truly represented and safe-guarded. Such a person or persons would act as mediators with the state's department of education, the school's principal and teachers. These persons would know the language spoken by the bureaucracy, have an intimate knowledge of how the system works, and have status and power to be heard. These mediators would be path openers: ultimately, their role would be to make it easier for emarginated groups to acquire "voice".

(2) My understanding of schools is guided by another important factor. Schools are not only bureaucracies - they are bureaucratic organisations which, consciously and/or unconsciously, represent specific social and political interests. They are, as the Victoria research team represented them, selecting and stratifying mechanisms, inclusive of some groups and exclusive of others. They are communities that are socially constructed in specific ways, generally by the more powerful interests in the local and national community who thereby seek to satisfy their own agendas. These powerful interests are, I would argue, class-based over and above all else, although class interacts in complex d dynamic ways with gender and ethnicity, so that most social institutions can be characterised as valuing white, male, middle class ways of being.

But it is also important to remember that schools, like other social institutions, are sites of struggle and contestation, where different interests clash as each group tries to estabsh its agendas and its programs, to promote its understanding of the world and to gain access to scarce resources. Of course, this struggle is violent because power is differentially distributed among the various groups. As the Victoria University

research team quite rightly ask, why is it that the Maltese community has not succeeded in establishing their agendas in schools, despite its size and long-standing presence? Precisely because of this power imbalance. But also perhaps, because of the lack of understanding as to where to direct frustrations and anger at. Rather than children failing in schools, I suggest we have schools failing children. Rather, therefore, than looking internally and guiltily at itself, the Maltese community should use its ethnic ascription, as it has done back in its homeland, to generate cohesion and focus which, if used capably and wisely could, with the help of the kind of mediation I suggested earlier, penetrate a notoriously impenetrable institution. We do this out of a sense of justice, using a language of rights that the state acknowledges, even if it so often betrays.

(3) A third point I would like to make about my understanding of schools is intimately linked to the previous point, and that is that these institutions are connected to the wider social order, to the rest of society. When young people attend schools, the larger context surrounding them comes to play in a complex manner. If we are to understand why some students do not invest in schools, we have to understand the way they construct their understanding of the usefulness and relevance of that schooling for them. This is where their class, ethnic and gender identities play an overwhelmingly important part and if we are to transform educational futures, we also have to work closely with these students and their parents - as Les Terry and his associates have attempted to do - in order to see what they value.

A few examples will suffice. One aspect which I felt the research team could have focused more upon is the centrality of class, over and above ethnicity, in the formation of educational and career aspirations. Students from working class backgrounds - and the majorily of participants in the research project come from such an occupational group - use material from their close and extended family life as well as from their experience of being Maltese in Australia, and of being male or female within that context - in order to make sense of their past, present, and likely future.

Many working class students and their parents, for instance, consider schooling irrelevant anyway - they prefer the apprenticeship route because that kind of learning by doing makes sense to them, and being on the job places them closer to the point where hiring is so often effected. Uncertainty about material resources for instance, can lead working class students to grab the first employment opportunity that comes their way, especially when the labour market is tight and the economy in recession (Sultana, 1989). There is also plenty of evidence to suggest that working class attitudes to work and to careers is based on the belief that it is best to gain access to a particular job and then, in the words of one of the students interviewed in the Terry *et al.* study, "work my way up" (p.51). Long-term investment in a game called schooling appears even less enticing when credentials no longer guarantee jobs, let alone good jobs. As sociological research has shown, credentials are only a first step in the penetration of lucrative sectors in the labour market. The importance of other qualities, such as class, gender, ethnicity, skin colour, networks, increases in proportion to the burgeoning number of students with credentials (Ashton and Maguire, 1980; Sultana, 1990). Society, in Australia as in most other countries, is after all predicated on hierarchy, and cannot possibly function if the vast majority of students are successful at school. How then would it sort, mark, park and store this unlimited pool of talent? Indeed, Fine and Rosenberg (1983, p.259) argue that "many adolescents who leave school are academically and intellectually above-average students, keenly aware of the contradictions between academic learning and lived experiences, critical of the meritocratic ideology promoted in their schools, and cognisant of race/class/gender discrimination both in school and in the labor force".

My contention is that young people from the margins are aware of this, even though they perhaps do not articulate such processes in the same way as I and other educational theorists have done. They note that the odds are heavily stacked against them, and prefer to "drop out", as we call it, before they are in fact dropped. The following reminiscence from my school days illustrates some of the processes of exclusion that working class, and ethnic minority students experience:

"There was a word which cropped up in a reading lesson during the first year of secondary schooling at the Jesuit college. The word was "sponge", and I read it as "spaunje", which is the way my mum used to refer to it. Everyone laughed. From then on, I was always very careful as to what aspects of my home background and culture I shared with my friends. If I wanted to become somebody in that school, I had to renounce my home, my roots, much that was myself."

Indeed, the observation of classroom proc-

esses - which could be a next step in solving the puzzle as to why Maltese background students underachieve at school does tend to demonstrate the extent to which students from working class and ethnic backgrounds find their realities, languages and dignities undermined. This is not simply a question of the professional quality of teachers present, but the relation between teachers and the dominant classes and cultures in the larger commimity. It is these kinds of experiences which lead students to develop educational and occupational career dispositions and career strategies. As Harvey (1985, p.275) has pointed out for the Australian context, such experiences force students to "initiate a process of differentiation and to choose early school leaving in order to retain control over their future. Some of these students continue to strive for academic success but become early school leavers in order to avoid even more demanding courses which would further undermine their sense of dignity. Others develop a deep alienation from school and adopt resistance and withdrawal modes of accommodation while waiting for the end of compulsory schooling to come".

What is to be done?

The challenge of changing the situation reported in the Terry, Borland and Adams study is not easy. On the plus side we have a state, Victoria, where the issues of multiculturalism and bilingualism are on the agenda, and where there are serious attempts to cater for minority ethnic groups in schools. Of course, there is always an assimilationist agenda in much multicultural discourse, which is why we must start talking of critical or resistant multiculturalism, and of the right for "difference" rather than "diversity" in schools (McLaren, 1992). But in today's global climat of conservatism and "new" right resurgence, that is no mean achievement, and every effort must be made to consolidate and extend such politics of diversity. The Terry *et al* report notes that such politics have been more successful with some ethnic groups, and less with others, including with the numerically strong community of Maltese in Melbourne. This, rightly, gives us all cause for concern. While the Maltese share with other ethnic groups the marginality that class and minority ethnic status imposes, we still need to inquire more deeply into the specificity of their situation.

Language is only one of the starting points, and I would caution the community about the bewitching effect of language, in the sense that it generally subsumes other important issues and can even distract from more central problems (Corson, 1992, p.65). The link between language, identity, and educational achievement is an important if complex and messy one. Much has been written about this issue, and we have moved away from a view which thought of bilingualism, for instance, as detrimental to the child's cognitive and educational development, to one which sees it as generally advantageous, as long as certain conditions are met. While during the first half of this century, the mother tongue of a child from an ethnic minority background was considered to be an obstacle, and that that language should be ignored at school if not actively eradicated, today we are insisting on the importance of consolidating that mother language. Indeed, there is a growing consensus that the child's early education should take place through the medium of its mother tongue, and that the dominant language should not be introduced before the age of eight or nine. This, it is argued, helps build the child's academic selfconfidence and identity, besides laying a language foundation which cannot otherwise be guaranteed. As Corson, reviewing a large number of research reports on the subject, has argued, it does seem "very important that the minority child's first language is given maximum attention up to the stage of middle schools so that skill in using it to manipulate abstractions develops and so that it can be used to perform the cognitive operations necessary for acquiring a second language" (1992, p.58). Unless we do this, an unjust situation could arise where we expect minority children "to perform equally well in an educational setting without the linguistic wherewithal necessary for competing on an equal footing with others" whose first language is the dominant language (Corson, 1992, p.50).

The language situation for the Maltese in Melbourne seems to be rather complex, with different groups claming quite different things about their sense of identity, and their ability to handle both Maltese and English. It would be foolhardy of me to try to ignore such differences and to suggest a language policy for the whole Maltese community. But perhaps the time is ripe for this community to come up with a policy of language use for itself. If that is going to happen, the community must be guided by a sophisticated understanding of the way language interacts with education. For instance, it appears clear from the report that Maltese is used only, or predominantly in the home. That could mean that since Maltese is not a language of wider communication, Maltese background students may arrive in schools with their first languages relatively under-developed in certain school-linked contexts, styles and functions of use. At the same time,

their knowledge of English could be limited to a small range of functions, often related to passive activities such as televisíon viewing and the like. These and other similar complexities need to be addressed seriously and systematically as the Maltese community tries to look for answers and formulate a language policy.

But that language policy has to connect not only with schools, but also with the status of the Maltese, as an ethnic, migrant group, in the larger Australian community. A strong sense of identity does not only grow from a recognition and affirmation of linguistic cultures, but also of a commonly articulated vision of a community's rightful place in the body politic. Bilingual teachers can be eventually placed in schools; students can, in time, be offered a schooling which connects with their language and cultural experiences; schools can, as a result of struggle, open up to facilitate the participation of ethnic minority parents. But while these will be improvements, they are only battles to be won in a larger war to be fought for general emancipation. Indeed, these battles and others are milestones along the way of a more equitable distribution of power and resources in Australian society. If our visions are not wide enough for this, we could discover that our activities are doomed to failure. Our adolescents, for instance, will be less motivated to use Maltese if they, as Maltese, do not feel a sense of pride. Social pressures will pull them towards a use of the dominant language to the extent that they can use it, and these pressures may frustrate schools' attempts to use the minority language for instruction (Corson, 1992, p.59).

I conclude my paper, therefore, by reaffirming my belief that it is the Maltese community which needs to generate internal cohesion, alliances with other ethnic minority groups, and organised grass roots activism in order to become more in charge of the schooling process. It is in that way that the entire programme of schooling becomes directed towards elevating the status of the community and questioning the role of schooling in that process. In this process, the Maltese will have a leading role since they are the experts about their own situation. The Terry, Borland and Adams study provides some of the understandings and ammunition required to engage in political mobilisation in earnest. I hope that my response to their excellent study will similarly go some way in further empowering the Maltese community to transform its educational and civic futures.

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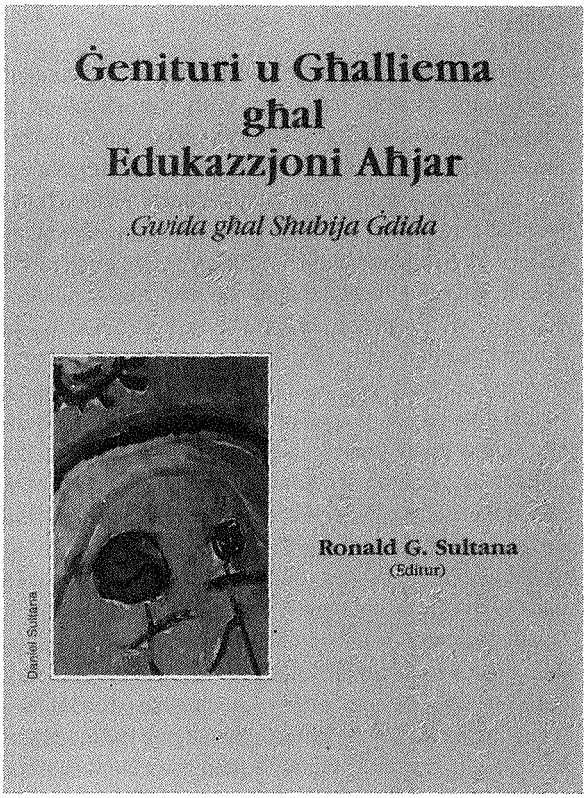
Book Notice

"Ġenituri u Għalliema għal Edukazzjoni Aħjar: Gwida għal Sħubija Ġdida"
Ronald G. Sultana (editor) (1994); Mireva Academic Publications, Msida. 224 pages; Lm3.95c (ISBN 1-870579-37-2).



Research on educational attainment in various countries around the world has shown that parental involvement in schools is one of the most significant practices that militates against student failure. And yet, parental involvement in the Maltese educational system is still in its infancy. Despite the Education Act of 1988, which provided the framework for the setting up of School Councils, most educational communities are still satisfied with organising a "Parents' Day", and thenceforth excluding the very same parents from participation in school planning and activities for the rest of the year.

This book represents a justification for parental involvement, arguing for a change of attitude in the way school interacts with the wider community. Consonant with the principles of local democracies and increased participation, School Councils and Parent Teachers associations ought to be hives of activity where the best that the community can offer is placed at the service of the child. While the book provides a solid theoretical base in making its case for parental involvement at all levels in the Maltese educational system, it is neither unduly technical nor hopelessly idealistic. Indeed, the testimony of various teachers, heads of schools, students, and parents as members of School Councils provides a realistic and inspiring account of what can, indeed what has been achieved in some schools in Malta.

The book also reports on the state of parental involvement locally, comparing and contrasting this with the situation in the United States of America, Australia, and the member states of the European Union. It includes a section with practical material that can be used by teachers and parents, such as documents and legal notices regarding the rights and duties of students, parents and teachers, a questionnaire form that can be distributed to parents so that the school can learn from the kind of feedback the former have to offer, as well as a critical glossary of technical words - such as *national minimum curriculum, Matsec, ability*, and so on - that are increasingly used in the field of education.

This is therefore a useful and practical guidebook aimed at parents and teachers who are keen to embark on new forms of partnership for the educational benefit of children. It should be of interest not only to those who are directly involved in School Councils and PTAs, but also to all those whose goal it is to provide each Maltese child with the best educational service possible.

Notes on Contributors

Godfrey Baldacchino has completed his Ph.D. studies at the University of Warwick, England, where he presented a doctoral dissertation on labour relations in small states. He is research officer at the Workers' Participation Development Centre (WPDC), University of Malta. Dr Baldacchino has published widely in the fields of industrial relations, workplace democracy and education. Articles of his have appeared in *Development and Change, Economic and Industrial Democracy, Tourism Management, Hyphen,* and *Economic and Social Studies.* He is the author of *Introducing Social Studies* (PEG, Malta, 1988), *Worker Cooperatives with Particular Reference to Malta* (The Hague, Netherlands, 1990), and co-editor of *Maltese Society: A Sociological Inquiry* (Mireva, Malta, 1994) as well as of *Cooperative Ways of Working* (WPDC-FES, Malta, 1994).

Mark G. Borg is Senior Lecturer Educational Psychology and Human Development in the Department of Education of the Faculty of Education. He is an International Affiliate of the *American Psychological Association*, an Associate Fellow of the *British Psychological Society* and a founder member of the Special Group for the Teaching of Psychology within the BPS. A UK chartered psychologist, Dr Borg has published widely in the field of educational psychology. He has written and co-authored several research papers which have appeared in learned journals, and presented at conferences, in Malta and abroad. His current areas of research interest are occupational stress among teachers, the birthdate effect in education, sex differences in scholastic attainment and the effects of kindergarten 'starting age' on children.

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Dr Ronald G. Sultana is a senior lecturer in sociology of education in the Departments of Foundations in Education and of Sociology at the University of Malta. He is the founder and co-ordinator of the University's *Comparative Education Programme*, and represents the Mediterranean region as a member of the international board of editors of such journals as *Qualitative Studies in Education, International Journal of Educational Development*, and *Teaching in Higher Education.* He is the author of over fifty scholarly articles published in Maltese and international books and journals and of a book entitled *Education and National Development* (1992). He has edited *Themes in Education: A Maltese Reader* (1991); *Parents and Teachers for a Better Education* (1994) and co-edited *Maltese Society: A Sociological Inquiry* (1994). He is currently directing the Education in the Mediterranean Project.

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International Seminar: Adult Continuing Education in Small States and Islands.

Venue: The Foundation for International Studies, Valletta, Malta.

Dates: 25, 26 and 27 November 1995

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Registration and Conference Fees: Registration forms, together with a fee of US$280 should reach the International Secretary by not later than the 20th September 1995. The fee includes Registration costs, transfers from and to Malta Airport 6 nights accommodation on half board basis (twin rooms), transfers to and from the Conference venue, two half day excursions, Conference fees and documents, and end of Conference dinner.

Correspondence: All correspondence is to be addressed to the International Secretary, Mr J.G. Agius, "Champignon", Gladjoli Street, San Gwann - SGN05, MALTA.

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