Out for the Count:

The Last Alternative State
High School in New Zealand

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Abstract

This thesis is based on a five-year case study of Auckland Metropolitan College ("Metro"), the only state-funded alternative secondary school in New Zealand. At the time of writing in September 2001, the school teeters on the brink of closure after the eighth negative Education Review Office (ERO) report in eight years.

Metro appears to exemplify many neo-liberal principles in education – choice, freedom, life-long learning, and flexibility – which are considered integral to the "effective school". However its position as a sink (and market safety valve) for unwanted students from other schools, as well as its long history without any official clarification of its status as alternative within the New Zealand education system, positions the school as a danger at the margins of mainstream schooling.

Metro's apparent inability to function "properly" within a framework that includes notions of the "good (professional) teacher", the "good (enterprising) student", and the "good (effective) school" is examined against a number of current neo-liberal educational discourses and concepts including teacher professionalism, classroom management, school effectiveness, the exercise of "proper" consumer choice, and the market place of "at risk" students.

The thesis re-situates the site of struggles away from the school, teachers, students and/or ERO per se, moving the focus to the narratives of the teachers, students, and ERO. A "post-structural ethnography" is built by combining some aspects of traditional ethnographic methodology with post-structural questions about meaning and historical specificity, moving beyond the ethnographic imperative of getting to the "real story" (Britzman 1995) into a new role of "making the familiar strange rather than the strange familiar" (Van Maanen 1995: 20). In particular Foucault's work on governmental power relations is used as an account of liberalism and neo-liberalism to problematise the current discursive framework in New Zealand education. The framework is explored as a "tricky combination in the same political structures of individualisation techniques and of totalisation procedures" (Foucault 1982: 213) and shows how Metro is inevitably a failing school.

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INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

"School pupils taught how to make beer"

I noticed this headline (*New Zealand Herald* 3 February 1996) in February of 1996 as I returned to New Zealand from a trip co-teaching at an alternative high school in Oakland, California. I was curious – the beer-making school, which happened to be just down the road from where I lived, was "alternative" and well known for its colourful students and the tolerant teachers who shared the school policy decision-making with those students.

After visiting the school I learned that, despite the implication of the headline, students at Auckland Metropolitan College ("Metro") were in fact learning about fermentation, used in beer making. Many schools did this; it was a legitimate part of the National Curriculum in Science. However the *New Zealand Herald* was right in another sense – something bad was brewing at the school. As a result of a highly critical Assurance Audit, the Education Review Office (ERO) had deemed the school a failure and was recommending it be closed down.

ERO is New Zealand's pre-tertiary education sector inspectorate, responsible for reviewing every public and private school in New Zealand to ensure that schools meet their contractual obligations to the government. ERO also regularly reports on the state of education in New Zealand more generally through its National Education Evaluation Reports (NEERs). Together the school audits and national reports, both of which are publicly released, form the basis of ERO's role in ensuring accountability of schools and fulfilling ERO's commitment to the student-as-consumer (of school knowledge and skills) and parent-as-consumer (as chooser of the school for their children).

ERO conducts an Accountability Audit[1] of every school on a three-yearly basis. Schools found by ERO to have issues of non-compliance with government regulations, embodied in the NEGs[2]

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[1] Accountability Audits have superseded two earlier types of reports – Effective Reviews and Assurance Audits.

[2] The NEGs or National Education Guidelines expand upon and interpret some of the legislative requirements of schools and indicate something of what is meant by good quality education. The NEGs also include the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) and National Education Goals.

and NAGs, or considered by ERO to be providing poor quality education can be subject to a Discretionary Review or Discretionary Audit at more frequent intervals. As a result of a critical ERO review, the Ministry of Education may, through the Schools Support Programme, provide assistance to a school in order to help it comply with regulations and/or become an effective school. The Minister of Education may also remove a Board of Trustees (BOT) and install a commissioner to run the school. Closure of a school for poor performance is a last resort undertaken when all else has failed or is deemed likely to fail.

In ERO's Discretionary Assurance Audit of Metro in early 1996, it criticised the school management and the performance of teachers. ERO cited "unreasonably low levels of student attendance" accepted by the Board of Trustees, a lack of "procedures to promote high quality staff performance", and "the Board's failure to meet its obligations as stated in the *National Education Guidelines 1993*" (Education Review Office 1996, February). ERO claimed that Metro's deficiencies were "long-standing", stating that it was "not confident that the present board, managers and staff have the will or the capacity to bring about the required change".

It appeared that Metro had few, if any, redeeming features and the report concluded that:

> …continued Crown investment in Auckland Metropolitan College can not be justified. The board of trustees has demonstrably failed to provide an adequate education for the young people enrolled at the school. (Education Review Office 1996, February: 3)

My only experience of an alternative high school had been Merritt Middle College High School in Oakland, a working class district in California bordering the well-known wealthier district of Berkeley. Although identified as an "alternative school", Merritt Middle College High School echoed its mainstream contemporaries in most senses. There were a large main gate, institutionally clean and somewhat barren corridors, greetings from a quietly spoken secretary who showed visitors into the principal's office or the staff room as students scurried past ghost-like and purposeful. Classes were fairly standard – English, Maths, Science, Social Studies, History, and Geography – were taught in classrooms with desks and a single teacher. Optional or additional classes such as Journalism, Cultural Studies, and Accounting were also similar to what is now accepted in many schools. In fact what made Merritt Middle College High School "alternative" was its size. The school was small (though class size was not) and lodged within a larger college setting that was composed of a large college-level student body. The small school was specifically for students who had been expelled from other schools in the Oakland District, a school district with high rates of violence and poverty. This school aimed to give students a second chance (for some, a last chance) at a conventional education.

Metro in no way resembled Merritt Middle College High School. When I visited Metro I arrived in a quiet street in the established, well-to-do city suburb of Mt Eden, Auckland. The school was situated several hundred metres from the local shops, amongst privately owned houses. I entered via a small gate in a picket fence into a villa that might have been just another household were it not for the fact that the entrance-way was strewn with colourfully and unusually dressed students who greeted me loudly and directly. The school itself consisted of the villa and several prefab buildings that served as extra classrooms for Science, Woodwork, and Music. Its overall appearance from outside stood in marked contrast to the formality of many secondary schools. While the outside of the main building was relatively tidy and unmarked, the fences at the sides and back of the site and several areas of the prefab buildings were covered in tags and graffiti, as well as "sanctioned artwork". I soon learned that both students and teachers could also be seen regularly at any of the many cafés on the main street or in the small local park nearby.

The front door led me immediately into a large hallway adjacent to a seemingly unspecified space. The phone rang constantly and it was sometimes answered by staff members, other times by students. Raucous laughter and chatter carried across the room and the photocopier shuddered like a train. I felt slightly unnerved, standing there in Chaos Central and, though I was not necessarily expecting an average school, so far everything about Metro seemed thoroughly un-school-like.

Since its inception in 1977 as a co-educational alternative state secondary school, Metro has been popular with the white, middle-class, professional, left-leaning liberal community. For many in that community, Metro represented a commitment to "educating the whole person" and a protest vote against what many radical educators have called the "dehumanising" element of mainstream schooling (Freire 1972). The decile five[3] Metro has always offered small teacher-student ratios – the lowest in Auckland, according to one of their advertising brochures (Auckland Metropolitan College circa 1985) – and more individual attention to students than other schools. In addition, students have been able to specialise in particular subject areas or interests and the school has been especially strong in the creative arts, having produced a number of well-known actors, dancers, artists, musicians, and composers.

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[3] In New Zealand, all schools are given a decile rating to indicate the scope and depth of financial and social resources against which the school can draw. The rating is calculated on a number of factors including socio-economic status of enrolled students' families, parent occupations, student ethnicity and school geographical location. Ten is the most affluent and advantaged of schools; one is the least affluent and most disadvantaged.

There were no uniforms, corporal punishment or detentions, and teachers and students addressed each other on a first-name basis. There was also a great degree of flexibility around curriculum, timetabling, and attendance. As part of its philosophy, the school had vertical form classes (as opposed to classes organised according to age or level) in order to encourage an "extended family" atmosphere where relationships are not limited by age groupings. Metro aimed to provide students with a wide range of experiences and variety of scope in school relationships was part of that. In many respects, teaching staff acted not only as teachers but also as tutors, running discussion groups that facilitated the students' decisions about their own learning. As a result, over the years the curriculum has included "popular culture" subjects such as Witchcraft, Flatting, Herstory, Psychology, Multi-media, Politics, Pre-history, Architecture, Harmonising, Religions, Frisbee, Pakeha Cultural Heritage, Cinema, American Studies, Latin, Car Owning (Auckland Metropolitan College circa 1985).

There have also always been opportunities for students to participate in decision-making at all levels through the school meeting. These were held twice weekly and additionally could be called spontaneously by any staff member or student as an immediate response to a particular event or crisis in the school. School meetings operated on a one-person, one-vote system and could be chaired by any staff member or student. These meetings were an integral part of the school's commitment to democracy. This allowed students, as well as staff, to suggest and vote on curriculum initiatives, and make decisions about allocation of resources and the annual budget. The involvement of students at all levels of decision-making about the school extended to having both students and staff on interview committees for staff appointments. Thus teachers applying for work at the school could expect to face questions from, and be evaluated by, the students they may later be teaching.

In 1999 the school's Charter[4] was rewritten when it had been discovered during a 1998 ERO visit that the school's original Charter had never been counter-signed by the Ministry of Education, effectively invalidating it as a contract. The school's Charter described the school as providing "opportunities for a full range of students from the highly motivated to those who are looking for a new direction in education". The Charter also said that the school's aims for an atmosphere that is "un-pressured", "non-hierarchical", "non-punitive", and which facilitates "honest, co-operative relationships between all members of its community".

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[4] The School Charter forms the legal basis of the relationship between the State, as the purchaser of education services, and the school Board of Trustees, as the provider of those services.

The roll at Auckland Metropolitan College generally stood at around 100. At the time of writing in 2001 however, the July roll[5] was around 84 according to the 2001 ERO report on the school. However enrolment numbers typically fluctuated during the year as students enrolled after the school year had begun, as they left their other schools or left Metro permanently to enrol elsewhere, or left to pursue further education at the tertiary level or took up employment. A number of students were returning adult students, one of whom was also the music teacher. Several others were young parents and often brought their children to school.

At the time of writing in September 2001, there were 13 teachers, including several part-time teachers. The roll-generated entitlement or equivalent full-time teacher count of 8.9 made the teacher-student ratio of around 9.4 a very favourable one in comparison with other state secondary schools in Auckland, which typically had teacher-student ratios of one teacher to around thirty students. Four of the teachers had been at the school more than five years. During 1998, the Director for the past three years resigned after taking sick leave since December 1997. A new permanent Director was appointed starting 1999, winning the job over the other two applicants who were senior Metro staff, one of whom who had been Deputy Director for a number of years and had been acting director for twelve months.

The new Director for 1999 was previously a deputy principal at another school, a position usually associated with "discipline" duties (Bush 1999). Some teachers expressed concern to me about the new Director's background in discipline, feeling that a strong disciplinary approach may not work at Metro because of the number of disaffected students enrolled. However the BOT and students on the selection committee were keen to bring a fresh approach to the school and this decision was supported by the Ministry of Education.

Most school days at Metro during 1997 and 1998 began with an optional class. Just what the optional classes would consist of was the subject of much debate at the school meetings that were held twice weekly and regularly chaired by students. Decisions made at school meetings were based on a "one person, one vote" system; teachers and students had equal voting rights on curriculum matters. Some examples of classes held at this time were: Tai Chi, Yoga, and Cooked Breakfasts. The early morning slot was regarded by some as an unstable and challenging slot (teachers were frustrated – just what would it take to get students to arrive on time?) and by others as a mark of democracy and a chance to explore and experiment with which classes would work best and attract good attendance from the students. More often than not, the slot became a form class meeting time for students to discuss and plan their work

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[5] Rolls counts are done twice yearly, in March and July, for the purposes of funding through the Ministry of Education. ERO also checks the school's own roll figures as part of an Accountability Audit.

schedules with a teacher, be registered as attending and discuss school meeting agenda items which had been referred back to small groups for further discussion and decision. Above all, the student's right to make choices and decisions, and the school's duty to respond to their choices and needs flexibly, was paramount at Metro.

The optional morning class was generally very poorly attended according to my observations and comments from teachers I interviewed. The teachers acknowledged that the increasing numbers of disaffected students, many of whom had been expelled from other schools or had found they could not cope with oppressive school situations or school routines generally, made teaching at Metro challenging. For this reason, and also because of the numbers of self-motivated students enrolled who are interested in a more nonconformist school environment, it has long been policy at Metro that only experienced teachers will be employed there.

ERO Criticisms of Metro

Metro's intentions were to have the optional class encourage student attendance but ERO has identified poor attendance as a key area of concern in every review of the school since 1992. In February 1996 ERO had analysed the available information on school attendance at Metro and its analysis showed that more than half of the students were absent from class for anywhere between 91.4% and 97.8% of the time. Perhaps even more damaging to the school than the poor attendance record itself was ERO's assertion that the Board actually accepted low student attendance as a norm and that staff often justified poor attendance (February 1996:3). ERO also expressed concern over Crown funding being used for unorthodox curriculum subjects at the school such as Star Trek, Demand it from Neil, Board Games, British Comedy, Living Left Hand, Astrology, Op Shopping, and Massage (Education Review Office 1996, February).

Alongside its concerns with school attendance and curriculum practices, ERO criticised the school meeting, the source of many curriculum and attendance-related decisions. Alarm was expressed over the authority of Metro's school meeting (see previous reviews (Education Review Office 1992b; Education Review Office 1995; Education Review Office 1996, February)), particularly where decisions made there appeared to conflict with the Board's legal obligations.

> Records show that the school meeting voted to make attendance at small group meetings voluntary. A motion put by a teacher and carried at a school meeting states that the school camp (held after senior examinations) should be open to seniors as well as to juniors but the school would be closed to seniors. Implementing this policy effectively denies non-examination senior students the instruction to which they are entitled should they be unable to attend school camp. The school meeting cannot make a decision that

closes the school to any students as this is contrary to the law. (Education Review Office 1996, February: 4)

ERO's contention in their February 1996 report that the nature of Metro's "deficiencies" was "long-standing" was a reference to three previous negative ERO reports[6] which all highlighted concerns over the quality of education offered to students at Auckland Metropolitan College. In 1992 ERO had noted ill-defined areas of accountability and a lack of understanding about the responsibilities of school management within the Management Committee made up of Metro parents, students, and staff (Education Review Office 1992b). ERO also raised concerns about poor student attendance and the lack of systems to support curriculum delivery and student achievement (Education Review Office 1992b). In 1993 ERO noted the considerable effort in policy development and leadership that had been made toward addressing the concerns of the previous report. However the need to continue developing management and curriculum delivery systems was again highlighted, as were concerns over attendance. In their 1995 report, ERO stipulated eleven actions required for compliance with education legislation in the areas of student attendance, curriculum planning and assessment practice, teacher appraisal, financial, and health and safety (Education Review Office 1995). The report made clear that ERO's concerns were serious:

> Management and delivery of significant areas of the curriculum fall short of an acceptable professional standard. At the heart of the issue are the effects of some low levels of programme planning and quality of classroom practice combined with the sanctioned freedom of students to opt out of attending programmes of instruction…The majority of students are not receiving a balanced curriculum…(Education Review Office 1995: 2)

The pressure of negative ERO reports on Metro continued to build with a further four ERO reviews[7] within the next six years. In 1996, as the Ministry considered options regarding closure of the school, ERO completed another Discretionary Assurance Audit and reported that despite some improvements over the past months:

> the board has not been able to effectively raise the low levels of students' attendance in class or the poor performance of a significant number of teachers. (Education Review Office 1996, November: 3)

> The school has become a school of last resort for students and parents…The school has retained its original philosophy and structures and has tried to make such students fit them. It has not successfully adapted its programmes, management style or teaching

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[6] Review Report, August 1992; Discretionary Assurance Audit, August 1993; and Assurance Audit, April 1995

[7] See ERO reports: Discretionary Assurance Audit, November 1996; Discretionary Accountability Audit, June 1998; Discretionary Accountability Audit, July 2000; and Discretionary Review Report, August 2001.

methods to meet the needs of its present students. (Education Review Office 1996, November: 5)

ERO persisted with its recommendation that Metro be closed down, having already stated bluntly in its unconfirmed[8] report:

There is little evidence the majority of students are being educated. The school has failed. (Education Review Office 1996, October: 10)

This was revised in the confirmed report to read:

There is little evidence that the majority of students are being educated as intended for all State school students. The school has failed to meet the terms of its charter. (Education Review Office 1996, November: 12).

The 1998 ERO report was similarly highly critical of the school management and quality of education provided by the school. ERO reiterated the recommendation to close Metro in its 2000 report (Education Review Office 2000). The school's existence has now, in August 2001, become extremely tenuous with the latest ERO report on Auckland Metropolitan College making clear that this review was a "last chance" one for the school, with the report citing the Secretary for Education's letter to the school BOT in September 2000, which had stated that steps to close the school would be initiated if the next ERO review did not indicate significant school improvements.

The findings of the last six reviews have been the same in relation to the poor quality of education being provided and the ineffective governance and management. Therefore, the Education Review Office sees no purpose in undertaking further discretionary reviews of this school…It is the Education Review Office's judgement that the Secretary for Education can have little confidence in the ability of the board of trustees or the staff to implement and sustain systems that will lead to significant improvement in the quality of education being delivered…Therefore the Secretary of Education should consider advising the Minister of Education to…begin the process that would lead to the closure of Auckland Metropolitan College. (Education Review Office 2001, August: 4)

As with previous reports, ERO's 2001 criticisms included poor student attendance, poor quality curriculum planning and delivery, and shaky performance management systems underpinned by unclear objectives in relation to being an "alternative" school.

…student learning is disjointed and programmes do not allow students to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills…student attendance is sparse and sporadic… programmes do not adequately provide for students' numeracy and literacy learning needs…

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[8] Unconfirmed ERO review reports are drafts which the school has an opportunity to comment on before the report becomes public and "confirmed".

> Students are not receiving feedback about their learning and teachers are unable to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programmes…The school's curriculum deficiencies are underpinned by the mismatch between national curriculum requirements and the commitment of the board and staff to being an alternative school…the board and staff have failed to clearly define their understanding of alternative education. (Education Review Office 2001, August: 5)

In the unconfirmed version of the report, the recommended school closure was explicitly justified in order to "protect the educational rights of these students" apparently being so poorly served by the school curriculum planning and delivery (Education Review Office 2001, July: 7).

Metro Response to Criticisms

Metro now has the dubious honour of being one of the most reviewed schools in New Zealand. Despite ERO's repeated recommendations to the Minister of Education, Metro has continued to exist, although it now operates in a sort of "twilight zone" of uncertainty and constant surveillance. There has been a significant reduction in student enrolments since 1996, a drop in student and staff morale, and a shift in school policies in an attempt to contain and neutralise ERO criticism.

Metro had consistently disputed many of the findings and judgements of ERO since 1993, but as far as ERO was concerned, by late 1996, Metro's time was up (see "High Noon for College" (Terei 1996)). Metro's BOT was very unhappy with what it saw as inaccuracies in both 1996 ERO reports and wrote to the Ministry of Education requesting a fair hearing on these (Chairperson of Auckland Metropolitan College BOT and Director of Auckland Metropolitan College 1996).

Metro had acknowledged some of the management issues raised by ERO in 1995 and Metro's progress towards resolving them had been noted by ERO (Education Review Office 1995). In April 1996 Metro joined the Ministry-funded Schools Support Programme in order to address issues raised in the February 1996 ERO report (Chairperson of Auckland Metropolitan College BOT 1996, Ministry of Education 1996). The director worked with a consultant to develop a management plan that was subsequently approved by the Board of Trustees. The management plan established clearer lines of accountability to the Board of Trustees. It included a number of appointments at position of responsibility level 2 with oversight of curriculum development, especially in Technology, Social Studies, and Guidance and Welfare. In addition, staff members began reporting regularly to the Board of Trustees and regular curriculum committee meetings were held. Teacher appraisal schemes were re-organised, and measures for more rigorous monitoring of student attendance set up. According to the BOT chairperson, the

Advisory Service even praised the school's curriculum schemes checklists and NZQA Accreditation Submission (Chairperson of Auckland Metropolitan College BOT & Director of Auckland Metropolitan College 1996) though the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) had not considered the submission up to a year later because of the threat of closure (Chairperson of Auckland Metropolitan College BOT 1997b).

Metro was assigned a facilitator and developed an action plan as part of its involvement with the Schools Support Programme in May 1996. Nonetheless the Secretary of Education began the closure process in early 1997 and considered arguments and submissions about closing the school from the BOT (Fancy 1997) as well as from other schools in the area. The majority of schools in the Auckland area that responded to the Secretary of Education's call for opinion actually supported Metro remaining open, albeit on dubious grounds, as a place to send their unwanted students (this is examined at length in chapter four). There were declarations of support for Metro via public meetings in 1996 and 1997, and letters of support from parents, current students, and ex-students published in the New Zealand's major newspaper.

Upon taking legal advice, the Metro BOT wrote again in 1997 to the Secretary of Education asking for clarification on a number of issues around a possible closure of the school (Chairperson of Auckland Metropolitan College BOT 1997a). The school also wrote to numerous MPs and other interested parties, seeking support and advice. Upon clarification of the closure process and situation from the Secretary of Education, the school sent a lengthy submission to the Secretary requesting that the Ministry take the advice of its own National Operations Unit and reconsider closure on the grounds that real change could not be expected to have been effected yet as the Schools Support Programme had only been assisting Metro for around twelve months (Auckland Metropolitan College 1997). Moreover the school argued that closure was a drastic measure at any time and there was in fact nothing drastic happening that required such a measure to be taken (Auckland Metropolitan College 1997).

In 1998 the Secretary of Education offered Metro a lifeline. While the closure process had continued throughout 1997 and into 1998, ERO completed another Discretionary Assurance Audit in June 1998. Although ERO continued to say that Metro was seriously deficient as a school, Metro had been successful in its argument to the Secretary of Education that the school required a chance to prove itself as an effective school with further support for a longer period of time (Auckland Metropolitan College 1997). Discussions between Metro and the Ministry of Education resulted in an Agreement being signed between the Ministry of Education and Metro that allowed Metro to stay open for a further two years. The terms of the agreement offered to

Metro by the Ministry were that the BOT accept a repayable advance of almost $19,000.00 to be used for Operations including:

- meeting legislative requirements;
- reducing student truancy, developing a five year curriculum plan and improving curriculum delivery;
- maintaining portfolios of student work;
- accepting a Ministry monitor and a financial manager;
- carrying out staff appraisals on a six-monthly basis;
- producing a marketing survey of the school community as a basis for a marketing plan;
- ensuring that all teachers participate in Assessment for Better Learning programmes;
- ensuring all students have individualised timetables and planning appropriate programmes for each of them;
- monitor student progress against national benchmarks;
- analyse school's external exam passes and develop plans for improving student performance in them by 10%;
- participate in a Ministry BOT training contract;
- develop board policies and systems to monitor and review policies;
- identify financial training needs;
- to develop and implement asset management policies and performance; management policies (Ministry of Education 1998a).

The Ministry's list of expected outcomes at the end of the 1998/1999 period included:

- full compliance with the NEGs and verification of this by ERO;
- improved student attendance and record keeping and verification of this by ERO;
- improved student achievement as demonstrated through assessment and monitoring and comparison with national data and baseline data held by the school;
- improved governance as determined by monthly reports and assessments by Ministry monitor;
- financial stability and effectiveness as determined by keeping within budget parameters approved by the financial manager and working within the policies developed by the financial manager and approved by the Board;
- operating surplus achieved, planned reduction of working capital deficit so the board can indicate how they will achieve a positive position by the end of 2003;
- development and implementation of a performance management system with appropriate performance appraisals and professional development for all staff;
- the school roll to increase to 110 by early 2002 (Ministry of Education 1998a).

The agreement instigated a moratorium on closure for up to two years, dependent on Metro meeting the agreement conditions. By the end of 2000, the Ministry of Education monitor had left after completing, together with the new Director, a fairly thorough transformation of management practices with the co-operation of the Board of Trustees. Nevertheless, a further ERO visit in March 2000 remained wary about the viability of the school, claiming that unless

substantial improvements were made within the next six months, its next review would again recommend closure to the Secretary of Education.

Now, in September 2001, the school and its community are preparing to fight the latest ERO recommendation for closure, certainly the most life-threatening one to the school given the weight of the seven similarly critical previous reports. A protest march down Queen Street, Auckland's main street, has taken place, letters of support are being published in the *New Zealand Herald*, and parents, students, and supporters are organising to write to the Minister of Education and the Secretary of Education. A community meeting with a Ministry of Education presence was held and submissions on the future of Metro made by parents, community members, students, Metro staff, and other interested parties to the Secretary of Education.

Leading the Way?

The claims by ERO that Metro is a failed school, a "school of last resort" (Education Review Office 1996, November), and as such should be closed, is quite a turnaround for a school that was enormously popular after its inception in 1977. During the late seventies and into the late-eighties (*Central Leader* 1986; Dunphy 1988), Metro had not only a waiting list for students to enrol but also for teachers to work there (see *Auckland Star* 23 November 1976 "Six into sixty just won't go", which reported that 60 teachers applied for 6 teaching jobs at Metro, and interviews with staff members who have been at school from 1977 up until the present). During the late 1970s and early 1980s, as the roll bulged at around its maximum of 130, Metro introduced a ballot system for students to determine entry to the school, similar to the ballot systems used today by large high-status schools such as Auckland Grammar School.

In many respects, Metro led the way for other schools in terms of implementing admired educational ideals and desirable outcomes. Metro's school organisation was genuinely democratic, it had a close school-community relationship which included a resourceful work experience program for students, and showed an advanced commitment to gender equality through the variety of non-stereotypical work experience placements for both male and female students (Department of Education 1986). Metro was commended by ERO's predecessors, the Department of Education inspectors, for the "successful" implementation of democratic decision-making for all school policy, the sense of belonging and respect at the school, the supportive learning environment created by teachers, the interaction between students and their local community, and the competence and commitment of the teachers (Department of Education 1986).

Andy Begg, the first Director of the school, had said in his Director's Report to the Board that although Metro was different from other schools, there was nothing Metro was doing that couldn't be done by other schools (Begg 1979). This was echoed – although to different ends – when the Education Review Office recommended the school be closed after its 1996 audit. They captured the uneasiness of a school that, while it can still be considered radical in many respects, never managed to realise all its radical aims.

> ...mainstream secondary schools have changed and many have incorporated some of the features that made Metro different. In many schools students have more choice about their dress; they take advantage of a wide range of curriculum, especially in the senior school; they are supported by strong guidance and counselling systems; and they participate in democratic decision making at many levels from student councils to boards of trustees. Conversely, as a result of pressures to meet its legal responsibilities, the Metro Board has introduced various management systems that are similar to those in mainstream schools. As a result many of the students who would have been attracted to Metro in the past now have many more suitable schools from which to choose. (Education Review Office 1996, October: 3)

ERO in 1996 suggested that Auckland Metropolitan College was a school that had had its day, a sad remnant of a failed experiment begun in the 1970s with much excitement and enthusiasm; a school born out of a radical and progressive education movement whose particular notions of social reformism and child-centredness the world has left behind. Ministerial Approval Clause 12 emphasised Metro's role in "widening the variety of education available to Auckland pupils" and had expected Metro to "encourage other secondary schools to examine and modify their policies, organisation and curriculum" (Mann 1989: 4).   Yet if, as ERO said, and the Department of Education intended, many mainstream schools have incorporated the features that made Metro stand out, why didn't ERO hail Metro as a leader in innovative school practices?

As well as offering school practices later adopted by the mainstream, Metro appeared to stand for many of the ideals and goals evident throughout the reforms to the New Zealand education system ongoing since 1987, out of which ERO itself was established in 1989. Reports and reviews concerning the education sector between 1987 and 1994 all had in common a commitment to devolution and community-level decision-making, freedom of choice, and the creation of an "enterprise culture" that would foster wealth-creation through entrepreneurial business activity. Metro, with its emphasis on making the skills taught relevant to society and community, its encouragement of parental involvement and the exercise of (student) choice in relation to its wide and varied curriculum, appeared to demonstrate precisely the sort of commitment to freedom of choice and community involvement vital to the reforms.

New Zealand Education Reforms and Metro

The governance and management of schools was restructured between 1987 and 1994 according to principles of freedom and choice. These principles were based in an application of a market-led economy model to the sphere of public education, making educational provision a government investment subject to market conditions (Gordon 1992; Peters, Marshall and Massey 1994). The vision for education generally was to increase equality and efficiency through choice and competition in conjunction with management theories, many of which were imported directly from business models (Boston, Martin, Pallot and Walsh 1991). The new efficient model, instigated by *Administering for Excellence*, known also as the Picot Report (1988), was one of an apparent devolution of control to the local level alongside the privileging of consumer choice and managerial accountability over models of professional accountability (Taskforce to Review Education Administration 1988). Similar themes were echoed in advisory and review reports throughout the entire education sector[9].

On the face of it, Metro appeared to exemplify the principles and aims of the reforms to New Zealand education. Metro could be seen to be *enterprising* in its diverse curriculum options and *flexible* in its timetabling possibilities and decision-making structures. It could be seen as providing *freedom of choice* to students on matters of attendance and course planning and *transparent* in its staff employment and budget allocation processes scheduled in democratic school meetings. It provided opportunities for *life-long learning* in its enrolments of teenage mothers, returning adult students and "at risk" or "second chance" students, as well as the school's innovative careers, "life-skills", and health programmes.

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[9] see early childhood sector: New Zealand. Early Childhood Care and Education Working Group. (1988). "Education to be More: Report of the Early Childhood Care and Education Working Group (the Meade report)`". Wellington, Department of Education.

see the compulsory schooling sector: Taskforce to Review Education Administration. (1988). "Administering for Excellence: Effective Administration in Education. Report of the Taskforce to Review Education Administration (Chair: Brian Picot)". Wellington, The Taskforce; Department of Education. (1988). "Tomorrow's Schools : the Reform of Education Administration in New Zealand.". Wellington, Department of Education; Education Reform Implementation Process Review Team (NZ). (1990). "Today's schools : a review of the education reform implementation process". Wellington, prepared for the Minister of Education; *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework 1991*.

see the post-compulsory sector: Hawke, Gary Richard. (1988). "Report on postcompulsory education and training in New Zealand". Wellington, prepared for the Cabinet Social Equity Committee by G.R. Hawke; New Zealand Business Roundtable. (1988). "Reforming tertiary education in New Zealand". Wellington, New Zealand Business Roundtable; Department of Education (1989) "Learning for Life : Education and Training Beyond the Age of Fifteen.". Wellington, Department of Education; Tower, Gregory. (1995). "The annual reports of New Zealand's tertiary education institutions 1985-1994". Palmerston North, Massey University, Dept. of Accountancy; Ministerial Consultative Group (1994) "Funding Growth in Tertiary Education and Training: Report of the Ministerial Consultative Group, 12 May 1994 (The Todd Report)". Wellington, Ministry of Education).

These points had not escaped the Metro teachers. Metro's submission to the Secretary of Education, contesting ERO's first and second recommendations of closure, cited *Administering for Excellence* and other Ministerial working party reports on the compulsory school sector in its definition of individual competence being "encouragement of initiative, personal responsibility, and entrepreneurial abilities" and its claim that if people are free to choose, a co-operative partnership between community and learning institutions is possible. Metro claimed that it was fostering these values and activities through its attitude towards its students and focus on introducing students to democratic practices and procedures through the school meeting (Metro 1997).

Research Design: Methodology

Given this history, Auckland Metropolitan College offers a rich site for research. It occupies an unusual and uncertain position within the New Zealand education system and has done since its emergence in 1977. There is ongoing confusion over the legality of some of Metro's policies and also its status as a school. There is also a lack of clarity about the Ministry of Education's ongoing support for Metro, support which was originally rooted in the education policies and era through which Metro emerged (explored more fully in chapter two). Several factors have converged to make Metro's uncertain status possible - the collegial relationships between teachers, schools, and the government pre-1989 and their replacement in 1989 with detached audit procedures, a background of educational trends related to radical sociological theory which later shifted to particular definitions of school effectiveness, uncertainty over the (limits to the) roles of ERO and the Ministry of Education post-1989 (see chapter four), and finally, post-1989 market conditions that left Metro trying to meet the needs of two specific groups of students who, while not entirely homogenous within themselves, had competing needs, either for *less* directed learning opportunities or for *more* directed learning opportunities (see chapter five).

This particular combination of factors and circumstances have made Metro an educational site of a deep and fascinating blend of cultures, policies, contradictions, and theoretical tensions. Metro as a research site allowed me to delve into New Zealand and local education archival material, ask questions of the staff and students at the school about their perceptions of the school and its role, and analyse the philosophies of ERO and Ministry of Education in relation to "marginal" schools. Metro, formerly recognised as an innovative school, was managing to fail in these flexible and enterprising times. This apparent paradox allowed me to consider destabilising the self-evidence of Metro's apparent failure. This research was not an attempt to

support the school, although that may have been a side effect (explored further in chapter three), but was an attempt to get at what it is that makes possible current notions of "good" or "bad" schools.

I used a blend of theoretical approaches in this thesis to form a "post-structural ethnography" (Britzman 1995). The blended approaches consisted of post-structuralism (acknowledging the historical specificity of discourse), ethnographic case study methods (data collection and documentation), and Foucauldian notions of genealogical inquiry (disruption of notions of progress or the apparent self-evidence of certain categories) and governmental power relations (as a combination of totalising and individualising modes of power).

This blend allowed me to ask questions and take a line of analysis different than that which is customary in a traditional or standard ethnography. In traditional ethnographies there is a tendency to provide a "realist tale" which represents an event or culture as it "really" is (Van Maanen 1988). The beginnings of a realist tale can be seen in the conflicting accounts by ERO and Metro detailed in the thesis so far. The tale could be further extended by observing the daily routines and details at Metro, evaluating them for appropriateness and functionality of the school's philosophy, then contrasting them with ERO's evaluative practices and definitions of school effectiveness and the "successful school". This might be very useful for the school, the Ministry of Education, and perhaps even ERO from the point of view of policy-making, or go some way to resolving issues raised over Metro's future, or may provide a useful account and documentation of the emergence and possible demise of an alternative secondary school in New Zealand.

The realist tale is even more seductive as an approach given the political situation facing the school and the comparatively little academic work done on alternative schools as they exist today. Moreover very little research has been done into the success of students at alternative schools in terms of academic achievement and broader social destinations for school leavers compared with students from mainstream schools (Semel and Sadovnik 1999; National Research Bureau 2000; Leue, M. M. 2000) although there have been calls for this research during the 1970s when alternative schools were popular (Duke 1976; Duke 1978a; Duke 1978b) as well as more recently in terms of "alternative education units" and "activity centres" (Education Review Office 2001).

Research could be done into comparisons between Metro and other schools that are or were similar, both internationally and within New Zealand. There could also be an interesting project in tracing the shifts in philosophies of various alternative schools, examining what alternative

schools have been and what they are today. Some work has been done in this area, most of it during the heyday of alternative (progressive) schooling (Barrow 1978; Brown 1977; Glatthorn 1975; Graubard 1972; Kozol 1973) and soon after (Everhart 1988; Otto 1982; Wright 1986) along with some more recent work (Leue, M. M. 2000; Semel and Sadovnik 1999). However the amount of research into this area pales into insignificance with the more currently popular education topics such as "school effectiveness", social class and school mix, gender (girls in particular), "at risk" youth, and effects of computers on learning.

Since Metro had been labelled a "failing school" by ERO, another approach to the thesis could have been to evaluate Metro myself, aiming to either debunk ERO's conclusion or confirm it as accurate. The thesis could have attempted to contribute further to the already burgeoning literature on school effectiveness with a local New Zealand application. I could have written a standard ethnography, perhaps to document the birth and possible or imminent death of a school that had seemed to promise something more from schooling for many people, in terms of greater parental and community involvement, more individualised attention and learning programmes, greater flexibility in curriculum, a more relaxed approach to discipline, student involvement, and democratic school organisation. Certainly the school had originally aimed for a kind of school effectiveness, intending to be more effective than other mainstream schools by virtue of employing *student choice* in an attempt to make learning more relevant, reliable, and pleasurable, with similar spin-offs for teachers' work planning and teaching.

However I am not looking to account for ERO's criticisms or Metro's philosophy, or to take sides on the issues raised in ERO audits. Instead I want to examine how Metro has "broken the rules" at a deeper level, how Metro disrupts notions of an individualised enterprising culture in relation to a particular articulation of neo-liberal thought at this historical juncture and what forms the regulation of the school now takes. Ultimately, I suggest that Metro, in a sense, *had* to "fail" because the aims on which it was built and the particular construal of certain principles such as choice and flexibility are now further constrained within, or excluded from, what we now know or accept as education in schooling. Thus the approach I chose was to examine notions of school effectiveness (including teacher professionalism) and student and parental choice themselves in order to understand what is regarded as "proper" or allowable in education and also what is excluded from the accepted discursive framework of *what school is and should do*.

In other words, my main research question is not: *why* is Metro a failed school? But rather: *how* do we "know" Metro is a "failing school"? The related questions are then: *how* is Metro regulated (i.e. through what discursive framework) so that it necessarily becomes a failing

school? How does the regulation of Metro illustrate the problematic of freedom and choice in (neo)liberal education more generally?

The pull to tell realist tales in this thesis highlights the tension between ethnography and post-structuralism. This and the importance of my research questions being about how (not why) Metro comes to be a failing school is further examined in *chapter three*. Essentially my questions are historical and discursive ones, unlike more traditional ethnographic questions that tend to take the current material situation and explain it. This how-not-why approach is generally post-structural (historically specific) and takes its cue from Foucault's work on productive power and subjectivity that attacked the Enlightenment disciplines, arguing that truth itself has a history.

Research Design: Data Collection and Analysis

In answering the question *How do we know Metro is a failing school?*, the tension between ethnography and post-structuralism is underscored. This tension can be considered in terms of a research project which aims to make the familiar (in education) strange (Van Maanen 1995). In the case of Metro, the familiar realist tales about teacher professionalism and student achievement at Metro, the accuracy of ERO measurements, and the correctness or truthfulness run throughout the thesis and form one part of that tension. However while such such tales can be "pulled out" of each chapter, they do not form the focus of the thesis. Rather, they are a background or context for the ideas which support them as realist; those ideas are analysed in detail in the remaining chapters, disrupting the apparent self-evidence (or familiarity) and appeal to "truth" of those ideas and providing an account of how Metro fails within a particular (historical) discursive framework today.

Chapter four explores ERO as a disciplinary and normalising institution in terms of Foucault's technologies of domination, and both the product of, and reproductive of, discourses of school effectiveness, linking notions of the good school with broader political economic imperatives, in line with Foucault's work on technologies of the self. Using Bentham's Panoptican as explicated by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1973) ERO is understood as mobilising forms of surveillance, enclosure, ranking, standardisation, and treatment through its practices which are applied to all New Zealand schools generally but particularly to schools that are "different" or outside the norm, as in the case of Metro. Chapter four explores *how* Metro fails against ERO's yardstick of what counts as an effective school.

Chapter five continues to explore *how* Metro fails within the particular discursive framework of "enterprise" and "risk" in education today, particularly in relation to what constitutes the effective school in ERO's model. The largely "at risk" student population at Metro is considered as an inevitable outcome of market-led enterprise education policies, producing an ineffective school which in turn (re)produces unenterprising or "bad" students. The category "at risk" and the notion of the "enterprising individual" are contrasted as collections of factors produced from human capital discourses which produce Metro as a liminal (temporal, disturbing, and abnormal) space. Metro's liminality is exemplified in its population of predominantly "at risk" youth and understood alongside their liminality youth/adolescence more generally and is considered in relation to neo-liberal market requirements for market safety valves. With such a neo-liberal requirement, the paradox of "consumer choice and competition" pitted against "equal opportunities for excellence in learning outcomes for all" is produced, and remains unresolved to Metro's disadvantage.

Chapter six examines ERO's criticism of teachers at Metro in terms of discourses of teacher professionalism. Teacher professionalism is being vigorously pursued today as a means to regulate teachers, and it forms the basis for an effective school in practice. Teacher professionalism includes particular notions of what it is to be a good teacher, through an intersection of discourses of both care and management. Metro teachers' policies and practices are examined against a managerial framework reified by ERO. Earlier liberal humanist modes of education employed by, and mobilised at, Metro involved teachers using a particular disciplinary and normalising model of care to work with students. However the current managerial framework functions as a normalising discourse that forces Metro teachers to classify and treat students in new ways. Metro's traditional approach involved a relaxed teacher/student division and time spent on process rather than outcome. However their "care-free-ness" now constitutes Metro teachers as unprofessional, particularly in relation to the pleasure of Metro teachers, at odds with the "proper pleasures" (McWilliam 1999a) of the professional teacher.

Chapter seven introduces Bakhtin's notion of "carnival" as a metaphor for Metro practices, allowing an exploration into what is allowable and acceptable in schooling. It is argued that Metro typifies carnival through its aspects of play and parody. Like carnival, Metro attempts to turn the world upside down, to invert hierarchy, and transgress the accepted order. The notion of Metro as "family" – a term that has been used by students and teachers to refer to Metro – is considered in relation to the grotesque in the formerly private domain. However since neo-liberal forms of governing use the domain of the family to regulate all sorts of other areas of

life, the Metro family is shown up by ERO to have a grotesque character in need of serious treatment.

Play and carnivalesque parody of the mainstream at Metro form part of the democratic culture of the school. Democracy as expressed via Metro's school meeting embodies the school's humanist democratic principles, and is contrasted with democracy through neo-liberal consumer choice in education. The democratic idealism from which Metro evolved is contrasted with a form of neo-liberal freedom where "individual freedom is a technical condition of rational government rather than the organising value of a utopian dream" (Burchell 1993: 271). ERO explicitly criticises Metro's school meeting in all of its reviews of the school. This sets up a tension between freedom as expressed by Metro's somewhat messy or grotesque application of democracy to its school organisation, and freedom as "properly" expressed by the educational consumer (parent or student). ERO's determination that such a tension be resolved in terms of consumer freedom is shown to be governmental in nature rather than any kind of natural or true freedom. As Rose (1993) importantly argues:

> This is not to say that our freedom is a sham. It is to say that the agonistic relation between liberty and government is an intrinsic part of what we have come to know as freedom. (Rose 1993: 298)

The data collected (archival material, interviews, observations) for the thesis provided the discursive evidence and background for the analysis of the "good" (professional) teacher, the "good" (enterprising) student, and the "good" (effective) school. Methods of collecting data included analysis of archival documentation, interviews with staff and students, observation of school practices, and participation in some school or class events. I became a regular fixture at the school between 1996 and early 1999, spending two or three days a week there. Between 1999 and mid-2001, I made regular but shorter and less frequent visits to the school. I spoke at the school meeting several times between 1996 and 2000 in order to introduce myself and my project to the staff and students.

Interviews were conducted with key informants at the school. These informants were 15 teachers (including the Director and a now-former Director who taught) out of a possible total of 19 teachers during the period between 1996 and mid-2001. The teachers who were not interviewed were either employed on a short-term or part-time basis which made organising interviews difficult. The six teachers at Metro who had been there more than five years were all interviewed twice – once early in 1996 after the first ERO recommendation to close the school and once more 18 months later. All interviews were formal, conducted in private, and recorded with either a tape recorder or a notepad. Some data was collected incidentally from informal

conversations. In addition, the founder of the school, first Director of the school when it opened in 1977, and one foundation (ex) teacher were also interviewed.

I also spoke with 30 different students at the school, mostly between 1996 and 1998. These interviews were rarely conducted in private and often conducted as an informal and spontaneous focus group. Such situations tended to arise as a result of "hanging out" with students before and after classes or at lunch-times. A number of these students were spoken to at length and some "focus groups" and "hanging out" sessions were conducted with the same students more than once. Five students spent time with me beyond the interview situation – at a Sports Day, at a trip to the beach, and one had lengthy discussions with me about future university courses she was considering taking. I also took guitar lessons for a month from a senior student (who taught music on a part-time basis at Metro) as part of a deal to support his giving up drugs, an arrangement which came about during an interview situation.

No interviews were conducted with either Ministry of Education or Education Review Office staff. Their viewpoints and arguments were publicly available through their various documents and reports. One consultant who had worked with the school in 1996-1997 was approached by telephone but declined to give a formal interview. Another consultant who reported on the school in early 2001 was interviewed informally by telephone.

Other data about Metro was collected by sifting through documents held at the school to which I was generously given unlimited access. Documents included school year-books, school submissions, student profile records, school meeting minutes, class timetables, responses to ERO reports (either as formal submissions or notes made by individual teachers), staff meeting minutes, and emails between the Ministry of Education and other schools or between Ministry of Education officials, which the school obtained under the Official Information Act. Unfortunately a fire at Metro in 1984 had destroyed most material between 1977 and 1983. I also examined other publicly available documentation such as ERO school reports on Metro and news-media articles between 1976 and 2001.

I found nothing of significance about the initial period leading up to, and just after, Metro's opening in 1977 at the Auckland Archives. However I was very fortunate to find that David Hoskins, Metro's founder, had a box containing early letters between the him and the then Minister of Education and Director of Inspectors, early Metro and Parkway Programme prospectuses and class timetables, his own notes and writings on Metro and alternative schooling, and articles and newspaper clippings of interest between 1976 and 1977. Access to this box of early material was obtained somewhat serendipitously. I contacted David just two

days after he and his wife had begun a major clean out of old papers; the box was being consigned to the rubbish bin the day I called. David lent me the box to use for several years as I worked on my thesis. I now hold copies of most of that material and, with the completion of this thesis, David elected to save the original box of material at his house.

General information was also collected through observation (and sometimes participation) at school. I attended the twice-weekly school meetings during 1996, 1997, and the early part of 1998. I participated in several school outings including one Sports Day, one "praize-giving", and one staff social. In addition I spent time observing interactions in the school office, which also served as a staff room and space for much teacher-student interaction, and in at the "smoking seats" (prior to 1999) at the front and side of the main building.

Confidentiality and anonymity issues were addressed with the University of Auckland Human Subject Ethics Committee approval for the project on the basis that no individual research subjects would be named. It was accepted that because of the nature of the school's unique position in New Zealand, individual subjects might be inadvertently identified through reference to their positions within the school. All interviewees in formal interviews were asked to sign consent forms that they might be tape-recorded and quoted, and agreed that their anonymity was assured in terms of not naming them but that it might still be possible to identify them. Student and teacher interviewee anonymity was protected by referring to them in the thesis in the "Teacher 'A'" or "Student 'H'" format with a year of interview date given in brackets. Quotes from interviews are shown in italics. Teachers in particular positions of authority (e.g. the Director) are referred to in the "Director" or "Former Director" format. David Hoskins, Metro's founder, gave his approval to be named and quoted by name in the thesis.

The University of Auckland Human Subject Ethics Committee approval for the project had included my intention not to name the school along with an acknowledgment in my application that the school was likely to be identifiable given its unique position in New Zealand and the publicity surrounding its possible closure. I came up with a pseudonym for the school and intended to use this in the final thesis publication. However the pseudonym became unworkable. My main reason for not naming the school in the first place had been to protect the school from any possible negative effects or publicity my research might have had on them during the delicate period in early 1996, as ERO first recommended closure of the school, when I first began my thesis. At this point in time, the school was attempting to avoid publicity. However by mid-2001, it became clear that not naming Metro was absurd; I was having to change the names of public documents (reports, review, and newsmedia reports) despite it being obvious that it could be no other school but Metro that I was discussing in my thesis. I

contacted the University of Auckland Human Subject Ethics chairperson who advised me that anonymity of a school was not obligatory and that if the school and interviewees agreed to it, I could name the school.

All formal teacher interviewees (including former teachers and directors) were given the opportunity to read the final draft of the thesis and comment upon it. All had the right to withdraw their quoted comments but none did. At this time, all formal interviewees were asked separately about my naming of the school and agreed to this. In addition, the Board of Trustees were approached on this issue and their approval to name Metro was obtained.

This data was used as part of the how-not-why approach of my research and allowed an examination of the various discourses in education today which produce our taken-for-granted knowledge about what is allowable in schools and what counts as effective schooling. The thesis is perhaps characterised as much by what data I did not collect – interviews with ERO and Ministry of Education staff – as what I did collect since these the ethnographic element in the data collection, particularly interview data, provided something of the "self-regulation" of teachers and students within competing discursive frameworks. What the thesis shows is that, within the framework employed and developed by ERO in its role of assuring the accountability of schools to the Crown's investment in them, Metro inevitably becomes a failing school. That inevitability of that failure is not due to the school's inability to meet historically prevailing, true notions and ideals about education but rather due to shifts within a particular neo-liberal political context today which continues to shape the discourses we come to know as "proper", "right", or "natural" in education. It is these discourses, which include teacher professionalism, effective schooling, enterprise culture and the knowledge economy, "at risk" youth, and classroom management, which produce Metro as a failing school. Against the benchmarks and indicators of these discourses, Metro teachers look unprofessional, students are unenterprising and in need of various treatments, and management practices and school policies appear unsound.

In taking a post-structural ethnographic approach to this thesis, it became clear that Metro's status as an alternative school and what that actually means in terms of a neo-liberal discursive framework lies at the heart of the debate over its continued existence. The word "alternative" as it relates to schools today is overwhelmingly associated with schooling for the "at risk" student or students with behavioural or emotional difficulties (Clark, Smith and Pomare 1996; O'Rourke 1994) both internationally and within New Zealand education policy initiatives. This is examined further in chapter four. The current meanings and identities associated with alternative education now point to a significant shift in the meaning of the word alternative from

when Metro was first established in 1977. Such a shift makes it important to explore Metro's history further in the following chapter as context for the discursive analysis which follows.

Chapter Two

A HISTORY OF AUCKLAND METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

Overview

This chapter provides a historical context for Metro's emergence and early popularity – in contrast with its more recent apparent failure to meet current educational standards or practice schooling "properly". The far-reaching effects of Auckland Metropolitan College's legal status as a state provider of education are now in 2001, more than ever before, becoming clear. Metro was explicitly set up as an alternative school in 1977. However it has never had any official alternative status. Metro has always been a state provider of education and as such, has always been subject to inspection as a state school. Consequently although the school Director and staff have sought recognition of Metro's alternative philosophy and practices by ERO, there is no legal requirement that ERO recognise Metro's status in this way. Moreover, ERO has not only made it clear that it has consistently reviewed Metro as a state provider, it has commented that it does not consider Metro to be alternative enough to be considered a true alternative (to the mainstream) anymore (Education Review Office 1996, October). Metro has managed to exist for more than two decades, attracting the interest and support of both the local community and the Ministry of Education, through an *implicit* understanding that it is an alternative school.

T.I.N.A. (There is No Alternative)

In November 1996, ERO commented that students, board of trustees, teachers, and parents felt strongly that the New Zealand education system, particularly with the system's emphasis on *choice*, should accommodate a school with an alternative education philosophy (Education Review Office 1996, November). Since late 1996, however, ERO has reviewed Metro as a standard state provider of education. ERO has explicitly acknowledged Metro's alternative approach to schooling (Education Review Office 1996, February; Education Review Office 1996, November; Education Review Office 1998b; Education Review Office 2000; Education Review Office 2001, August) but has also explicitly justified reviewing the school as a standard service provider, citing the board of trustees' decision not to negotiate a contract with the Ministry of Education as an alternative education because it would likely mean becoming

something akin to an activity centre rather than remaining a school (Education Review Office 1998b; Education Review Office 2000; Education Review Office 2001, August).

Metro existed as alternative, with tacit approval for its various innovations and schemes until 1989, when the Department of Education was dissolved and replaced with the Ministry of Education. At that point an entirely different set of governing principles – clear lines of accountability, previous Departmental responsibilities devolved to schools (e.g. local boards of trustees, school charters) with central control retained by the Ministry, was implemented through a massive reform of the public sector. Any tacit sanctioning of Metro's interpretation or philosophy in the areas of curriculum and attendance was nullified under the new system that included National Education Guidelines and National Administration Guidelines (NEGs and NAGs) that *all* schools had to adhere to. Technically Metro had no exemption from this though it continued to try and operate as though it did, at the same time as it tried to honour its new compulsory commitments under the 1989 Education Act.

While dealing with the issues of compliance raised by ERO in 1995 (Education Review Office 1995) had been accepted as necessary, the factual accuracy of parts of the report and the general tenor of the report – which contended that management and delivery of the curriculum was not up to a professional standard (Education Review Office 1995) – had been disputed (Metro 1995). Similarly, many aspects of ERO's February 1996 report were also vigorously disputed by Metro staff and their BOT (McDonald 1996). Particularly upsetting to them were what they saw as inaccurate and unfairly damning statements from ERO about them personally, such as the claim that the BOT lacked the *will or capacity* to manage effectively and that the teaching quality was poor. The BOT pointed out that efforts had already been made to address some of ERO's earlier (and reiterated in 1996) concerns regarding curriculum management and staff appraisal structures. The BOT claimed that there was never a lack of will on their part.

Moreover, the Metro Board argued that the school was being unfairly judged as a mainstream school despite its long-standing establishment, functioning, and general acceptance by the public as an alternative school. They argued that the scope of ERO's reviews had been wrongly premised on Metro being like any other school yet it had never been like any other school. Aspects of the school functioning, such as curriculum and attendance were integral to their alternative functioning and needed to be reviewed in this light. As the school's director in 1997 put it:

> *One of my major criticisms of ERO is their failure to put [the school] in context and that's come from the very top. What we consider to be really important issues about how the school operates and who our students are...there's just a definite feeling that all*

schools – that they're trying on the one hand to treat all schools as though they are the same. In actual fact, the way that they operate they treat them very differently, but there's a sort of assumption in there that their methods are so objective, it's almost as though they can tick all those little boxes. (Director, 1997)

The dispute over Metro's status had been complicated by the Ministry of Education's own uncertainty over how to resolve the situation of a school that catered to both disaffected "at risk" students and academically-able but non-conformist students (Connelly 2001; Dow 2001; Graeme (Team Leader Wilson, Education Provision and Improvement, Ministry of Education), 2001). The Metro staff and Board of Trustees dispute ERO's contention in their July 2001 report that the Metro Board "chose" not to develop a specific supply agreement with the Crown to be an alternative provider (Auckland Metropolitan College 2001). They claim that upon ERO recommending they pursue the option of developing such an agreement, they discussed the matter with the Auckland Regional Manager of the Ministry of Education and concluded that there was no practical way to achieve the specific supply agreement since the manager informed them that this would involve first closing the school and then re-opening it *if* subsequent approval for the school was obtained. There was no guarantee that the school would ever re-open and consequently the Metro Board of Trustees did not regard this as much of a choice.

Another option was for Metro to become a "special character" school. The Ministry of Education's Briefing to the Secretary of Education (released under the Official Information Act) on possible courses of action regarding Metro outlines a possibility of making Metro a Year 10-13 Alternative/Special Senior School within section 156 of the Education Act 1989 which allows for designated character schools to be approved (Phillips 2001). Most special character schools tend to be integrated (formerly private religious) schools and have a category to use that specifies their special (usually religious) character. There was no category in this sense that applied to Metro. Moreover the staff at Metro were themselves somewhat unclear as to what category might fit or what special character they really had. Metro had moved from being conceptualised as a "school without walls"[10], to being funded as a state provider of education for non-conforming and atypical students, to making concessions to ensure it met the requirements of the NEGs and the National Curriculum as state school.

When I first came to this school I asked the director what the philosophy of the school was. He said: Well there's about 130 people here altogether so there's about 130 school philosophies. (Assistant Director, 2001)

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[10] A "school without walls" is modelled on the Parkway Programme in Philadelphia which utilised the community as teachers and classrooms for its students.

Metro staff claim that the possibility of becoming an alternative senior school under Section 156 of the Education Act had never been discussed with them and they have had no opportunity to define their special character, vision, and purpose alongside assistance from the Ministry of Education. Metro's clearest idea about its philosophy in recent years has been to remain open and meet legislative requirements as a state provider of education whilst retaining as much of their original humanist philosophy as possible through an emphasis on choice and democracy, a responsibility to the school community and a personal autonomy model based on the work of Paul Hirst (Auckland Metropolitan College 1997).

Metro's other option was, and possibly still is, to become an activity centre under the Special Education Services that caters for students with behavioural, physical, or psychological difficulties. In some respects Metro already fits with the activity centre model – it has a mix of student levels and ages within classes, teachers willing to act as tutors in some respects, and a tendency for many student enrolments to be short-lived or temporary (students moving from other schools to Metro and back again). Furthermore, Metro's students tend to be the "at risk" students regarded as the accepted clientele of activity centres.

However the activity centre idea would have positioned Metro as a non-school, effectively denying the teachers their collective employment contract and necessitating the attachment of Metro as a unit to another mainstream school. This would have been ironic given that Metro had fought to un-attach itself from Penrose High School, within which it was originally a unit, several years after it first opened, and cut right across the commitment to offer unique learning opportunities and recognised qualifications. Metro was always intended as an alternative, not an adjunct, to other schools.

The Ministry of Education Briefing also notes that Metro has no specific vision or charter statement that mentions "at risk" students specifically despite it having an obvious considerable "at risk" student population. The Ministry of Education goes on to note that other providers may better meet the needs of Metro's "at risk" students in terms of producing acceptable learning outcomes in an acceptable format. They maintain that mainstream schools are generally more aware of the needs of such students, that several centres designed for such students already exist, and that private training establishments offer courses well-suited to many of the Metro "at risk" students. Metro staff claim this flies in the face of evidence that most of their "at risk" students have tried other schools and centres and rejected them. For those students, Metro is the only acceptable alternative.

After almost two decades of apparent acceptance, Metro was caught between a rock and hard place on the issue of its reputation, status, and significance as a valued alternative to mainstream schooling in New Zealand.

Deschooling Auckland

Metro was established in 1977. Letters between the then Minister of Education, the Chief Inspector of Education, and the founder, made it clear that Metro was explicitly understood to be alternative or "experimental" (Amos 1974). However its status as alternative was never clarified in any legal or enduring way. The school had been established from a proposal to the Department of Education by David Hoskins, a tutor at Auckland University during the early 1970s. In October 1974, Hoskins wrote to Phil Amos, the Minister of Education at the time, seeking interest in, and support for, a new secondary school in Auckland. In his letter Hoskins said:

> The fundamental aim of the school is to embrace students as responsible both to themselves and to the community. Students were to have the freedom to take up that responsibility and the notion of school-*as*-community was to enable students to further develop that responsibility. This new school was instead to have classes with flexible timetables, chosen by the students themselves, in consultation with tutors who would provide guidance to the students. In order to make the point that learning is not limited to a time, Hoskins proposed the school be open from 9am to 9pm. This would also enable older students, working people, and other community members to participate in the school more easily. Students would have much free time when not actually in a class and Hoskins saw this as integral to the building of student responsibility, also arguing that how much time in class was not as important as how much the student profited from the classes they were in. Small tutorial groups were to be arranged so that each tutor and group of students decided when and where they would meet and how often. Each tutor would have several tutorial groups and tutorial times were compulsory and used as a core discussion group, a place for guidance and direction on the student's course and study decisions. These tutorials would be an interdisciplinary – as opposed to curriculum subject-specific – meeting point for the students and the various curriculum options; an interface between school and community. The right of students to not take part in class was respected as part of the building of responsibility for one's own actions. (Hoskins 1974)

Hoskins' proposal, inspired largely by the work of Ivan Illich, made for a radical departure from traditional mainstream schooling's adherence to time schedules, the school as separate from the community and a teachers-as-experts students-as-recipients approach (Illich 1973). However it was part of a growing worldwide trend of interest in alternative educational initiatives throughout the United States and Britain. There were also already a number of alternative schools or programmes in operation or being proposed throughout New Zealand, such as the Auckland Alternative Secondary School of Halsey Street and the private alternative primary Rosedale School in Albany.

Hoskins' proposal to the Department of Education was based in his being particularly inspired by radical critiques of education such as Freire's (1972) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1972) and Illich's (1973) *Deschooling Society* (Hoskins 1998). Freire challenged the notion of schooling as educative, maintaining that the general schooling version of education, through a teacher/student opposition, is little more than "banking education" and as such it was "dehumanising". Freire suggested replacing banking education with a liberating system of "dialogue" and "problem-posing education" in recognition of both the student's and the teacher's innate humanity. In Freire's eyes, the potential for school to be liberating was enormous.

Illich, on the other hand, saw little hope for formal education beyond a radical overhaul of schooling that would effectively replace school with something akin to centres of research, community interaction, and relevant opportunities for life experience for students. Illich (1973) had argued that school, as we currently knew it, was symptomatic of an institutionalised society, which employed a host of teachers, and therapists to deal with constructed categories of childhood and deviancy. Claiming that schools produce consumers and consumerist desires, he charged, "everywhere not only education but society as a whole needs "deschooling" (Illich 1973: 10).

During the 1970s, a host of other writers alongside Illich were deriding what they saw as the meaningless routines and dehumanising or authoritarian aspects of school (see *Letter to a Teacher* (The School of Barbiana 1970), *Free Schools: A Time for Candor* (Kozol 1973), *Summerhill* (Neill 1968, 1970), Kohl's *36 Children*, *Compulsory Mis-education* (Goodman 1964), and the diary-based *How Children Fail* (Holt 1969)). These were part of a growing body of texts critiquing modern schooling's role in perpetuating social inequalities following the *Plowden Report (1967)* in England and the *Coleman Report (1966)* in the United States. Along with a multitude of other educational research projects and critical analyses, these reports presented evidence showing that school achievement correlated with the socio-economic background of students' parents and that public schools had not overcome social and racial inequalities (Rust 1977). According to the critics, not only did schools fail to break down social class barriers but also they reproduced them and served already-powerful interests in society. Educational sociologists highlighted the classist (see Bowles and Gintis 1976), raced, and gendered nature of schooling practices and pedagogy. Others focussed on the hierarchisation of knowledge (see Young 1971) and its non-neutrality or class-based nature.

School processes were also examined in terms of structure and agency (Willis 1977), and accommodation and resistance, showing that schooling was not a straightforward process of reproduction and correspondence, but a complex interplay of pedagogy, curriculum, and policy.

Studies focussed on the interpretation of these factors; the way knowledge and practices were taken on, mediated, and "worn" or even "performed" by students and teachers. The importance of the totality of social influences was stressed by Raymond Williams (1958) and, along with Berger and Luckmann's (1967) notion that "reality is socially constructed", a compelling argument could be made that the totality of social experiences should be taken into account in any analysis of schooling. However by 1971, the idea of society influencing school had been turned on its head, with deschoolers like Illich declaring that school itself had an anti-educational effect on society more generally (Wright 1986).

The wave of sociological educational theory in the 1970s both grew out of, and contributed to, a rising tide in social movements and protests based around political demands from groups traditionally oppressed, marginalised, or ignored by the political mainstream – women, blacks (in the United States, Maori (in New Zealand) and the working class). New Zealand in particular saw itself as a progressive society, a "socialist democracy", with one of the first Race Relations Conciliators in the world, a keen interest in child-centred education and New Zealand women being the first Western women to vote in a democratic election. During this 1960s period, there were more international middle class social movements for peace, specific anti-war protests, and environmental back-to-nature concerns. Alongside such environmental concerns came a more critical questioning of scientific facts. Science was no longer uncritically accepted (Wright 1986) as its claims to objectivity were unmasked by Kuhn (1962). The notion of scientific progress was seen as leading to an increase in the use of limited physical resources, particularly for energy production (Schumacher 1974) and also as producing a diminishing of the personal significance of the individual (Rust 1977). The hold of mainstream and conservative interests, including educational interests, was being shaken.

In Albany, Auckland, Rosedale School had opened in 1969 after a parent group interested in a parent-involved, child-centred, and flexible learning environment formed (Papp 1976). Like many (child-centred) alternative schools the idea for the school had grown from a general dissatisfaction with state schooling. The Rosedale School philosophy emphasised process over product in learning, strong school-community links, and the encouragement of self-discipline rather than school discipline, in conjunction with student subject choice and responsibility, rejecting divisions between subjects and imposed criterions of success outside of forms of assessment to which students agree (Papp 1976).

Auckland Alternative Secondary School opened in 1973, in part to provide a school for ex-Rosedale students and in part to take on students who had dropped out of, or had troubled experiences with, other secondary schools (Papp 1976). The parents involved in setting up the

school were keen readers of Illich, Holt, and A.S. Neill.   Although attendance was not compulsory, a core curriculum and recognised school examinations were offered in line with the students' wishes (Papp 1976). The school ran with a flexible timetable that combined the core curriculum with an alternative studies programme. Later, the fluctuating school roll began to destabilise the school budget and waning parent involvement impacted negatively on the day-to-day running of the school. Additionally the school began to acquire a bad reputation as disaffected students joined those enrolled out of interest in a freer style of learning (Papp 1976). Eventually this fragmentation would prove too much and the school would be closed down a few months before Auckland Metropolitan College opened in 1977.

During that early 1970s period, enthusiasm for exploring and experimenting with the potential of schooling was high. It was in this climate that Hoskins' proposal met with interest from Phil Amos, the Minister of Education at the time (Amos 1974; Hoskins 1974). After the Second World War and throughout the 1920s, New Zealand had embraced the work of the famous child-centred educationalists, Froebel and Montessori, and their methods for early childcare and primary schools with the support of the Minister of Education (Middleton and May 1997). By 1970 there was huge interest in non-streamed approaches to class organisation, the inclusion of Maori culture and language, wide curriculum choice beyond the "basics", and pastoral disciplinary practices (as opposed to corporal punishment) based in behaviouralism were being explored (Middleton and May 1997). The climate was right for the emergence of alternative high schools in New Zealand.

The Progressive Impulse

Though many alternative schools can be grouped together under the rubric of being "alternative", alternative schools were not necessarily a cohesive group or part of one cohesive philosophy. At a general level, Everhart (1988) divides alternative schools into two camps – those that foster freedom through providing the opportunity to learn and those that provide learning through the provision of freedom. These two camps corresponded to child-centredness and social reformism respectively, both being informed by what Cremin (1961) has called the "progressive era" of 1917-1957, in turn inspired by the "progressive impulse" of 1876-1917.

The latter "progressive impulse" era was based in a social reformism, best known through the writings of John Dewey who identified the "proper" role of publicly-funded schooling to "see to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born and to come into living contact with a broader environment" (Dewey 1916). Child-centredness had in common with social reformism a commitment to the betterment of the

child through greater opportunities but its locus was drawing out the natural qualities of the child through a focus on the individual peculiarities and characteristics of that child. Thus child-centredness, while it overlapped with social reformism in some respects, was in contradiction with it to a certain extent, particularly as notions of nurturing the natural child flowed into "the child knows best", taking its cues from Rousseau:

> Nothing is known about childhood. With our false ideas of it the more we do, the more we blunder. The wisest people are so much concerned with what grown ups should know that they never consider what children are capable of learning. They keep looking for the man in the child, not thinking of what he is before he becomes a man. (Rousseau translated by Boyd 1962: 6)

Pestalozzi had followed Rousseau, making a case for the primacy of sense experience, indeed that nature (and the child) had its own way of developing. Thus the teacher had a special, but non-imposing role in that process, and was to operate on a basis of mutual respect, allowing spontaneous activity to occur (Rust 1977: 108). Child-centred education was anti-authority as the teacher's role was redefined and children were not expected to do things simply because it was commanded by an authority. However there was an idea that children could behave in accordance with authority, in understanding why things should be done a certain way. Later this was to become the progressive catch-cry of 'teaching children not what to think but how to think'.

Following this, schools such as the Children's School in England, established in 1915 by Margaret Naumberg and later called the Walden School, took an approach that abandoned the textbook in favour of nurturing children's independence of feeling, thought, and action. Within a curriculum that emphasised arts, staff did not define syllabi for age levels, were addressed by first name, and students worked individually with the teacher. This rendition of child-centred thought tended to be inspired by Freudian notions of human nature and the unconscious. Teachers were to understand transference and identification (as they become symbolic mothers and fathers) so that child could be freed from early childhood fixations to develop normally. Teachers were to recognise the source of motivation and behaviour for themselves and students; thus the task of education was to sublimate child's repressed emotions into socially useful channels through opportunities provided by the teacher. The provision of such opportunities came to be seen as more important for schools than communicating bodies of information.

With teachers taking a back-seat to what was considered the child's own innate abilities to learn, child-centred education thus rejected the group-tendencies of Dewey, claiming the answer to true education lay not in social transformation but individual transformation (Cremin 1961).

Dewey certainly favoured preserving and making use of the natural impulses – curiosity, construction, expression – of the child and his own Laboratory School called for children to be at the centre (Dewey and Dewey 1915). However John Dewey was critical of child-centred schooling (see essay reprinted in *Art and Education* 1947, *Child and the Curriculum* 1902 and *Experience and Education* 1938), claiming that making use of the natural impulses of the child did not mean that the child knows best (as with the "free schools"). Freedom, Dewey argued, is not something given at birth nor bred of planless-ness but systematically wrought in competition with experienced teachers who are knowledgeable in their own traditions (Cremin 1961: 234).

Dewey, the best known of the social reformist progressives, argued that schools were to promote personal growth (i.e. to educate), provide social continuity (induct the young into the community), and promote equality of opportunity (Marshall 1988). This was to work against a democratic background of the development of rational habits and shared interests and activities, with learning to be organised in this manner (Marshall 1988: 29). Social reproduction, so often criticised by radical educationalists in the 1960s and 1970s, was not seen as negative by Dewey but as necessary for the continuation of social life, although there had to be a way to ensure continual improvement and progress rather than simply reproducing less progressive aspects of society such as social and economic inequalities. In this model, the aim of education was not merely to make citizens and workers but to make human beings who would live life to the fullest, who would add meaning to their experiences and improve their ability to make meaning from subsequent experiences (Cremin 1961).

Thus, according to both Dewey and the child-centred schooling movement, schooling was to be seen as a potential site of liberation and the liberal ideology of economic and social success being based upon merit was firmly established within schooling – hence, the celebrated meritocratic equation of 'ability plus effort equals success'. The alternative education movement, though based in an optimistic view of schooling's potential, took a more critical view of the liberal meritocratic equation. Many alternative schools had radical political commitments although they were generally accountable to a liberal notion of democratic freedom as well. However both equality and freedom have long been in tension throughout liberalism's history, with liberty usually privileged over equality (Hall 1986).

The many alternative school initiatives during the 1960s and 1970s were based variously in ideals about active learning, recognition of individual differences between students, co-operative class planning by teachers and students, and an attempt to make learning at school more directly related to "real life" outside school. The alternative school practices were in turn

based in a combination of ideas taken from Dewey, Holt, Illich, Montessori, and Freire. There was also a drive to address health, vocational, social, and community issues in alternative schools. The United States produced privately-funded "street schools", "freedom schools" or "storefront schools", which were located in working class and black areas and had a stated objective of increasing the life chances of its working class students through politicisation (Everhart 1988). Many such schools set out to attract dropouts from traditional schools and prepare them for entry to university (see Harlem Prep of New York and CAM Academy of Chicago) (Glatthorn 1975). Others, like the free schools, were inspired by Summerhill founder, A.S. Neill's text, *Summerhill*, and took their cue from Rousseau's famous thesis on *Emile*. The free schools preferred to leave children to their own devices, with extensive free play and small group or individual rather than class activity. In free schools adults were facilitators rather than teachers, children of different ages were grouped together, and there were no formal lines of authority, much less any regard for dress code. Similar but less unrestricted primary schools based on the work of Montessori were also established, as well as a number of alternative programmes operating within existing traditional schools and aimed at particular student constituencies, such as students who had behavioural or learning difficulties.

The School Without Walls

> The Auckland Metropolitan College, as a redefinition of the form of the school, frees the student from the "dehumanisation" found in the isolation of the traditional school from the community and in the restriction of the timetable which predefines when learning will occur. (Hoskins 1975a: 42)

In November 1974, Hoskins had visited the Parkway Programme in Philadelphia, United States and saw in action a school in keeping with Illich's ideas of deschooling and similar to what Hoskins had already proposed to the Department of Education in New Zealand. Although there was a venue for a weekly school meeting, there were no school buildings in the conventional sense. Classes were held in buildings all over Philadelphia, the use of which was negotiated according to demand. Consequently, the school had come to be known as the "school without walls" and was premised on the ideas that learning cannot be forced and therefore student choice should be a cornerstone of any school programme, that learning is not a place but a process, and that life experience was a valuable teacher (Bremer and von Moschzisker 1971).

Parkway was open to anyone of grades nine through twelve. It was the student, rather than the parents, who applied for entry (though one parent had to give permission). There was no entry test and no references or behaviour records required for successful enrolment. Students were encouraged to plan their own courses with information and guidance provided in the form of a comprehensive handbook outlining the courses and requirements. Some of the courses were

taught by the unit tutors, others by members of the community and all included a description of the course, expectations and mandatory projects, pre-requisites, class times, course credit value, class size limits, course locations, and instructor details (including home contact information). Social Studies courses included radical historical critiques such as "Women in American History", "Black history", Peer group counselling", "US foreign relations" as well as practical work-based courses such as "Administrative aide for youth employment unit at family court", "Job developers for juvenile court", "Volunteer work at graduate hospital", and "Planned parenthood aide" (Parkway Programme 1974).

Metro's architect, Hoskins, had built the school on a commitment to egalitarian ideals and the school being publicly funded and open to any and all students. This commitment was embodied in Metro's ballot system. This system was based on the public lottery system that the Parkway Programme ran when it was seriously oversubscribed in its first year, as 4000 students applied for around 120 places. The Parkway lotteries, with set numbers of available places for each of the eight school districts, were in keeping with Parkway's status as a public school and philosophy of making a good public school education freely available to any student. Again the question of equality as well as fairness was at stake and the lottery was designed to ensure that both black and white students would be represented according to the wider student population of those districts. Embodied in the lottery approach was a critique of traditional admissions standards as discriminatory in their reliance upon what the director called social rather than any scientific criteria (Bremer and von Moschzisker 1971). Thus the lottery not only reflected the values that would be taught to students, but also a confidence in those values being necessary for a broad, full, and superior education. Although the racial context differed and Metro's commitment to equality did not include an explicit lottery organised around race or ethnicity, it did recognise a particular balance in gender and age. Each time a place became available, the ballot held awarded a place to a specific gender and age-level category of student (see interview with Teacher "E", 2001).

Another "school without walls", Four Avenues School in Christchurch, New Zealand, opened in January 1975. Hoskins sought the support and advice of Graham Robinson, the director of Four Avenues School in Christchurch asking for support and advice (Hoskins 1975b, Hoskins 1975c) and Robinson and Hoskins continued their correspondence for several years with Robinson delighted that they would have a "sister school" in Auckland (Robinson 1976a, Robinson 1976b, Robinson 1976c). At a more formal level, and upon the recommendation of the Department of Education, Hoskins embarked on a feasibility study, approaching and making presentations to the media, the Auckland City Council, and various community and interest groups. Throughout 1975, Hoskins approached the Department of Education and the

MacKenzie Education Fund for funding to continue the feasibility study. He also wrote to community organisations asking for support and ideas for funding throughout 1975. As a result of a public meeting on 31 October 1975, the Auckland Metropolitan College Association was formed and began meeting on a regular basis with Hoskins producing a regular newsletter for members.

By the end of 1976, the Department of Education had approved the school to be established as a department of Penrose High School. While the school was not accorded any official status other than being a state-funded, public high school, it was clearly set up on the basis of being an alternative school. When it opened in January 1977, Auckland Metropolitan College was a radical critique of mainstream schooling in an approach that saw students without any uniform[11], choosing their own classes, attendance, and study schedules, having equal voting rights alongside their teachers on all matters to do with the school, and organised into vertical (rather than horizontal age-based) classes. The school offered innovative work-experience programmes, similar to the STAR (Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource) and other related work-skills programmes offered now in many schools. Metro was subject to the governance of the board of the Penrose High School.

At this point, and as a result of the lack of differential status accorded to the school, a tension between accepting state funding and safeguarding the school's ethos began to appear.

Another Brick in the Wall

As Pink Floyd released their album, *The Wall*, with its huge cult hit deriding conformity and the English school boy's experiences with authoritarian teachers (Pink Floyd 1979), Metro too began to attract a wall – in precise contradiction to its status as a school without them. Despite Metro's initial success in attracting teachers and students, its deviation from Hoskins' original aims together with the tension of being a state funded alternative school inevitably became problematic.

Although the school had originally been his idea and all-consuming project for several years, Hoskins could not be appointed to the school without formally applying for a position there. Regulations governing the appointment of teaching staff rendered him unqualified because for he had no recognised teaching certificate (all his teaching had been in the United States or at university). Therefore, Hoskins spent a year at teacher training college gaining his teaching

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[11] Several other liberal high schools in New Zealand such as Green Bay High School and Onslow College also had no uniform.

certificate. However Hoskins was then ineligible for the position of director since he was only a newly qualified teacher rather than one with the experience deemed necessary for running a school. As he then applied for a teaching position, Hoskins was also unable to participate in the selection committee for staff at the school; being a teacher applicant as well as on the selection committee would constitute a conflict of interest. With state school status, the Eastern Secondary Schools Board took over managing the AMS[12] project from Hoskins. Hoskins' concern grew as he was instructed by the new board that, as an applicant for a position at the school, he could not be in contact with the board.

Ironically Hoskins' success in getting the Department of Education to establish Metro as a state school came to undermine the school philosophy and base in the community that Hoskins had struggled to build. With Metro being state-funded and existing on an understanding of, rather than an official status for, its alternative structure, there was little protection for, and development of, the school's or Hoskins' ideals. Hoskins expressed concern over losing the capacity to steer the project in a letter to Graeme Robinson, Director of Four Avenues School in Christchurch (Hoskins 1976).

The school-community alliance that Hoskins had worked towards was not eventuating. During the stage of negotiations between Hoskins and the Department of Education, it was understood that AMS would rely heavily on community resources (Hoskins 1975c).   Earlier correspondence between Hoskins and Phil Amos, the then Minister of Education, had confirmed that what it called the "experimental school" was in line with the Department's policy of integrating schools more closely with their community (Amos 1974).

Hoskins had sought undertaking from various organisations to become involved with the school. Various organisations, including the Law Society, the Auckland Hospital Board, the School of Medical Laboratory Technology, Winstone Ltd, the New Zealand Institute of Engineers, the Vocational Training Council, the Interior Designers Association, the Accountancy Society, the Post Office and the Auckland Manufacturers Association, agreed to publicise AMS among their members with a view towards offering practical support to AHS. Others organisations like New Zealand Insurance, City Art Gallery and the Auckland Institute and Museum were committed to some kind of involvement and still others like the University of Auckland, New Zealand Co-op Dairy, the Bank of New Zealand, Abels Ltd, and the Consumer Institute had signalled availability to discuss possible involvement. Many other people had offered home and garden space to the school for classes .

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[12] AMS or Auckland Metropolitan School was Auckland Metropolitan College's original name.

For at least the first two years, Metro produced course catalogues almost identical to those from the Parkway Programme, attempting to follow Hoskins' lead stated in the school aims in the advertisement for teaching positions at the Metro that he had drafted himself:

> The school will aim for close integration with the community in which it exists. That is, the city itself will become an important part of the school, and the school will look towards people and institutions in and around city as valuable educational facilities. The school will also aim to involve the student more directly in determining his own education, to develop responsibility; to develop communication skills; and to develop critical acumen. (New Zealand Education Gazette 1976)

Hoskins' aspirations for a strong school-community link were perhaps a precursor to Tomorrow's Schools' ideals. However the original Metro approach differed markedly from that of another well-known alternative school, Summerhill School in England. Unlike Metro, Summerhill saw the school as a community in itself, possibly in part a reaction to pressure or prejudice from the wider community about its unusual methods and position.

> Our relationship with the local community is polite but fairly distant, though many local people are fond of the school and proud of it too. The younger people tend, understandably, to be either a bit envious or suspicious of our kids. We try to have open days from time to time, to allow people to see us in action, but most of the time we keep ourselves pretty much to ourselves. (Readhead 1998)

However, the desired relationship between Auckland Metropolitan College and its community was never consummated as the original director pointed out in his annual report:

> The amount of community support anticipated by David Hoskins in his feasibility study before the school was opened has not eventuated. The reasons for this vary but include the present economic climate, the dissatisfaction with students in some community situations and the students' desire to be involved in traditional exam-oriented courses. The main strategies used to encourage this interaction are work experience for any students who wish to be involved (all academic levels and all ages). Many visitors speaking to classes. Many classes moving out of school to see things in the real world. Some community service work and so on. One reason for this [community] area not being stressed to the extent it could have been is that in my opinion this aim could contradict the second aim "determine his own education" – and so while I think that the interaction should be encouraged, I do not regard this aim as any more important than the other aims. (Begg 1979: 1)

Ironically, the school's popularity with students and teachers alongside its less than ideally intimate relationship with the local community caused another issue to surface. The school was set up in an old manual training centre in Vermont Street, Ponsonby. Four weeks after opening, with 80 students, overcrowding was taking its toll ("Roll swells at new college" (Auckland Star 1976b); "Already in need of new home" (New Zealand Herald 1977)). The following year,

needing a bigger general space for everyone, the school moved to its current premises in Mt Eden – the villa with one main room and a series of other rooms, ripe for use as classrooms. The move to Mt Eden had sealed Metro's operations as a mainstream school in terms of having a fixed location in a designated area marked "school". For Hoskins, the move to a school building was a mistake that, as one of the general teaching staff, he was powerless to avoid.

> *...[there was a] Great lot of money spent on it [the new premises]. But all you needed was one space that everyone in the school could get into. Then the rest would be outside. The whole idea was that it would be cheaper to run. You didn't need to put money into buildings. But as soon as you build a building that is comfortable, people are going to want to stay there. (Hoskins 1998)*

The move to a fixed school building marked a turning point for Hoskins. He realised the school was not reflecting his original ideas in terms of location or community involvement.

> *My argument was always that the institutional framework (one aspect of the hidden curriculum) influences the students' and teachers' perceptions of what the educational opportunities are. To run with the 'community school' concept means to overtly set the framework to encourage this. (Hoskins 2001)*

Metro continued to develop beyond the original 'school without walls' idea. Students exercised their democratic right to demand traditional school organisation in terms of teacher-led activities that were not necessarily compatible with community involvement. As the first director, Andy Begg, explains:

> *I acknowledge that the original staff were all very aware of David's ideas of 'school without walls' but at the same time we were appointed to develop a school with a set of aims that were capable of interpretation in a number of ways, and a school without walls was only one of these. We were not antagonistic to this notion but we did see that what students wanted also had to be encouraged...The move away from Vermont Street was inevitable as our first site was only a temporary one. The support of the Department of Education in looking for alternative premises and doing alterations as needed indicated the support they were giving us. [The Ngauruhoe site] was certainly not meant to get away from the possibility of more happening outside school but acceptance that we needed a base somewhere as students wanted many 'nearly' traditional classes. (Begg, 2001)*

Within eighteen months of the school opening, Hoskins had resigned and the school continued to evolve into a hybrid of a state-funded school responsible to the government but expected to challenge it. Its students reflected the diversity of philosophies within the school and the awkward placement of the school within the state system. They were a mix of students disaffected with schooling or society more generally and students genuinely interested in the freedoms and limits that a broad liberal and experimental education had to offer.

The tension between the ideals of equality and social change in social reformism and freedom of expression and individualism of child-centred education could be seen in some views of Metro as serving a privileged few. By 1988, Metro was struggling for autonomy from Penrose High School. Metro's relationship with Penrose High had grown increasingly strained over differing notions of what counted as attendance (in class or just at school). The Penrose High principal also expressed concern over what she saw as the "enormously privileged group" of students at Metro who enjoyed "the benefit of totally enviable student: teacher ratios" and Metro teachers who took a "permissive attitude to absence from school" and were "paid full salaries for a greatly reduced workload" via a small roll (Dunphy 1988).

As the philosophical differences between the Penrose High and Metro deepened, Metro finally won the right to be a fully-fledged school in its own right by 1993. Only three years earlier, the wide-ranging education reforms of Tomorrow's Schools had come into force, effectively legislating against most of the freedoms and personal responsibilities that Metro had somehow intended to foster in its students through its particular brands of democracy and diverse curricular activity. Three months before the new systems and lines of accountability of Tomorrow's Schools became law, confusion over Metro's philosophy as alternative was highlighted as problematic in an independent report commissioned by Penrose High, Metro and the Department of Education (Mann 1989). The report recommended Metro ready itself for Tomorrow's School by defining its purpose and function within a Charter that would then become the yardstick for its accountability (Mann 1989: 4). However Metro's position as a school designed to experiment and lead others, and as a school which would stand apart from the mainstream, would prove to be its downfall. Save for Four Avenues School in Christchurch, also based on a "school without walls", over 1000 kilometres away, Metro had no real peers and it was not clear just who it was going to lead.

Concluding Comments: What Kind of Alternative is This?

Auckland Metropolitan College had taken two approaches in its arguments against ERO's criticisms and recommended closure. Firstly the Metro staff and Board of Trustees argued that Metro had no real chance to implement what changes it had agreed to accept or implement in the school and thus ERO could not determine their success or failure within the short time-frames between reviews. Secondly they argued that the school had been unfairly reviewed. Much of that argument rested upon Metro's perceived and publicly understood, but in fact unofficial, status as an *alternative* school.

Metro's status as alternative was at first recognised in some official capacity by school inspection services during the 1980s but later dropped by ERO in the 1990s in favour of its official status as a standard service provider. Both the Department of Education Inspectorate in 1986 and the first ERO review of Metro in 1992 referred to Metro as an alternative school (Department of Education 1986; Education Review Office 1992b). A report prepared by an independent consultant nominated by the Department of Education explicitly recognised Metro's establishment as an alternative school against Ministerial Approval clause 12 which established it (Mann 1989).

Metro has never had any real support *as an alternative school* from the Ministry of Education nor for long any close peers with which to offer and receive support and practical advice or develop philosophically, nor even to withstand attacks from ERO. Summerhill School, the well-known English *free school* in England started in 1921 by A. S. Neill, with which Metro has been compared, was more successful on the latter front. Summerhill won a well-publicised and drawn-out battle with its inspection agency, OfSTED[13]. OfSTED had found that the school did not meet the requirements for registration under the Education Act 1996 in respect of curriculum delivery, management, and health and safety matters and claimed that the school confused "the pursuit of idleness for the exercise of personal liberty" (Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) 1999). However Summerhill, unlike Metro, has always been an independent, rather than state-funded school, and although it is accountable to some extent to the British government, it managed to successfully argue that the OfSTED inspectors had failed to evaluate the full breadth of learning at the school which extended beyond the classroom lessons and that the school had a right to its own philosophy including that students could makes choices about their own attendance (Chambers 2001).

Although Summerhill won its (latest) battle with OfSTED, comparisons are unhelpful. Metro was never proposed as a free school in that sense, with its instigator, Hoskins, claiming:

> *I've never been in favour of Summerhill. Don't talk to me about alternative education [like that]. I will tell you my idea and if you want to run with Summerhill, or if you want to run with laissez faire, fine, I will support you, but that is not what these [Metro] ideas are about. (Hoskins, 1996)*

A number of teachers at Metro over the years had been interested in Summerhill and at least two had visited the school with several others having brought similar ideals about child-centred learning with them to their teaching jobs at Metro. However Summerhill was successful to

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[13] OfSTED is the Office for Standards in Education, ERO's counterpart in Britain.

some extent in challenging the OfSTED standards against which they were reviewed from a private-school position. Metro's position as a state provider offered no such possibilities here.

The lack of peer support was exacerbated with Metro's sister school, Four Avenues School in Christchurch, being closed down in 1993. Its penultimate ERO report in 1992 identified several areas of non-compliance and weak management but generally gave the school a very good review (Education Review Office 1992a). A Specific Compliance Audit just over one year after that was carried out at the request of the Secretary of Education following concerns over serious discord affecting the ability of the school to operate effectively (Education Review Office 1993). ERO was highly critical of the management and governance, claiming accountability could not be ensured. ERO also claimed the school could not provide a safe emotional environment, did not foster student achievement and was critical of low levels of student attendance.   On that basis, and particularly on the basis that there were irreconcilable differences between the BOT and Management Committee, between groups of staff, and between the director and a group of staff, ERO recommended closure of the school (Education Review Office 1993). Four Avenues' students were sent on to the Youth Education Centre in Christchurch, established especially to cater for them, with a short-stay routine designed to move students on to their pre-Four Avenues schools or other schools. A similar plan is being considered by the Ministry of Education in the wake of a possible closure of Metro (Phillips 2001).

After the closure of Four Avenues, Metro had no peers left in New Zealand and with the massive changes being undertaken in the education system, Metro had no real or practical support *as an alternative school*. Inevitably, it foundered. As one teacher put it:

> *We were delighted at first because so many of the things recommended in Tomorrow's Schools we were already doing and had been doing for years – taking an individual approach, involving the parents, having parents on the Board, having students on the Board. However, in the fine print were these uniform expectations which the government was imposing upon all schools, completely forgetting the fact that the government had set up alternative schools, the intention of which was to be different. And there was nothing in Tomorrow's Schools or the legislation that flowed from it, that allowed for those differences. We've been forced to deliver the national curriculum which we were set up to avoid in the first place...And we are trying to do two opposite jobs and doing a very good job of trying to do that. But then you see ERO come to our school and hammer us for not doing one, and in the same report hammer us for not doing the other! (Teacher "F", 1997)*

Metro may well close. After eight highly critical reviews in as many years and six years with its future hanging in the balance, the school may finally have run out of options that will keep it open as an alternative school. As the school has shifted ground, in response to the changing

educational and political climate, and in direct response to ERO's criticisms, it is governed in terms of the discursive frameworks at the centre of (neo)liberal rule. The school's apparent failure could well be considered the failure of that (neo)liberal framework to resolve the paradox of consumer individualism through the imperative to define and meet individualised learning needs and the emphasis on managerial and curricular accountability to the central state funding authority.   This is the "tricky combination in the same political structures of individualisation techniques and of totalisation procedures" (Foucault 1982: 213) as it is practised in our schools and it governs those schools that can no longer sustain their own credibility within that framework.

Chapter Three

WHEN SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING: AN ETHNOGRAPHY UNDONE

Questions of Truth and Meaning

> While ethnography promises the narrative cohesiveness of experience and identity and the researcher's skill of representing the subject, poststructuralist theories disrupt any desire for a seamless narrative, a cohesive identity, or a mimetic representation…Thus the tradition of ethnographic authority derived from participant observation becomes a site of doubt rather than a confirmation of what exists prior to representation. (Britzman 1995: 232)

The kinds of questions I am asking in my thesis are informed by post-structural theories and as such assume historical specificity and particular discursive realities rather than one fixed reality or truth over time. I take both the objects and subjects of my research to be aspects of larger questions about what it is that structures meanings and practices in education today; those meanings and practices are not taken to be self-evident. Instead they are understood in terms of discourses or "regimes of truth" (Foucault 1980b) that make some things ("accountability, "self-management", "education outputs", "individual learning styles") speakable or authorized, while other things (optional attendance, corporal punishment, the exercise of professional judgement) become unspeakable or, at the very least, questionable within sentences that also include words like "excellence", "quality", "accountability", and "good teaching".

Questions about meaning lend themselves to a post-structural ethnography. With traditional ethnography there is an undertaking by the researcher to represent a culture, an event, and people as they really are or see themselves, making the research conform to a "realist tale" (Van Maanen 1988). For the reader there is the pleasure in being present by proxy. The reader gains information or insight into a new world through a text that strives to bring the voices of its subjects together. The text may also build several competing sides – such as that of ERO and that of Metro supporters, students, and staff – with a representation of truth or right. It is an approach that assumes "'reality' is somehow out there waiting to be captured by language"

(Britzman 1995: 232). In this kind of tale all the actors tend to become a-historical or present in the present.

Post-structuralism, on the other hand, begins with an assumption of historical specificity, an understanding of reality as discursive, and a notion of the subject as produced through a web of power relations/discursive practices. Instead of bringing subjects together into one cohesive voice, a post-structural account often highlights a multiplicity of voices and discourses (Burstyn 1990), some of which are contradictory and inconclusive.

The paradoxes in Metro's situation – for example, a school in a climate that reveres choice considered to be failing precisely because of its philosophy of choice – are perhaps best accounted for with theories which place paradox and contradiction, at the centre rather than the periphery of their considerations. Such theories of paradox see such contradictions not as matters to be subsumed or even neglected as irrelevant but rather embraced and made the key problematic. No longer is something (the culture or the group) thought to come first while our understandings or models come second; it is our representations that may come first, allowing us to selectively see what it is that we describe (Van Maanen 1995). Ethnography starts to look quite different with this new emphasis, moving beyond the imperative of getting to the "real story" (Britzman 1995) into a new role of "making the familiar strange rather than the strange familiar" (Van Maanen 1995: 20).

Making the familiar strange in school research necessarily involves questioning the taken-for-granted knowledge operating in education today. Post-structuralism has developed out of the questioning of knowledge foundations, particularly those associated with Enlightenment appeals to truth. It is upon this Enlightenment knowledge that more traditional ethnographies have depended as credible explorations into, and explanations of, the development of human cultures.

The foundations of modern Western thought inherited from the Enlightenment centre around the idea that scientific and rational thought will increasingly move us closer to the truth about our world and our selves (McNay 1994). Thus much of the Enlightenment knowledge about us as human beings has been developed in the name of progress and humanitarianism (the more we know, the more human we become). Michel Foucault[14] convincingly critiqued

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[14] Though Foucault's critique of the Enlightenment and, in particular, his notion of modern power relations and subjectivity can be regarded as post-structural, Foucault did not consider himself a post-structuralist or a post-modernist Foucault, Michel. (1984a). "Polemics, Politics and Problematisations: An Interview with Michel Foucault." in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow. London: Penguin Books.. For a discussion on this see "Foucault: Modern or Post-Modern?" in *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges* Hoy, David Couzens. (1991 (first published 1988)).

Enlightenment notions of progress throughout his studies. Foucault showed that the explosion of interest in knowledge about ourselves and the emergence and the development of the human sciences are legitimated by values that are fictions. The so-called curative practices associated with psychology and psychiatry, the "helping professions", are in his account the coercive and insidious side of Enlightenment liberties, giving the word "discipline" a double-meaning. The new disciplines (the studies centred around the human sciences) brought with them a system of discipline – a microphysics of power operating upon the body. Foucault's studies on imprisonment (Foucault 1977), the asylum (Foucault 1963; Foucault 1965), and sexuality (Foucault 1980a) showed that the disciplines of social or human science were essentially manipulative, in fact *disciplinary*, in character through their various concerns for partitioning, exclusion, training and correction against norms which in turn produced a knowledge attended to by experts in that knowledge. Consequently, according to Foucault, practices of the human sciences with their Enlightenment rationality serve to increase rather than decrease our subjection through an amplified attention given over to the advancement of our individuality.

Genealogy and Power

> 'Effective' history...will uproot its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupt its pretended continuity. This is because knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting. (Foucault 1974: 154)

The first thing I did as a researcher, as most researchers do, was conduct a literature review to see what else had been written in "my area". Research is often about looking for gaps, in order to fill them, marking out what is missing and then filling it, drawing boundaries around an area that the researcher can call her own. Part of the definition of a PhD is the requirement that the thesis be a "formal and systematic exposition of a coherent piece of advanced research work… be an original contribution to knowledge in its field…demonstrate a knowledge of the literature relevant to the subject and the field or fields to which the subject belongs, and the ability to exercise critical and analytical judgment of it" (University of Auckland 1999). Therefore, we are aroused to construct our work as the missing part or the long sought-after discovery in the as-yet incomplete body of existing knowledge.

However the type of ethnography I am doing necessarily cannot merely build upon existing knowledge or take it to be a solid foundation against which we can continuously add. Following Foucault, I am using existing knowledge to cut, undo, rework, and revise that knowledge. This is how Foucault used *genealogy* (Foucault 1974; Foucault 1991; Foucault 1994) – as a method of inquiry through which to question Enlightenment values. Although

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"Foucault: Modern or Postmodern?" in *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge and Postmodern Challenges*, edited by Jonathan Arac. USA: Rutgers, The State University.

Foucault critiqued the Enlightenment values, this does not mean he did not consider it important. His paper *What is Enlightenment?* (Foucault 1994) showed that although Foucault questioned certain values, he recognised the importance of the Enlightenment through a distinction between modernity as a period of history and modernity as an attitude or ethos. Foucault suggested we might preserve the attitude or philosophical interrogation of the Enlightenment, if not its humanist projects (Foucault 1994). In other words, the Enlightenment attitude provides us with a rich foundation of investigation in its way of thinking about our present, about who we are and how we have come to recognise ourselves as certain kinds of subjects who act upon ourselves in certain kinds of ways.

Genealogy is vital in this ontological attitude since it enables a critical investigation into the historical events that shape us into subjects. Genealogy, known also as "effective history", was an expansion of Nietzche's *wirkliche historie* (effective history) and Foucault contrasted it with traditional history's concern to trace a logical series of events (e.g. wars, great discoveries, nation-building) leading to our present situation. Unlike traditional history, genealogy, as a mode of intellectual inquiry, dispensed with the idea of the transcendental subject, had a scepticism towards (the authority of) truth, followed a commitment to investigating the constitution of the present as difference in history, showed an ironic eschewal of absolutes and acknowledged the interestedness of knowledge (Owen 1994).

The idea that "knowledge is for cutting" must be understood in the context of the two different words for "knowledge" in French that are lost in the translation to English. *Connaissance* or "surface knowledge" is the day-to-day knowledge that allows society to function. *Savoir* on the other hand, and to which Foucault is referring in the above quote, is a "deep knowledge" or set of discursive practices and rules that permit surface knowledges to proliferate and appear seamless or continuous.

Savoir was essentially a set of rules that determined what kinds of utterances would count as true or false in some domain. As Hacking explains,

> …the kinds of things to be said about the brain in 1780 are not the kinds of things to be said a quarter of a century later. That is not because we have different beliefs about brains but because 'brain' denotes a new kind of object in the later discourse, and occurs in different sorts of sentences. (Hacking 1981: 33)

The concern over 'what can be said' was at the heart of Foucault's earlier work known as "archaeology". Here the *episteme* or *savoir* which is (deep) knowledge was examined in terms of how it made certain statements possible (as either true or false). Archaeology was about

isolating 'rules of formation' (Foucault in *The Order of Things* 1966) which are unconscious in the sense of being a part of certain discourses but are not "articulated in their own right" (Owen 1994:144). Foucault was not concerned with whether or not certain statements actually were true or false; he was concerned with that which governs whether or not certain statements may be true or false, that which governs certain configurations of knowledge, and also with marking the shifts from one *episteme* to another.

One of the problems with archaeology was that it was unclear as to whether or not the *episteme* was constituted by discourses or whether it constituted the discourses (Owen 1994). It is for this reason that Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) argued that archaeology became untenable for Foucault because it meant trying to stand outside discourse. However Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) also argued that archaeology became a tool of Foucault's later work, "genealogy", which expanded Foucault's area of concern from objects of (surface) knowledge (madness, the mad, criminality, the criminal) to include subjectification (how we are made subjects). The *episteme* (which Foucault regarded as pertaining to language) was thus expanded into the *dispotif* (apparatus) that included non-discursive practices as well.

Actually doing archaeology had involved Foucault in researching forgotten knowledge, obscure documents, and seemingly trivial archives and records since his concern was with power as silencing, forbidding, and excluding. With the move to genealogy, the concept of power shifted to a more interesting and useful model. Power was now productive and apparently enabling, producing a matrix of relationships, discourses and forces which operated to shape and organise bodies in time and space – the inscription of power upon bodies – as well as operating through institutions and particular practices (or technologies) of power.

Given the productive and innovative qualities of power, Foucault insisted on a nominalistic approach, analysing power as an exercise (rather than an entity). He claimed that a society without power was an abstraction (Foucault 1982). The shift in methodology meant Foucault became less concerned with marginal struggles and more concerned with local struggles.

> …Foucault sees all systems of thought as embedded within a network of social relations. Knowledge is not a form of pure speculation belonging to an abstract and disinterested realm of enquiry; rather it is at once a product of power relations and also instrumental in sustaining these relations…Once the fundamental notion of 'enlightenment' is undermined – this is to say the idea that scientific and rational thought progressively acquires a greater proximity to the truth – then a whole series of social practices can be viewed in a new light. (McNay 1994: 27)

The new light for viewing social practices was, for Foucault, generated by focussing on power. The most critical aspect of genealogy was its addressing of power directly, although Foucault later claimed he had always addressed power out of his interest in the subject (Foucault 1982) and how the subject entered into certain "games of truth" (Foucault 1988). Foucault's early genealogical work involved a particular conception of power centred on a distinction between "sovereign" or "juridico-discursive" power and modern power relations, which he called "power/knowledge" and "disciplinary power" respectively. Foucault's thesis of power/knowledge was crucial to genealogy (Marshall 1990). In Foucault's thesis, the central characteristic of power was that it is essentially productive, creating certain qualities of relationship, discourse, and consciousness. Throughout *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977), arguably Foucault's best-known work, Foucault claimed that while traditional histories show the legal system to have succeeded feudal and monarchical systems of power relations, in fact both systems operated within a similar repressive conception of power which he called "juridico-discursive power". This power is the power to say "no", located centrally with a particular person or institution, and applied (often with force) to those further below in the hierarchy.

Although Foucault appeared to have studied various institutions (the prison, the clinic), these were not his target (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 113). He was focusing on institutions as a site, a place where technologies of power have taken root and grown. Similarly, this can be applied to research in/on schools. Although this thesis is a kind of case study of Auckland Metropolitan College, it is primarily a study of power relations through its focus on *how* particular power relations (a discursive framework) structure the field of possibilities (Foucault 1982: 221) for schools. Foucault called the carefully defined institutions "a privileged point of observation" of (Foucault 1982: 222) and my case study takes Metro to be such a point of observation. The observations made there are about power but more precisely they are about the kinds of relationships and subjects that this power constitutes. Hence, Foucault insisted that we study power relations from the standpoint of institutions, rather than the other way around because institutions, while they embody power relations, are not in themselves power relations nor are they equal to them. This is why my thesis is not attempting to evaluate the truth of ERO's or Metro's version of events or what counts in education.

Foucault demonstrated the difference between these two types of power (productive and juridico-discursive or sovereign) in the opening pages of *Discipline and Punish (1977)*. It begins with the famous juxtaposition of a violent execution with the exactness of a prison timetable. This was Foucault's attempt to show that modern forms of power are far more insidious in their attention to the detail of our lives. This point was extended throughout *The History of Sexuality volume one* (Foucault 1980a) where Foucault firstly highlighted the linking

of practices employed at the micro-level of the bedroom to sexual and health practices across a population and secondly advanced the idea that the intertwining of truth (about our sexuality and its meaning) and power cannot clearly be understood by our juridico-discursive approach to understanding the operation of power. Most importantly, he showed that forms of domination were linked to identity, making them much harder to recognise, resist, and escape.

Discipline and Punish (1979) was a study of the emergence of systems of confinement, in particular the prison, and the emergence of the criminal as object. Foucault disrupted the accepted history of the prison as developing out of humanistic sensitivities and progress. Instead he showed how the techniques for identifying and categorising the criminal, and the techniques for punishing and treating the criminal, linked up to form "technologies of domination" which were simply more efficient than previous methods surrounding punishment.

With genealogy and the focus on subjectification, Foucault argued we needed to "dispense with the constituent subject...that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework" (Foucault 1980b: 119). Again, building upon archaeology, truth itself (about ourselves, our "nature", what our aspirations should be, how we should be governed) was understood to have a history – hence Foucault called genealogy a "history of the present" (Foucault 1974). It aimed specifically to disrupt our notion of a continuously progressing and improving human condition throughout history. As Foucault explained:

> History becomes 'effective' to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being – as it divides our emotions, dramatises our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself. (Foucault 1974: 154)

The idea of the disruption of human progress throughout history makes genealogy particularly relevant to research in education that examines the discursive frameworks within which schools operate. Schooling has been predicated on a notion of the improvable human individual and the improvable human condition more generally. However the modes by which the human being is to be improved through schooling can be shown to belie the aims of education. Processes of normalisation similar to those highlighted by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* – the disciplining of the body through seating arrangements, detention, school bells and timetables, exclusion and categorisation of students – can be readily observed at any school and appear to have more to do with domination than liberation or improvement.

Foucault's work on genealogy necessarily focussed on subjectification or how we are *made subjects*. Foucault in fact claimed that studying how we are made subjects had really been the

general theme of his research all along (Foucault 1982: 208) though he had spent much time elaborating upon power relations in various institutions in society such as the mental hospital (Foucault 1965) and the prison (Foucault 1977).

Foucault used the double-meaning of *subject* in order to illustrate that we are all subjects in the sense of being *subjected to* various discursive practices and we are all also subjects in the sense of a *knowledge about* ourselves tethering us to particular identities. In *The History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction* (Foucault 1980a) for example, Foucault used the case of sexuality to illustrate the invention of a truth about our sexuality and its meaning, and how this "truth" became linked to identity.

Foucault's work on identity and power has been taken up and extended by many post-structuralists (Henriques 1984). Foucault's work on the production of "docile bodies" and the site of the body as a locus for domination has provided many theorists, particularly feminists, with a useful way into looking at how the female body is constituted in certain ways (Diamond and Quinby 1988). More generally Foucault's methodological bracketing of 'truth' and account of how the will to truth is constituted as a problem, alongside a methodological bracketing of the "transcendental subject" and account of how this idea is constituted (Owen 1994: 148) has allowed a rethinking of identity – such that it is not fixed, unitary or transcendental (fixed over time) and this in turn has allowed a rethinking and re-theorising of gender in interesting ways.

My study is not strictly speaking a genealogy since I am not concentrating on the emergence of one particular subject, such as "the student", within educational discourses. However the focus is genealogical to the extent that I am making use of some of the methodological approaches involved in genealogy – making the past unfamiliar instead of taking it as a continuous set of events unfolding to the present, highlighting breaks in the historical record in order to problematise "progress", and making problematic some of the basic categories in the human sciences currently seen as self-evident – in education for example, the "at risk student" or "unprofessional teacher".

As Rose (1989) suggests, my genealogy should involve an examination of the emergence of problems in relation to particular moral, political, economic, geopolitical or juridical concerns. This necessarily involves investigating explanations and operative concepts (Rose 1989) such as managerial discourses in education. It also involves an account of the technical assembly of means of judgement, authorities and claims to that judgement (Rose 1989) such as those used by the Ministry of Education and in particular the Education Review Office (ERO). In essence this forms an enquiry into subjectivities that include ontological, epistemological, ethical and

technical selves alongside strategic or governable aspirations (Rose 1989). Foucault's point was that we are neither completely dominated nor completely free (Foucault 1982), but that we are constituted through a complex interplay of techniques – hence the idea of "subversive repetition", of doing research that is both within/against, both doing and troubling simultaneously (Lather 1997).

The Side Show

What are the implications of using Foucault's genealogical method and post-structuralism in my research? The idea of a post-structuralist ethnography immediately raises a number of uncomfortable issues. The larger issue centres upon the implications of post-structural ethnography for ethnographic research more generally, since post-structuralism and ethnography appear to be inherently in tension. A second issue relates to how the mechanics of actually doing a post-structural ethnography could actually work since the mechanics or methods of ethnographic research become questionable.   What makes field-notes or observations or interviews valid if reality does not come first and representation second? How can I do a post-structuralist ethnography if not only the things ethnography seeks to describe and analyse, but also the method of ethnography itself, is a fiction?   Where traditional ethnographic research could have political applicability, particularly in the case of "giving voice" to a particular struggle or suppressed group, how do we make use of research that is "troubling" (Lather 1991) rather than emancipatory or problem solving?

The tension between post-structuralism and ethnography can be seen clearly through the methods involved, as well as the assumptions behind them which tends to result in research being experienced and reported as "an intense epistemological trial by fire" where "restlessness is the norm" (Van Maanen 1995). Post-structural research immediately places the researcher in a tricky situation since any research that involves real people raises tremendous pressure to take a humanist and holistic line, to produce the research kind of "victory narrative" (McWilliam, Lather, Morgan and with Kate McCoy 1997) that in this case would either exonerate Metro staff in light of ERO's negative reviews or expose the rightfulness of those negative conclusions and recommendations in the reviews.

The imperative for me to produce a "victory narrative" about Metro was quite strong. Firstly the pressure was due to the standard practices involved in doing an ethnography – interviews, participant observation at the school, and delving into school archives and education policy documents. The pressure was also due in part to the politics of the school's situation. When I

began my thesis in 1996, ERO had just recommended to the Secretary of Education that the school be closed. During 1997 the Ministry of Education was actively canvassing opinion in the community in order to facilitate its decision about Metro's future. At that time, the BOT and school were holding community meetings to discuss options. The media were reporting on progress and publishing comments and letters from Metro teachers and BOT, from students, and other interested parties. To become involved with the school at this point was to *have to say something*. Was it reasonable to expect people to give up their time to tell me about their situation, their feelings, their ideas, and their concerns, without a commitment to some kind of orderly conclusion, recommendation or counter-recommendation in return?

Not unsurprisingly staff and students at Metro saw my research as an opportunity for them to be heard both by me and perhaps also a wider audience. While ERO commanded the attention of the national news media, Metro staff, students, and supporters were confined to sound bites and Letters to the Editor. Both teachers and students I spoke to tended to voice the hope that I would understand their position and difficulties, if not actually take "their side" and perhaps join their fight against ERO and the possible closure of the school. It was, after all, their school. When I first began visiting the school, I would regularly be approached – politely but firmly – by students, both individually and in small groups. "Are you from ERO?" they would demand. Later students would express concern over what I was writing down in my notebook.

> *We're only talking to you because we think you won't write anything bad about us. We don't want our school to close. (discussion with Students "H", "J", "I", "B", and "A", 1998)*
>
> *What are you writing? (to me) Just say we always go to class and all that. (Student "G", 1997)*
>
> *It takes a while to understand this school. Everyday is different. (Student "P", 1997)*

In part, the pressure to tell "the truth about Metro" or the "real story" came from the genuine confusion of the majority of teachers (including the Director at the time) to whom many of ERO's criticisms seemed inexplicable. The implication was that I could at least enlighten them about to how the administration of education worked. Teachers often asked me: what do you really think about our school? What ideas do you have for what should we do? Do you think we should close? In what ways do you think we should change?

The Director[15] during 1996 and 1997 expressed much frustration over the ongoing tenuous situation (discussed in chapter one):

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[15] This director has resigned since this interview in 1997. After a period with an acting director (1998-1999), a new director was appointed to start in 2000.

They have never at any stage explained to us why – and we see this as a major inconsistency – when they've found trouble at other schools – often where they've found instances of a large breakdown of safety of students like in sexual or physical abuse – they have never explained to us why they have recommended we close, whereas in other instances they recommend to other people commissioners, managers, or restructuring. (Former Director, 1997)

Nearly all of the teachers I interviewed commented that the recommended school closure seemed a foregone conclusion and they rationalised this in terms of ERO's bias against them or any school that was different:

…the main problem is that they don't trust us...I think the whole problem of an alternative school and alternative education is people have fantasies of what it is about, and if we don't meet their fantasy I think there are problems...in other words in normal schools you look at the paperwork and if that looks about right, you'd say "well that looks good" and then check the pupils. But basically anything we wrote they (ERO) automatically see as a lie...That they feel we are in some kind of denial, that we don't know what we're doing. (Assistant Director, 1996)

Throughout 1996 and 1997 ERO had become the enemy.   Teachers expressed huge disappointment over the evaluation process which they had approached openly with hopes of an evaluation of them *as alternative* and supportive guidance:

I'm tempted to say that, and there's a very strong feeling at the school, that we just wouldn't let them in next time. (Former Director, 1997)

While the teachers felt that ERO did not trust them and therefore that they no longer trusted ERO, I was afforded a great deal of trust. They might have been suspicious of letting ERO in again but they let me in again and again, at any time I wanted without an appointment, for as long as I wanted. I organised formal and informal interviews, I "hung out" with students and with teachers, I had access to school documents, I took part in day to day school activities and even won the three-legged race with another student at the 1998 sports day. I was always made to feel welcome at the school. This was in keeping with the school's philosophy and enrolment procedures (see Charter) and was reflected particularly in its earlier years via the volume of interested visitors Metro received.   Teachers explained that the welcoming atmosphere was integral to their school culture.

I think here there is a difference in atmosphere here…You do feel that you can say what you feel. (Assistant Director 1996)

I believe that one thing we do that schools find hard to do is that we are openly welcoming and accepting of people. (Former Director 1996)

My position in the school was fragile however. There were at times unspoken and implicit expectations from teachers and students alike that I would take up a position of authority in a way that would assist them in their battle with ERO. Alongside this sat my sense that it was my apparent lack of authority as a young student that made me seem particularly approachable to teachers and students alike and gave me great interviewing opportunities.

On a daily basis, I became preoccupied with "side-stepping" and attempts to be "outside" the workings of the school in order to pursue my research. However at the same time, I knew the business of my research in this particular school setting required me to become, in some sense at least, an insider, a part of the school. And it seemed that I was. At the 1997 end-of-year presentation of certificates to students and teachers for various fondly-regarded characteristics, achievements and notable behaviour, students presented me with the certificate: "Honorary Metro Family Award for Being One of Us Really".

The "really" at the end of the award name is telling in this context. Such was the level of mistrust resulting from the ERO review process, results, and manner of some reviewers, that suspicion lay just beneath the surface. I trod a difficult path, somewhere between wanting to raise interest and participation in my research but not their expectations or hopes over the outcome of it. Providing a voice to those previously silenced and endeavouring to make my research emancipatory would presuppose a transcendental subject, a humanist position.

Undoing Research

One way to undo the bind of ethnographic research and a humanist perspective is to avoid telling a "victory narrative" (McWilliam, Lather, Morgan and with Kate McCoy 1997), in which I am truth-seeker/truth-teller, the teachers and students are narrators (of truth or fantasy) and the school is a site of crisis. Instead I follow Deborah Britzman's (1995) argument that ethnography can be a "regulating fiction" which itself produces (rather than reports on) textual identities and regimes of truth; I want to re-situate the site of struggles – away from the school, teachers, students and/or ERO and to the narratives of the teachers, students, and ERO.

The re-location of the site of struggle in turn re-situates me as a researcher calling into question the fields of play I have territorialised. As a researcher, I had access to the school and its documents, ERO documents, staff and students. In the terms of my research, ERO documents

were "prescriptive texts" – "texts that elaborate rules, opinions, and advice as to how to behave as one should" (Foucault 1985: 12). Such texts serve as devices that enable individuals to "question their own conduct, to watch over and give shape to it, and to shape themselves as...subjects" (Foucault 1985: 13). I recognised that I do not have a guaranteed access to the truth about any of those situations nor the experiences of my subjects since, according to Foucault, "human experience does not occur naturally or through rational or true fields of learning; instead experience constituted historically out of games of truth" (Foucault 1985: 7).

My emphasis on a multiplicity of voices, narratives, or discourses in the case of Metro is strongly an expression of the post-structuralist view that there is not necessarily one truth or reality except insofar as there are things which are true within particular discourses about this school and education generally. Such things are true or real because they are invoked as truth and reality through those very discourses. In this frame I cannot produce the teachers at Metro or the students who go there as heroes of the resistance against ERO's regime or the status quo of mainstream education; I can only "question how categories of resistance become discursively produced and lived" (Britzman 1995).

Whenever I have talked about, or given conference papers, about my research, the audience have at some point fallen in love with details about the school. We become voyeur-sociologists; me with my anecdotes that purport to illustrate some theoretical point, and the audience, prompted to collective oohs, aahs, and knowing mmms. At times I wondered whether I hadn't just focussed in the wrong place. After all what people wanted to hear about and what tended to be validated as good ethnographic research was this timeless story-telling aspect, the capturing of a pre-existing reality "out there", the making familiar of something strange. The school, as alternative and threatened, lent itself to this approach. I realised later that the interest in the *story* about Metro confirmed that truth and reality are indeed invoked through discourse. In this case both neo-liberal and liberal humanist discourses meant that there would always be a pull for my research to be narrating *the* reality, instead of narrating *a* reality and showing it to be just that – one reality that was so because it was constituted that way to the exclusion of other ones.

St. Pierre (1997) writes about her study of a group of women in a small rural community where she grew up and the kinds of spaces in which she found herself working. Following Deleuze and Guattari (1980, 1987) she discusses "smooth space" – nomadic, deterritorialised space – and "striated space" – coded, bounded, defined and static space and asks us as researchers to consider what fields of play we have territorialized in the doing of science/research.

> In ethnography we must take ourselves to the field, and we usually think of the field as a physical location – for example, a classroom, a school, a street corner, a town, a place to which the researcher travels to find people with whom to talk and culture to observe. Ethnographers often write an 'arrival trope' describing their first impressions of the space of the field and its natives. I too wrote an arrival trope for my study, and perhaps it was that writing, that first attempt to striate and territorialize the space of the field that set me to wondering about its limits. After all, I had not just arrived at this place. The beginning of my official study at middle age was not my first encounter with my hometown of Milton. I had grown up in this community; I had been collecting data about Essex County all my life; I had been involved in a long-term prior ethnography of this place. (St Pierre 1997)

My own Metro "arrival trope" suggests I was a bit fazed by my first encounter with the school. This was not my first experience of "school"; like the majority of adults in New Zealand, I had spent the best part of ten years there. When I arrived at Metro, I arrived with expectations of what a "school" was, what it looked like, and how the people there behaved. In some ways Metro fitted with my expectations, with its classrooms, desks and notice boards. In other ways, with students relating to teachers on a first name basis, no designated staff room off-limits to students, and its villa setting that might otherwise be much sought-after real estate, it seemed far from the institutional corridors and agreed social customs characterising other schools.

My time at Metro was coloured by my own prior ethnography. Even on my own first day at school as a five year old, I had certain expectations. Not even being roughed up by a group of older boys could dampen my enthusiasm for writing and mathematics. The walls at home bore evidence of my early three- and four year-old attempts to take control over, and make meaning from, the strange symbols. I remember all too well trying to blame the damage on my younger, and then illiterate, brother who wasn't even out of his cot yet. School had been pitched to me as a place I could practise writing without restraint and I ditched my anxious mother at the school gates; I was on a mission. While I managed to retain my enthusiasm for communication, the mission ended in great disappointment all round some eleven years later when I was asked to leave school to avoid an expulsion on my record.

My arrival and departure tropes for school coupled with my academic studies at university, where I rewrote some of those experiences in different terms, meant that when I visited Metro, I had territorialized certain fields of play (St Pierre 1997) into my fieldwork. That dominion or field of play took a thoroughly embodied form in me – a heavy feeling in my stomach, a sense of unrelenting boredom, and physical discomfort throughout the day. The field of school was, for me, a disappointment, and a fidget-scape, and I had to repeatedly remind myself that I was an adult researcher and that I could leave at any time I chose.

The significance of recognising my prior ethnography is that it allows an interrogation of discourses of schooling alongside my own taken-for-granted concepts around schooling which include understanding school as a place to domesticate and normalise students, a place of order and discipline, and a place to foster learning as well as provide opportunities for experiences not otherwise available. Such concepts operate through a framework that understands "school" to be constituted through various cultural practices and promised liberatory experiences that, in turn, are constituted through "school".

Many researchers have already shown that schooling fails to deliver on such liberatory promises, particularly in relation to the classed, raced and gendered nature of the schooling process (Jones, Marshall, Morris Matthews, Smith and Smith 1995) and certainly "situating oneself as a researcher" in relation to the "text" of cultural practices and frameworks has become more standard, primarily in feminist-based research.

The kinds of counter-practices in ways of knowing that feminists have sought out ever since Audre Lorde's claim that the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house (Lather 1997) have been interpreted and popularised in feminist, particularly post-structural, research through techniques such as the use of personal diaries, dialogic interviews, and co-writing. It has often meant that research has been "conducted under assumptions of finding a less exploitative, more innocent way of proceeding" (Lather 1997: 25) particularly given the researcher's privileged position with access to groups often disenfranchised, silenced, or unknown within that system. The idea emerges that the researcher might not only *speak about* but also *speak for* that group.

In speaking for a group and problematising one's own prior ethnography, ethnographic researchers run the risk of making their own personal lived experience the criterion of validity in their research. Using their own feelings as a foundation for the research, a "vanity ethnography" (McWilliam, Lather, Morgan and with Kate McCoy 1997: 24) or a "confessional tale" is a likely outcome. As I felt pulled to, the researcher schizophrenically tacks back and forth between the perspectives of dispassionate outsider and a passionate insider (Van Maanen 1988).

Lather (McWilliam, Lather, Morgan and with Kate McCoy 1997) suggests a way through such tensions by thinking of one's research as a "ruin", "ruined from the start" in that all research inevitably appeals to truth and knowledge foundations which are "inventions of the present". The truth of Metro's situation – whether it really is a failed school or whether ERO are just unfair in their judgements about the school – is not the issue in this thesis. At issue are the

discourses that make it possible to say Metro is successful or failing; tracing these and getting at the competing regimes of truth underneath is the issue. This allows us to see how Metro's teachers, the "at risk" students who go there, or "Metro the failed school" has become an "invention" of current educational discourses. In other words, I want my research to act "as a strategic act of interruption of the methodological will to certainty and clarity of vision" (Stronach and MacLure 1997: 4).

In contrast to the Enlightenment project of truth through greater knowledge, which the researcher seeks out, provides, or interprets, perhaps leading to freedom for the research subjects, the readers or author, post-structural educational research can disrupt the appeal to discursive oppositions.   These oppositions, such as power/pleasure (McWilliam 1999a), power/freedom (Sawicki 1991) and reality/fiction (Gane 1993), can be "undone" (Stronach and MacLure 1997) so that social reality need no longer be understood only as a determinant, and theory need no longer be understood only as a reflection.

That "undoing" works similarly to the undo button (see previous section heading) featured in most computer software applications. When the button is clicked the software takes one back a step (or several steps if activated repeatedly) to restore a previous situation, as if the most recent one had not existed. This is what genealogy as a method does in part; rather than shedding light on the past from the present, linking each with a sense of continuity (and progress as with Enlightenment), genealogy illuminates the present from the past, disrupting continuity and identity (Visker 1995). Genealogy effectively *undoes* our present; going back a step and making it seem strange and unfamiliar so that *what is now* cannot be taken as the result of some unambiguous path set by previous events. As Foucault explains:

> Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present…genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people…it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are. (Foucault 1974)

It is in this context that I want to know how self-management, in the professional careers of teachers, in the organisation and practices of schools, and in the daily lives of students with their Individual Learning Programmes and School Profiles, has become *the* central concern in education. As such, I want to know how such a central concern makes it possible that certain practices that can regulate or close down Metro.

Introducing Governmentality

Foucault's work on power as a way of investigating what we have become, certain modes of subjectification, and locales of domination, is perhaps most useful in his later conception of power in terms of *governmental* relations of power. Foucault introduced "governmentality" during a series of lectures between 1970 and 1984 at the College de France in Paris. His 1978 lecture, "security, territory, and population", has been published as "Governmentality" (Foucault 1979) and details Foucault's investigations into government as a "rationality" or "art" – a way of thinking about the practice of governing - based on his study of models of government between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Similar to the line he took with *Discipline and Punish*, where his central focus was the shift in the rationalisation and meaning of the practice of punishing rather than on mutations in the configuration of penal institutions, Foucault was focussing on a sharp break in models of government in Europe around the mid-eighteenth century. Around this time, the population and a concern for its welfare and improvement became the ultimate end of government. Prior to this, modes of ruling were based on Christian principles of governing people according to "natural laws" and by following a model of divine ordination and later a rationality developed which became concerned with the freedom or lives of the citizens. Where the Christian doctrine was concerned to understand the State and how to emulate a higher (divine) order, the later doctrine of Machiavelli was concerned to understand the relationships between the Prince, his citizens, and his territory (McNay 1994).

It was not the difference between a divine model and a territorial one that Foucault was concerned to highlight. Rather it was the sharp break to a new political rationality of *raison d'etat* during the eighteenth century that provided the basis for governmentality. There were similarities in governmentality to Machiavelli's ideas that involved the conception of a strong state but, in a novel turn, the strength of the state would come to be identified *through* its population. The state was thus required to foster the lives of its subjects. It did this through what Foucault calls "pastoral power", the nature of which is to care for each and every individual by knowing their consciences (the truth of which is produced) and linking those practices of "knowing" to political practices.

Foucault was particularly concerned with the Western practice of government's inclination towards a form of political sovereignty that involves a "tricky combination" of both totalising and individualising practices (Foucault 1982). Foucault explored this "tricky combination" through two interlinking aspects encapsulated in his definition of governmentality as "the conduct of conduct". The first aspect meant governmentality was examined in terms of an activity concerning the political arena. The second aspect understood governmentality in terms of a relationship of self to self as well as "relations within social institutions and communities and, finally, relations concerned with the exercise of political sovereignty" (Gordon 1991: 3).

More generally, and most importantly for this thesis, governmentality was Foucault's inquiry into the political rationality of liberalism – now extended into neo-liberalism – which is characterised by a form of rule where freedom is not necessarily opposed to power. Instead, liberalism takes the "life-conduct of the ethically free subject, as in some sense the correlative object of its own suasive capacity" (Gordon 1991). So a governmental account of power relations is able to elucidate the peculiar and specific relation of power mobilised within liberalism and neo-liberalism that involves a simultaneous dispersal and intensification of power relations, with the dispersal to the individual (or community or school) requiring the exercise of freedom, rather than the repression of it.

The whole concept of governmentality is premised on what we know as our freedom (currently embodied in discourses of choice and the importance of the market) being an integral part of how we can be governed and regulated; in fact how we govern ourselves. This is similar to McWilliam's (1999a) argument that we need to undo the discursive opposition between power and pleasure. Pleasure is not taken as the opposite of power nor seen in terms of natural emotions we can experience or express when repression is lifted. There is no framework of progress over time to guide such an examination. McWilliam aims to understand pedagogy and pleasure in relation to each other by examining how pleasure is historically constituted *through* power (relations).

It is here that the link from governmental forms of power to genealogy becomes clear. Foucault conceptualised historical developments, not as a culmination of historical processes with great actors, as with traditional history, but as manifestations of stable mechanisms of government, exercises of power to restore stability or struggles over relationships of domination and subjection (Marshall 1990). In other words, modes of government (and relationships) are not fixed but rather are ever changing in tactics and outcomes and involve individuals as particular kinds of people, who think of themselves and understood their own freedom and capacities in certain ways, and we are made subjects or particular kinds of people.

Despite the neo-liberal discursive framework, the idea that choice, as expressed through the educational consumer (the parent or the student), is an articulation of intrinsic freedom cannot be taken for granted. Nor can the notion of the consumer as free be taken for granted. Foucault problematised the notion of the ethically free subject with his work on sexuality and sexual identity (Foucault 1980a; Foucault 1985; Foucault 1986). Foucault illustrated the possibility that what we see as increasing freedom, expressed through confessional techniques or what Foucault called "the talking cure" (Foucault 1980a), and epitomized today in the mass

appropriation of psychotherapeutic-speak in order to "know" ourselves (see the Oprah Winfrey "Your Spirit" show), is form of self-surveillance and self-normalisation, culminating in forms of domination being tied to identity itself. This problematising of freedom and the free subject is not necessarily "to say that our freedom is a sham. It is to say that the agonistic relation between liberty and government is an intrinsic part of what we have come to know as freedom" (Rose 1993: 298).

The relationship of genealogy to governmentality thus turns on the major themes in Foucault's work of the subject and power; the subject is dispensed with as a transcendental fixed axis around which history revolves, and power (as an exercise, as discursive practices, as modes of governing) is examined in terms of how it constitutes the subject and various identities. With governmentality understood to involve such a broad domain, it has informed the work of many social theorists and writers investigating various areas of life – poverty (Dean 1991), health (Peterson and Bunton 1997), the world of work (Donzelot 1991), family and welfare (Donzelot 1979), alcohol (Valverde 1998), childhood (Bell 1993), and psychiatry (Rose 1989) being among the most well-known.

In short I want to argue that the regulation of Metro can be understood as the exercise of governmental relations within the broader context of neo-liberalism, a rationality that has informed and steered the educational climate in New Zealand more generally. The following section details more fully Foucault's investigation into governmentality in order to allow a fuller appreciation and understanding of the significance of governmental relations to our historical circumstance and to my study.

Individualism and Governmentality

Governmentality or governmental forms of power background my research questions and make liberalism central to my thesis. Eighteenth century liberalism was a refinement of the idea of a totalising will and administrative grip of the sovereign over territory and subjects. Individualism was critical to liberalism because, as liberalism emerged to limit a state which required a knowledge of itself through a knowledge of its subjects, there was a need to know what or who was to be governed. Liberalism needed individuals and made them citizens, furnished with rights (such as equality of rights and access to social resources, various versions of freedom) that could not be interfered with by government (Gordon 1991).

The emergence of individualism (as opposed to just individuals) is, in Foucault's account, a result of the shift in power relations – from what he called "sovereign power" or "juridico-

discursive power" to "modern power" or "power/knowledge" - which has metamorphosed into governmental power relations and the emphasis on individuals whose lives must be nurtured rather than extinguished in sudden irregular blinding demonstrations of power.

As Gruber put it:

> Rather than a single sun, which no matter how brilliant cannot light up the entirety of the social landscape, there would be an infinity of suns, illuminating every corner, so that decision and action would have no dark side, no obscurity or secrecy. Liberalism's project would not be to dissolve this form of social power, but to disperse it, to intensify it and its potential by granting each human being the status of individuality. It would make everyone a king. (Gruber 1989: 616)

While early forms of liberalism marked out, as separate from the public domain of the state, an unassailable private domain of civil society in order not to impinge upon its citizens, Foucault (1983) contended that civil society can no longer be understood as opposed to the State. The idea of presenting the state pejoratively and as opposed to civil society which is idealised "as a good, living, warm whole" (Foucault 1983:168), mobilises a repressive understanding of power relations, as if the authoritarian state is inclined to repress or control civil society. Instead civil society can best be understood as "an instrument or correlate of a technology of government" (Gordon 1991:23). That is, liberalism attempts to ensure that the conduct of individuals within civil society conforms to the conducting of the public domain. The technique that liberal rule requires to rationalise itself – that of dispersing power relations – involves the use of particular instruments, such as the school, the family, and the market, which spread and link up in their functions throughout the social nexus (Vaughan 1995).

The state's need to foster the lives of its subjects made liberalism the quintessence of the key characteristic of governmentality identified by Foucault – "a tricky combination in the same political structures of individualisation techniques and of totalisation procedures" (Foucault 1982: 213). In other words, liberalism infuses its rule with knowledge of its population through a promotion of its well being, and truth in the form of "know how" (Rose 1993) and expertise. Equally critical then is its involvement in a perpetual critique of itself, a "shaping and nurturing of those domains that were to provide its counterweight and limit" (Rose 1993: 290). Thus with liberalism we see a fostering of rights enabling the population to vote, to protest, and to lobby.

In terms of the market, Foucault described classical or early liberalism as emerging in relation to the problem of how a necessary market freedom could be reconciled with the unlimited exercise of a political sovereignty. Market freedom is then justified on the grounds both of limiting the exercise of political sovereignty as well as increasing the State's financial benefit.

With neo-liberalism, the market is not regarded as pre-existing as with classical liberalism (the idea of minimal government) but as a field to be nurtured, to exist under certain legal and institutional conditions actively constructed by government.

The individualising/totalising paradox of governmentality or liberalism has been clearly evident throughout the development of liberal models of schooling. The tension between negative and positive freedom is manifest in school's capacity to generate both authority (of the teacher and of certain knowledges) and resistance (by the student, by certain forms of progressive education) in the same moment and is embedded in the notion of the liberal individual, just as the notion of the individual is embedded in, and a critical part of what constitutes, liberalism.

By the seventeenth century, mass schooling emerged as a consequence of Enlightenment with its rationalist, humanitarian, and liberal values, and was focussed on the capacity of all people to learn and become learned, to think for themselves, beyond God. As nineteenth century compulsory and universal education spread across Europe, Britain, and United States, one of the main purposes of school to create good citizens with an emphasis in ideals of political freedom and justice in the United States. Thus schooling came to be the sign of a modern society (Rust 1977).

As universal (Western) compulsory schooling rose alongside the development of industrial capitalism during the eighteenth century, schooling was not only about citizenship but also the most efficient means for training and mobilising a workforce and performing the role of social control during a time of great social mobility. Thus school came to be presented to all social classes as a key to social and individual betterment (McCulloch 1990). In other words, school had the mission of giving the young meaning in the industrial world with intellectual and practical skills (Rust 1977). Embedded within the notion of schooling was a liberal humanist commitment, from the Enlightenment, to progress and the betterment of the human condition through knowledge, discovery, and amelioration of human suffering (Cremin 1961). Other accounts such as Hunter's (1994) argue that these readings of schooling are misguided. He argues that schooling should not be understood as a limited historical realisation of certain educational principles (such as social control and individual betterment) but that educational principles themselves are a limited expression of historical reality of the school (Hunter 1994: 31).

Nonetheless modes of governing populations remain central to any conception of schooling. Since liberalism (a particular mode of governing) increasingly rationalises itself through a dispersal of rule, equipping itself with instruments so that it can "govern without governing"

(Rose 1993), it becomes rational to the extent that individual aspirations can conform to those of government. This lay at the heart of neo-liberal reforms to the New Zealand public service begun during the 1980s (covered in more detail in chapter four). In education then, our choices – which we are encouraged to make – are constituted in relation to the market and regulated through various instruments such as the family and the school.

It is through these instruments of government such as the family and the school that the "at risk" (truant, underskilled, learning-disabled) student (see chapter five) or the "professional teacher" (see chapter six) emerges, to be "normalised" in relation to the market, so that each choose to improve and manage themselves as part of an ongoing process which constitutes fulfilment and success in work and life more generally and conforms to certain economic ends.

Concluding Comments: Political Applications of Governmentality and Ethnography

Foucault's work raises questions of political usefulness. If we are going critically to investigate what we have become through examining the regulation of one particular school, what do we do with such an analysis? How can forms of domination within current educational discourses as they are applied to Metro's situation be identified and resisted?

Certainly Foucault did claim an interest in politics, but he never considered himself a political theorist (Foucault 1984a; Foucault 1984b) and did not regard his work as political per se. As he explained:

> ...the questions I am trying to ask are not determined by a pre-established political outlook and do not tend toward the realisation of some definite political project. (Foucault 1984b: 375)

Foucault's reluctance to give clear indications on what to do politically, leaves him open to charges of being politically irresponsible (Hoy 1986b), particularly given that, as Hoy (1986) argues, it is not at all clear whether genealogy, as the tool of Foucault's critique, can actively advocate social change.

Walzer (1986) admits that, although Foucault's account of our everyday politics is "often annoyingly presented and never wholly accurate", Foucault is "right enough to be disturbing" (Walzer 1986: 53). Fraser (1985) too is sceptical of the potential for success with Foucault's line of criticism, arguing that while genealogical analyses have yielded compelling insights into the nature of modern power, they are normatively ambiguous. Foucault insists on suspending

liberal values, particularly those derived from humanism, and this is one of his strengths, having shown that:

> we do not need humanism in order to criticise prisons, social science, pseudoprograms for sexual liberation, and the like. That humanism is not the last word in critical social and historical writing. (Fraser 1985: 171)

It is curiously a weakness that Foucault appears to presuppose the very categories he attacks. Taylor (1986) contends that while Foucault offers insight and a critique into our history and to what we have become, he also repudiates any sense of hope or liberation from the repressions he shows up. Thus Taylor (1986) argues, "to speak of power, and to want to deny a place to 'liberation' and 'truth', as well as the link between them, is to speak incoherently" (Taylor 1986: 93).

Fraser (1983) referred to Foucault's (political) unrecuperability by comparing him to a lover:

> Great writers are either husbands or lovers. Some writers supply the solid virtues of a husband: reliability, intelligibility, generosity, decency. There are other writers in whom one prizes the gifts of a lover, gifts of temperament rather than of moral goodness. Notoriously, women tolerate qualities in a lover – moodiness, selfishness, unreliability, brutality – that they would never countenance in a husband, in return for excitement, an infusion of intense feeling. In the same way, readers put up with unintelligibility, obsessiveness, painful truths, lies, bad grammar – if, in compensation, the writer allows them to savour rare emotions and dangerous sensations. And, as in life, so in art both are necessary, husbands and lovers. It's a great pity when one is forced to choose between them. (Susan Sontag, quoted in Fraser 1983: 69)

Fraser (1983) suggests that we take Foucault's outrageousness in refusing humanist values and narrative conventions and use his work to provide us with a jolt to de-reify our taken-for-granted patterns of self-interpretation, keeping alive the sense that these may not tell the whole story (Fraser 1983).

While it is true that Foucault fails to give us answers or provide us with political programmes as a political theorist or critical theorist might (Hoy 1986a; Marshall 1990; Smart 1983), he does refer to "permanent critique", a notion of freedom through a "care for the self" (Foucault 1988) and an "attitude of philosophical interrogation" that could translate into a "labour of diverse inquiries...a patient labour giving form to our impatience for liberty" (Foucault 1994). This provides a form of critique that is a historical and practical investigation of self, and redefines autonomy as process where interrogation of established limits of identity lead to increased capacity for independent thought and behaviour (McNay 1994). Therefore the aim is not to achieve a state of impersonal moral transcendence but to refuse to submit to the government of

individualisation by constantly interrogating what seems natural and inevitable in our own identity (McNay 1994).

This cuts to the heart of Foucault's analysis of governmental power relations. Foucault would critique liberalism for relying on humanist conceptions of freedom and the individual. As far as a post-structuralist ethnography is concerned then, Foucault's work is useful to the extent that understanding the subject as a secondary effect or by-product of discursive formation, rather than the source of meaning, opens up possibilities for exploring the history of truth itself (McNay 1994: 5) and making possible a historical analysis of the limits imposed upon us and the possibilities of going beyond them (Foucault 1994).

Ethnography can thus be revisioned beyond the true and false or the objective and subjective – "seeing is believing". We can understand ethnographic writing to be an effect of a contest of discourses; ethnography is thus a regulating fiction (Britzman 1995).

> …if discourses construct and incite the subject and produce contradictory investments, pleasures, and knowledge, they can also be employed to deconstruct the kinds of naturalisation that push one to take up the impossible moral imperatives of policing categories, insuring boundaries, and attempting to live the promises of a non-contradictory, transcendental self. Precisely because one's conceptual ordering of experience structures intelligibility and unintelligibility and because one's conceptual ordering of experiences is an effect of discourse, one might also be able to begin to employ some more suspicious discourses that exceed practices of normalisation. (Britzman 1995: 235)

Chapter Four

ERO AND METRO

Overview

This chapter puts Metro's concerns about ERO in a context of wider concerns about ERO's practices expressed by educationalists, teachers, and some policy-makers. ERO has been criticised for unreliability between district offices (Smith 2001) and its reliance on quantitative forms of measurement (MacDonald 1997; Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997; Thrupp and Smith 1999). ERO's method has also been criticised for disadvantaging low-SES schools through a review methodology that does not acknowledge the particular economic, and also often cultural, challenges that such schools face (Thrupp 1997b). This thesis argues that a similar disadvantage applies to alternative schools which lie outside ERO's norm and schools with extra (wider than school itself) social challenges not acknowledged by ERO. In addition, as a government department in its own right, ERO mounts a challenge to the Ministry of Education, having used its policy of publicity and informing parents to put pressure on policy development in education. Foucault's notion of governmentality is useful here, accounting for the paradoxical situation that ERO represents – where an apparent devolution of power to community/school, audited by ERO, results in greater control from the centre – at the broader political level. This is due to the peculiar relation in liberalism that, rather than pitting freedom against power, enhances freedom and choice for each individual, "shaping and nurturing those domains that were to provide its counterweight and limit" (Rose 1993: 290).

Foucault suggests we think of governmentality as a "contact point" between technologies of domination and technologies of the self. ERO exemplifies technologies of domination through its regulation of the work of teachers via "quality", "competence", and "accountability" in education. Within the now commonplace neo-liberal definitions of these concepts, Metro is a failure.   ERO's expectation that schools must educate and compensate for society's disadvantage ignores the market realities facing schools like Metro that increasingly exist to sop up the excesses of disadvantage from neighbouring schools that can implicitly choose students who will look and function best in school. We can look at ERO's methods more closely in this chapter to see how they work against Metro or any school that is "different" and understand how measuring student achievement in schools is based on a school effectiveness approach which is essentially normalising in character.

The technologies of the self side of governmentality will be explored in the next chapter, which discusses the free market, school position, and "at risk" students, within a wider discussion of the "knowledge economy" and the "brain drain" debates, economic imperatives linked to enterprise, lifelong learning, and *homo economicus*, producing the flexible perpetually improving individuals.

Surveillance

Foucault's earlier work on the prisons provided useful insights on the general carceral nature of society in terms of modern power relations. His analysis of Bentham's Panoptican prison design (Foucault 1977) as the epitome of the efficient method of surveillance can be applied to ERO in respect of a surveillance that is continuous without requiring an actual continuous physical presence. Like the cylindrical guard tower in the Panoptican design where guards can see into every cell arranged around the outer edge of the tower at any time, ERO has the potential to move into any school for a Discretionary Accountability Audit (DAA) and issue follow-up reports as it sees fit. Like the prisoners who internalise the potentially continuous gaze of the guards and adjust their behaviour accordingly, the teachers and principal internalise the methods of surveillance to which they are subjected (inspection of property, classroom observation, demands for intensive documentation). The notions of self-management, self-review and self-improvement (Austin, Parata-Blane and Edwards 1997) in schools is precisely this surveillance minus the continuous presence in actuality of ERO. These notions are ones that Metro has adhered to in a mostly informal sense, often via school meeting. The Ministry of Education "monitor" who worked with Metro during 1998 and 1999 was assigned to formalise these arrangements into ERO-acceptable systems. In its August 2001 report, ERO acknowledged the improvement of those systems (Education Review Office 2001, August).

The analysis in this thesis does not, of course, posit that teachers are akin to prisoners per se. Nor was Foucault's point that society (or school) is the same as prison. However through its stated evaluative model of quality assurance concerned with the outcomes of education, ERO does focus on the micro-practices of administration and management involved in creating those certain outcomes, making their practices disciplinary and normalising in their design for maximum efficiency (Vaughan 1995). It is notable that many of those practices, particularly those of documentation, do not necessarily represent what happens at school. The "reality" of how a school operates may be something entirely different from what is presented to ERO and there is evidence of schools "ERO-proofing" themselves with purchases of standardised ERO-acceptable documentation (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). That schools do this bears out the enormous success ERO has had in normalising schools and recasting educational knowledge as technological.

ERO's success here can be understood as one prong of a two-pronged approach to understanding the regulation of schools. This first prong corresponds to Foucault's work on the technologies of domination, best known through *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977), where practices of surveillance, correction, and improvement are shown to be linked to an obedience that is maintained through self-policing. Following this, the Education Review Office makes visible those who are to be "made docile" and "normalised" (Foucault 1977) because ERO reporting relies on measuring what is made visible to them.

The other prong of the regulation of schools can usefully be explored with the help of Foucault's work on the technologies of the self begun with *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1980a). Foucault expanded his argument about surveillance and self-policing into an argument about the relationship between self-policing and identity in relation to the control of populations more generally. Foucault illustrated the link between the control of public health and the insinuation of certain micro-practices into the home through his examination of codes of conduct around sexuality and sexual practices. The public health-private home link produced organisations and identities, he argued, which became self-regulating, often through therapeutic practices which became associated with, or known as, freedom of expression and freedom of choice. Self-regulation, associated with freedom of choice, can be seen operating in schools, particularly in the practices of documentation and self-review which schools are encouraged to undertake regularly in order to keep up with requirements and developments for being an "effective school".

New Zealand Reforms 1984 – 1990

ERO was established in 1989[16] and developed out of a context of public service reform in New Zealand, which followed aspects of managerial reforms in Great Britain and the United States. However the New Zealand reforms also greatly extended those from overseas, and New Zealand itself became well known as an "economic experiment" (Kelsey 1993; Whitwell, J. L. 1990). Indeed Fiske and Ladd's (2000) book on the reforms to New Zealand education, which refers to New Zealand as a "global laboratory", has a back cover which suggests it is marketed in the United States in terms of its usefulness to those interested in the largely unknown consequences of market-led school reform (Fiske and Ladd 2000).

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[16] Until 1990, the Education Review Office was known as the Review and Audit Agency

Neo-liberalism, identified as underpinning the reforms in New Zealand (Boston, Martin, Pallot and Walsh 1991; Gordon 1992; Grace 1989; Kelsey 1993; Peters, Marshall and Massey 1994), promotes mechanisms which supposedly secure, for each individual, freedom of choice. As a version of liberalism, neo-liberalism understood people in terms of *homo economicus*, the self-maximising individual or rational utility maximiser (Peters, Marshall and Massey 1994) that acts to secure his/her own interests culminating in versions of the "hidden hand" (Smith 1870) notions of society served by the market.

All the reforms in New Zealand generally, but in the education sector particularly, opened up measures designed to promote the key neo-liberal principles of flexibility and choice through a lessening of State mediation. These principles were coupled with a fundamental commitment to managerialism's fiscal imperatives around performance, efficiency, accountability, and audit.

Changes to the education system were based in wider changes to the economy instituted by the 1984 Labour Government's grand scale dual programme of liberalisation (opening up markets to competition, lifting tariffs and other market restrictions) and commercialisation (using the private sector model to organise other economic relations, particularly in the public sector – see State Sector Act 1988, State Owned Enterprises Act, Public Finance Act 1989). Massive changes to social welfare (through the Social Welfare Reform Bill 1990) and the labour market (through the Labour Relations Act 1987 and Employment Contracts Act 1991) were instigated in the years following. These regulated welfare and labour so that the rights and freedoms of the individual became paramount. The individual would exercise and pursue (entrepreneurial) self-interested choices unfettered by government paternalism or inflexible industrial contractual arrangements.

Speed as well as ruthless and relentless activity was a noted characteristic of this dual programme, which was criticised from the left as being "undemocratic" in character (Apple 2001; Fiske 1996; Kelsey 1993; Snook 1997) and explained by Roger Douglas, Minister of Finance during that time, as being part of an approach to "…implement reforms by quantum leaps. Moving step by step lets vested interests mobilise. Big packages can neutralise them" (Douglas 1989).

The Treasury had insisted it had to intervene in the "crisis" in the New Zealand economy and clearly identified education as one of the areas of culpability for economic problems as well as an untapped key area of economic recovery (New Zealand Treasury 1984; New Zealand Treasury 1987).

The combination of freedom of choice and accountability was articulated through the Education Act 1989, the Education Amendment Act 1990 and the Education Amendment Act 1991 (4), which abolished the Department of Education (and its regional offices, associated Boards) and installed a Ministry of Education. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), Education Training and Support Agency (ETSA), Teacher Registration Board (TRB), the Careers Service (Quest Rapuara), the Special Education Service (SES), and the Parent Advocacy Council (which was later disbanded in 1991) were all established. Boards of Governors and School Committees were replaced with Boards of Trustees (BOTs) whose new responsibilities included staff employment, management of the institution's property and the design and implementation of a Charter (based on a contract). The Acts also initiated bulk funding for school operations and a voluntary bulk funding scheme for teaching salaries (including the transferability of funds between categories), revoked compulsory registration for teachers, and abolished zoning for schools. In 1991, the Labour Government introduced a user-pays system for a proportion of student fees into tertiary education, culminating in the National Government's current Study Right scheme and means testing for allowances.

The notion of devolution to the community underpinned the legislative changes for the education sector. Devolution was the preferred method for achieving both the managerial principles of accountability and efficiency and the neo-liberal principles of freedom of choice and equality of opportunity. Community-school partnerships through Boards of Trustees and accountable self-managing schools were the new face of an education system that would contribute to the economy rather than being a drain on it via high schooling costs due to inefficiency.

The New Zealand education reforms have tended to be understood by left-wing critics both in terms of a crisis in the duties of the State legitimation (Codd 1990; Gordon 1992) and a shift from egalitarian ideals within a liberal humanist framework in education (Marshall 1988) to a market-oriented system where principles are technical ones, concerned with efficiency and consumer choice (Peters, Marshall and Massey 1994). Similarly justifications for restructuring have been seen in terms of a shift from initial liberal humanist justifications of empowering school communities (e.g. Boards of Trustees and the recently-revoked voluntary bulk funding scheme for teacher salaries) to later neo-liberal justifications based on the promotion of excellence through competition (Gordon 1992; Porter 1990). Both Treasury's involvement with the radical reconception of social policy (Codd 1990; Gordon 1992; Peters, Marshall and Massey 1994) and the Social Services Commission's involvement with the reform of public administration (Dale and Jesson 1992) have been seen as crucial instruments in dramatic changes which have put education at the centre of New Zealand's economic recovery from

"crisis" (New Zealand Treasury 1984; New Zealand Treasury 1987). Critics have argued that this devolution is one of responsibility rather than real power (Gordon 1992; Kelsey 1993). However perhaps even more important than such a devolution of responsibility is the mode of regulation this entails – such that our participation, and constitution, as autonomous choosers is compelled by it.

Governmentality becomes useful as an account of the reforms in education here in that perhaps the most striking element of reforms is that of recognising each person, as well as each school and each community, as freely choosing, self-managing and self-maximising. While the reforms have seemed to decentralise power, schools have encountered an increasing level of centralised control in specific areas under the guise of accountability. The premise that New Zealand's economic recovery can be determined by greater efficiency through choice (and competition) thereby makes individual freedom of choice both *a condition for* and *a result of* the education reforms. In this way, the reforms have taken hold at the level of identity and become a means through which we constitute and come to understand ourselves as free subjects (Vaughan 1995). As an activity which shapes and directs the activity of others through techniques which address the minute particulars of every individual's life, governing is a form of power which is both individualising and totalising (Foucault 1982) and the reforms, ERO in particular, exemplify this paradox of rule.

From a Distance

The Education Review Office developed out of the education reform rationalisation of the promotion of excellence in schools. The notion of excellence was linked to a notion of accountability which was explicitly devoid of any sense of professional accountability and instead emphasised audit. Audit was seen as superior in its ability to provide detached and neutral evaluation, unlike professional accountability which was seen as subject to "provider capture".

Treasury's chief criticisms of the welfare state and its functioning concerned *provider capture* (where the suppliers of state service pursue their own interests), *administrative capture* (where some government departments not directly involved in producing state services pursue their own interests at the expense of the quality of those services) and *consumer capture* (where some users of state services secure preferential treatment over others) (Peters and Marshall 1988). The line to follow, they argued, was one where education could be reoriented away from being a public good towards a focus on its contribution to the economy, efficiency, and accountability. This ran parallel to the State Services Commission's approach of reshaping education as part of

its overall reform of public administration, making education simply a branch of public administration and as such not afforded any special treatment (Dale and Jesson 1992). In fact it was the State Sector Act 1988 which established ERO, though later the 1990 (New Zealand Statutes 1990) and 1993 (New Zealand Statutes 1993) amendments to the Education Act spelled out ERO's functions and the scope of its power more specifically.

The State was anxious to avoid provider capture in all aspects of the state service, particularly in education.   Putting into practice the imperative to avoid capture alongside efficiency and accountability resulted in the Ministry of Education and ERO having quite separate roles and functions. The Ministry provided policy advice and purchased education services as a principal on behalf of the Government. ERO's assignment, on the other hand, was to audit and assure the Crown's continued investment in education (Education Review Office 1996, February). The separation of roles followed the principle that policy, practice, and audit responsibilities be separated out. That same principle of separation or detachment was continued through the recommendations of the Picot Report that some policy decisions go to local school boards and schools, that a central authority (which became the Ministry of Education) be set up to allocate funding and prescribe national curriculum requirements and other specific requirements for schools, and that an audit agency provide assurance to the central authority (Taskforce to Review Education Administration 1988).

Being a government department in its own right immediately set ERO apart from its predecessor, the Department of Education Inspectorate. The second feature which defined its distinctiveness from the Inspectorate lay in its lack of an advisory capacity. ERO was a audit and review agency only and, as such, did not advise teachers and schools. Public agencies associated with the Ministry of Education and private providers were to take up those roles. In line with new practices of accountability across the public service, the elimination of "provider capture" became key.   The focus was on transparency and accountability through an independent body where there was no conflict of roles (Codd 1994). It could be argued that this essentially "reduced accountability to audit because 'qualitative' measures of compliance would end to play into the hands of the self-interested organisations and professionals, including teachers" (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997: 23). ERO's responsibilities were based on its distance from both the schools and the central policy and funding authority – the Ministry of Education.

Not only were the roles of the Ministry of Education and ERO quite separate but they were also in tension, competing for resources, authority, and influence within the education sector. There has been some discussion over the confusing and sometimes contradictory definitions of ERO's

scope and responsibilities under the 1989 Education Act (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). Despite this, ERO's duties have included providing assurance to the public and to the State that BOTs are meeting their obligations and undertakings to the Crown as well as providing comment on the effectiveness of BOTs in promoting student achievement and providing independent quality assurance through audits on individual schools and National Education Evaluation Reports (NEERs) aimed at improving school effectiveness.

Jesson (2000) described the situation between the Ministry of Education and ERO as "a deep and abiding sibling rivalry" (Jesson 2000: 22). There were some expectations that the Ministry of Education would take on more of a leadership role than it had done and this has been cause for concern, particularly in respect of its relationship with both NZQA and ERO because the separate-roles situation left the Ministry of Education "unsure whether it has any overview responsibilities for specific policy issues" (Laking, Douglas, Gunaratne, Karran, Crawford-Gleeson and Taylor 1996: 18). Jesson wrote that even Nick Smith, Minister of Education in the National Government of 1996-1999, appeared to have more confidence in ERO than in his own Ministry since Smith had said that if he wanted objective advice he'd go to Judith Aitken, CEO of ERO instead of his own Ministry of Education (Jesson 2000). In an interview published prior to Jesson's (2000) article, Nick Smith claimed that ERO had probably been a stronger advocate for standards and excellence than the Ministry of Education had been (Fitchett and Lane 1999: 26). Certainly education legislation had failed to clearly define Crown expectations regarding criteria for auditing education delivery and standards and it was argued that Boards of Trustees had not taken up this role, leaving ERO as a "minder" and responsible by default (Austin, Parata-Blane and Edwards 1997: 16). Thus the varying definitions and scope of ERO's responsibilities have shifted, at times opening up "possibilities of both overlap and neglect… encouraging turf wars and defensive positioning that could increase the difficulty of policy making between the two agencies" (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997: 22).

Metro in the Middle

The tension between ERO and the Ministry of Education may well be what has allowed Metro to stay open despite continual ERO reviews which openly recommended it be closed down. The Ministry of Education, as a policy provider and agency involved in the recommending and contracting of education services, had to be preoccupied with maintaining the market-led system. To close Metro would have looked bad in the light of the Ministry's commitment to choice, community, and flexibility. Moreover, the Ministry had allowed Metro to exist for two decades without any special or distinctive category, and without even a signed Charter between 1989 and 1998. Had Metro had some officially acknowledged alternative status, it might have

been protected from ERO reviewing it as a standard state school.   Given the uncertain boundaries between ERO and the Ministry of Education and the potential for ERO to move into policy-making areas left open by the Ministry of Education, it could be argued that the Ministry had some motivation to assert its authority over ERO – both in terms of its acknowledged superior authority to decide the fate of the school and in terms of its role to assist or enable schools to function within the market-based schooling system.

Never Mind the Quality, Feel the Quantity!

ERO's methodology of relying heavily on a perusal of the school's own documentation has been criticised for being overly quantitative. Schools are expected to provide a huge amount of school policy, class-planning, and student assessment documentation to ERO prior to ERO visiting the school. ERO's actual time spent in the school is typically no more than three days. The reliance on quantitative measures of school effectiveness has led to the validity and reliability of ERO's *Effectiveness Reviews* being challenged. In addition, ERO's *Assurance Audits* have been questioned in terms of consistency and matters of judgement and ERO's review methodology generally has been attacked as weak in scope and depth (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). Both Effectiveness Reviews and Assurance Audits have since been superseded by *Accountability Audits*.

What ERO could measure or expediently "codify" (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997) was what becomes the measure of educational quality in the school (Smith 2000). Of prime importance to ERO was the performance of schools, BOTs and teachers and the achievement of outcomes, namely student learning achievements. Collegial relationships and actual processes of teaching were not seen as relevant to accountability, a definition of accountability-as-audit that has been seen as narrow (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997; Smith 2001). In practice such an accountability focus tended to be on compliance with managerial and administrative outcomes, engendering what teachers have called "tick off" quantitative approaches (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997; Smith 1998). The review process itself has been questioned in terms of the validity and consistency of reviewers' judgements (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997).

One of the key issues at stake for many educationalists has been the means by which ERO is to achieve the objective of providing assurance to the Crown. According to some critics, ERO's objectives are framed by the same overall approach that created the objectives – to stifle provider capture by limiting the scope of professional judgement and discretion and replacing

professionalism with managerialism and contractualism, achieved through Charters, NAGs[17], and the National Curriculum and then establishing the extent of compliance with those measures (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997).

A scheme to exempt "good schools" from further reviews was being considered in 2000 though there are still no details about how long they might be exempt nor on exactly what basis (Smith 2000). In Britain, OfSTED (Office for Standards in Education)[18], with which ERO has a close relationship (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997), has already introduced such a system whereby schools performing well by OfSTED standards are selected for a shortened visit (Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) 2001).

That a school's previous reports have much bearing on the next one disadvantages Metro considerably given the salvo of negative ERO reviews of the school – seven, beginning in 1995, makes it an average of one report every twelve months. Many staff felt that the reports and recommendations as well as the review process itself, repeated over and over, left them no real way to recover from the "failed school" label in either managerial, educational, commercial, or emotional terms.

> *…you can't make conclusions about a school after...they're punch drunk...It's completely invalid. (Teacher "I", 1996)*
>
> *...I believe that all our figures and...all our documents on attendance and past experience – I think they discounted a lot of the documents that we think are important. And I believe, and I've actually seen them in action so often now, that their major emphasis when they look at documents is their own documents. In other words, they use their past reports as their starting point – that's fair enough, but they put a great deal of weight on their past documents, and that's very hard to get past. (Teacher "J", 1996)*
>
> *…we just can't seem to do everything we are supposed to do, everything we are supposed to change, and have it all working perfectly in time for the next review. (Teacher "D", 1999)*

For some Metro teachers, continuing negative ERO reports have generated a sense that their school's fate was determined some time ago. All that remain are the procedures and paperwork, a going-through of the motions.

> *You see this is the awful thing – I actually do welcome processes of evaluation and that's what feeds into this perception that there was an agenda there – that the whole process was actually phoney. We might as well have spent hours and hours and hours and*

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[17] The NAGs are the National Administration Guidelines, which are part of the National Education Guidelines (NEGs) requiring Boards of Trustees (BOTs) to follow sound governance and management practices in relation to employment, financial and asset management, and the curriculum.

[18] OfSTED is ERO's school inspection counterpart in the Britain.

spoken another language. And it didn't actually make any difference, what we did. (Teacher "I", 1997)

I've always seen every ERO visitor as an opportunity for us to make our point to ERO. One could look at it and say, well we failed to get our point through. But I've always remained ever hopeful that they'll listen to what we've got to say. (Former Director, 1997)

The latest and most damning report on Metro from ERO (Education Review Office 2001, August) states that ERO's findings are the same as the previous six reviews completed on Metro and once again recommends the school be closed. The report claims to see "no purpose in undertaking further discretionary reviews of this school" (Education Review Office 2001, July: 4) and is explicitly written as a "last chance" review for the school. Yet the report itself, minus the statistical information and summary history at the beginning, barely runs to three pages. ERO's approach appears to be one of "closing the deal" or, as the Deputy Director called it, "*an exercise in creative negativity*" (2001). It is interesting that a report with such far-reaching implications and consequences should be a synopsis rather than a detailed exploration of the situation facing Metro and its students.

Teachers at the school continued to be thwarted in their attempts to be reviewed thoroughly according to terms beyond those of standard schools and seemed confused by the differences between their interactions with the review teams and the conclusions of the resultant reports. They cited previous examples of ERO reviewers who, whilst they were there observing, appeared to be sympathetic to the school and its philosophy. The resultant negative report findings which followed were a surprise.

[ERO reviewer] was sitting there and said what she was concerned about and suggested possible solutions...I might not agree with the conclusions she made, but she made them very openly and spoke to me as if I was someone worth speaking to...Also after that particular Audit when talking to [the principal] she'd said something like "well, what we've said isn't too bad in the draft reports" and that was the one of course that was rewritten in the final report and was the first time they'd suggested perhaps they close the school. (Teacher "I", 1997)

The suspicion that their fate might have been pre-determined or that they were targeted because they were an alternative school heightened some teachers' sense of alienation from the process. A number of staff referred to the general tenor of ERO's attitude toward the school as being derisive:

And then ERO walk in the door and it's [two senior ERO management staff] from Wellington and [the ERO reviewer] and they didn't have the courtesy, again, to let us know that they were coming...you talk about preparation, they just appeared! You know

this sort of thing happened all the time. They don't answer phone calls – things like that. (Former Director, 1997)

We insisted this time that we let them know that we have a particular culture in the school and that the school's policies and procedures in term of visitors were crucial and…that we task them to do their job, but to follow the rules that the school sets for visitors. Now some of them weren't just rules – they were part of the culture that we asked them to communicate with the students, that if we had visitors in the school who didn't communicate, then students could be asking questions and the whole place would change. We asked them to come to our school meetings, we asked them to meet with parents. We think, in both cases, that they did that reluctantly, but they did do it. In the one previous visit they actually refused to meet with parents and refused to meet with the school meeting. (Former Director, 1997)

Teacher accounts here suggest that not only was what ERO measured beyond the reach of Metro to document, but that ERO's standardised practices of evaluation were either applied to the letter, over-riding school philosophy, or not applied at all (in the sense of insensitivity to the school).

ERO's narrow focus has been vociferously resisted by PPTA[19] members who picketed outside area ERO offices in 1997 and by NZEI[20], who challenged ERO on various issues (Smith 2001). The reliability of ERO's methods and processes has also been questioned through teacher surveys which found that teachers considered many aspects of the ERO review process to be focused on "trivia" (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997; Wylie 1997).

Metro teachers have much at stake over ERO's inattention to qualitative measures arguing that their school, as alternative with many "at risk" students, cannot be measured quantitatively.

I know people say oh well it's all very well for you, you've only got small classes and you are only dealing with small numbers but I maintain that the particular students we've got desperately need that. They need a lot of individual attention and if they don't get it here now the repercussions later in many cases will be diabolical because they are not going to be able to be functioning members of society. That's where we fall foul of ERO. How can we show that we've added value to a certain student? They say oh look, so and so hasn't done any classes for a week. But I know that person's attitude to education has changed. I know that they are actually on the way to being in a learning mode...I just think that because it is extremely difficult to quantify, we are perceived as not doing it. But we know we are and the students know we are. And the parents know we are. (Teacher "D" , 1997)

One of my major criticisms of ERO is their failure to put [the school] in context…there's a sort of assumption in there that their methods are so objective, it's almost as though they can tick little boxes. (Former Director, 1996)

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[19] The Post-Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) is the secondary teachers' union in New Zealand.

[20] The New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI) is the primary teachers' union in New Zealand.

ERO's quantitative focus has been exacerbated by a lack of funding (Smith 2000) and ERO staff numbers being cut by a third in 1990 following the Lough Report. The year 1990 marked an important turning point for ERO in that until then its organisational set-up included staff, most of whom had extensive teaching experience or had held senior positions in schools or in the Inspectorate of the former Department of Education (Codd 1994). This reflected the earlier collaborative processes of the Inspectorate, consistent with the educational mission of learning institutions and the professionalism of teachers (Codd 1994: 49).

However the Lough Report came only six months after the Tomorrow's Schools reforms had been introduced (late 1989) and it can been argued that it was an attempt by the State Services Commission to bring their concerns back to the centre of the education reforms and end the "backsliding" to "provider capture" (Dale and Jesson 1992). In fact, Smith's research (Smith 2001) turned up the original title page from the *Today's Schools* Lough Report, published by the State Services Commission – it had been called *Gaining Ground*. Thus the Lough Report refocused ERO to meet the needs of the Minister of Education. It seemed that the Minister, rather than the schools, was ERO's client (French 2000).

Under these circumstances of reduced resourcing and redefined responsibilities, ERO's reviews became cursory, after fairly brief (two to three day) visits to schools, and were directed to the Ministry of Education in terms of fiscal accountability. Hence a reliance on school self-assessment became more likely and a "low trust model of accountability" (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997), which audited school effectiveness in terms of teacher performance without relying on their professional judgement for evaluation, was set in motion.

Publicity and Difference

> There's a gang stalking south Auckland playgrounds. A ruthless, unfair, single-minded and tough gang. Unsuspecting principals and boards of trustees have found themselves beaten up and kicked while they're down. This gang takes no prisoners and brooks no excuse. What's more, it's legally entitled to do what it does. It's the Education Review Office – coming soon to a school near you. (*Metro* magazine, MacDonald, 1997: 58)

> ERO has stood firm against what many consider a push for mediocrity in state schools and in the process has drawn the ire and indeed hatred of many teachers, academics and

the teacher unions…But the guardians of our education consumers – us the parents – have come to look to the service for accountability and clear guidance…(*North and South* magazine) (Langwell 2001)

The eschewal of teacher professional judgement in favour of audit is tied to the public release of all of ERO's reports. A "politics of blame" (Thrupp 1998) is intensified by this as schools which receive criticism from ERO or negative ERO reviews are subjected to a public castigation through the media's attention to the outcome of the report. ERO's publicity policy is one of the most controversial aspects of ERO's operations and has been criticised by many teachers and researchers (Thrupp 1997, Smythe 1994; Robertson, Dale et al. 1997; Smith 1998; Smith 2000). In keeping with the collegial relationships of teacher and inspector during the 1980s in particular, schools' reports were kept confidential. What is nowadays called a "failing school" might have received criticism but also advice and support. Adverse publicity was out of the question; the only people who had access to the reports were the Department of Education, the inspectors and the school itself. The rationale for publicity was one of improving public confidence, increasing the reliability and quality of information about schools (Smith 2001). In a speech to newspaper editors, Judith Aitken, CEO of ERO, characterised ERO's three main powers as "the power to enter, the power to recommend, the power to publish" (Aitken 1996b), indicating the importance placed on the publicity aspect of ERO's role.

Negative publicity certainly impacted upon Metro. Four further negative ERO Audits since February 1996 and the resultant publicity from the first two created a fragile situation (see "Alternative school criticised" *New Zealand Herald* 22 April 1995; "School pupils taught how to make beer" *New Zealand Herald* 3 February 1996; "College is failing – ERO" *Central Leader* 9 February 1996; "Former students defend troubled Metro" *Central Leader* 14 February 1996; "Yet another report on Metro" *Central Leader* 26 July 1996; "School vows to fight after another bad report" *New Zealand Herald* 29 November 1996). That situation led to a loss of confidence in the school which manifested in a falling roll from 1996 on, with both teachers and students experiencing a subsequent loss of confidence in their own performance and effectiveness.

A survey of news media from between January 1994 and June 1997 found that, of 30 schools to receive ERO reviews over that period, most received sustained negative media publicity and the vast majority (84%) of those were schools in low socio-economic areas (the lowest third of school decile rankings in New Zealand). Of the other five schools criticised by ERO, with higher-decile rankings, two were alternative schools (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). Clearly low-decile schools or schools that were "different" and faced socio-

economic and political challenges already, in addition to educational ones, had the most to lose from ERO's media policy. Schools already labelled as failing were likely to move into a spiral of even further decline following negative publicity (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). With schools expected to market themselves, there is potential for the poorer schools to bear the brunt of the additional marketing costs necessary to retrieve market standing after a negative ERO review and bad publicity about their school. Situations such as the one where seventeen Auckland schools paid $250 each to advertise nationally "Otara kids are not illiterate" (*New Zealand Herald* 30 May 1996) spell out another cost carried by those schools which can least afford it.

It has long been acknowledged that journalism, despite its code of ethics, is open to subjective reporting or, at worst, propaganda. News values are determined by a number of considerations including audience interest and relevance, accessibility through article prominence and ease of audience capture, and fit (that it can be made sense of in terms of what is already known) (Golding and Elliott 1996). News is made, not merely depicted. News values are the reason that reports on positive ERO reviews of schools also tended to focus on low decile schools. News, by definition, is a disruption to normal events (Golding and Elliott 1996), defining what is "normal" as much by what is not said as by what is said (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). So not only do the media focus on poorer schools because they have received bad ERO reports (and are therefore newsworthy), but the media also focus on poorer schools because they are poorer schools, because they are outside the "norm" (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). This focus has the potential to further generate audience capture through emotions such as anxiety and pity.

Publicity can also mobilise choice, the much-vaunted quality of the free market and educational services, in interesting ways. In the case of the higher decile schools receiving positive media coverage on their good ERO reports, parental choice becomes the school's choice as places in "successful" middle class schools become scarce and sought after, fuelled in part also by the plummeting rolls of the low decile schools receiving bad reports (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). It is schools that have choice, selecting the students they will accept and enrol in their school (McCulloch 1991). Metro's commitment to an open enrolment policy that disadvantages nobody means it has never had this opportunity (see next chapter for further discussion on the free market and school positions).

It is understandable that news coverage might be framed in a sensational way and produce a market effect. Increased pressures on the news media as a result of political shifts tend to intensify commercial imperatives via patterns of globalisation and concentration of media

control through business mergers with computer or telecommunication industries (Dahlgren 2001). The proliferation of occupational groups such as professional communicators, media advisors and political consultants allows the techniques of advertising, market research, public relations and opinion analysis to be used to assist economic and political elite groups to shape media messages to their advantage, thus marginalising the citizen in favour of the consumer (Dahlgren 2001). The consumer is, within ERO's neo-liberal framework, both the target audience (parent-as-consumer) as well as the target client (child-as-consumer) (French 2000: 23).

Given news values and the current political climate, ERO's desire to "ensure a balance in public reporting" (Education Review Office 1996b: 15), predicated on the belief that the benefits of "openness" far outweigh the "negative dimension" of principals and teachers feeling "exposed by public reporting" (Education Review Office 1996b: 9), seems unlikely to succeed. It is more likely – and this is borne out by surveys of teachers' anxieties, arguments about competition between schools, and empirical evidence about the effects of publicity on schools – that ERO's commitment to a model of school improvement is really "a matter of adding media-engineered public approval or disapproval to the weight of the ERO review itself" .

ERO does not apply the principle of transparency and openness to itself. It has refused to release its *Handbook of Practices for Reviewers*, which guides how reviewers are to go about their duties prior to, and during, a visit to a school, except under the Official Information Act (Smythe 1994; Vaughan 1995). Without media involvement, ERO reports would possibly hold little interest for the public since most ERO reports are formulaic, even dull. This is perhaps not surprising given that the reports are written to a standardised format in order to facilitate consistency (Smith 2001) and have a focus on good practice models over best practice models and on compliance issues over qualitative measures and processes in education (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997).

Staff at Metro have commented that the negative publicity has hurt the school.

> *So we were front page in the Herald and you still meet people in the street two years later – "oh you're that school that this, this, and that...". (Teacher "A", 1996)*

> *You know what people are like, they think we have closed already. (Teacher "D", 1997)*

> *There's a feeling that we are struggling to survive. (Assistant Director, 1997)*

The publicity, together with the publicly available ERO reports themselves, left Metro teachers and students feeling like they haven't had a fair say or a chance to defend themselves in any way that could make a difference.

ERO's complaints policy itself has some elements of mystery. A review of ERO commissioned by the Post-Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) in 1997 and carried out by researchers from the University of Auckland and the University of Waikato noted that ERO contracted to deliver its Assurance Audits, Discretionary Assurance Audits and Effectiveness Review Reports with no more than 3% sustainable complaints of their total complaints received overall. While most government departments or Ministries accept a sustainable complaints level of around 10%, it was former CRO Judith Aitken's desire to keep to an even lower count (Smith 2001). A sustainable complaint is one deemed sustainable by ERO itself or by the ombudsman, should a complaint be taken that far and then receive some form of authorised backing. However no complaint against ERO or an ERO review has ever been sustained in this manner.

The PPTA review also noted that the mechanisms for lodging a complaint were not clear or accessibly set out and that such complaints could only be made about the conduct or conclusions of the review with no mechanism for contesting the underlying framework or methodology that ERO used in order to draw its judgements about school effectiveness (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). The *Manual of Standard Procedures for Accountability Reviews* (January 1998), which has been used by reviewers, covering the various rules and procedures around setting up and conducting reviews generally, is not a publicly available document. It contains the Complaints Procedure in section 10.4: "Complaints are dealt with according to the Office's complaints policy". There is however a footnote "Also refer section 9.10 of this document". Unfortunately, despite repeated rummagings through the Manual, I had to conclude that section 9.10 did not exist. It is not listed in the Table of Contents and there is no such 9.10 Complaints section, indeed no sections at all in the Manual between section 9.9, which ends halfway down a page and is followed by an entire blank page, and section 10.1, which begins at the top of the next section page (Education Review Office 1998e). A fellow researcher enquired into this absence and ERO staff were surprised and embarrassed to check their personal copies and find they were similarly lacking in the Complaints section.

The mysterious complaints process leaves schools with the somewhat pitiable option (in comparison to front page feature articles or sensational headlines) of writing Letters to the Editor or, in the case of some low decile schools, writing or featuring in articles on their "angry" responses to ERO or "fight". This tends, however, to attract even more attention to their

situation, potentially producing negative market consequences for the school (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997).

Due to the high potential for negative market consequences, Metro did decide to avoid the media where possible. After the first ERO report that recommended the school be closed, Metro's BOT made a decision *not* to talk to the media.

> *Our survival is dependent on maintaining our roll...our roll fell to a very very marginal level...our Board made a conscious decision basically to just keep away from the media because they could see no way that we could get our case fairly put out there. So the tactic if you like has been damage control and in terms of our roll, which I guess is only one measure, and reasonably superficial but a good measure, the more we kept out of the media, the more our roll has gone up...the Herald actually did print quite a few letters from students and parents and staff but the weight of the negativity in the media has actually caused the school a lot of damage. (Former Director, 1997)*

Still the publicity hurt Metro and Metro has no need of a waiting list anymore, its roll dropping by up to 30% from the average over the years before the February 1996 ERO review and surrounding publicity. Like so many of their students who claim no other school than Metro would have them, a number of the teachers feel stigmatised by years of public scrutiny through the press and a series of bad ERO reviews; they doubt that they would ever be able to get a teaching job anywhere else. This of course leaves the teachers open to claims of a "bunker mentality" and versions of the much criticised "provider capture" in neo-liberal thinking.

Remarkably, part of the 1998 Agreement between Metro and the Ministry of Education, which allowed Metro to stay open with organisational advice and limited financial assistance from the Ministry of Education, was that Metro would increase its roll to 110 by the end of 2002 (Ministry of Education 1998a). This would have been an increase of some 31% on 2001's roll of approximately 84[21]. Instead Metro's roll has dropped by 22% since the first negative ERO review in February 1996. Figure 1 shows the falling roll over the past few years.

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[21] Since the 1996 ERO report which recommended closure of the school, Metro's roll has fluctuated by as much as 60% during the course of a normal school year. This is due in part to students from other schools enrolling at Metro part-way through a year or leaving Metro to study at other schools or institutions or join the workforce part-way through the school year. It may also be due in part to adverse publicity as a result of the ERO reviews.

Metro School Roll 1990-2001
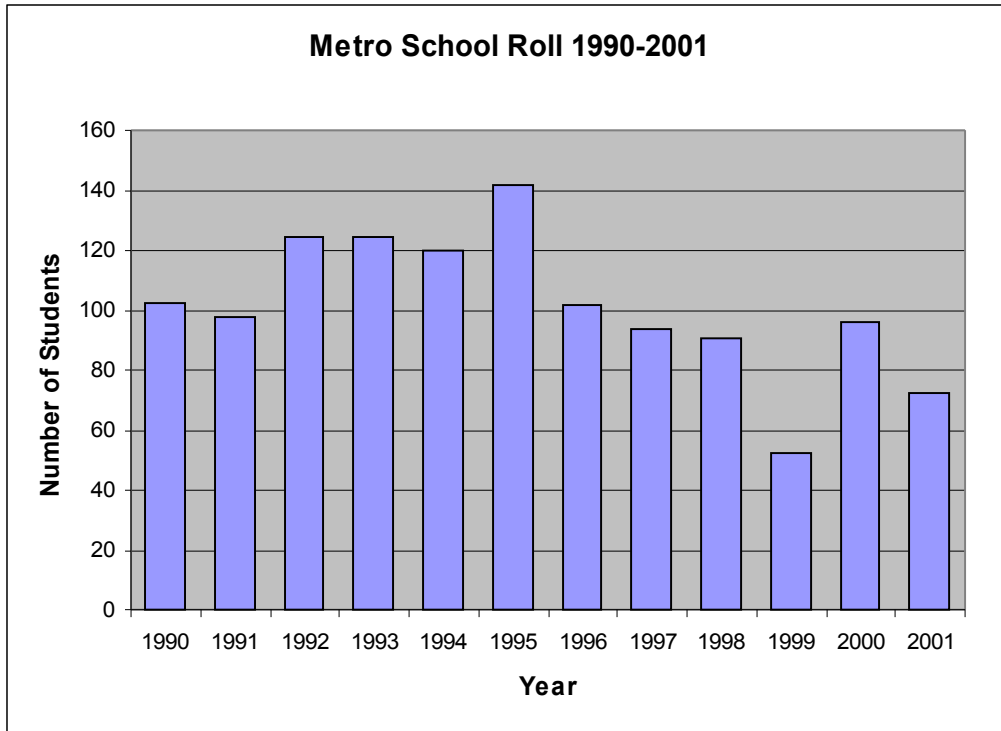
Figure 1: Metro Roll Comparison, Source: Ministry of Education 2001

Metro has always had mixed publicity and the capacity to attract sensationalised news coverage from the beginning – "Experiment in Schooling" (Auckland Star 1976a), "What's this, a plot to ruin our young?" (Binnie 1976), "School was never like this" (Jones 1977). During the 1970s and early 1980s, this was likely part of Metro's appeal to its community of alternative education supporters.   However in a climate of market competition and a tendency, acknowledged by ERO, to have schools become more conservative and alike, such publicity has worked against Metro.   In this climate, difference or abnormality, protest against the mainstream or status quo, and shock and scandal repel clients or potential clients, leaving Metro to face a "trial by media" (Thrupp and Smith 1999; Wylie 1997). ERO stated its partiality towards the "power to publish" (Aitken 1996b) puts ERO in a position to influence parents' perceptions of schools (parent-as-consumer) via the media and constitutes a form of "market accountability" (Thrupp and Smith 1999) that disadvantages any school, such as Metro, already perceived as "different" or outside the norm. As one teacher put it:

> There's nowhere for us to fit with ERO. We're simply not in their line of vision. (Teacher "D" , 2001)

SES and Difference

ERO's attitude towards Metro, according to the Metro staff, can be understood in terms of Metro's positioning as different from other schools and therefore more visible and vulnerable

to negative findings from ERO. Metro teachers have referred to ERO reports as a "*hatchet job*" (Teacher "F", 1996) and say they are "*being squeezed*" (Teacher "C", 1998) by virtue of being an alternative school and therefore an easy target.

> *...we're judged more harshly. We're expected to be tighter than perhaps a bigger school or a whatever school would be. We have to prove more how we're dealing with attendance. We have to have a better attendance. I mean we hear on TV about schools where one third of the students are away on any one day...if that happens here, it is assumed that that's proof that we give permission for students to be waggers, wastrels, drunkards, school perverts and what have you...[as if] in some way we're, in advance, giving students permission to miss out on education. (Teacher "A", 1997)*

Yet ERO made precisely the opposite point about Metro's alternative character that they did *not* see Metro as different from other schools. In an unconfirmed report in 1996, ERO stated that mainstream schools had changed, incorporating many features that made Metro different, thereby opening up the choice of other schools, besides Metro, to students (unconfirmed Discretionary Assurance Audit October 1996:3).   There is evidence of growing trend to standardisation in schooling character. As Apple (2001) argues, schools have become more similar and more committed to standard traditional methods of teaching and a standard and traditional curriculum. ERO itself acknowledge the tendency for schools to become more conservative as a result of consumer pressure (Education Review Office 1996a: Section Parents Choosing Schools). Apple argues that the tendency towards conservatism and similarity among schools is because neo-liberal markets are usually accompanied by neo-conservative pressures to regulate both educational content and behaviour through national curriculum, national standards, and national systems of assessment. This neo-liberal/neo-conservative combination, he argues, is due to the neo-liberal emphasis of a weak state with a faith in markets developing alongside an emphasis on a strong state that regulates knowledge (Apple 2001: 75)[22]. In such a climate, schools will tend to respond to a market situation by consolidating existing accepted practices rather than experimenting with new ones. Mainstream schools have incorporated practices tried and tested by Metro decades earlier, and Metro has shifted in an attempt to meet curricular and good-practice requirements made of all schools.

ERO's comment that many schools now offer what Metro can offer is, as ERO's message has always been, that schools will be reviewed against consistent and common standards of good practice, against a backdrop of the student-as-consumer and consumer rights to an equally good educational outcome regardless of the school they attend.

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[22] It should be noted that Apple is referring to an era inaugurated by Reagan in the United States and Thatcher in Britain. Conservatism was much less marked within New Zealand with Treaty of Waitangi legislation and a liberatarian attitude towards the "personal". The social welfare reforms of the 1990s did, however, signal some elements of conservatism in relation to the family.

ERO's comment that there are "many more suitable schools from which to choose" would seem to imply that either parents-as-consumers or students-as-consumers have made a bad choice in Metro, something that appears to fly in the face of ERO's commitment to consumer sovereignty. After all, ERO shows confidence in the public through the publication of National Education Evaluation Reports, one of their key output classes.

> By making available information about the attributes of schools identified as 'good', the Office intends to contribute to the provision of good quality education in New Zealand schools.
>
> Such information will enable parents and schools to identify the kind of practices and processes that promote effective student learning. This will help parents make informed choices about their child's education. (Education Review Office 1994b)

The public are seen to have both the right and the ability to choose, given the appropriate information. Yet perhaps now even the Metro parents and community have become tainted with an inability to make proper choices, perhaps similar to the lack of "will or capacity to bring about the required change" (Education Review Office 1996, October) that ERO attributed to the Metro Board of Trustees.

The denial of any real or important difference between Metro and other schools is in line with ERO's persistent denial of the impact of factors outside the school upon school practices and outcomes. Thrupp's (1997) study of the South Auckland schools which were criticised by ERO shows how SES was dismissed as a cause for the low educational failure of the schools in a much-publicised case. Instead ERO argued that poor teachers and poor management, rather than SES (socio-economic status) factors, were to blame (Thrupp 1997a: 385). Schools thought otherwise. In the case of the national advertisement ("Otara kids are not illiterate", *New Zealand Herald* 30 May 1996), after ERO released its report on the "failing" schools in South Auckland, claiming they made up 42% of the total schools in South Auckland (Thrupp 1999).

> Since 1993 ERO has found that socio-economic context is not a significant determinant of the quality of school students' educational experience. We have found that ownership of the school is not a significant determinant of the quality of school students' educational experience. We have found that the level of revenue is not a significant determinant: schools with the highest levels of revenue from all sources are very often the least successful risk managers, and often fail to deliver good quality educational outcomes for their students. (Aitken 1996a).

Although socio-economic status (SES) is seen as one of the barriers to learning identified by ERO (Education Review Office 1998d) and although there is some evidence that ERO has more recently paid some attention to SES (though this appears to be only the cosmetic change of recording school deciles in their reports), ERO claims that school size is at least as much of a

factor in poor school performance (Education Review Office 1998d). Smith's research (Smith 2001) on over 1400 ERO reports between 1996 and 1998 also found school size to be a factor, along with geographical location, namely that rural schools were more likely than their city counterparts to be found performing poorly by ERO standards. Smith (2001) also found differences in the number of compliance issues found across or between ERO district offices, raising questions of consistency and reliability between district review offices (Smith 2001). Despite these reliability issues and a few concessions to the SES factor, ERO maintains that "despite the overall lower level of performance in decile 1 schools in comparison with decile 10 schools, there are many decile 1 schools that succeed in providing a high quality education that effectively meets the needs of their students" (Education Review Office 1998d).

In 1997 the government-commissioned review of ERO, known as the Austin Review (Austin, Parata-Blane and Edwards 1997), had found that while SES was a contextual variable it could not be an excuse for schools to avoid "biting the bullet" as suggested by ERO's reviews of the South Auckland schools (Hunt 1999) and dealing with what ERO saw as management problems. The Austin Review Panel concluded that schooling needed to be seen as a compensatory mechanism for the disadvantaged:

> …schools and centres need to take account of those external factors [such as SES] in their initial planning and not at the end of the cycle when they become a convenient excuse for performance that is less than acceptable. (Austin, Parata-Blane and Edwards 1997: 28).

A similar finding about taking into account SES was made by the Achievement in Multi-Cultural High Schools (AIMHI) project, which studied the student achievement-promoting and standards-raising practices of eight high schools with high numbers of Maori and Pacific Islands students. The AIMHI project report found that low decile schools claimed ERO reviewers failed to recognise the greater welfare and psychological demands placed on those schools, and that the reviewers were lacking both experience (of working in such schools) and the means to actually measure school effectiveness in those circumstances (Hawk, Hill, Seabourne, Foliaki, Tanielu and Williams 1996).

OfSTED, ERO's British counterpart, follows a similar approach to ERO. In her discussion of OfSTED and "failing schools", Tomlinson argued that Bernstein's famous quote that "schools cannot compensate for society" has through OfSTED become the message that if your school cannot compensate for society, it will go under and you will be personally blamed (Tomlinson 1997). Similarly Judith Aitken, former CRO (Chief Review Officer) of ERO, regards schools as having a major role in redressing social inequality (French 2000). So central is ERO's

understanding of schools having this compensatory role, measured in terms of student learning needs and learning outcomes, that any concern for the effects of SES on school's abilities here is seen as an excuse rather than a reason for failure.

ERO's "SES is no excuse" approach has been foregrounded by the eschewal of provider capture in the form of teacher professional judgement, which has instead been replaced with managerial accountability and an insistence that it will brook no excuses about poor performance or outcomes from teachers or schools. This means of understanding school processes is based in a school effectiveness model that looks to identify aggregate, independent, causal factors in school success or effectiveness (Hamilton 1998) while refusing to acknowledge the contexts from which they spring. ERO has noted that school effectiveness is a highly contested area and that there is no "agreed 'formula' of attributes that can guarantee effectiveness for all schools" (Education Review Office 1994b). ERO also has some recognition that market reputation and economic advantage has produced what it calls "cruising schools" which "cruise along, often for many years, confident of continuing Crown revenue and a secure place in the market, but failing to recognise any imperative need to demonstrate the value they can legitimately claim to have added to their students' education" (Education Review Office 1999a).

Nonetheless ERO consistently evades the issue of socio-economic and market advantage by suggesting the correlation between socio-economic status and school achievement can be mediated by schools. In its *School Governance* report it states:

> Student achievement is influenced by a basket of factors some of which schools can control directly and some of which they cannot. The quality of governance within schools is only one, and not necessarily the most significant, of a number of factors influencing student achievement.
>
> Many educational researchers consider that home and social factors (for example the level of family income and support) are more influential than school factors in contributing to student achievement. Some have even concluded that the schooling is relatively unimportant in influencing achievement since the effect of schools is minuscule compared to that of the rest of society.
>
> However, on the basis of its field-based observations, ERO has developed the strong view that schools can and do make a difference to student achievement. In seeking to raise achievement levels, successful schools do not just focus on the factors they can control directly, but also adapt their efforts to accommodate the factors they cannot. The relative influence of factors within and outside schools in contributing to student achievement, and ways in which schools can combat the effect of home and social factors, are discussed in ERO's publication *Good Schools, Poor Schools* (1998). (Education Review Office 1999b).

The lack of any real engagement with matters of SES disadvantage, together with ERO's largely quantitative approach, has had implications for teachers of special character or low decile schools. Many of these schools contend that the lack of attention to qualitative matters, particularly those related to pastoral care, means much is missed in terms of an evaluation of their particular challenges and successes. ERO instead attributes the success or failure of schools to the attitude and skills of the staff, holding them responsible (Thrupp and Smith 1999):

> The socio-economic status of…leading schools is not necessarily the most useful indicator of a good learning environment for young people. Probably the strongest indicator relates to the intelligence, judgement, vision, qualifications and zest of the principal.

> Effective principals simply do not accept the proposition that schools cannot successfully intervene to the benefit of the child, whatever the socio-economic background. They actively dispute the idea that schools do not have it within their power to make a difference to their students' educational achievements, and the quality of their learning. (Education Review Office 1994a)

The Normal School

Metro does face similar problems to low-decile schools in terms of market positioning. In some ways, Metro is not particularly socio-economically disadvantaged; indeed it enjoys a wonderful teacher-student ratio, and a location in a relatively wealthy inner-city suburb. However the challenges faced by Metro's over-subscription of "at risk" students involve the use of various other health and counselling agencies, just as they do in poorer schools. Metro's students, from a variety of SES backgrounds, display a range of problems consistent with students from low-SES backgrounds – basic numeric and language difficulties, low records of achievement at school, a history of attendance problems, drug-related issues, police involvement. The director of Metro applied to the Ministry of Education in 2000 for a lower decile ranking.   The advantage of a lower decile ranking for the school would be increased funding, particularly for specific "at risk" student needs, and what the director considers a better reflection of the school's true position with its students in the market[23]. Metro staff say they perform the task of providing for students' welfare and emotional needs just as ERO has stated may be necessary, but this does not mean that Metro, as ERO has implied that some schools might, have "low expectations" of those students. However the concentration of such students in one small school does make Metro more visible, particularly with the example of student attendance. While overall attendance figures at Metro appear to be poor, the school claims that each individual student's attendance is in fact an improvement upon their attendance at previous

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[23] The application was turned down. The school plans to apply again.

mainstream schools. It is the *concentration* of poor attenders at Metro which highlights the school negatively. In situations such as this, within a market framework, it is less demanding for ERO to blame schools for wider societal problems, as ERO has done with low SES schools (Thrupp and Smith 1999).

In addition to pressure on low-decile schools or schools with high numbers of "at risk" students for inter-agency co-operation and intervention co-ordination, there is the pressure of not appearing to be like "other" schools, "normal" schools, or wealthier schools, that have a more able and unstressed student population. ERO's methods deny factors outside the "norm" of middle-class schools. The normal school, for ERO, is one that functions well, either without outside challenges, or despite them.

Robertson et al's (1997) review of ERO found that different socio-economic and market contexts produced different expectations and effects, in turn creating differential impacts upon the schools (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). The researchers admitted surprise at the findings of their survey, which showed that it was mid-decile schools, rather than low-decile schools, that were most anxious about publicity surrounding their school report and the effects of this on their market position (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997).

Metro also faces similar challenges to low-decile schools in the sense that ERO's expectation is clearly that all schools must compensate for disadvantage in society and produce similarly excellent educational outcomes for students; this is ERO's definition of the normal school.

> ERO discussions with school boards of trustees and staff have revealed that most schools regard home and family circumstances that impact on students' ability to be receptive to their performance as a barrier to learning. Some schools appear to have low expectations of students from disadvantaged family backgrounds.
>
> However students should not be prevented from achieving their potential because of home circumstances. Schools have a responsibility to effect learning and achievement in each student. In some cases, this may involve schools providing for students' welfare and emotional needs before they can address their learning needs. (Education Review Office 1997a)

Concluding Comments

The twin pillars of school accountability are now are visibility and surveillance. In order to please ERO, schools must make their work "ERO-visible" through various forms of documentation. School processes also become "visible", to some extent, during the few days ERO is actually observing in the school. What ERO understands to be good school practice,

informed in part by the school effectiveness debate, is what is visible. Accountability comes via transparency in particular areas such as the documentation of student achievement through learning needs, teacher planning and assessment, and learning outcomes.

ERO exhibits the essential qualities of normalisation or discipline (Foucault 1977) through *surveillance* (Accountability Reviews), *enclosure* (the denial of the impact of SES), *categorisation* ("the failing school", "the good school"), the establishment of modes of *differentiation* between perpetrators rather than acts ("ineffective teachers"), *ranking* (publicity), *treatment* for offenders (The Schools Support Project, Discretionary Assurance Audits, management technologies), the *partitioning* of time, space, and movement (the recording of detailed information by teachers about their activities and how they contribute to student achievement), and *efficiency* through *interchangeability* (the standardisation of ERO reviews).

For Metro, ERO's surveillance over the school has impacted enormously upon the pastoral care regime of the school through the increased attention and time required for documentation, and responses and submissions to ERO and the Ministry of Education. The impact of this upon staff-student relationships is explored further in chapter five. ERO's insistence on reviewing Metro as a mainstream school, yet criticising it for not being alternative enough, converged in an interesting way with Metro's own lack of clarity about the kind of alternative school is was. In the space left open by ERO's denial of the effects in schools of social and economic factors and Metro's imprecision about its own philosophy, the market offers a position for Metro that is a sink for "at risk" students (explored further in chapter five).

Foucault's illustrations of normalising techniques, many of which are apparent in ERO's review methodology and procedures, were "a machinery of control that functioned like a microscope of conduct" (Foucault 1977: 173).   One of Foucault's main points about discipline (and normalisation) was not that it was inherently bad but that it was inherently dangerous in the way it linked up with disciplinary knowledge (i.e. what we "know" to be "true" about effective schools). Metro has had and probably still has its share of problems and inefficiencies – the staff have never been shy about saying so themselves, either to me, the various consultants in the school as part of the School Support Project, or even ERO – but ERO's knowledge about school processes and practices might best be regarded warily since ERO posits its form of evaluation as the only solution to problems that it casts as technical in nature. Austin's themes of self-management, self-review, and self-improvement (Austin, Parata-Blane and Edwards 1997) operate within a discursive framework that means Metro has little chance to ever be "the good school".

Chapter Five

SOME LIKE IT LIMINAL:
ENTERPRISE AND RISK

Overview

In chapter one, we saw that despite ERO's claim that mainstream schools had incorporated many of the features that had previously made Metro stand out, Metro was seen not as an innovative school, but instead as a failing one. ERO's evidence against Metro can be read within the context of neo-liberal principles. Within this context, devolution of responsibility to the community, the eradication of bureaucratic provider capture, and evaluative measures designed to provide accountability and regulate (or normalise), highlight the definitions and limits of the "effective school" and the inevitability of Metro's failure in this context.

This chapter contasts the "at risk" students of Metro with the enterprising individual, the particular successful student with the capacity for maximising their self-interest through "lifelong learning", demanded by today's educational climate. The situation arising out of market competition between schools has made some schools enterprising in their use of Metro as a place to send such students but put Metro in the position of "expert" in the treatment of those students, a position in which it cannot be successful.

As Apple has pointed out, neo-liberalism demands an enterprising individual to make sense of the various measures of devolution and regulation (Apple 2001). Governmentality, as an account of how liberalism "works", can be extended to *neo*-liberalism in its basis tenets – a tricky combination in the same political structures of individualisation techniques and totalisation procedures (Foucault 1982: 213) – with the addition of intensified individualisation or techniques of assessing and acting upon the self. The conceptualisation of the individual in terms of collections of capacities and sets of skills (and an obverse lack of skills or set of deficiencies) has produced rules of conduct for acting upon the self such that evaluation of these factors, capacities, and skills necessary for living a full life can be made. In schooling terms, such rules of conduct are governed through initiatives such as Metro students' Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) which identify individual skills, capacities, and deficiencies for improvement. The identification, evaluation, and treatment or correction lead towards the goal of living a full life. Such rules of conduct for the identification and promotion of "life skills"

occur as an *ethics of enterprise* (Rose 1992). Enterprise forges a link between how we should govern ourselves and how we should govern others, designating not only an organisational form (for example, schools competing for students and reputation in the marketplace) but also providing the mode of activity encouraged throughout life in school, in work, and in the family (Rose 1992).

Within the "failing school", Metro's students are necessarily failing too. The "at risk" label applied to the majority of them is linked to a failure on the school's part to contain and correct their "riskiness" as deviant citizens as well as the possibility that the school is actually contributing to the risk (they pose to society). This form of risk contains within it a core idea of students not governing themselves "properly". Beck (1999) argues that we have moved from industrial society to risk society, the latter being characterised by hazards that are now decided and consequently produced by society and "*undermine or cancel the established safety systems of the welfare state's existing risk calculations*" (Beck 1999: 76). Institutions should therefore be understood in terms of how the self-produced consequences can be made socially calculable and accountable and their conflicts made controllable; the unpredictable is made predicable (Beck 1999). Metro is accountable to the government, socially and economically, for its students. The failure of the school to produce their students as successful and enterprising may contribute to, or even produce, a potential failure of the students in a society. Conversely the (academic or social) failure of the students becomes conflated with, or even produces, a failure of the school.

School is a site where risk can be individualised. The identification of risk factors is understood as a technology which mobilises various attempts to produce rational, choice-making, autonomous, responsible citizens (Rose 1996). Once risk is identified in the individual, an assemblage of appropriate treatments in the form of various government "helping" agencies designed to address everything from youth suicide to truancy can be deployed in order to assist the students, re-attuning body and mind to the achievement of appropriate and proper life-goals.

As a failing school with failing students, yet with support from its local community (including other schools) to remain open, Metro can be considered a liminal space. The term liminal is an anthropological term denoting a threshold of consciousness and has been used in anthropology to describe rites of passage with an emphasis on the relationship between order and freedom. In various cultures, a person who is shifting status in some way is separated off from the group or tribe and stripped of any previous identity and status; they exist then in *liminality*, the threshold or margin at which conditions are most uncertain and in which the normative structure of society is temporarily suspended or overturned (Hetherington 1997). They are then subjected to

ritualised ordeals that mark the distinctiveness and inbetweeness of their non-identity and finally, reintegrated into society as new person (Hetherington 1997). Hetherington defines *liminal spaces* as those that are clearly defined and demarcated sites, which tend to act as a dangerous polluting margin. *Liminoid spaces*, on the other hand, are likely to be created out of spaces during particular events or in breachings of mundane order (Hetherington 1997). Metro represents both what we (society) are not and where our (society's) deviants can be located.

Metro liminality can be seen as either liminal or liminoid since it fits both definitions of the liminal and liminoid. Metro can be seen through other schools' comments on it being a necessary place for certain kinds of student and on students themselves who move in and out and inbetween Metro and other schools, often using Metro as a temporary respite from mainstream schooling demands or as a fresh start (especially for pregnant students or students recovering from substance addictions) before reintegrating back into mainstream education. During the most uncertain times after the 1996 ERO recommendation they be closed down, Metro staff flirted with, but ultimately rejected, the possibility of becoming an activity centre for at risk students, an even more explicit space of the *liminoid* as students cannot be brought to order any other way. Instead Metro remains a *liminal* space, a danger at the margin, earlier infectiously innovative but now potentially polluting of the social body.

The Enterprising Individual

What is the successful student today? At one level it seems self-evident that it must be the student who passes their exams, achieving certain learning outcomes. And the successful school is one that produces such a student. Such a student must be, as all people must be, enterprising. Good government aims to foster the lives of its subjects; schools are the vehicle for this. If government is about rules of conduct which form an ethics of enterprise, then education is about quality of life. School, as the primary site of education, has a duty not only to identify and evaluate the individual, but also to foster an ethics of enterprise so that the individual student will aspire to and make the "proper" choices in life, will enjoy life and conduct their lives "properly". It is this individual that lies at the heart of neo-liberalism; as government devolves responsibility and governs at a distance, whilst retaining control over evaluation and standards, the enterprising individual is required to mediate, to make sense of, and operationalise government at an individual level. The individual is to aspire to autonomy, personal fulfilment and to find meaning in existence by shaping its life through acts of choice (Rose 1992).

For liberalism to operate, flexible individuals are required to act within it (Burchell 1993). Gordon (1991) explains that where classical liberalism took the individual as its object and worked to protect and enhance the natural market through as little intervention as possible, neo-liberal government needs to work *for* the market by providing the conditions (laws, institutions) necessary for its operation. The individual is taken as an accomplice in this activity. The individual in classical liberalism has a human nature and is required to practice freedom in accordance with this. Governmental activity is rational only to the extent that it can ensure this. Neo-liberalism, on the other hand, seeks to create an individual that is an enterprising competitive entrepreneur and will exercise his/her freedom accordingly. While classical liberalism rationalised government according to principles of free, natural interests of individuals, neo-liberalism does this in relation to constructed, entrepreneurial individuals.

The political shift from classical liberalism to neo-liberalism contains the important shift from "homo economicus" or "economic man" (sic) who naturally behaves out of self-interest and is exercising freedom when allowed to act in this way to "manipulable man" (sic). The latter is created as, and encouraged to be, "perpetually responsive" so that we each make "a continual enterprise of ourselves" (Gordon 1991). Our individual responsiveness and flexibility can be rationalised through the neo-liberal theory of human capital. Fitzsimons and Peters (1994) quote an OECD (1993) report that identifies human-capital development as a crucial issue in New Zealand's economic recovery. Human capital is understood as "the sum of the skills embodied in its people, with the value of that capital dependent on the opportunities people have to use those skills" (Fitzsimons and Marshall 1994: 255). Thus, neo-liberalism organises behaviour with reference to the market with the flexible deregulated labour market providing opportunities for us to utilise our skills. There must also be other opportunities for us to develop our skills, to transform ourselves into skilled and flexible individuals who manage our lives and make choices that we perceive as "free".

An "enterprise form" can be understood as generalisable to *all* forms of conduct – "to the conduct of organisations hitherto seen as being non-economic, to the conduct of government, and to the conduct of individuals themselves – constitutes the essential characteristic of this style of government: the promotion of an enterprise culture" (Burchell 1993: 275). This makes the neo-liberal space a fertile but inherently uncertain and open-ended domain of politico-technical invention with different possible outcomes (Burchell 1993). However as the previous chapter argued, only certain outcomes are possible as good or desirable.

So the "successful student" today is one who is flexible and enterprising, who has obtained certain skills but more importantly knows how to act upon herself to continue improving and

adapting throughout life to achieve particular and flexible "life styles" or identities (Rose 1996). Such life-styles or identities today might include being a skateboarder, an IT professional, or a financial consultant. As Rose (1996) has argued, each identity relates to a desirable "quality of life" such as having a disposable income, job satisfaction, financial security, or an exciting career path. Each individual can adapt readily and cope with "life crises" and the "major events of life" such as marriage, divorce, childrearing, the death of a parent, securing the first mortgage, the mid-life crisis, or redundancy. This culminates in the productive economic power of the individual corresponding to the productive economic power of the capitalist state, such a correspondence termed "busno-power" (Marshall 1994).

Improper Enterprise

The majority of students at Metro are not successful students within accepted definitions. Despite exercising a great deal of choice and flexibility about their learning and school attendance by having scheduled classes such as "cooked breakfasts" and "Star Trek", making decisions on teacher appointment committees, and voted in and out smoking at school at various times over the years, Metro students are not nevertheless recognised as enterprising in the "proper" (neo-liberal) sense of the word. The majority of them are what's today known as "at risk" students. The varied definitions of the "at risk" student include:

> ....failing in school and unsuccessful in making the transition to work and adult life and as a consequence are unlikely to be able to make a full contribution to society. (Centre for Education Research and Innovation (OECD) 1995: 21)

or those:

> …in danger of low educational achievement as a consequence of behavioural problems which may include truancy. (Ministry of Education 1995:3)

ERO's National Education Evaluation Report *Students At Risk: Barriers to Learning* defines the qualities of "at risk" students in the following list:

- Absenteeism;
- The use of drugs;
- Disturbed, disruptive, violent and anti social behaviour; and
- Poor mental and physical health (Education Review Office 1997b: 1)

The OECD report *Our Children At Risk* (1995) also includes references to the "at risk" with terms such as "dropouts", "disadvantaged youth", "deprived youth", "culturally handicapped", "underachievers", "delinquents", "endangered", "emotionally disturbed", "those with "behavioural problems" and "drifters". These are all grouped together as being "young people whose problems are not really pathological in nature or socially aberrant but who have failed to

find their way into the world of work" (Centre for Education Research and Innovation (OECD) 1995: 118).

Certainly Metro students tend to fit many of the classifications cited above. My own analysis of Student Enrolment Profiles in 1998 showed a huge majority of students who can be classed as "at risk".
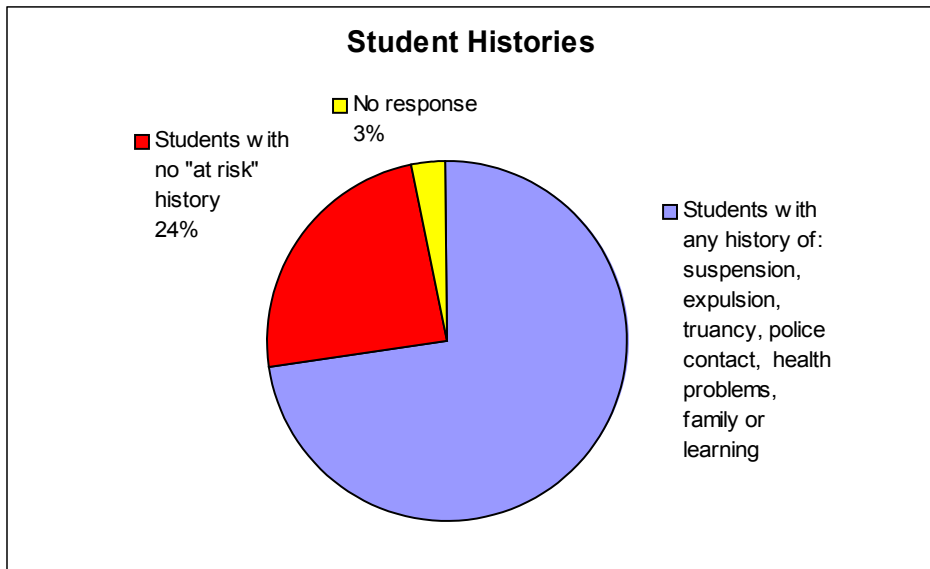
Figure 2: Student Enrolment Histories, Source: Auckland Metropolitan College Student Enrolment Profiles 1998

The data came from self-reporting[24] through Student Enrolment Profiles (with a small percentage from teacher assessment comments added to the Profiles) from 109 Student Profiles out of 127 enrolments during 1998. The "family difficulties" category from the Profile question "Have you had any family difficulties?" was not necessary a reliable one given that a number of students gave the response "none of your business", while others simply said "yes" and still others specified the difficulty as being, for example, "my uncle committed suicide a month ago" or "my mother is the problem". The "learning difficulties" category was similarly unreliable. Some students (or teachers making the assessment) were very specific (e.g. "ADHD, has had Ritolin") while others gave a simple "yes" answer. Of the specific answers, a number were fairly vague (e.g. have trouble with maths" and "can't concentrate") rather than details about specific recognised conditions such as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

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[24] During enrolment, students were asked to complete a Profile form. In some cases, teachers completed forms on behalf of students or where students had left questions blank.

The breakdown of "at risk" characteristics is shown in the next figure with unspecified learning difficulties and health problems included in the category "student with no learning difficulties, no police contact, or truancy history".
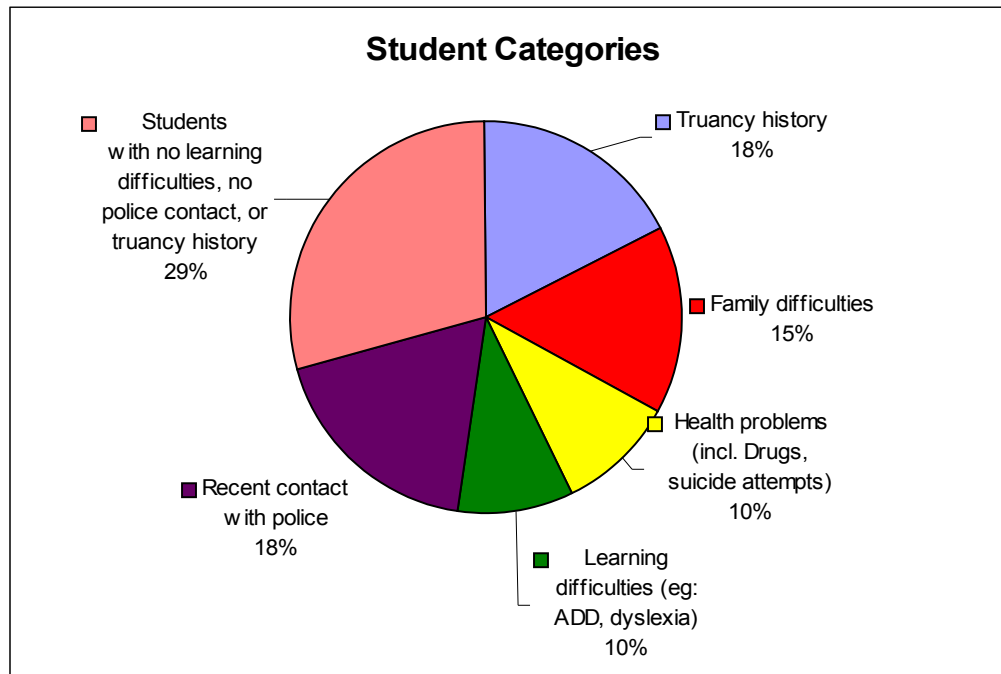
Figure 3: Student Categories, Source: Auckland Metropolitan College Student Enrolment Profiles 1998

ERO have noted the high numbers of "at risk" students at Metro (Education Review Office 1996, February; Education Review Office 1996, November; Education Review Office 1998b; Education Review Office 2000) citing the staff's claim that "at risk" students numbers were as high as 80 per cent. When ERO noted an increase in "at risk" students at Metro in 1996, it was seen as an indicator that neither the school nor the teachers working there were not doing a good enough job. In the confirmed Discretionary Audit later that same year, ERO stated:

> Efforts to provide "alternative" education programmes are unsuccessful in that many students fail to attend classes regularly and are reluctant to participate in the learning programmes offered by the school… The school has become a school of last resort for students and parents. Many of the present students are reluctant attendees and reluctant learners. (Education Review Office 1996, November: 5)

That fact that so many of their students were "at risk" has been something that many staff at the school had been reluctant to acknowledge, with a number of teachers saying that there was no "typical Metro student". They stressed their commitment to the school's policy of enrolling and treating all students equally, just as their inspiration school, Parkway Programme in Philadelphia, had done.

> …if we accept any student, without judging him, if we introduce him to a community of learning, and to a richer life in the world, and preserve our own integrity, how can we fail? (Director's Statement at First Student Drawing, 31 January 1969, Parkway Programme Brochure) (Bremer and von Moschzisker 1971)

Metro staff were determined that no student would be disadvantaged by, or prematurely or unfairly judged with, a label such as "at risk". Metro teachers were well aware of the power, persistence, and iniquity of labelling. The power of labelling is something ERO have made clear in terms of the notion of quality teaching, which necessarily involves rigorous evaluation of students, and the *risk* to students if this is not done.

> One of the major risks a student faces is the principal who does not know what the student is learning, and does not know whether what the student learns is coming anywhere near the intended learning objectives, the predefined quality standards.
>
> The student is really exposed to serious risk where significant variations in the way, or the quality, of his or her learning are not picked up, not analysed, not recorded and not managed by the principal and professional staff. (Aitken 1996a)

Despite the appointment of a new director from outside the school in 1999, and a Ministry of Education monitor working with the new director and Board of Trustees during 1999 and 2000 to improve matters of paperwork, procedures, and management, attendance problems were a major outstanding matter that Metro was still not addressing to the satisfaction of ERO and the Agreement with the Ministry of Education. Many teachers felt they had put in place exhaustive measures to try and improve attendance and, while they insisted they would still keep trying, they felt frustrated and hopeless that ERO didn't seem to understand their difficulties. "*We're just never going to get the attendance tick*" commented teacher "E" while another claimed "*Maybe we can't get these students to attend here to the degree that ERO require. But nobody has been able to get to them attend anywhere else either (Teacher "D", 2001*).

To make claims against the "at risk" category seemed to be the school's best hope of demonstrating that it was trying to perform effectively but was hamstrung by the students' circumstances. The fact that throughout 1998, students were required to fill out Student Profiles on enrolment, highlighted that at least some Metro teachers were making use of the "at risk" category in order to gain more Ministry of Education funding to assist those students, provide better classes and care to the students, and to demonstrate extenuating circumstances to ERO. By 2000, nearly all the staff at Metro were far more open about having high numbers of "at risk" students on their roll. Many of the students were clear that Metro was the only place that would have them.

This is the only school that understands us. If we weren't here, we'd be on the streets. (Student "T", 1998)

My mother got me in here. I got kicked out of the other schools for smoking pot and assaulting a teacher. And I wouldn't do the detentions. (Student "F", 1998)

I was asked to leave [school]. I like the freedom here to choose what classes and when. I tried three other schools but none of them would take me because of the trouble at [school]. I called the teacher a bitch and I wouldn't apologise. They took me to the police and I was in a cell for an hour. (Student "B", 1998)

I was expelled from [school] after two days. I was asked to leave the school before that. Metro was the only one that would take me. (Student "Q", 1998)

The Dangerous Dyslexic[25]

Nothing in particular
and everything in-between
This is what you mean to me
(Colvin 1996)

The notion of the "at risk" student sits alongside other recently emerged categories of "attention-deficit disorder", "hyperactivity" and "dyslexia" (Marshall 1990). The category "at risk" is bracketed around all of these and a huge knowledge and literature has been amassed, reworking and producing an expansive terrain of educational deficiency. Foucault's work is useful here since his investigations into modern power as relying upon differentiation, enclosure, and categorisation showed such practices to be integral to new forms of punishment (or discipline). Such practices were therefore also integral to new forms of knowledge (disciplines) for diagnosis and treatment (Foucault 1977). Foucault's point was that power relations work in circularity through practices that formed new knowledges. He charted the policing of public hygiene through the insertion of psychiatry into criminal law, again in terms of securing of a modality of power in *The Dangerous Individual* (Foucault 1978). In terms of "at risk" students, similar modalities of power operate. Forms of intervention to the risk embodied in students tend to produce categories (e.g. Attention Hyperactivity Deficit Disorder) with their own bodies of knowledge and their own experts (psychiatrists and counsellors) who increasingly work with schools in organisations that laud the "inter-agency" approach to children "at risk". School is the site of diagnosis and early intervention, a "one-stop shop" for intervention.

Risk and its interventions can be understood in terms of a move that started with a concept of "dangerousness" and has moved into a notion of risk (Castel 1991). Again, Foucault's work is

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[25] Dyslexia is a learning disability which can contribute to a student's categorisation as "at risk".

useful in terms of providing a historical illustration of the shift.   Foucault explored the psychiatric category called "monomania" which emerged during the 17th century in order to explain a condition of insanity whose only symptoms were manifest as a monstrous crime without any apparent reason or motive, "a crime which is nothing but insanity, an insanity which is nothing but crime" (Foucault 1978: 132). The resulting paradox – that the legal freedom of a subject is proven by the fact that his act is seen to be necessary, determined; his lack of responsibility proven by the fact that his act is seen to be unnecessary (Foucault 1978: 140) – was partially resolved by a shift in questions of responsibility. As with *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977) and the shift from identifying the perpetrator (who did this?) to considering what exactly the crime was (What is this? Perversity or insanity?), there came a move away from questions of judicial responsibility and the degree of freedom of the individual to questions of the level of danger she or he represented to society. As such the penalty did not have to be punishment but instead a mechanism for the defence of society. The relevant difference then came to be not one between being a legally responsible and therefore guilty subject and, on the other hand, being a legally irresponsible and unpunishable subject. Instead the difference was between absolutely and definitively dangerous subjects and those who might cease to be dangerous provided they receive certain treatment (Foucault 1978).

"At risk" students pose this very threat of temporary or potential dangerousness, of risk. Schools have long had a social control function for both middle, but in particular, working class, children who were seen as both *in danger* and themselves *a danger to* society (Donzelot 1979). The first sense – *in danger* – is captured by the Ministry of Education and ERO definitions of lists of factors related to behavioural and health problems, while the second sense – *a danger to* – is captured by the OECD definition of "at risk" being those who are "unsuccessful in making the transition to work and adult life and…unlikely to be able to make a full contribution to society" (Centre for Education Research and Innovation (OECD) 1995).

Although Placier (1996) argues that the label "at risk" does little that is new compared with "disadvantage" or "culturally deprived" and being "in danger" except to redescribe disadvantaged and under-achieving students in a more neutral-sounding way, Tait (1995) takes another approach. He argues that not only does "at risk" replace earlier forms of policing the young but it also constitutes the young in terms of factors rather than as individuals, permitting greater numbers of people into the field of regulatory strategies (Tait 1995). Tait's analysis of the Finn Report in Australia reveals a similar conception of "at risk" to that of the OECD's – "at risk" as a failure to make the successful transition into adulthood. The at risk youth is now firmly located within the at risk family; a pre-existing dysfunctional family background. This connection to the family and failure to transcend youth status will be discussed further in

chapter six. However the salient point for now is that unlike the term "disadvantage" which requires a fixed point of reference, risk is more comprehensive, "a governmental conclusion based on a statistical correlation" (Tait 1995: 129) thereby allowing greater possibilities for more and earlier intervention upon identification of the factors of risk. Perhaps this is why the OECD makes the claim that:

> At risk is an *optimistic* [my emphasis] concept. It implies preventative action during all the school age years, and...requires flexible school organisation, curriculum and teaching to meet the educational and social needs of children and their families as well as community wishes and business interests. (Centre for Education Research and Innovation (OECD) 1995)

Despite the optimism and prevention implicit in the OECD's definition of "at risk", most of the people who qualify for that category do so because whatever it is that could happen, that they are "at risk" for or "at risk" of, *has already happened*; their low educational achievement, problem behaviour at school, health problems and learning difficulties are why they are in this category.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the power relations involved in diagnosing and treating "at risk" students is that the prospect is opened up of quite paradoxical modes of governmental intervention in relation to the school. With eighteenth century urbanisation and industrialisation producing demographic concerns, questions of population and social danger (epidemics, infant mortality, work-place accidents, labour trends, overcrowding, debauchery), a refinement of risk came with the notion of third party risk and no-fault responsibility, established through a chain of cause and effect (with cause on side of responsibility) (Foucault 1978). Thus there came a move from examining dangerousness in society to examining risk for or to society. Risk could be attached, not to individuals themselves, but to sets of factors. Castel (1991) claims that this is the great innovation in preventative strategies of social administration – that strategies can now dissolve a subject or concrete individual into a combination of factors or risks which reside in population flows and the collating of statistics. It is these risk factors that provide opportunity for government through early intervention strategies and programmes. Sociology of education literature has tended to claim that students' failure is complex and involves factors such as the student's home-life or socio-economic status. Risk intervention strategies involve similar identification of those factors but understand them as predispositions to educational failure to be subject to risk management strategies. Metro itself becomes one of these risk factors because it is seen to be exacerbating the risk its students pose to society by not addressing their "proper" learning needs to be made enterprising and academically successful. Metro has exacerbated its students "at risk" status by failing to become an "enterprising school"

– one that responds to niche market opportunities, takes on some of the elements of private schooling practices, and performs by publicly excelling in nationwide competitions (McWilliam 1999b).

Outsourcing the Experts: Market Strategies

Modern risk interventions impact directly upon Metro's essential characteristic of providing pastoral care to students.   The identification of predispositions as factors of risk mean intervention need no longer take the form of a face-to-face relationship between a carer and cared-for or a professional and client (Castel 1991).   Policy is consistently separated from delivery in all government spheres according to the New Zealand economic, social, and educational reforms. Thus the professional capacity of staff at the school is supplanted by the concentration of force with administrators. ERO's procedures tend to focus on school records rather than actual school practices and upon what schools *say they do* rather than what *they actually do* (Robertson et al. 1997: 53, my emphasis).   With risk being understood as a convergence of risk factors rather than being centred in the individual, anybody can observe and identify those factors and preventative or rehabilitative strategies can be employed from some distance.

ERO's expectations of schools are that they deal successfully with "at risk" students and situations including those "physical and mental health issues that arise in the context of student use of illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco; truancy; frequent changes of school; and the high rate of youth suicide" (Education Review Office 1997b).   These expectations are claimed against both the notion that risk situations constitute "barriers to learning" and the requirements that schools must "*foster student achievement*" and "provide *equality of educational opportunity"* (Education Review Office 1997b, ERO emphasis) and are part of the public accountability of the enterprising school's performance and educational productivity (McWilliam 1999b).

While the school must be responsible for the identification of risk factors in any student and, as far as possible, the school environment should minimise the emergence of further risk and ensure that learning is not impeded by these factors, it can also outsource experts in the field of "at risk" management. In the case of truancy, a factor that often goes hand-in-hand with other factors, the Ministry of Education contract over 100 District Truancy Services and Safer Community Councils that can manage students from a number of different schools.   ERO suggest that if a school has not resolved the problem through intervention by its own staff, it might like to involve visiting truancy officers, *kaumatua*[26], public health nurses, Specialist

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[26] Kaumatua are respected Maori elders who take a leadership role in their community.

Education Services (SES), or the Non-Enrolment Truancy Services (NETS) (Education Review Office 1997b).

The outsourcing also takes on another form in a market context. The swing away from a student population at Metro comprised predominantly of children from the politically left, successful liberal and academic, new age and middle class had begun in the 1980s with a corresponding move towards a population comprised mainly of the disaffected children of the middle class and disenfranchised working class. Being treated as a dump for students was not an uncommon experience for an alternative school. There is evidence overseas that some alternative schools did start out as schools for the working class who were not successful in mainstream schools and offered practical subjects (Everhart 1988). However as we saw in chapter two, this was never Metro's educational vision nor were dropouts or the disaffected its intended student body.

Certainly the prevalent perception of alternative schooling today is as "alternative learning units" or "activity centres", educational entities attached to mainstream schools designed to manage "at risk" students or students with special needs. In this way "alternative" education has become synonymous with education of the "at risk", particularly where truancy is concerned – see *Students At Risk, Truancy, School-Based Alternative Education* (Ministry of Education 1998b). Market competition between schools and a reduced social welfare network has created even more pressure for such entities to be established. In a news article *Judges Deplore Education Ills: Alternative Chances Call for `Lost Tribe'* some Youth Court judges are cited as pushing for alternative education centres where students can learn a mixture of academic and practical skills at their own pace (New Zealand Herald 1996b). Such centres tend to be perceived as second-rate in comparison with their mainstream counterparts.

> The sooner a very small group of malcontents seeks alternative schooling where standards are lower and more to their liking, the better for us all. (Principal of Fraser High School in Hamilton) (McCabe 1998)

The change in Metro's population over the years has had grave implications for the school. It highlights incompatibilities between a school philosophy that embraces all and any students and a philosophy that seeks to provide opportunity for young people to take charge of their education and make responsible choices. It was felt by some long-serving staff that by the mid-1980s school meetings were not working as well since more "at risk" students began to enrol and appeared unable to make use of their democratic rights, often disrupting or failing to attend school meetings (Morgan 1988).

Market conditions fostered from 1989 onwards exacerbated this tendency to attract the "at risk" even further. The New Zealand reforms produced schools as competitive, encouraging them to market themselves to attract the best students, ones who would provide good outcome reporting material for the school. During 1998, 42% of the students enrolled at Metro did so largely by default – they had been expelled or regularly suspended over a period of time from other high schools. Many of the 42% had been "asked to leave" (see Figure 4) suggesting that the illegal practice of "kiwi suspensions"[27] is inadvertently fostered by the market conditions.

Student Enrolments

■ Chose Metro by default - expelled, suspended indefinitely/regularly, or asked to leave previous school
42%

□ Chose Metro out of interest in school, moved into the district, or disliked previous school and wanted a change
58%
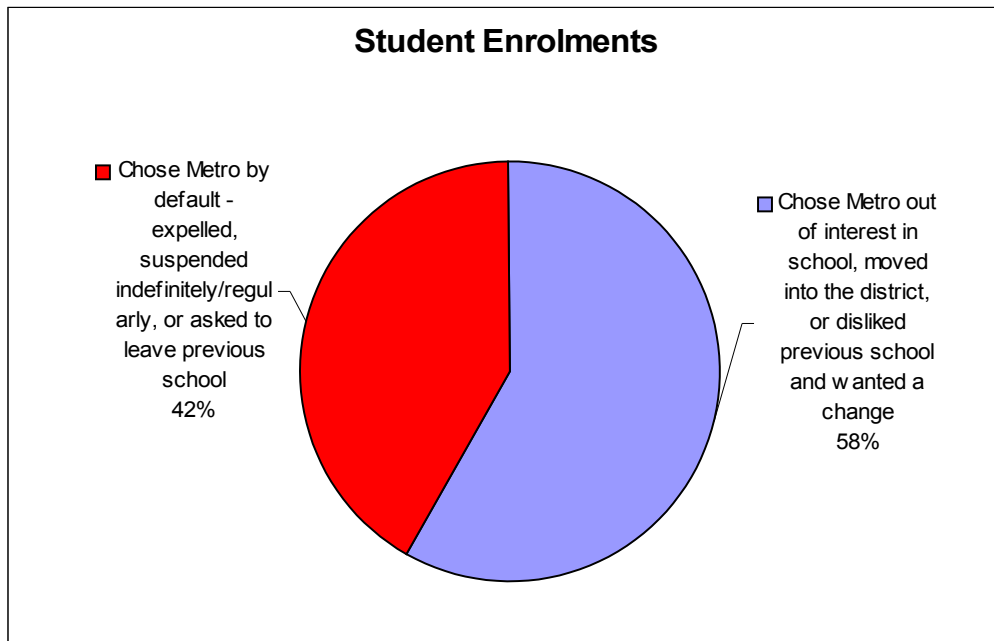
Figure 4: Student Enrolments, Source: Auckland Metropolitan College Student Enrolment Profiles 1998

Outsourcing in the market context, coupled with the capacity for more and more specifications of factors to emerge within the "at risk" matrix mean more and more people are potentially "at risk". Valverde's (1998) study of alcohol and regulation highlights the similarity between risk and the notion of co-dependence in relationships. Valverde argues that the hunt for co-dependence within relationships has become so popular and the notion of co-dependence has so many uses that it means nothing in particular (Valverde 1998). The phrase "at risk" itself is now as ubiquitous as "self-esteem" (Kahne 1996; Ward 1996) or as commonplace and taken for granted as the insertion of stock market results on the nightly six o'clock news – and possibly equally as meaningless when examined for real substance. However as Valverde points out, the notion of co-dependence (like risk) does have real effects in the world and really is used to pathologise behaviour that is otherwise quite socially appropriate or acceptable (Valverde

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[27] Kiwi suspensions are the illegal practice of schools asking parents to "choose" to withdraw their child from school rather than face suspension or expulsion by the Board of Trustees. One news article referred to the practice as the "cultural cleansing" of schools (*New Zealand Herald* 15 July 1996)

1998). Similarly risk factors can be manifest through behaviours that might otherwise be quite "normal" or even enterprising – exercising choice over classes and programmes, expressing individuality visibly, questioning authority (rather than simply accepting it) – just as many Metro students do. As Lubeck and Garrett (1990) point out, with the human condition now conceptualised as being on a continuum in which all that is normative is considered positive, anyone experiencing anything unexpected or unpleasant is potentially at risk.

ERO's reviews of Metro have made it clear that the school is itself not only *in danger* (as a school "at risk" and of "last resort" for students and parents, as ERO claim) but also *a danger to* the rest of society. Paradoxically this produces both the call to close the school and the call to leave it open since the school appears to serve not only its own students but also the students who attend other mainstream schools by soaking up students who would disrupt other schools.

Little wonder then, that when the Ministry of Education canvassed 71 schools across Auckland about a possible closure of Metro, of the 36 responses by letter[28], there was support for the school to stay open.

School Opinions on Possible Metro Closure

For
5%

Neutral
24%

Against
71%
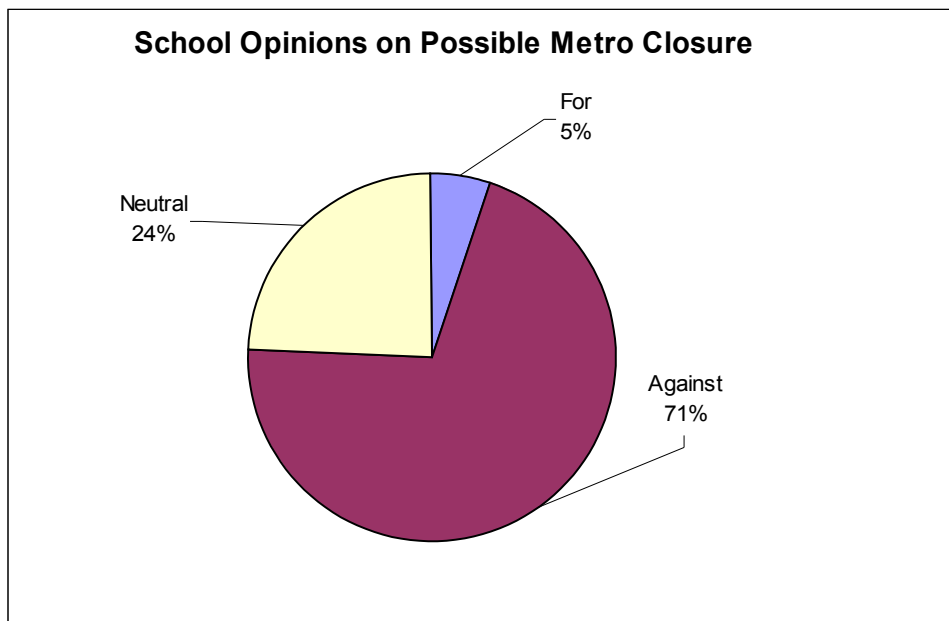
Figure 5: Opinions Canvassed from Local Secondary Schools in 1997 on Possible Closure of Auckland Metropolitan College, Source: Ministry of Education 1997

(Figure based on the 37 responses to a Ministry of Education request to 71 secondary schools received from principals of secondary schools).

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[28] Copies of these letters were obtained from the Ministry of Education by Metro after invoking the Official Information Act. Metro made the letters available to me.

The support from other schools for Metro to remain open may be significant in Metro's "stay of execution" to date. Many letters from other schools were surprisingly frank in their assessment of the situation they faced with market competition and student enrolments, some linking this with a sort of marketised version of public good which they understood Metro to perform. The kind of competition generated between schools results in schools claiming over-subscription so that they can selectively enrol students who are likely to demonstrate the greatest relative progress (Nash and Harker 1998). Apple (Apple 2001) argues that schools' interest in attracting motivated parents and able children is a subtle shift, not as openly discussed as it should be, from student needs to student performance, from what the school does for the student to what the student does for the school. The letters reveal this shift in practice:

> Our education system needs diversity of methods and environments to educate an increasingly diversified populace. Metro has a mission with the down and outs – students who don't make it in the mainstreamed system. The closure of Metro would impact on [our school], as we would be under increasing pressure to enrol more disruptive boys. (Letter from school to Ministry of Education dated 16 May 1997)

> Closing Metro would inevitably result in stretching the resources of conventional schools like Metro in order to accommodate (unsuccessfully) students disaffected with mainstream education. (Letter from school to Ministry of Education dated 3 March 1997)

> Should this alternative cease, and not be replaced, the future of such students returned to mainstreamed education would be most dubious. (Letter from school to Ministry of Education dated 3 March 1997)

> Conventional schools cannot be expected to retain students who are seriously prejudicing the education of their peers, simply because there is no alternative. (Letter from school to Ministry of Education dated 10 March 1997)

> The provision of a worthwhile alternative is a necessary *safety valve* (my emphasis) for those children. (Letter from school to Ministry of Education dated 12 March 1997)

> The Auckland Activity Centre changed its criteria for entry two years ago and no longer provides a place for many of these students…Mainstream secondary schools are not funded or resourced to cope with these students and the closure of an alternative such as Auckland Metropolitan College would be wrong. To say that it is up to schools to cope with violent and disruptive students who threaten the education and safety of others is a nonsense. (Letter from school to Ministry of Education dated 6 March 1997)

> These students can have a detrimental effect on the learning of other students. Being forced to accept more students, some of whom do not want to be here would stretch our resources further, tipping the fine balance between students who choose to enrol at our school and those who have no choice. (Our school) has worked hard and long to turn its reputation around so that it can claw back students in its local area and the closure of Auckland Metropolitan College would negate this hard work. (Letter from school to Ministry of Education dated 24 April 1997)

This difficult situation Metro was in was appreciated by only one school whose principal wrote:

> …I believe one consequence of "self-managing" schools has been to more readily seek to be rid of those students whose actions are clearly counter to a positive marketing profile and to less willingly take such students suspended from other schools…Formerly Metro attracted many creative, intellectual and self-motivated students and was able to offer them a genuinely "alternative" programme. It now must try to cater for students who often have extreme social, behavioural, and emotional needs. It cannot do this and at the same time remain true to its founding ethos. (Letter from school to Ministry of Education dated 12 March 1997)

In a sense Metro has had the potential to emerge as the "expert" in the assessment and treatment of "at risk" students, making the school enterprising in its quest to make its "at risk" students enterprising. It's not clear whether other schools genuinely saw Metro as having a role in educating "at risk" students or whether the schools' primary concern was that they not have those students on their roll. Certainly many staff at Metro expressed their role in terms of a duty to enrol such "at risk" students because nobody else would.

> *Most schools I think are grateful that we are here...when parents come here they are just so relieved that there is somewhere that they can send their student to and that somewhere that will accept them. You see we don't turn anyone away...State schools, because they are getting pressurized, as we are, but they are also, therefore they are tending to be much more particular about who they have there. So a lot more kids are getting, not officially, but told to go somewhere else. (Assistant Director, 1997)*

As we saw in the previous chapter, negative publicity about an ERO review tends to contribute to, if not cause, a falling roll, which in turn contributes to the school having a "bad reputation", making it difficult for the school to recover. As the school loses students, they lose their government funding for those students and the pressure comes on the school to make this up somehow. It is interesting that, in 2001, Metro had five fee-paying students in a total roll of 84 (Education Review Office 1998b), a high proportion in comparison to many other secondary schools. As the Director explained, the school has never sought foreign fee-paying students, and Metro has always had interest and enrolment from overseas students who do not have access to schools such as Metro in their own countries. However the high proportion of foreign fee-paying students at Metro perhaps also reflects more widely the pressure schools are under. Overall, there has been an increase in foreign fee paying students throughout New Zealand schools with 3125 more foreign fee-paying (FFP) students as at March 2001 than there were in 2000, an increase of 49.6% (Ministry of Education 2001).

At the same time that Metro's roll fell over the past five years, there has been a change in ethnic composition of the school. 2001 saw a large increase in the proportion of Maori students in particular with a concurrent drop in the proportion of Pakeha students.
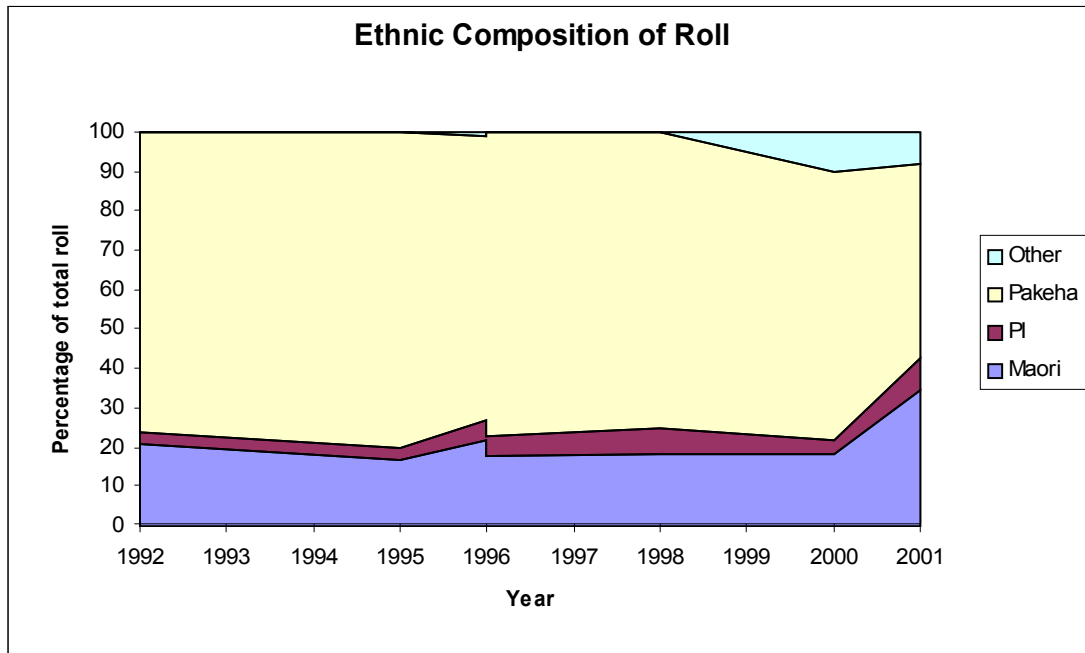
Figure 6: Ethnic Composition of School Roll 1992-2001, Source: ERO Report Statistics

(NB: "PI" is Pacific Islands students)

The change is even more noticeable when Maori/Pacific Islands students are grouped together and compared with Pakeha students. The increase in the latter group may in part be due to the tendency for families and friends of families to enrol in the same school. From 2000-2001 Metro had receptionist who was Maori and a parent of a student at Metro which may have encouraged other Maori students and parents. However the Maori/Pacific Islands student increase at Metro may also be due to tendencies of a "white flight" phenomenon as parents, likely to be those of Metro's former majority student population of the liberal, middle class, "new age" persuasion, choose to enrol their sons and daughters elsewhere.
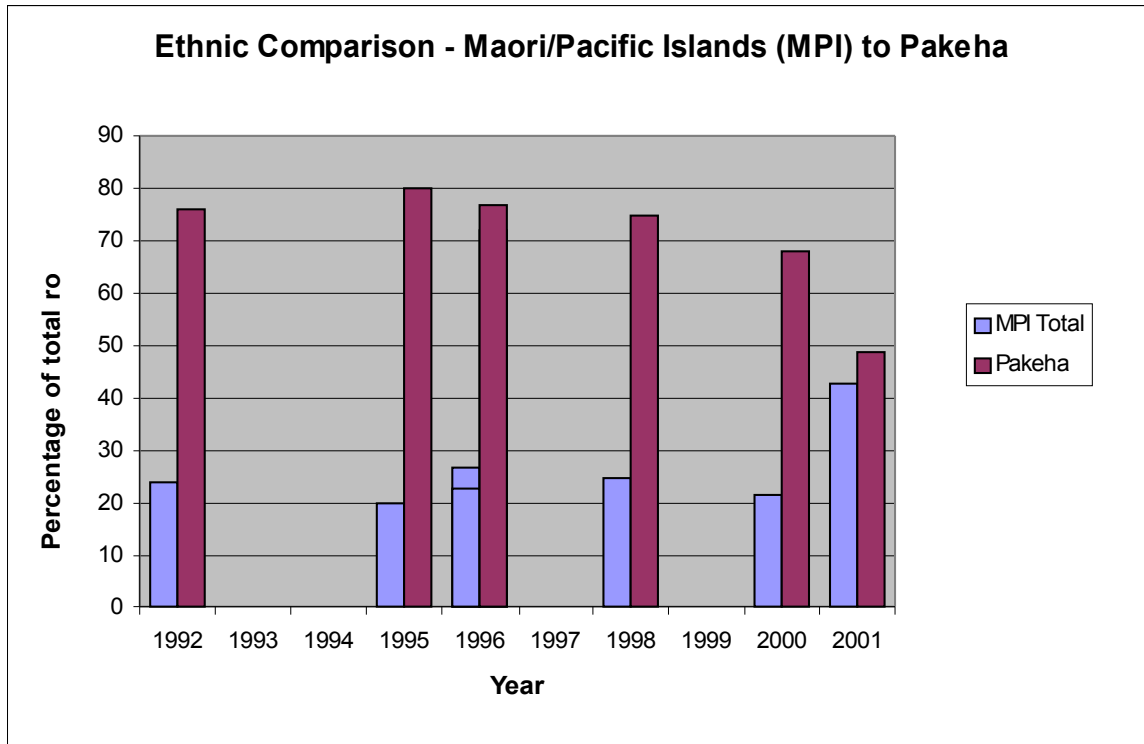
Figure 7: Ethnic Comparison of School Roll 1992-2001, Source: ERO Report Statistics

(NB: Figures were unavailable in some years).

Ironically ERO admits that the market pressures here do not necessarily foster enterprise in schools.

> Consumer pressure in education, as demonstrated by overseas experience, encourages schools to take a conservative direction. Parents are seen to apply conservative criteria to the choice of schools and regard future success as determined by society's more conventional values. If schools in such a climate are to attract students they must supply a product which reflects the wishes of parents. (Education Review Office 1996a: Section Parents Choosing Schools)

Perhaps this was the precursor to ERO's comment that Metro were no longer alternative enough and that "mainstream secondary schools have changed and many have the incorporated some of the features that made Auckland Metropolitan College different" (Education Review Office 1996, October: 3)

From Dangerousness to Risk – and Back Again

ERO's latest review of the school has acknowledged that there should be a school available for "at risk" students.

> The Auckland community does need education facilities for students with the particular needs of those currently attending Auckland Metropolitan College. The Ministry of Education's recent initiatives in the area of alternative education are designed with these

issues in mind. It is clear from discussions with parents that they appreciate the opportunity to enrol their son/daughter in this school after some very unhappy and unsuccessful experiences in other schools. (Education Review Office 2001, July)

However ERO is dubious about whether Metro is the school to take the role of providing education facilities for Auckland's "at risk" students (Education Review Office 2001, July). Certainly Metro was never set up to manage an "at risk" population and has tried to retain its emphasis on freedom and choice at the school despite it appearing to be inappropriate in terms of the acceptable ways of managing "at risk" students today. Although Metro's Individual Education Programmes, Student Profiles, and diagnostic maths and literacy tests attempt to identify and treat the "barriers to learning" experienced by, and manifested through, "at risk" students, ERO regards the school itself as a "barrier to learning".

> They do not adequately identify student needs…the ineffectiveness of the IEP[29] process is resulting in students frequently being mismatched in relation to curriculum levels and learning goals…In light of the fact that the majority of students attending Metro have considerable social-behavioural and learning needs, the failure of the IEP system is a significant barrier to student achievement. (Education Review Office 2001, July)

> Efforts to provide "alternative" education programmes are unsuccessful in that many students fail to attend classes regularly and are reluctant to participate in the learning programmes offered by the school. (Education Review Office 1996, November)

As students fail to attend regularly or demonstrate "reluctance to participate", school discipline at Metro became more of an issue. Staff generally prided themselves on the atmosphere of tolerance and school meetings were regularly used to debate issues or deal with incidents of intolerance, for example, verbal abuse. Despite claims (borne out by my own observations during 1996, 1997 and 1998) of the surprising lack of violence in the school given the histories of the many of the students, during 1999, 2000 and 2001, staff claimed a rising incidence of violence. Nonetheless the school still exhibits a commendable lack of bullying in comparison with other schools. This was noted by the Ministry of Education monitor assigned to Metro who claimed the absence of bullying, "caring towards their colleagues" and "acceptance of difference" was a feature of the school (Maureen Wilson 2001: 3).

Although Metro's atmosphere is friendly and caring, an analysis of a comparison between school meeting minutes ten years apart does show a dramatic increase in the attention given over to disciplinary issues more typical of an "at risk" or disaffected student population. There is a corresponding drop in attention for other important school issues – staff, course and trips planning, visitors, and school philosophy, in particular. While the increased focus on discipline has been taken by some staff (see interviews) to be the result of a greater proportion of "at risk"

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[29] Individual Education Programmes (IEP)

students being enrolled and therefore a greater need for discipline, it can also be understood as being produced through the late 1980s and 1990s focus on managerial solutions in education, particularly those based around classroom management.

Auckland Metropolitan College School Meeting Minutes Coded by Issue
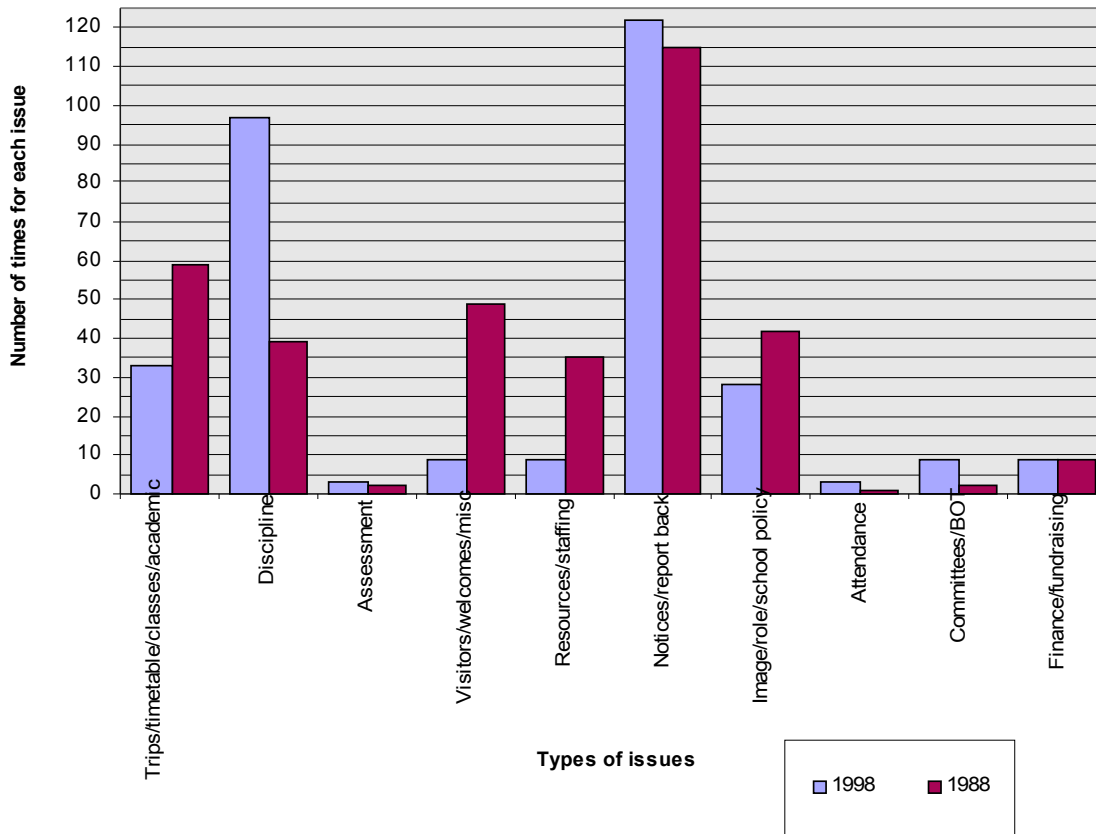
Figure 8: School Meeting Issues Comparison, Source: Auckland Metropolitan College Meeting Minutes 1988 and 1998

NB: Number of school meetings overall for 1998 (taken up until and including 26 October): 71 (60 standard, 11 special disciplinary). Number of school meetings overall for 1988: 90 (67 standard, 11 special disciplinary, and 12 special policy/resources). Each minute was coded into only one area and on the basis of discussion. Where no discussion occurred or was necessary, the minute was coded as a notice or report-back.

With risk factors abounding at Metro in the guise of their students and the school itself being "at risk", the needs of "at risk" students are generally assessed in terms of what control is needed over them in order to address their needs. Certainly expecting such students to be able to exercise "proper" choices is out of the question; once in the "at risk" category, neither student nor school is accorded, or may exercise, the flexibility that successful enterprising people or organisations may or do.

The category "at risk" constitutes the students of Metro as irrational given that the discursive framework of the enterprising individual, New Zealand economic recovery, and school effectiveness bolstered by consumer choice posits us as autonomous choosers. As Marshall (1994) argues, the autonomous chooser must be perpetually responsive to the market and is not just autonomous in the sense of having a duty to exercise autonomy, but is necessarily continuously exercising a faculty of choice on commodities (Marshall 1994). The rational utility maximiser and "manipulable man" (Gordon 1991) of current education and society is rational to the extent of exercising this faculty of choice properly. Metro students, parents, and teachers do not appear to do this.

The intervention into risk and treatment of "at risk" students at Metro made their learning needs the focus of debate and further research. In 2000 the Ministry of Education commissioned a report on Metro students' learning needs. The report identified both the "at risk factors" and "protective factors" which, in combination, could mediate or reduce risk (Tennant 2001) for the students. Tennant argued that the rationale for the assessment of risk factors and standardised maths and literacy tests undertaken by Metro teachers seemed unclear – was it for diagnostic purposes? To judge progress? To provide comparisons with national standards? The use of diagnostic tests reflects the shift teachers have made over the past five years in order, at least in part, to mediate concerns raised by ERO about the validity of the school. Tennant's report acknowledges the pressure the school is under and claims that the "introduction of standardised and added-value testing at the school seems to have been the result of compliance for accountability" (Tennant 2001: 18) but has unfortunately resulted in "incoherence and incompatibility" (Tennant 2001: 23). The ERO-identified issues of compliance which Metro are hastening to meet may also reflect a wider confusion among schools about recording the adding of value to their students, something which may be "well nigh impossible" for schools to demonstrate, in ERO's narrow definition and given their somewhat cursory school visits (Nash and Harker 1998).

Tennant's report also clearly identifies two aspects of Metro's vision and policy – the open enrolment policy and the acceptance of non-conformist, particularly "at risk" students – as being incompatible (Tennant 2001). She argues that the learning needs of those who are academically capable and have chosen the school specifically for its flexibility and democratic approach and the learning needs of those who have chosen the school as a "last chance" are entirely different. Tennant recommends the school introduce a graduated process for the latter category of students so that they "earn the right to flexibility and choice" (Tennant 2001: 24).

The loss of a right to flexibility and choice conflicts with a key Metro idea of giving students a wide and sometimes unusual curriculum choice. If "at risk" students are seen to require more discipline because they are not able to rationally or properly exercise choice, a greater degree and skill of classroom management must be mobilised to deal with the problem. The loss of choice has also come about through pressure on Metro to document what they do which tends to overwhelm spontaneity, another key ingredient in what has in the past made the school alternative. In practical terms, the greater the range of subjects, the greater the required documentation and so the breadth and width of Metro's curriculum has in fact shrunk over the past five years in areas where they were once considered leaders. With the 1989 introduction of formal legal requirement to follow the National Curriculum (see Education Act 1989) and pressure from many parents and students to provide opportunity to gain national qualifications, Metro now fails to serve its original student population. Those students in turn echo ERO's claim that Metro is not alternative enough anymore.

This is somewhat ironic considering Metro's progressive roots where a link between alternative schools and deviant or poor children was forged with the work of Maria Montessori who, with her schools in the Italian slums, demonstrated that any child, no matter how deprived, could learn well with enough love and flexibility. However the tension within the alternative schooling movement continues to be one between being seen as a place for the privileged middle classes to do as they please or being seen as a place for working class and/or students with behavioural or learning difficulties, who cannot cope with the traditional schooling system, to be disciplined (diagnosed, treated, made enterprising).

Within this tension lies another one, particularly relevant to the traditional child-centred strand of alternative education that is also evident at Metro – that social class relations must be challenged in order for an alternative school to be truly radical.

> What is incontestable is that any form of upbringing that puts the stress on leaving children alone to develop, by chance, in reaction to the stimuli of their particular environment must be disastrous in terms of radical objectives so long as environments are different, sometimes disparate and always anti-educational. A world without the sort of effort currently being made by schools – Emile's world, a world of Summerhills or a world without schools – would in practice be a world in which the individual's background determines his future, and, since we start with varying backgrounds, a world in which difference, envy and inequality are perpetuated. (Barrow 1978: 179)

The tension between intervention (to certain ends) and a child-centred notion of letting the child develop in their own way at their own pace is important in relation to the potential relocation of "at risk" students to activity centres. While "at risk" students may appreciate the more

validating (than their mainstream school) experiences at Metro, they are seen to be missing out on an education there that might challenge their likely unsuccessful, unenterprising social destinations. Alternative arrangements such as Metro's that do not provide recognised learning outcomes appear to be inviting students to "choose" to consign themselves to the very social positions which, according to the OECD (1995), produce "at risk" people in the first place – low-paid, low-security jobs and poverty, just as vocational educational for the "at risk" can be seen to be doing. Practices may emerge which "…assign different social destinies to individuals in line with their varying capacity to live up to the requirements of competitiveness and profitability" (Castel 1991: 294). This was precisely Dewey's concern:

> The problem is not of making the schools an adjunct to manufacture and commerce, but of utilising the factors of industry to make school life more active, more full of immediate meaning, more connected with out-of-school experience…there is danger that vocational education will be interpreted in theory and practice as trade education: as a means of securing technical efficiency in specialised future pursuits... Education would then become an instrument of perpetuating unchanged the existing industrial order of society, instead of operating as a means of its transformation. (Dewey 1916: 316)

However the OECD suggest that school may provide a person's best or even only chance of entering society at an appropriate level of work or status:

> …first placement upon entering labour market can determine vocational path and social status; rarely is there a second or third chance, especially for those starting with a low level of qualifications. (Centre for Education Research and Innovation (OECD) 1995: 113)

This is in contradiction with SkillNZ[30] and the enterprising culture's emphasis on lifelong learning and the continual improvement of ourselves.

There is not only a risk to society or even to the school but also, and perhaps more pertinently, to the students themselves since they are open to, or at risk of, being labelled, isolated from other students, drugged (for example, with Ritalin in the case of hyperactivity), treated, and sent away from their families. Being an "at risk" student presents very real physical, emotional, and psychological dangers in terms of the treatments at the same time as the treatments appear to be "good" for some students, parents, or society generally.

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[30] Skill New Zealand is a Crown agency set up to purchase training on behalf of the Government for stakeholder groups such as industry and educators.

Out of Place, Out of Time

Treating the "at risk" student is to lead to a healthier society and a more enterprising (better, proper) culture in society. The OECD states that *schools* are at risk of low morale and poor image when they have large numbers of "at risk" students (Centre for Education Research and Innovation (OECD) 1995: 96). This suggests that risk is a sort of a disease, spreading through the social body. Foucault's work on bio-power which showed how public hygiene and healthy homes corresponded to healthy population more generally, and how micro practices of the bedroom correspond to wider social ideas about sexuality, is particularly relevant here as it provides an account of the healthy society which has been extended into enterprise culture. This culture has been presented specifically as the cure for the "culture of dependency" (New Zealand Treasury 1984; New Zealand Treasury 1987) which had apparently gripped New Zealand in the form of welfarism (welfare having been captured and used by those who did not really need it, and also become, more than a safety net, a way of life) and caused a poor economic showing. Education seemed a "natural" place to promote the instilling of enterprise through both meanings of enterprise – firstly in terms of partnerships between businesses or industry enterprises and schools, and secondly in terms of a attitudinal change required by the individual student towards a business-oriented outlook (Vaughan 1995).

The metaphor of the healthy (social) body is continued by NZQA with their brochure on acquiring useful and enterprising skills which produce in the individual:

> [a] Sharp Mind because it's clearly focused on the standards you need to achieve...Better Grasp of the skills and qualifications you'll need to make your career happen...Huge Heart because your skills and knowledge will be nationally recognised, encouraging you to keep on learning...Hands On practical experience could count towards a national qualification...Powerful Feet as your learning takes you into local businesses for on-site experience. (NZQA and Skill New Zealand, undated brochure)

Similarly in the case of under-performing or failing schools, schools which lacked enterprise, treatment is necessary. School effectiveness research is used to support the view that schools can make a difference to the achievement of students regardless of student SES or ethnicity. The characteristics of the effective school, identified by researchers and made available to schools for the purposes of school improvement, assume schools with intakes of students that are similar in terms of SES, previous school achievement, and ethnicity could differ in the extent to which they assisted and fostered student achievement (Tomlinson 1998). Tomlinson (1998) claims this research, though originally intended to help schools help students, was hijacked in the 1990s and used to blame secondary schools which appeared to perform badly in examination league tables. The factors which identified the effective school were reversed to

identify the failing school, a simplistic and dangerous practice given that school effectiveness research was carried out in the 1980s and cannot be crudely applied to the 1990s situation which involves market forces that move the more desirable students out of particular schools and concentrate them into others, as well as involving increases in poverty and unemployment (Tomlinson 1998).

Hamilton (1998) suggests that school effectiveness theory is in fact a pathological view of education, "a plague on all our houses", where teachers are infected, schools contaminated, classroom practices have become degenerative and dysfunctional (Hamilton 1998: 14). He claims that the threat of the failing school is to the health of the economic order. Failing schools are targeted and require therapy via "organ transplants" (new principals or BOTs), "regular implants of appraisal-administered HRT (Human Resource Technology)" and "shock therapy" by outside agencies (Hamilton 1998: 14). The school effectiveness model is one of prototypes or technical, managerial solutions, polarising schools into "good" and "bad" schools as well as good and bad students.

Youth can be understood as an artefact of history (Kelly 2001) insofar as childhood is a constructed category (Aries 1962; Schnell 1979). As an artefact of expertise, youth is principally about becoming an adult, a citizen, independent, mature, and responsible (Kelly 2001). The "bad", unenterprising, "at risk" Metro students are understood by teachers to be going through a phase during which they need "time out" from the normal life to later reintegrate back into the mainstream on their way to becoming mature adults. For the "at risk" students at Metro, their general "becoming" or transition state of youth is magnified by their status as deviant or in need of treatment.

> *I know people say oh well it's all very well for you, you've only got small classes and you are only dealing with small numbers but I maintain that the particular students we've got desperately need that. They need a lot of individual attention and if they don't get it here now the repercussions later in many cases will be diabolical because they are not going to be able to be functioning members of society. That's where we fall foul of ERO. How can we show that we've added value to a certain student? They say oh look, so and so hasn't done any classes for a week. But I know that that person's attitude to education has changed. I know that they are actually on the way to becoming in a learning mode...I just think that because it is extremely difficult to quantify, we are perceived as not doing it. But we know we are and the students know we are. And the parents know we are. (Teacher "D", 1997)*

In keeping with notions of the carnivalesque as upending hierarchies of status, space and time (Bakhtin 1968) which will be explored further in chapter seven, Metro students can be understood as "out of place", as making a geographical transgression through their lack of

rooted-ness. The students change schools frequently; many have attended three or four high schools before they get to Metro and others move back and forth between Metro and other schools in an attempt to find an environment they (and their parents) are comfortable with. Many have a history of truancy (see figures and ERO reports) both at Metro and other schools they have attended and one of the aspects of truancy most concerning to government officials is that transient parents, common in this situation, make the students difficult to track.

ERO understands transience (students moving between districts and schools) to be a barrier to learning in that frequent changes of school and interruptions to attendance that often results from this can create learning difficulties (Education Review Office 1997b). ERO identified school transience as having a negative impact on the continuity of student learning and achievement at Metro, noting that from 130 enrolments during 2000, 88 students had left during the year (Education Review Office 1996, November). ERO accepted that this placed a great deal of stress on teachers' ability to provide continuous and coordinated learning programmes. However ERO also found, perhaps not surprisingly, that the learning programmes did not adequately reflect the transient nature of the school population (Education Review Office 2001, July). In their *Students At Risk: Barriers to Learning* NEER, ERO noted, "in almost all cases the transient nature of their school attendance and its causes are outside the control of both the students and the school they attend" (Education Review Office 1997b).

Paradoxically, transience is both a problematic category of person and a laudable aim in terms of the flexible and enterprising worker. Cresswell (1996) argues that the status of "no fixed abode" can be a highly suspicious characteristic since people are expected to go to work and pay taxes according to their location; the entire state bureaucracy depends upon this and thus mobility threatens society's order. Certainly Metro and Metro's students can be compared with gypsies, whose transience and way of life has been simultaneously idealised and romanticised (Cresswell 1996). Gypsies have been perceived as in touch with nature, mysterious, wearers of bright clothing, and sexually desirable (Cresswell 1996). Similarly Metro has been associated with "new age" community groups and their more "traditional" alternative students, who are "in touch" with "human education" and the ecology movement. The weird and wonderful clothing, hairstyles, and body piercings worn by Metro's students can be compared with the gypsies' "difference" from the mainstream in dress sense. The gypsies' transience, associated with dirtiness (Cresswell 1996), is echoed to some extent by the "dirtiness" of Metro students who attend irregularly, are difficult to track down or pin down in terms of any commitment to regular attendance, have associations with sexual promiscuity through teen pregnancy, may appear troublesome, and have substance addictions.

Difference and protest has often been associated with dirt. Cresswell's (1996) studies of the hippy convoys to Stonehenge during the early 1990s and of taggers and graffiti artists link difference to moral panics to perceptions of dirt. Cresswell's study of the 1970s Greenham Common Women's Camp showed up news media representations of the women as deviant through the use of metaphors of dirt, smell, disease, and hysteria used to describe the difficult muddy and cold conditions of the camp faced by the women. The very notion of womanhood, of women as the epitome of cleanliness, produced through such conditions as the advertising of perfume and soap, was transgressed by the Greenham women who at first may have struggled, but later gave up (and even enjoyed not) being entirely clean or wearing feminine clothes – which were entirely unsuitable to the conditions anyway (Cresswell 1996). Interestingly the outside front of Metro was repainted late in 1998 and one of the first things to be "cleaned up" at Metro by the new director in 1999 was graffiti and tagging inside the school buildings. In 2000, eight residents of the street which houses Metro wrote to the school complaining that Metro students' graffiti, littering, and smoking left the street looking like "a war zone" and "a third world country" (Residents of Ngauruhoe Street 2000).

Similarly the difference of another alternative school deemed failing by the school inspectors was expressed in terms of dirt and foulness. Though Summerhill School in England has no association with school transience (in fact it is a boarding school), there is a sense of its community being removed from, and different from, the mainstream – "most of the time we keep ourselves pretty much to ourselves" (Readhead 1998). Claims of dirtiness, concerns with health and safety, and descriptions of students as "foul mouthed" were included in OfSTED's last review of the school (Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) 1999). A well-known documentary about Summerhill focussed on the nudity of some students in the swimming pool, mud-streaked faces of students at play, students playing with sticks and bush knives (Getzels and Gordon 1992). The Director of Summerhill decried the documentary as inaccurate and complete a betrayal of trust (Readhead 1998). The images of nudity, mud, and children running wild left by the film conjure up visions of primitive and uncivilised savages. These are apparently people who pose a risk to clean, enterprising, modern society.

Despite the association of transience with dirt, difference, and the primitive, it is becoming more common for a certain class of young (usually single) professional people to have a transient lifestyle. These highly-qualified young people have no fixed abode, and travel the world, taking on short-term contract work in different countries, working for Western trans-national corporations who themselves have "no fixed abode" save a head office in a location of convenience. However, unlike well paid highly educated young professionals who could make any place their own place, Metro students appear to have rejected all places as their place or

have no place that will accept them. Therefore, while the professionals are exciting and valuable (to society), Metro students are a drain on resources. In the case of the young professionals and trans-national corporations, no bad reputation results from this lifestyle; on the contrary, corporation-building, tax avoidance, individual flexibility, and continual improvement and movement is the epitome of enterprise and the enterprising individual. Metro, on the other hand, cannot possibly be a leader in school innovation or even an expert in the treatment of the "at risk" under their circumstances of transience and difference.

The consequences of the ethically acceptable transience and profit-making of young professionals and trans-national corporations for an economy the size of New Zealand's results in a semi-hysterical perception of "brain drain" in New Zealand (see news articles such as "Bold Incentives to Halt Brain Drain (Read 2001) and "Brain Drain Here to Stay" (Ansley 2001)) as we apparently "lose" highly skilled workers to other countries who pay more for the same job or who offer the specialised positions for which the workers are qualified. As a consequence there is a renewed interest in the relationship between education and the economy which is now conceptualised as the prized "knowledge economy". The "knowledge economy," in which the relationship between education and culture, particularly in terms of the university and business, is critical, and is one in which it becomes impossible to pursue the question of (the accumulation) of capital separately from the question of (the accumulation of) knowledge (Peters 2001).

In September 2001, at a public meeting held to discuss Metro's future or possible closure, several students raised the question of enrolment at other schools if Metro closed. The Ministry of Education representative assured students present that those under the school-leaving age would be assisted to find places in other schools, activity centres, or correspondence school, or assisted to fine places in appropriate work-training schemes. What, enquired one student, would happen to students over the school-leaving age? Were they not also entitled to pursue an education at the facility of their choice? Given that exponential growth in knowledge and the demand for continuous learning (Jarvis 2001) are seen to be the key ingredients for international competitive advantage (Peters 2001), Metro looks like a repository of students not only excluded from other local schools, but also excluded from the future.

Welcome to Our Heterotopia

If Metro students don't have a recognised place to be, what kind of place is their school? The idea of *heterotopia* may be a useful way to analyse Metro. Foucault defined heterotopia in relation to utopias which he claimed were sites with no real place but with a general relation of

direct or inverted analogy with real spaces in society; utopias are society in its perfect form. Heterotopias, on the other hand, were seen as places that do exist and are formed in the founding of society. Heterotopias are counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which other real sites are simultaneously represented. Therefore, although they may be outside other places, it is possible to locate them in (a) reality (Foucault 1998).

Foucault borrowed the term heterotopia from the history of medicine. The term denoted dispersals or dislocations of tissue occurring primarily in the embryonic phase. A heterotopia is tissue which develops at some other place to what is intended; the tissue is not necessarily diseased but simply displaced, not inherently pathological but a variety of what is normal. The term has been revised with new genetic research and the practice of mapping the functionality of body parts in their correct place is now outmoded (Ritter and Knaller-Vlay 1998). Nonetheless, heterotopia is a term which is still used to refer to a variation of the normal and it retains an implication of something that is profoundly *disturbing*.

Rather than seeing Metro as a school at the edge, we can see it as a space where margins are blurred. Though many alternative schools were conceived in terms of utopian ideals, Metro's practices of parody and critique of the mainstream, traditional and formal, lends itself to heterotopia as a "third space" (Lasch 1995) where one can be known in an informal way, where what are known as extra-curricular activities in other schools often form the mainstay of popular curriculum choices amongst Metro students, and where democracy is nurtured through a serious commitment to freedom as important for human existence.

In respect of the fostering of democracy and freedom, Metro is not peripheral but central to the principles of education though it sits at the margins in terms of being a heterotopia of deviation. Where heterotopias were formerly sites for individuals in crisis or at a point of change in society (such as the elderly, the adolescent, the pregnant woman), they are largely being replaced by heterotopias of deviance where deviant individuals can be placed or housed (Foucault 1998). Similar to its medical background in the body, heterotopias of deviance with, in this case, at-risk students, unprofessional teachers, and parents who have exercised their choices poorly, constitute an out-of-place, carnivalesque and grotesque disturbance of the social body.

Perhaps ERO and other schools who support Metro staying open, even if for less than altruistic reasons or commitment to Metro values, see Metro as a *liminal* space, given its particular place at the margins of a market-led society and its attention to young people negotiating a transition into adulthood through schooling.

Of course while Metro itself can be understood as liminal, it also exists within an even greater liminal space. The market is the epitome of local identity and the unsettling of that identity by the trade and traffic of goods from elsewhere (Hetherington 1997). At the marketplace is a commingling of categories usually kept separate and opposed – inside and outside, centre and periphery, stranger and local, commerce and festivity, high and low (White 1986). The market is associated not only with trade and commerce but with fairs and festival, entertainment and ritual performance, where existing morals and norms are mocked and momentarily overturned – just like a carnival (this is explored in chapter seven). It is ironic that ERO's recommendation that Metro be closed in fact appears to limit the market. As many parents of Metro students have claimed, the choice to enrol at Metro is under threat of being removed. What other choice will the parents of students who may not be wanted elsewhere, or who may not want to attend elsewhere, actually be able to make?

Concluding Comments

Against the market backdrop, Metro and ERO can be understood to be competing over humanistic intervention and economic intervention, two concerns within "at risk" discourses which frame enterprise as the epitome of the successful transition from youth to adulthood. (Withers and Batten in Kelly 2001). Metro students appear unsuccessful in this transition to adulthood and proper citizenship. Metro teachers have felt in two minds over using the "at risk" category to describe many of their students. Using the "at risk" category has been a way to make claims about their student population and strategise learning approaches for those students. It has also been an acknowledgement of an apparent market placement of the school as a "school of last resort" (Education Review Office 1996, November). ERO's criticisms of the school have rewritten the latter in school effectiveness terms that blame the school and teachers for poor performance. The school fails to (re)make the choices of the students as rational, instead allowing the students to "opt to exercise their prerogative by deciding not to attend or study at all" (Education Review Office 1996, November: 3), a choice which is not proper or rational in enterprising, market terms.

As many of the letters from other schools local to Metro reported, schools are not set up to deal with "at risk" students. Metro serves as a safety release valve for those schools who can each send students to Metro via recommendations following suspensions or expulsions or at the individual student's wishes. Schools, as a group, may also send students to Metro by default through a removal of the opportunity for a student to attend the mainstream school, perhaps out

of concern for other students who will lose out on scarce resources, or perhaps out of concern that the school's status and market standing may suffer through taking on "at risk" students. Either way, market forces and Metro's egalitarian philosophy combine so that "at risk" students become concentrated in the school. Such a concentration of "at risk" students into Metro is not recognised by ERO as being a market outcome. Instead ERO measures Metro as they would any school and find attendance figures, learning outcomes, and class planning poor in comparison with those of other schools.

Schools are ostensibly set up to provide equal learning opportunities and outcomes for all to join the "knowledge economy". However the lack of recognition of Metro's conundrum in attempting to serve both the "at risk" students that other schools do not want and unconventional, self-motivated, liberal-arts students makes Metro's place in a neo-liberal education system at best heterotopic. Metro is forced to exist in a market that fails to resolve the paradox of consumer choice and competition between schools.

Chapter Six

HEARTS AND HEADS: TEACHERS MANAGING CARE

Overview

Within ERO's managerial framework, not only is Metro inevitably produced as the failing school but teachers at Metro are inevitably produced as bad or unprofessional teachers. The *professional* teacher is critical to the success of effective schools. Professionalism is a key way that teachers can themselves be governed. A discourse of teacher professionalism is now redefined away from expert authority and judgment within the profession and into managerial terms. Notions of caring in teaching are still important to professionalism but can now be delineated in terms of competencies and measured in terms of student learning outcomes. Care has always been a vital part of Metro's philosophy and practices and this has been noted in many of ERO's reviews of the school and by the Ministry of Education Monitor. However Metro teachers' model of caring, which is tied in with a particular psychic-reward-based professionalism, does not fit with the newer definitions of care and professionalism within a managerial framework. The notion of psychic reward in teaching (for example, teaching out of a sense of caring for children) is still a strong motivator in both teacher education and at Metro, possibly contradicting the government's model of teachers as self-interested and requiring accountability checks through audit. However the managerial model of measuring what teachers have *done to* students to advance students' learning and produce certain outcomes is unworkable at Metro; teachers there have instead *done things with* students and focussed on process over outcome.

Will, Skill, and Capacity

When ERO first recommended Metro be closed, in their February 1996 review, ERO listed numerous managerial and teaching deficiencies in their report and asserted that it was "not confident that the present (Metro) board, managers and staff have the will or the capacity to bring about the required change" (October 1996:3). That the *will* and *capacity* of staff was questioned in this way pointed to a significant aspect of governmental intervention into teaching, mobilised through professionalism-as-competencies (of aptitude, capacity, and behaviours).

As governmental techniques have addressed themselves to the minute particulars of everyday life, our capacities, skills, and aptitudes are to be fostered in order to create a healthy self-managing population. For teachers, there is the additional responsibility that they must explicitly create the healthy population of self-managing, good citizens. The general policy objectives of "flexibility" and "enterprise" associated with New Zealand's economic recovery manifest themselves educationally through a "training culture" (ETSA and NZQA 1994:3) and these objectives are to be pursued by each individual so that certain techniques take hold at the level of identity, requiring that we ourselves become the enterprise in the "culture of enterprise" (Vaughan 1995). Such a training culture lends itself to professional development programmes and corporate culture. The individual's participation is critical to the continual betterment of ourselves through self-knowledge, self-management, and self-monitoring and is secured to our liberation (from repression and authority). Thus *will* and *capacity* have become crucial in the exercise of (productive) power in schooling and manifest through convergence of three major aspects of ERO evaluation – "self-management, self-review, and self-improvement" (Austin, Parata-Blane and Edwards 1997).

The governmental relation of intervention in schooling can be located within a discourse of professionalism, encompassing an interplay of both care and management discourses. Such a discourse of professionalism sustains the claim that not only are Metro teachers doing a poor job, but they themselves, as a collection of capacities, as results of techniques upon the self-maximising individual, are faulty. The inadequacy inevitably falls upon the teachers rather than the schooling system or the managerial framework within which a school and its teachers are evaluated. That Metro staff are seen as having neither will nor capacity to do these things is a perhaps a twist on the what Popkewitz calls the "redemptive project of education" where the teacher had to save the child in order to save society (and themselves) (Popkewitz 1997). Now Metro teachers find that, along with their school, they themselves require saving. However current discourses of teacher professionalism produce them as irredeemable.

In ERO's managerial model, "quality" or professional teachers have become a sought-after commodity. Educational outcomes are to occur through teacher performance which is considered to be strongly linked to quality in education. According to Chief Review Officer, Judith Aitken, teacher performance is the critical factor in student achievement (Education Review Office 1998c). Consequently, much of ERO's criticism of schools and ineffective schooling practices have been directed at teachers[31].

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[31] See also "Teachers hindering learning: reviewers" (Young in *New Zealand Herald 21 December 1998*)

> It is pretty depressing to observe how banal is much that is taught, how low are many schools' expectations of what will move, excite, unsettle and inspire youngsters…we are generally a public-spirited people actively interested in public affairs and international events – but it is far from the norm amongst the professionals who work in our schools.
>
> And that is all the more worrying since this is the one profession that is officially dedicated to enrichment of the mind, to formal education, to supplying the young with the keys to knowledge, the maps to understanding and a continuing ability to think for oneself. (Aitken, former CRO of ERO, 2000)

Together with ERO's Panoptican-like operation through administrative surveillance and the "low trust model of accountability" (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997), ERO's vision of school effectiveness in terms of meeting prescribed objectives for students who are the "outputs" makes good teaching a technical activity. With such notions of efficiency and effectiveness tied to notions of measurable quality in teaching based on outputs (such as student achievement), then a double-move is possible. The first is toward standardising the activity of teaching, the second to make teaching *competence* a question of teacher *competencies* which teacher must be able to perform (Anne Phelan 1997). The Ministry of Education are following other countries (Britain and parts of Australia) in a commitment to developing teaching competencies and, within such a model of teacher professionalism, it becomes difficult to critique the idea of competencies. Who can argue with the idea of quality in education, with having good teachers, with high expectations for student outcomes and achievement?

As the focus shifts onto teachers, the Ministry of Education has committed to producing them through teacher education programmes, professional development courses, and the establishment of professional standards and competencies (Ministry of Education 1997). The Ministry of Education have acknowledged some difficulties inherent in defining these competencies:

> Defining teacher quality is difficult and contentious, as there are many dimensions to the concept. Teaching is a dynamic activity and one in which performance is affected by the characteristics and behaviours of both teacher and students, as well as the environment in which learning occurs. An effective and supportive school management structure facilitates high quality teaching. (Ministry of Education 1997: 11)

However since a management model privileges an assumption that one right answer can be known through a management of resources leading to measurable prescribed outcomes, it becomes a question of designing a managerial structure to control the "dimensions" and "environment" referred to by the Ministry of Education. Thus in addition to promoting the

caring, selfless teacher through TeachNZ[32] promotions, the Ministry of Education strategy for maintaining teacher quality is situated within "a broad teacher labour market strategy" and includes "the promotion of a professional teaching force" within "the overall framework of accountability of schools for achieving educational outcomes" (Ministry of Education 1997).

The Capable Teacher

Despite the Ministry of Education's difficulties with prescribing teacher competencies, ERO showed little reluctance here, in getting to the heart of matter (see ERO's inside cover declaration "Rurea, taitea, kia toitu, ko taikaka anake: Strip away the bark. Expose the heartwood. Get to the heart of the matter") with the release of its *Capable Teacher* NEER. The lack of any clear division of responsibilities between ERO and the Ministry of Education leaves ERO able to structure teacher education courses and pre- and in-service programmes effectively so that they concord with the ERO-definition of capable teaching (Clark 1998). With audit controls in place, the remaining struggle for ERO then, is over what counts as teaching *quality* and who has the right to define and assess this (O'Neill 1998).

ERO claims "competencies are the foundation upon which all good teaching is built" (Education Review Office 1998a: 3). They also state that their choice of "capable" in the title is an attempt to get away from the minimum standards approach associated with the word "competent" (Education Review Office 1998a), hence the report is not called *The Competent Teacher*. However ERO does go on to list 100 core competencies, grouped under four categories ("professional knowledge", "professional practice", "professional relationships", and "professional leadership"). The "Professional Practice" category shown below lists 24 competencies in a sub-category called "Learning":

A capable teacher in professional practice:

- creates an environment of respect and understanding;
- relates positively to all students;
- establishes an orderly, friendly classroom in which students are treated with consistency and fairness;
- establishes routines and practices that reinforce student cooperation with one another, mutual respect and helpfulness;
- establishes high expectations that value and promote learning;
- conveys enthusiasm for the work and in turn the students demonstrate they value it;
- insists on high quality work and in turn students demonstrate pride in that work;
- recognises and reinforces the meeting of expectations;
- manages student learning processes effectively;

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[32] TeachNZ is a division of the Ministry of Education whose role is to promote the professionalism of teaching.

- structures learning activities that focus on the achievement of learning objectives;
- uses teaching techniques that assist students to more advanced levels of thinking and learning;
- organises tasks and routines for individuals and groups to engage students productively in learning;
- manages smooth transitions with efficient use of time;
- manages routines for handling materials and supplies and performs administrative duties with students accepting some responsibilities;
- ensures parent volunteers and teacher assistants are productively engaged;
- manages student behaviour positively;
- establishes clear expectations for classroom behaviour;
- uses subtle and constructive methods of monitoring and managing student behaviour;
- uses praise effectively and sincerely to reinforce desirable behaviour;
- treats misbehaviour calmly and consistently;
- organises a safe physical and emotional environment;
- identifies and eliminates potentially hazardous elements in the learning environment;
- establishes routines to ensure that the learning environment is safe and hygienic;
- develops strategies to eliminate bullying, threatening behaviour, physical and verbal assault and sexual harassment (Education Review Office 1998a: 11)

As O'Neill points out, the competencies are essentially minimum standards in their reduction to a checklist style of observable behaviours (O'Neill 1998). The example vignettes are equally simplistic and fail to take account of contextual factors which limit, challenge, and also provide opportunities in schools:

> An example of a teacher who establishes an orderly, friendly classroom:
>
> - If some students are late because their last class was at the other end of the school, the teacher has planned for this and there is something worthwhile for the early arrivers to do. Early arrivers often get the extra little session of one-to-one teaching they need. Ends of periods are efficient "pack up and go" sessions without any wasted time or running-over time. Beginnings and ends of periods are characterised by greetings and "thank yous" from both teacher and students.
>
> - The classroom is tidy and clean. There is no graffiti. The classroom smells good, the windows are open and the furniture is in good condition.
>
> - The teacher uses all the school's systems for reporting damage and tidies up between lessons. He has established routines for students to put gear away and to leave desks and chairs in their proper positions when they leave the room (Education Review Office 1998a: 11)

ERO maintains that these core competencies are generic ones, applicable to any teacher in any school setting (Education Review Office 1998a). However these generic attributes that good (capable) teachers should have are incredibly problematic in their definition as observable behaviours. The link between aptitudes and performance is difficult to establish given that

aptitudes are stable and behaviours are momentary; a disposition can be displayed under many conditions and through many different behaviours, just as a particular behaviour may indicate one of a number of aptitudes (Clark 1998). ERO does not spell out any understanding of this, nor indicate how they might reliably measure or differentiate between aptitudes and behaviours.

At the very end of the *Capable Teacher* document, ERO appears to acknowledge some inherent inadequacy of a competency model, claiming that:

> There is no single model of a capable teacher. Good teaching requires judgement and improvisation. Different teaching approaches are appropriate in different contexts depending on the learning needs of the students and the demands of the subject being taught. (Education Review Office 1998a)

However there is no exploration of this beyond the final paragraph which shows that the acknowledgement of context in teaching is limited to individual teachers fine-tuning their behaviour according to ill-defined concepts previously listed in the document:

> Capable teachers adjust their approach in the light of their knowledge of learning content and theory. They use their professional knowledge base to inform their professional practice for the benefit of all the students they teach. (Education Review Office 1998a)

Clark (1998) regards ERO's *Capable Teacher* as "bleak" in its limited vision of teaching, arguing that:

> …teaching is social undertaking bounded by wider sets of rules, structures, relations, assumptions and practices which govern what we do. Our theorising and our immersion within the dynamics of ethnicity, class, gender and economic relations bear directly upon and cannot be disconnected from our thinking about the ethnic diversity, class differentiation and gender distinctiveness to be found in classrooms and how these causally impact so directly on teaching and learning. These considerations are not peripheral to an adequate account of the capable or comp teacher but are crucially central, simply because the profession of teaching in a modern, complex, capitalist society cannot be understood in the absence of them. (Clark 1998: 194)

However, more than bleak, the generic nature of the core competencies, when read against ERO's "no excuses" model of teacher evaluation, doesn't hold up. That any teacher anywhere, any time, should be able to demonstrate their competence according to ERO's model and definitions tends to remove social factors from the equation leading to student outcomes. At first glance this is in line with ERO's refusal to recognise context such as SES (see chapter four). However if teaching is merely competencies, without context, without social vision, then how can teachers perform the compensatory role for the (class-based, gender-based, ethnicity-

based) inequalities of society – inequalities which ERO acknowledges and a compensatory role for schools which ERO demands (Education Review Office 1998d)?

Beautiful People: Professional Teachers

Perhaps the most significant aspect of teacher competencies is that they are not opposed to a concept of teacher professionalism but instead make use of it in governmental terms. Historically, teaching has occupied a precarious position in occupational status and teachers themselves have been ambivalent around their own status as purveyors of middle class culture. While there are claims that their location as public servants make teachers managers rather than leaders (Lortie 1975) and subject to "proletarianisation" (Apple 1986; Robertson 1996), alongside these claims are calls for teachers to be recognised as intellectuals (Aronowitz and Giroux 1993; Freire 1998; Marshall and Peters 1990) and critically reflect upon and be creative about their own practices. Teacher professionalism can be considered a "double-edged sword" (Lawn 1995), used by governments to manipulate teachers, as well as be capitalised on and used by teachers to defend their own interests, often against those of the government (Hargreaves and Goodson 1996). What makes teacher professionalism particularly interesting at this particular point in history is that where governments have resisted recognising teachers as professional in order to stem claims for greater autonomy over the curriculum and classroom, pay increases, and self-evaluation, governments are now vigorously pursuing programmes of professionalisation (Hargreaves and Goodson 1996). Thus no longer is professionalism the counterweight to liberal government; instead it is an opportunity for greater government (in Foucault's sense), a tool for the regulation of teachers.

The twin axis of teacher professionalism centres upon a discourse of managerialism (competencies) and a discourse of care. A discourse of care is used to recruit teachers. As part of its stated aim to "raise the appeal of teaching as a profession", "enhance the public perception of teaching" and "improve the status of teachers" (Ministry of Education 1997), Ministry of Education advertising for teacher trainees presents teaching as a noble vocation where the good teacher is selflessly and responsibly passionate, charged not only with teaching the official curriculum but with affecting and inspiring every individual student.

> **If there was** such a thing as the **perfect job** we'd all be following the **same career path**. A teacher, like any other professional, endures long hours, stress and occasional disappointments. The **similarities end there. No other career** has the ability to influence or **make a lasting difference** in so many lives. When an executive works overtime they get a bonus. When a teacher works overtime they **shape a life**. Teachers **guide young lives** through knowledge and by instilling a sense of **self worth**. Their own career is realised as the children they teach blossom. **A teacher accepts what you are** and helps **discover what you can be. Teachers ignite lives.** (Ministry of Education, 1998, original emphasis in bold)

The parallel television advertisements for TeachNZ juxtapose a teacher's name and professional job title ("Jill Wong, maths and physics teacher") against an image of the teacher's real business (riding a flying fox in a terrified but selfless demonstration for the students) and description of what they actually do related to their job title ("proving the law of gravity"). Time and time again the teacher extends beyond the call of (official curricular) duty to show dedicated professional care and love for their students, often "mucking in" with the students (as opposed to being separate from or above them). The images play against a musical backdrop of New Zealand band Herbs' 1980s song "Sensitive to a Smile" ("beautiful people have come into my life, beautiful people, young and wise. Beautiful children longing for life, beautiful children…"). The images are seductive, charged with the hopes of an older generation as it cares for a younger one, filled with innocence, curiosity, and need; equally, the "beautiful people" could refer to the dedicated teachers who have come into the young people's lives to make a difference.

With its quick-time video clips of teachers talking about their lives, the web site juxtaposes financial reward with "psychic reward", favouring the latter as an acceptable pleasure available to teachers. As Lortie (1975) points out, teachers who seek money, prestige, or power are regarded as suspect; the good teacher is known by her/his willingness to forego personal ambition (and extrinsic reward) in preference to satisfaction from reaching classroom-based goals. Thus the rewards of teaching are to be found in pleasure from influencing others, the shaping, guiding, instilling, accepting, helping discover, and igniting of lives, referred to on the website. Above all, the teacher is a professional who will "endure long hours, stress and occasional disappointments" which lose their gravity placed in the context of the psychic rewards of teaching – "Their own career is realised as the children they teach blossom".

In contrast, the irony of TeachNZ's text is exposed by the *Good Teacher* magazine's winning entry in a competition to design a job advertisement for teaching:

> **Childminding Technologist and Shoecleaner Wanted:** Join the group who, in election year, are told that if we add extra tasks to our overload, then we will cure NZ society of all that is wrong with it. Battle with the newest Minister of Education's enthusiasm for technology, and meet printers which refuse to work, email that is sent but doesn't pop up on the screen for a week, and know that if a child doesn't know their alphabet, they won't be able to use a computer very easily.
>
> Be told by a parent that it's your job to peel a child's orange; make them eat their lunch when parent has packed a lunch that the child hates; organise fresh clothing for those who have wet their pants without daring to help them change; throw out a favourite and expensive skirt because a child had a big nosebleed and it was more important to get them mopped up and back to class than give your skirt a quick dab; discard a pair of shoes because a child has been sick over them and they are indelibly marked.

> Sort out muddled lunch and book club orders; pay for things you need to teach a range of learning activities but the school grant and parents' pockets won't stretch.
>
> Enjoy a stressed life where the demands become heavier every term! Go on, be a teacher!" ("LH" 1999: 36, winning entry in Teacher Job Advertisement competition)

The focus on the mundane everyday activities and dilemmas of the classroom teacher in the mock advertisement highlight a reality of inadequate resourcing and support for teachers. As another recent article in *Education Review* on the merits of teaching claimed:

> We know that teaching is a relatively habitual activity. We get into a groove, things work smoothly, children and young people feel protected by safe routines, it's unspectacular and potentially dull…(Sutton 2001: 16)

TeachNZ may well reflect the motivations of service and love for those considering a teaching. However there is also a necessary political invocation given the recent teacher shortages (Ministry of Education 1997) and the most recent TeachNZ advertisements in 2001 ("Caroline Fa'ave, seeking a good job – shouldn't she try teaching?") reflect this invocation as well as reflecting another possible shift to the notion of the teacher as a regulated and particular kind of professional.

Containing Self-Interest

The particular kind of teaching professional is also carefully defined against concepts of self-interest. As we saw in chapter four, teachers were attacked by the Treasury on the basis of their apparent self-interest in the education system (called "provider capture"). Robertson (1999) claimed that the self-interest argument was advanced on three fronts – self-interest as *generative* where teachers generate positive market response, resulting in social good; self-interest as *opportunistic* through the contractual relationship with the Ministry of Education; and self-interest as *anti-community* and therefore anti-democratic (Robertson 1999: 124). It is clear that if teacher self-interest is conceived in these terms, it becomes in the interests of society to *contain* the opportunism (displayed in collective contract and centralized funding arrangements) and get the community to manage education, and to *foster* the generation of quality education through competition between schools and teachers within the market. A concept of teacher professionalism defined in particular ways can provide the necessary containment of teacher (self)interests.

In another sense, the neo-liberal model of the self-interested individual is in tension with what seems to be a peculiarly specific form of self-interest attributed to teachers. Psychic reward as

indicative of the teacher's professional and "proper" interest in, and motivation for, teaching (as seen in the TeachNZ advertisements) stands in contrast to the teacher's self-interest as indicative of their basic human nature, to be acted upon in the marketplace, presumably to further their own careers, compete for performance-based salaries, or improve the market standing of their school. If teachers act out of self-interest, as we all apparently do in a neo-liberal model, why does the government continue to recruit teachers through a discourse that says teachers are caring, giving, and selfless, their "own career is realised as the children they teach blossom"? Or perhaps a more self-interested angle is beginning to show up in the latest TeachNZ advertisements – "Caroline Fa-ave, seeking a good job. Shouldn't she try teaching?".

The TeachNZ website in 2001 now features case studies of teacher trainees, all of whom have come into teacher training "as mature students, in some cases having experienced a variety of work environments before making the decision to go teaching". The case studies feature a range of comments from teacher trainees that tend to fall into the selfless, caring category – "I really want to make a difference; do something meaningful. It is important that young people have positive, enthusiastic role models" (Karen) and the possibly more overly self-interested, work satisfaction seeker category – "As a sales rep I really enjoyed the contact with people but didn't enjoy the work being constantly motivated by money" (Bridget) and:

> Ian's degree in statistics and operational research led to a successful 15-year banking career in the UK. He was earning good money as an auditor in a management role and had achieved status in a demanding profession. When Ian met his New Zealand partner and came here on holiday his life took a major change in direction. I decided to look for work that would gave me personal rewards and job satisfaction", he recalls. (TeachNZ website)

The issue of teacher self-interest has been a tricky issue with progressive and alternative schools such as Metro in particular. These schools highlight the tension between equality and freedom in liberalism. Alternative schools, particularly those associated with the Deweyan social reformist movement, have tended to attract a largely homogenous group of students and parents at the same time as they have espoused theories of diverse community-building, equal access to quality education, and the eradication of societal, particularly social class, inequalities (Graubard 1972). The related paradox is that not only do the participants in alternative schools not represent a cross-section of society, but they attempt to realise stated aims of effecting societal change within an existing state-defined system which subjects them to inspection and evaluation by government bodies (Everhart 1988). Those alternative schools that are private are in the ironic position of being in opposition to public education despite their own anti-elitist philosophies (Everhart 1988). Ironically this dilemma existed to a great extent as a result of perception by many of the working class that alternative schools, by virtue of being

experimental or opposed to traditional examination or credentialing systems, would rob them of their mobility opportunities, preparing them for a life of class reproduction (Everhart 1988). Not only have alternative schools, Metro included, begun with ideals about society but they have tended to be highly individualistic. In this way, Metro can be seen as indulging the middle class and this again puts it at odds with ERO.

> ...as Dewey noted, freedom only sets the problem, it doesn't solve it. This also means that the value of freedom shouldn't be used to hide the need of adults involved to face the responsibility they have taken on by engaging themselves with young people in the educational enterprise. (Graubard 1972: 237).

Both TeachNZ and *Good Teacher* magazine sustain the idea that teachers go the extra mile for their students because they are professionals. In today's climate, teachers commonly face public attack (from industry representatives, ERO, the general public), a comparatively low rate of pay (for a professional body) increasingly tied to narrow definitions of performance (Post Primary Teachers' Association 1998), and mounting administrative duties imposed by practices of devolution and accountability. Attracting people into teaching requires an appeal to a caring disposition and a sense of service and satisfactions on a higher plane. The demands of the job in terms of student contact, administration, and public status, may not be enough without that appeal to caring and service. Psychic reward is implicit in both TeachNZ and *Good Teacher's* advertisements, indicating the continuing significance of care and service to the teacher's professionalism that can be defined within managerialism in way that contains teacher self-interest.

The Caring Manager

The idea of regulating teaching through its status as a profession is critical in terms of genealogy's isolation of scenes and roles, as well as in term of governmentality's problematic of liberty coupled with regulation. As Foucault has argued:

> Genealogy must seek…events in the most unpromising places, in what we feel is without history – in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles. (Foucault 1974)

The notion of professionalism in teaching now anchors sets of competencies and standards and forms the basis for both teachers' work modes and evaluation of their work. While the "battering" that teachers have taken in the press and through "the slow inexorable build up of anti-teacher legislation" (Sullivan 1999) can be questioned as an indicator of "real" professionalism or seen as anti-professional (Jesson 1999; Sullivan 1999), it can also be understood as the establishment of a very real and very particular kind of professionalism.

Certainly it is not a professionalism borne of experience and judgement but it is one borne out of learning the correct techniques, of practising pedagogy and managing "properly".

Activities, including pleasures, can be understood as an effect of proper training.   As McWilliam (1999) argues, following the work of Michel Foucault and Peter Cryle in notions of sexuality, the possibility of pedagogical pleasure can be treated as constituted, an *effect* of specific training, rather than pleasure being understood as an outpouring of inner desires, passions, and feelings, and/or an intended *result* of training.   She notes that of the two approaches taken to pleasure in theorising teaching so far – pleasure as psychological satisfaction and pleasure as dangerous (for example, with the topic of sexual harassment) – both tend to support the idea of progress in pedagogy as a natural phenomenon.   Instead this is where a theory of power can be used to "undo" the discursive opposition of pleasure and discipline (McWilliam 1999c), thereby undercutting any notion of progress.   Foucault's work in particular is useful here since he consistently debunked the idea of progress, especially as enlisted throughout liberal humanist thought and endeavours and the notion that children's learning and pedagogical relationships are natural.   In the case of teaching, a discourse of managerialism, based in neo-liberal conceptions of the individual as self-interested, is redefining what it is to be professional through a linking of traditional notions of care and selflessness in teaching (as with "psychic reward") with notions of teaching as sequence of managerial capacities, tasks, and competencies.

The two aspects of teaching – care and management – converge through a discourse of professionalism that sees management, not as opposed to the teacher's true inner desire to care, but rather as producing and integrating this in a particular form.   The well-known care theorist Noddings argues that to be cared for and to care are fundamental human needs (Noddings 1992; Noddings 1995a; Noddings 1995b).   Noddings (1992) understands caring to be a relation, rather than a one-way, one-dimensional act.   So the carer and cared-for each get something out of the act of caring.   Similar to the claims of some Metro teachers, Noddings claims that children currently grow up not receiving enough care and in turn schools get their agenda wrong, elevating intellectual development over moral development.

Noddings (1992) does however offer a possible critique of managerialism in education, and the idea of an accountability that is an audit rather than based on professional judgement, through the claim that there is more to education than measuring outcomes.   What really matters in education, Noddings argues, is not reaching competency levels or academic achievement, but having better people (Noddings 1992; Noddings 1995a; Noddings 1995b).   However her thesis becomes problematic in that the notion of the "better" person that she offers is tied to an

Enlightenment-based idea of an individual with an inner nature and truth, waiting for the repression of liberal education and liberal rule to be lifted, allowing expression at last. She may well be right that educating may mean schools breaking free from the demands of standards and levels of achievement and being allowed to explore other possibilities (so long as standards do not drop in the process, she hastens to add) (Noddings 1992) but the rationale that stripping away the "special qualities" of teachers and students in our analyses of how to "do" schooling assumes a particular form of caring to be innate.

Noddings' argument fails to take account of the move to a warmer, friendlier form of managerialism. With this form of management the idea of caring relationships in school continues to be important but it is important in terms of something to be managed in particular ways. The discussion of managerial practices in the previous section illustrates the impact upon relationships between teachers and students, particularly where they have been considered paramount in the Metro setting.

Prior to the 1980s, the term "management" tended to have a cold, hard image, reflecting the bureaucratic model emphasising production line-type efficiency. This management model is now seen as dehumanising and is associated with workers' feelings and rights being ignored, and the body being disciplined in ways that have emerged as anti-productive (particularly in the case of the rise in Occupational Overuse Syndrome and various stress disorders). Now inefficiency is the accusation directed towards managerial practices that put people's feelings, values, aspirations, and dreams (and healthy bodies) second to administrative concerns or blatant profit seeking.

According to McWilliam (2000), the task for modern management is to take notice of the little person as much as the corporate head. The corporation in general must be seen to care about teambuilding (McWilliam 2000) and a shared vision between management and workers. Management is about making attempts, not to stifle creativity, but to use it for the good of the corporation which in turn must shown to be tied to the good of the individual worker within it.

The idea of promoting the good of the individual is popularised through self-help books such as those by personal management guru Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Covey 1990) with *How to Develop a Family Mission Statement (The 7 Habits Family Leadership Series)* (Covey 1996). Other such popular books include *The Path: Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and for Life* (Jones 1998) and *How to Write a Personal Mission Statement* (Blair 2000) and these books line the shelves of any bookshop and the new management books in business sections of bookshops. These books pitch management at a

personal individual level. In the business section, coaching and warm, generous people-related words are preferred even to the older-style term management, with titles such as *Leading with Heart: Coach K's Successful Strategies for Basketball, Business and Life* (Krzyzenski and Phillips 2000) and *Stop Managing, Start Coaching* (Gilley 2000). Even M. Scott Peck, a veteran of do-it-yourself soft psychology has a chapter entitled "Servant Leadership: Training and Discipline in Community" in a well-known business management book (Peck 1995). There are books that eschew anything like a cold-hearted approach to business – see *Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest* (Block 1996) and *The Soul of a Business: Managing for Profit and the Common Good* (Chappell 1993). *Management for Dummies* has thrown out the old model of intimidation and fear as an efficient or effective method of organising the workplace.

Some management texts have caring, management, and corporate profit bound up together. The back cover of one popular business book stated that we could and should "replace self-interest, dependency and control with service, responsibility and partnership" and "create a workplace where every member thinks and acts as owner" right before it stated that we could also "raise the production capacity of worker units and the economic success of organisations" (Block 1996). The warm, caring focus of managerialism is a critical part of what it is to teach as a professional. Unfortunately the ordered and measurable aspect of caring management is precisely where Metro teachers fall short.

Teachers Who Love Too Much

> Teacherly love has the distinction of being both too obvious to study and too difficult to study. But it is too important to ignore. (Goldstein 1998)

> I determined that…I must resolve to define love, think love, indeed, realise how to be love to my students. (Agne 1999:166)

> I loved my children and worked hard for them, lay awake at night worrying about them, spent my Sundays making workcards, recording stories for them to listen to, planning the week ahead. My back ached as I pinned their paintings to the wall, wrote the labels with a felt-tip pen, a good round hand, knowing even then the irony with which I would recall in later years the beacon of light of the martyr's classroom shining into the winter's evening, the cleaner's broom moving through the corridors of the deserted schoolhouse. (Steedman 1985)

Just as care is shown to be central to the professional teacher in the TeachNZ advertisements, care is vital both to the Metro teachers' sense of professionalism and to the school in that it forms the cornerstone of their commitment to educating "the whole child" and providing individualised care. Many teachers at Metro accept that their role involves not only teaching

and facilitating but also parenting in the sense of being a safe and dependable adult role model. The link between parenting, specifically mothering, and teaching can be understood as vital to progressive notions of freedom as being freedom from authority (Walkerdine 1992). The idea that children in school required constant attention to their needs corresponded to expectations of mothers rearing their own children (Steedman 1985). This led to a conviction that love was the most effective way to regulate (and civilise) children, extending into a popular notion of teaching as love and teaching through love, and tied a notion of "naturalness" to pedagogy (Walkerdine 1992).

The idea of the caring, dedicated teacher is one that has come through the traditional of Western progressive education. Early this century, Western progressive educators critiqued the idea of schools as teacher-driven factories, pushing for a child-centred curriculum (through pedagogical techniques such as discovery learning) which would replace the mechanistic model of learning and teaching with something more open and based on child activity and exploration. During the 19th and 20th centuries, notions of what a teacher is have moved through teacher-centred ideas of being an unskilled worker and disciplinary authority, to being a humble model of virtue and then exercising moral tutelage as if a good parent (Jones 1990).

Whilst shifts in education from teacher-centred to child-centred have been presented in progressive education discourses as humanitarian, Foucauldian academics have pointed out that so-called humanitarian pedagogical techniques such as public humiliation of misbehaving students and the introduction of student self-evaluation are simply more efficient than corporal punishment rote learning in terms of the government of a population (Marshall 1990) though it should also be noted that public humiliation, such as the "caring (by) shaming" contains within it the possibility of being undone under certain circumstances (McWilliam 1999a).

A discourse of care and love can be seen as a technology of government in that "the child had to love the teacher and the school and not the mean backstreets" (Hoskin 1990: 64). Thus notions of care and love are mobilised to produce the disciplined, obedient student.

> At the very moment that nature was introduced into pedagogy, the shift to covert surveillance became enshrined in a word – 'love'. 'Love' was to facilitate the development of the child in a proper supportive environment. (Walkerdine 1992: 18)

It follows from the idea of a "proper" environment for children that there ought to be one for teachers too. Within a discourse of professionalism, care and love also produces the disciplined teacher. Teachers are urged to use love (Agne 1999; Stewart 1993) as a means to better teaching in terms of both student learning outcomes and professional satisfaction. This idea has

been prevalent in conceptions of learning motivation that has been attributed to love of the subject being taught and love of the person teaching. Learning of this kind has been thought to be more meaningful, substantial, and consequential than other learning, motivated by other emotions such as fear or other means such as authoritarianism (Walkerdine 1992). Metro teachers in particular are vehemently opposed to authoritarianism in teaching and the school's Charter, brochures, and Ministry of Education-appointed Monitor all stress that the school is welcoming to all. Detentions are never used at Metro; in keeping with a discursive framework more popular in the 1970s, care (love) is accepted way to get things done.

Metro's pastoral care regime is integral to the school and has been recognised as successful both by its own students and by ERO. Metro specifically recognises the inequalities between student backgrounds, the general disillusionment with school and experiences of students and the school attempts to compensate for these things through its emphasis on pastoral care. ERO and the former Department of Education acknowledged the quality of "pastoral care" at Metro, mentioning the teachers' "significant contribution to the atmosphere of caring and sharing in the school" (Department of Education 1986), the "apparent success of pastoral care systems" (Education Review Office 1995), and that teachers are "committed to the well-being of students and have a good knowledge of each student's personal situation" (Education Review Office 1998b: 14). In June 1998, ERO said that there is "generally a positive tone amongst the students, demonstrated by their willingness to support one another, their tolerance of difference and disruption and the absence of threatening physical behaviours".

Students at Metro frequently say that they can "*really talk to the teachers*" (Student "K", 1998), that they are "*not just another student*" (Student "M", 1997), that they "*feel respected as a person*" (Student "E",1998), that they matter as human beings in their own right. However praise for this aspect of the school does not appear to have impacted upon overall conclusion reached by ERO, that Metro is a failure.

> *...the one bit of credit they {ERO} gave us was "you're very good with their hearts but not with their heads". And that to me...is the classic problem with ERO. People are people with hearts and heads. Their hearts aren't separate from their heads and nor is their learning outcome separate from their state of nutrition or their state of attendance. (Former Director, 1997)*

McWilliam (1999) argues that a knowledge of pastoral needs and the practices associated with meeting them are the result of training. As McWilliam (1999) points out, the idea that good teaching consists of a teacher getting to know her/his students and responding to their individual learning needs is a relatively recent phenomenon. She compares it to early Greek times when it

was believed that responding to students was actually a distraction from good teaching and asks how have we come to "know" that such a (close and caring) relationship is the basis for good pedagogy?

For teachers, the essence of caring for others is to gain entry into their realm of experiences and thoughts; the teacher must get to know the student, such pastoral care being fundamental to our notion of what constitutes good pedagogy (McWilliam 1999a). As one teaching text says:

> Your job is to develop yourself as a skilled helper, a task that will involve mastering a number of counselling and consulting skills. This training will permit you to observe and make sense of what children are thinking, feeling, and doing. It will allow you to gain access to their inner worlds, to earn their trust, and to truly understand what they are experiencing. From such an empathic position you will help them feel understood. You will help them reach greater clarity. You will help them make difficult decisions. And they will listen to you because you have the helping skills and an authentic interest in their welfare. (Kottler and Kottler 1993: 3)

Pastoral care could, in its original form, be understood as a method of coping with increased size and diversity in comprehensive schools. Marland (1974) claimed it later became a tool for achieving unity and safety as subject-centred teaching and curriculum development expanded, particularly since sociology of education had highlighted the school's role in making up for disadvantage. During this time, sociology of education highlighted socio-economic advantages and disadvantages, the importance of student's home lives, and the school's role in change and making up for the disadvantage so that student security and salvation within the school became a fundamental concern of schooling policy and practice (Marland 1974).

At Metro, student security is central, apparent through its philosophy of being "a welcoming place of learning" and its antipathy towards punishing students who have difficulties attending or completing work, preferring instead the "marae-style" discipline and community responsibility of school meeting (Auckland Metropolitan College 1997). The physical set-up and location of the school also foster a sense of belonging and security – a restored grand old villa rather than an overtly institutional building or set of buildings like most state schools, centrally located in a suburb oriented around trendy cafes which are always buzzing.

The Management of Relations and Emotions

The redefinition of professionalism in teaching in terms of sets of competencies and properly exercised caring involves a shift in relationships in schools and contrasts sharply with notions of teaching in Metro's founding philosophy. The Ministry of Education's statement that "teachers find their role moving away from the traditional approach to one where the teacher facilitates

and mediates students' learning" is an interesting turnaround for Metro, a school based in progressive educational notions of the teacher-as-facilitator, explicitly opposed to the teacher as all-knowing, authoritarian figure. As Hoskins, Metro's founder, explained:

> *I've always felt that teachers have too much power in schools. Also what I tried to do is downplay the role of teachers which is traditional in school. (Hoskins, 1996)*

The teacher-as-facilitator, called "traditional" by the Ministry of Education, was in fact a radical notion of teaching practice and educational theory. However the Ministry of Education redefines it to mean a performance of sets of competencies against which ERO can evaluate the performance and competence of the teacher. This sense of professionalism is not one of wisdom and judgement from professional experience but one of administrating predefined academic outcomes and categories of student behaviour. Care and caring relationships are still integral to facilitation and professionalism but are concerned with the transmission of techniques, the minimisation of risk factors, and performance of competence.

Pastoral care and caring relationships at Metro are evident through teacher-student relationships that can appear to be very close. Teachers are known to students by their first name, students and teachers can be seen lunching together, smoking together, and playing games together. Teachers claim that not only do the students gain from these relationships, but teachers themselves also find it rewarding in terms of their development as teachers. A number of teachers spoke about how firstly, they saw teaching in this style as no different from their development as people and secondly saw as symbiotic with the learning value for the students. A discourse of care thus provides the motivation not only for students to learn but also for teachers to teach since teachers themselves learn as they teach and learn through caring for others (Agne 1999; Hamachek 1999).

> *I mean, people tell me I'm a born teacher... I don't know about that, but it certainly has been my life. I care a lot about it. (Teacher "H", 1997)*

> *You are able to grow as a person, as a teacher, really amazingly. Because you are not forced into teaching just certain parts of your subject. I've done all sorts of interesting things here – whodunit classes, mystery classes, you know, taking the kids out on heaps of activities, which is what they need. (Teacher "D", 1997)*

> *(Metro has) good-hearted people and good teachers. You couldn't ask for more. I suspect that goodness is partly a response, caused by the fact that students are involved in choosing the staff. And for all that I'm rude about teenagers, they are bloody perceptive, more than they realise. I've been involved in the interviewing process as a candidate and an interviewer. It's lovely. It's so much better than the alternative, which is sucking up to a headmaster, saying how bloody good you are at your subject. It's*

wonderful not to have to be limited to a subject. Again that's just one kind of teaching. (Teacher "I", 1997)

I had been teaching English for years and I thought; I've had enough of teaching English. Bit by bit, by chance, I got interested in woodwork. I did a few courses. Then I met someone who was teaching here who said why don't you come and do some work here. That's how it happened. I was not intending to come back to teaching. But that was fun because I was learning at the same time. And I really loved that. (Teacher "C", 1998)

Metro's model of pastoral care, with its pleasurable relationships that make the school special for students and teachers alike, is under threat through continued review and audit of the school. Through their professional development programmes, the Ministry of Education are rewriting the more traditional pastoral model. The Ministry of Education focus on relationships of care as it pertains to the management of students and their learning needs, training teachers accordingly in the importance of "proper" relationships with students:

> While the traditional objectives of mass education – basic literacy, numeracy and fact-based knowledge – remain essential, the method of achieving these objectives has changed. Students are now more able to access and process information for themselves, and to communicate widely. In this way, information and communications networked tools provide greater opportunities for students to engage in self-directed learning.

> Equally importantly, teachers need to diagnose individual learning and other needs and address these collaboratively with the student. Together with the challenges of greater social diversity, it is desirable that teachers possess a broad range of *relationship management skills.* (Ministry of Education 1997, my emphasis)

As management skills are transposed onto relationships, science takes over even emotion, the previously unmanageable feature of human behaviour (Boler 1999). This is quite different from the idea that emotions are natural. Foucault argues that "we believe that feelings are immutable, but every sentiment, particularly the noblest, and most disinterested, has a history *(Foucault 1974)*. Following this, Boler (1999) charges that not only are emotions not natural or ahistorical but they are recast in apparently neutral terms through the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) as it is applied to managerial enterprises such as schooling. Boler's analysis of Goleman's best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence*, stresses that emotional intelligence (EI) is devoid of any class, ethnic or, in particular, gender analysis and without this, casts itself in entirely neutral – and natural – terms, appearing as a challenge to earlier biased definitions and uses of IQ and intelligence tests. Despite EI's clear concerns with social relations, it is individual choice that is emphasised as crucial to success; a successful person is one who learns to choose and to control their emotions.

>Both as a management strategy, and as a curriculum that can teach students to manage conflict and delay gratification, emotional intelligence casts the social self in entirely individualistic terms. (Boler 1999: 63)

In this regard, Metro's pastoral approach to care looks impractical and ineffective, lacking the latest techniques in management. At a political level, emotional intelligence becomes part of a productive workforce where people care for themselves in terms of managing their lives (see the business and personal management books earlier in this chapter). Furthermore Metro's "at risk" students now appear as almost unintelligent in their apparent inability to capitalise on learning opportunities but read against attacks on teachers' competence, their abilities or inability is recast as the inability or unwillingness of teachers to offer learning the correct opportunities in the correct environment – one where staff-student relationships are about the management of the learning needs of students to the exclusion of the improperly informal pleasures of teachers. In this sense it is neither SES nor geographical location but the Metro teachers themselves who are the "barriers to learning" for the students.

That Metro teachers' pastoral approach appears ineffective in terms of managerial principles suggests that the teachers may lack the guile or "emotional intelligence" necessary for dealing with students as sets of learning needs and capacities. Boler (1999) argues that Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a useful site through which to explore social control, claiming that the application of EI can be used in a similar fashion IQ – for gauging capacities and determining work/social destination. Unlike IQ, which is thought to be genetically inscribed and inherited, EI is understood to have mutable qualities since your EI can always be improved and learned; the ideal citizen is now one who controls *his* (Boler argues that questions of EI lack a class, race and particularly gender analysis) emotions through rational choice (Boler 1999).   The association of emotions with rational choice shifts emotion from being the failing of the weak (read: women) to being associated with the corporate world, emotional skills now constituting a critical advantage in profit-making through interpersonal "trust networks" (Boler 1999: 69).

Within the school market, Metro do not so much lack such a "trust network" mode of practice as fail to attach it to a "managerial emphasis on role and function" for teachers. The proper managerial role and function for teachers is one in which they "are expected to distance themselves from students" (Anne M Phelan 1997). While teachers are encouraged to practice pastoral care through some sharing of information about themselves, too much self-disclosure by teachers can result in a violation of professional boundaries (Kottler and Kottler 1993). Professional distance is not only the best model in terms of assisting students to learn, but also the best model for safety, given the current climate of harassment claims, as the following

excerpt from a School of Education, University of Auckland teacher training programmes for secondary school teachers emphasises:

> In all relationships with students, teachers must remain aware of the authority they have both from their professional position and from age. They must accept that it is their responsibility to control the nature of the relationships…

> Teachers are at risk if:

> - They enter rooms where students are changing, especially P.E. staff, coaches, cultural group leaders;
> - They invade a student's personal space, e.g. by leaning over them closely at a desk;
> - They touch students in any way able to be construed as sexual…;
> - They allow themselves to become familiar with students, failing to maintain professional distance; they spend a lot of time privately with individual students… (PPTA 1998)

Emotional Intelligence could be seen as just another bandwagon reflecting public concern over youth in crisis, "caring for our children" (see current hysteria over and campaigns to end violence and abuse of children). The caring and concern may well be genuine but the discourses mask other rationales of cost-effectiveness (Boler 1999) by teaching students to identify certain emotions and control them (Boler 1999; Leavitt and Bauman 1997); the individual is always to blame for a lack of self-control. On the other hand, the rationales for promoting emotional intelligence are sometimes explicit and this has not gone unnoticed by Metro teachers, as teacher "H" said: "*we will all end up paying for the young people that we don't teach or discipline now*".

Learning, Thy Will Be Done

> All children can and must learn. (Rhode Island Department of Education 1998)

> "Ko te tamaiti te pūtake o te kaupapa! The child, the heart of the matter!" (declaration on the insider cover of ERO NEERs)

What makes pastoral care distinctive at Metro is the reluctance of teachers, despite having so many "at risk" students, to *do things to* them. Instead Metro teachers find both learning opportunities and personal pleasure in *doing things with* the students. It's a crucial distinction that cuts to the heart of the importance of learning needs. Learning needs are not new; for the latter part of the 20th century, children have been conceived of educationally as sets of needs and pastoral care systems developed to deal with those needs. Oddly enough, Metro has not until 2000, had a designated counsellor and ERO criticised the previous lack of a designated

counsellor in their report. However Metro teachers consider that pastoral care is integral to their professionalism as teachers and therefore that they each have a counselling role to play in the day-to-day work at the school.

Metro teachers' interpretations of their students' learning needs has been echoed by the students themselves and their parents. At a community meeting held in September 2001 and called by the Ministry of Education, parents persistently asked the Ministry of Education representative why they had not been consulted about their son's and daughter's learning needs. If ERO or the Ministry of Education had bothered to ask them, they argued, they would have been happy to point out the improvements in their children's attitude to learning, enthusiasm for school, and indeed in their school achievement (in comparison with achievement levels at previous schools). As a number of students at the meeting said: our learning needs *are* being met at Metro.

Yet ERO and the Ministry of Education work to a different conception of learning needs. ERO's position on learning needs is shaped by the idea that every child in New Zealand has an educational entitlement (Robertson 1999). Certainly ERO's most recent report on Metro is couched in these terms, ending in a strongly worded recommendation to the Secretary of Education to advise the Minister of Education to close the school in order to "protect the educational rights of these students" (Education Review Office 2001, July: 7). Read against *The Capable Teacher* and ERO's emphasis on managerialism in school effectiveness, learning needs are not to be judged by the teachers, parents, or students of Metro, who lack the proper focus on recognised academic outcomes.

According to Woodhouse (1987), the authority of "needs" statements come not only from their apparent and questionable self-evidence but also from their emotive quality, invoking a sense of responsibility and therefore guilt if they are not heeded or met. Ironically, the student appears quite passive in this conceptualisation – quite at odds with the enterprising characteristic of the successful student. Woodhouse identifies four types of needs usage – as a description of children's psychological nature; as an inference from what is known about the pathological consequences of particular childhood experiences; as a judgement about which childhood experiences are most culturally adaptive; and as a prescription about which childhood experiences are most valued in society (Woodhouse 1987).

Learning needs can be understood as "contested needs" (Fraser 1989), "a political instrument, meticulously prepared, calculated, and used" (Foucault 1977: 26). Some Metro teachers see as natural their students' needs to play, receive lots of attention from adults/teachers in small

classes, be allowed time to "chill out" and join classes when *they* are ready (as opposed to being required or forced into attendance). However this view shows up as a lack of attention to the detail of student needs defined in terms of learning objectives in an academic curriculum, managed relationships, and achievable learning outcomes.

Noddings (1992) engages with Charles Silberman's 1970 book *Crisis in the Classroom* to argue that the mistake of the progressive or radical educators was that:

> A real change requires a radical transformation in goals or ends, not simply in means, and the American public has never really understood a call for radical changes in ends. Silberman saw the need clearly but was unable to extricate himself or the open education movement from the traditional entanglement with academic goals. He had to insist that children would learn more and better in this new way. Would anyone have listened if he had said, "Maybe they won't know as much about math and history, but they'll be better people"? (Noddings 1992: 12)

Noddings (1992) does raise an important issue about the imperative to learn. For Metro teachers, student needs are aligned with democracy and a particular notion of freedom. It is okay for students to vote with their feet, to choose to attend or not because they are simply exercising their democratic rights and freedom and teachers welcome this as a challenge to them to provide better, more interesting and relevant classes and to reflect on their own practices as teachers. This is not a discourse about student needs that is recognised in current policy and practice.

What is recognised is that classroom management of needs is paramount. In order for this to take place and be transparent to evaluation by ERO, teachers must know who is in their class in terms of the available and accepted categories of learning needs. One of the key concerns for ERO has always been that the BOT can provide information that answers the question, "How can you show the difference you have made to students' achievement?" (ERO 1993: 6). There is no model achievement statement that ERO examines prior to visiting the school but ERO does have some general criteria:

> The statement should be about students' achievements, not those of the Board; it should refer to the Board and the National Curriculum expectations; and it should set out skills, knowledge, and understandings to be obtained by students. (ERO 1993:5)

Most significantly, it must be possible for the results of the achievements to be demonstrated (Education Gazette, June 1993 and ERO 1993:5). This immediately comes into conflict with the huge number of the students at Metro who can be considered "at risk" (readily acknowledged by ERO) – defined in terms of low educational achievement (MOE 1996), health

including issues such as attempted suicide, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and unplanned pregnancies (ERO 1997), family background including malnutrition, poverty, single-parent caregiver (OCED 1996). While many schools have resorted to doing pre-tests so they can later show "value added" to students, Metro have only begun doing this in recent years in order to meet ERO requirements and demonstrate the validity of their school – within the discursive framework available.

Many teachers commented that at one level this seemed inappropriate for students who had arrived from other schools feeling disorientated, negative, frightened, and depressed. To be faced with a test on arrival at Metro went against the welcoming and non-judgemental atmosphere the school claims in its Charter, brochures, and policies. For teachers, it ran counter to their beliefs about teaching based in progressive ideas about educating "the whole person" as a pre-testing and gathering information about students could appear to the student as overwhelming, meddling, even frightening.

ERO note the increase in "at risk" students at Metro but use this to show that the school and the teachers are not doing a good enough job. In the confirmed Discretionary Audit of November 1996, ERO stated:

> The school has become a school of last resort for students and parents. Many of the present students are reluctant attendees and reluctant learners. (1996:5)

> Efforts to provide "alternative" education programmes are unsuccessful in that many students fail to attend classes regularly and are reluctant to participate in the learning programmes offered by the school. (1996:3)

However in ERO terms, in terms of the learning needs of the neo-liberal individual student, committed to lifelong learning and the development of capacities to enable further self-maximisation, Metro teachers cannot rely on their professional judgement to say "we know" because it is not transparent and therefore impinges directly on the customer's (parents') right to choose.

> If data is privatised by the classroom teacher, being largely anecdotal or only informally maintained, then neither they nor their pupils, nor the parent community, owners, purchasers or regulators of public education will be able to establish any links between outputs and outcomes (Aitken 1998: 4)

Liberal humanist notions of teaching and learning have often been associated with gardening metaphors with the teacher as gardener and the student as seed, plant, or soil, the latter related to the notion of the child as blank slate. On the one hand, the teacher/gardener could cultivate the

student's mental garden for greater profit or on the other, the child could be seen to have specific properties or a nature which teacher could not alter, highlighting the particularity of the child's development and the lack of control by the teacher. So as with gardening practice in the 16th and 17th centuries, teaching could be about "imposing order and uniformity on England's moral landscape" (Bushnell 1996: 76).

The transposition of managerial principles onto teacher-student relationships in terms of fulfilling student learning needs harks back to the culture of redemption – where pedagogy is to save the child for society and rescue society through the child (Popkewitz 1997) and in this case Metro teachers are irredeemable because they appear to let their students go wild, like weeds which are a risk to the rest of the garden/society. Metro teachers lack the will or capacity to intervene properly – to collect the right information about students in the right ways, to use that information transparently, to impose order on the educational landscape.

A Question of Time

Gathering data about students is an important aspect of an ERO review and is sometimes an opportunity to up-date outstanding records and reconsider policies. However it is also often a challenge to perform (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997) and these performances can be elaborate. Many schools use consultants to organise compliance and develop charter and policy documents, and assessment recording. Some even purchase existing ERO-approved documentation from other schools in a practice known as "ERO proofing". Others admit to having to later "redo" or "undo" work because it has been rushed together for the purposes of impressing ERO and has not necessarily been of their own design or appropriate to their needs (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997).

In a small school, Metro students became well aware of the link between their attendance behaviour and perceived teacher competence. Many students whose attendance is generally sporadic admitted that the threat of the school closing led them to take part in the performance themselves, attending classes during ERO visits with a commitment rarely seen outside these times.

> *When ERO's here, we just go to class and all that. And don't smoke as much. (Student "S", 1998)*

Contrastingly a number of Metro teachers felt that they were naive in their honesty and openness with ERO about attendance policies and practices and in doing so made their school vulnerable to attack.

> *I suppose what we've learned, and perhaps we've taken longer than anybody, is that honesty is not the best policy...we'd probably be more showy...be even more careful about what we say. Because at the time, if we feel that certain things are difficult here, we say so quite openly and then that somehow might be twisted or used against us...I don't feel that I can trust them. (Assistant Director, 1997)*

In a small school like Metro, documentation and recording has had a huge impact – most teachers are a department of one and have sole responsibility not only for their students and their teaching but also for developing curriculum planning and delivery, and assessment systems. Increased administrative workload for teachers means that teachers have less time to spend with students – one of the primary aims and trademarks of the school, one that teachers claim students need most.

Time taken up by managerial work actually plays a contradictory role in teachers' working lives where an ethic of care is what informs their own notions of being a professional (Shacklock 1998). With the redefinition of the principal as CEO (see Education Act 1989 and 1991 Amendment), principals who formerly had more time for direct classroom support of teachers and their students, and were involved in demonstration teaching, special programmes or coaching have found the demands of restructuring have shifted the emphases of their actions, time and commitment. Many have said that a management emphasis had taken over from instructional leadership (Mitchell 1991:24).

Liz Gordon (1991) cites Cathy Wylie's (1991) study of primary and intermediate school teachers which found that, while bulk funding was opposed by 79% of the surveyed teachers for both political and administrative reasons, administrative concerns were most pressing and ranked higher than other reasons. Another study found that teachers frequently voiced concern over the issue of extra work involved in preparing for an ERO review and the impact of this on their teaching (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). Ironically one of most voiced complaints from teachers surveyed in the latter study was the lack of time that ERO put into visiting their classrooms.

A number of teachers commented not only on the toll taken by repeated audits but also on the distraction from daily teaching that it led to.

> *We were actually asked to buy into the management scheme...which from what I can see was a total con. It was another part of the business model where we had to buy a package, where we had someone who was appeared to be friendly who, as far as I could see, did fuck all...and didn't even complete his job when the time was up and off he went. And that was the Ministry's way of saying that we had been given some help and it was*

not useful, and there was not enough time. If a school is that much under threat...you can't make conclusions about a school after...they're punch drunk...It's completely invalid. (Teacher "I", 1997)

The size of Metro dramatically increases the potential for criticism to be perceived as personal. In ERO reports, while individuals are not identified by name, teachers at Metro were identifiable where departments were criticised. In a small school, this has a huge effect on the morale of staff and, in turn, on their students who need the attention of those teachers.

What I think it's done is shaken the morale of the staff here generally...and that it's actually shaken the morale of the students. There's a feeling that we are struggling to survive. (Assistant Director, 1996)

I think in a couple of the recent visits they've actually been very hard and there's an almost emotional preparation because they've been here on extended visits and we often haven't even known when they're going to be in the school. (Former Director, 1997)

Metro teachers would claim that their relationship management skills are integral to their sense of professionalism as teachers. Although ERO questioned the staff and BOT's "will and capacity", Metro teachers are perhaps characterized best here not through an excess of will or lack of will but by their twisted development (Valverde 1998) when read against ERO's *Capable Teacher*. The only way Metro teachers could be redeemed is by self-managing and self-improving, turning their particular mode of care for the students toward a proper care for self.

Concluding Comments

Many teachers consider care to be the defining element of their professionalism and certainly a significant motivating factor in the choice to become a teacher (Agne 1999; Hamachek 1999; Hargreaves and Goodson 1996; Lortie 1975; Shacklock 1998). As such there is potential for anything which prevents expression of this care – such as the demands and intensification of accountability-related duties, the requirement to respond to students with ever-increasing "special needs" in technical ways, and the imperative to produce innovative practices to compete in the market place – to produce depressive guilt in teachers (Hargreaves and Goodson 1996). This is particularly so when ERO's "low trust model of accountability" has quality assurance taking the form of audit (Robertson, Dale, Thrupp, Vaughan and Jacka 1997). This embodies singular views of correct practice that do not encourage teachers to share expertise or express doubts about their own practices because different practices could be read as bad practices (Hargreaves and Goodson 1996).

In terms of liberalism opening up a problem-space of government – namely how to "govern without governing" (Rose 1993) – teachers, as experts in the conduct (carrying out) of conduct (behaviour), with their knowledge of students and the individual needs of students, have rendered liberalism operable because they provided a solution, in part at least, to that problem-space by way of managing young people. The teacher's expertise was initially linked to the disciplines (forms of authority, knowledge, and truth) similar to the examples in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), where getting to know the criminal was used to establish a discipline, a "regime of truth" about criminality and to promote treatment of the criminal.

By virtue of being the experts, teachers themselves escaped much disciplinary scrutiny (Rose 1993). However with the more recent advent of advanced liberalism, experts are also regulated – through audit (such as ERO reviews), budget disciplines (such as the Ministry of Education/Metro Agreement which includes a financial loan), and accountability (through voluminous documentation). Similar to the discussion on risk as a statistical convergence in the previous chapter, the privileging of the administrator over the professional, occasions a condition ripe for governmental intervention.

As disciplines produced various knowledges, experts, and professionals, their expert knowledge and authority made the disciplining of students possible. This same idea can now be extended so that government occurs through the individual choices of the regulated citizen. Thus experts and professionals are relocated within the market place and rendered governable through the establishment of distance between the political and the expert; in effect a devolution of regulatory powers from above – planning and compulsion – to below – decisions of consumers (Rose 1993).

Thus the free market in expertise regulates relationships between citizens and experts, not through compulsion but through choice as the school's claims (to teach or educate better) are judged by consumers. This is why ERO is so important as an axis of professionalism against which teachers can be disciplined and also why publicity so important to ERO (Aitken 1996b) in terms of producing and fulfilling consumer interest.

In a discourse of teacher professionalism that values particular expressions and demonstrations of "proper" care, Metro teachers appear "care-free" and lacking in the appropriate signs of teacher competency (and competencies) in their relationships with students and their pleasures in teaching.

Chapter Seven

FROM ERO TO EROS: CARNIVAL IN THE SCHOOL

Overview

This chapter explores notions of the carnivalesque and the grotesque body in relation to Auckland Metropolitan College organisation, students, and staff. Although carnival was never an alternative to orthodoxy and could perhaps be understood as necessary to it (Stallybrass and White 1986), Metro might usefully be seen as a "carnival" space insofar as it is contrasted with the "normal" space of the traditional school. The "effective" or "good" school is quiet, ordered, and beautiful, a well-oiled machine where everyone knows their place and stays in it, where there are identifiable learning outcomes, exercises of proper care, and efficiency.

The "carnival" is Other to the effective school. *Informality* marks the carnival's boundaries, with mess, disruption, and unpredictability. The education reforms and school effectiveness generally can be said to be characterised by *formality*. The formerly relaxed, collegial relationship between the Department of Education Inspectorate and schools, indeed between School Inspectors and other Department of Education workers, is now formalised into a separate evaluation agency (ERO) and a policy-making agency (the Ministry of Education). Similarly modes of evaluation of teachers have been formalised into documentation and compliance-checking. Student learning has been formalised into sets of outcomes, learning needs, and essential skills.

Metro, like most alternative schools, whatever their type, has been characterised by *informality*. Staff-student relationships have been relaxed and friendly in a way that is often precluded in larger school settings or schools with a more strict approach. School policy is fluid, changing to represent the various teachers and different students each year.   Individual Education Programmes evolve as the students aspire to, and achieve, varied goals.

However the informality of Metro, read against moves to promote the professionalisation of teachers along competency lines and the imperative for students to develop certain skills and capacities, starts to look unreasonable or even flippant. A certain degree of flippancy, or more

accurately, parodic behaviour and attitude, is a key ingredient of the carnival, which aims precisely to disrupt formality in relationships and other situations.

Metro typifies carnival in terms of a kind of care-free-ness. As we saw in the previous chapter, care is now (proper) managed care and the brand of care (or care-free-ness) at Metro has not tended to fit with this over the years. Playfulness, parody, and grotesqueness are all devoid of the carefully managed and tabulated pastoral modes of care we now recognise as proper professionalism (for teachers) and the fulfilment of learning needs (for students) in education. This care-free-ness is akin to an idea of eros (union, passion) which appears disordered against the ordered image of the effectiveness school, an image that persists despite widespread accounts of their day to day activities as being anything but ordered.

The Carnival

During 1996, 1997 and 1998 when I conducted my field research at the school, I developed a researcher's tool kit for myself: a notebook, a tape recorder, and a large green plastic semi-automatic Super-Soaker water-gun. I was determined to be part of the annual water-fight at the school that occurred every spring. There was no specified date; apparently the fight just erupted and went on to last several days, disrupting classes and involving almost everyone. Sadly I somehow managed to miss it every spring but the principal at the time had this to say about it:

> *…talk about democratic stuff and developmental learning behaviour. It's a developmental need…every year it happens that somebody starts a water-fight and for two or three days usually it seems that nothing else is happening…but they always run their course because people get sick of water-fights and they need to do it, they are teenagers, and adults too…And again it's something they can't do out of school. Now there's a whole set of rules about water-fights. And they've been developed over time and refined. But they basically are that you are not allowed to involve someone who doesn't want to be involved so that people don't get a shower unless they are part of the deal. And they are not allowed to get water inside so the place isn't awash. So every year, because a lot of new people break those rules, we have two or three school meetings and again those are, between years, been there done that, but it's a brilliant learning process for the students to know that they can do that and only a few of them end up with the flu…(Former Director, 1996)*

A water-fight in your own backyard is one thing but a disruptive ritual which involved teachers and students alike, spanning several days which would normally be spent in prescribed and approved school-like activities, was indicative of a carnival and a mood which had been part of the fabric of the school from its inception in the late seventies.

The notion that carnival itself is a useful way into understanding culture and its norms can be attributed to Russian writer, Mikhail Bahktin. Bakhtin studied French medieval culture and

argued that understanding folk culture, in particular the carnivals and festivals of the middle ages and renaissance, was essential to understanding cultural and literary life and history (Bakhtin 1968). Carnival is a useful concept because as well as being a way to account for what is outside the normalised in schooling, it also underlines the possibility that there are corners of education which neo-liberalism produces as deviant, resistant, and even counter-cultural.

Bakhtin described medieval ritual spectacles – church feasts, harvests, and banquets – a "ritualised *inversion* of social, moral and *spatial* orders that is allowed to take place once a year" (Cresswell 1996: 123). Although they are spectacles there are no spectators and actors as such; a feature of such rituals is that everyone participates; the carnival embraces the people. So there is much cross-dressing, exchanges of role between peasants and kings, and the usual demarcations of space or public/private divisions are transgressed.

Alongside the hierarchical inversions, Bakhtin documented other essential ingredients of the carnival such as parody, irreverence, laughter and humour, and bodily pleasure. The comic and bodily pleasure aspects emphasised the "grotesque body" with the participation of giants, dwarfs, monsters, and trained animals; those who were traditionally regarded as "other" by official culture. Thus carnivals shifted focus from the classical emphasis on the beautified, finished product of a body, embodied in a statue on a pedestal, to the lower regions of the body signalling processes and the unfinished. Carnivals featured acts of defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy, and birth.

An essential principle of grotesque realism (the grotesque body) is degradation, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, and abstract. Grotesque realism was a transfer of these to the material level, to the inseparable spheres of earth and body. Degradation means coming down to earth and the contact with earth signifies a swallowing up and a giving birth at same time. To degrade is to bury, to sow and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something better. This was why medieval parody was unique – where other forms of parody are solely negative, medieval parody was regenerative. As bodies acquired a private, individual nature, they became immovable parts of private life, goals of egotistic lust and possession. The grotesque body incorporated themes of fertility, growth, and abundance. It was not a private abundance as with the notion of classical liberal "economic man" but a collective, ancestral abundance of body, of all of the people.

The fundamental tendency of grotesque imagery is to show two bodies – one giving birth, one dying – in one body. The unfinished and open body is not separated from the world but blended with it. Bakhtin (1968) compares it with a classical view of the body as epitomised by the

statue – elevated, a finished product, individualistic and isolated from other bodies. The statue denotes an inherent form of high official cultures and suggests that the shape and plasticity of the human body is indissociable from shape and plasticity of discursive material and social norm in a collectivity. While the grotesque represents the teeming throng, the statue anticipates an admiration from below, transforming us into spectators. Stallybrass and White (1986) comment on the classical statue that it "immediately retroflects to the heroic past; we are eternal latecomers".

Bakhtin called the carnival the "borderline between art and life" and a "second life" because carnival embraced all of the people, and life during carnival time was governed by the carnival; the usual laws and norms did not apply. People "for a time entered the utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance" (Bakhtin 1968:9).

Bahktin's study can be seen as an alternative history that shows that folk humour never merged with the official culture of ruling classes but remained outside it, challenging it, even transforming it. The core problem of society for Bakhtin was one of over-civilisation where the market place is victorious over the carnival, the mind reified over the body, and of the individual ego reigning over the communal spirit. Various writers including Russo (Russo 1986), Davis, (Davis 1975) and Stallybrass and White (Stallybrass and White 1993) understand Bakhtin's study to be a critique of modernity in that the gradual containment of carnival and its particular forms of laughter has reduced the possibilities for creative human freedom. This chapter argues that the carnivalesque may still have a place in modern schooling culture and that Metro itself can be understood as a carnival insofar as it is transgressive, disruptive, and grotesque.

The Classroom Upside Down

Carnivalesque disruption occurred in several ways at the school. There were no student uniforms to differentiate students from the teachers and in some cases, teachers were dressed as unusually as the students with brightly dyed hair or unusual combinations of articles of clothing. There were few demarcations of space. The school itself, as an old villa in a quiet suburban street, with an entrance via a small gate in a picket fence, was unschool-like to start with. While there was a staff-room of sorts, it was really only a place for teachers to leave or pick up papers or grab coffee. It was certainly not set aside as a refuge for teachers; students used the room too, for getting drinks and chatting with the teachers. The school office was also not out-of-bounds for students. Although there was usually a designated receptionist, students were as likely to answer the phone as anyone else. Until 1999, students stood in the school grounds

openly smoking after out-voting many of the teachers who had wanted it banned. Indeed up until around 1998, students were considered to be "at school" even when they were down the road in a café or just hanging around in the school grounds. This was a hang over from the school's beginnings as a "school without walls", which attempted to use buildings and local expertise and knowledge throughout the community as its education programme. These factors, and in particular the idea of a broad definition of what constituted being "at school" or "in school", put it at odds with ERO who were required to check that the Crown's funding investment was being appropriately used to educate students in their rightful place – in a classroom.

Metro had its own rituals and elements of parody and inversion were evident throughout many of them. Schooling can be understood as a set of rituals – from exams and formal assemblies to particular modes of address between teachers and students, from classroom design and student uniforms to school report formats and conventions. A notable example of parody at Metro was the annual Uniform Day. On this day students and teachers wore the uniforms of the armed forces or the police, or uniforms from other secondary schools. Everyone then performed exaggerated routines of strict politeness and deference to authority. The "better dressed" someone was, the more they adhered to the convention the uniform represented, the funnier it all became and the more the societal norm or accepted regime became strange and absurd.

There was also a parody and inversion in the annual "praize-giving", which was a variation of the common school ritual of the annual prize-giving. Here the students were in charge of making the awards and presenting both teachers and fellow students with certificates for all kinds of things, many crude or insulting – Worst Dressed and Biggest Fashion Disaster; Loudest Farting; Most Days Absent from School; Bossiest Teacher; Most Weight Gained in the Year. All the awards were presented by senior students during school meeting amidst much uproarious laughter, cheering, and eye-rolling cringing. The cringing came mostly on the part of the teachers who kept checking to see my reaction. Fortunately the award I was presented with – Honorary Metro Family Member – wasn't (and was not intended to be) insulting to me, although the second adjunct to it – "and a gold star for having the bad luck of knowing Harriet" might have been insulting to Harriet. I doubt it was intended to wound deeply but it was certainly indicative of the thick-skin necessary to participate in school meetings. To be heard, you had to be prepared to literally speak up; to be known or make challenges or have your say on an issue, you had to be prepared to deal with all kinds of reactions, not necessarily "cleaned up" for public consumption or appearance.

Grotesque Democracy

The school meeting was the central feature of the school's democratic philosophy in action. The twice-weekly meetings, which could also be called by any staff or student at any time in response to a particular event in the school (e.g. a theft), were regularly chaired by students and the "one person, one vote" system was utilised for all school-related decisions including decisions about curriculum and curriculum delivery, timetabling and school hours, matters of student discipline, some financial matters (e.g. whether to buy certain equipment or not), and general policy decisions.

The celebration of the "grotesque" could be clearly seen at the school as democracy was exercised at the meeting, not necessarily in respectful hushed tones and serious concentration, but instead loudly and chaotically – actually a lot like what goes on in the House of Representatives in the New Zealand Parliament. There were not always enough seats for everyone so teachers as well as students who came late (or so chose) sat or sprawled on the floor together. Meetings aimed to resolve issues but there was an emphasis on process over resolution. The principal at the time insisted that school meeting was fundamental to the school, a commitment to democracy in action, in fact this is at first what made the school so different to other schools. In other schools, it tends to be the finished product that is important: legislation is interpreted and elaborated through BOTs; school policy and school rules are decided with very little, if any, student input. The results are then presented to the students and teachers as school policy or regulation. Where other schools might ban water-fights because of people breaking the "rules" each year – and Metro did have some (for example, getting water inside or involving people who don't wish to be involved at all) – this school used the school meeting process as a tool and learning experience. That the rules were broken was not as important as developing a system for dealing with it was developed and redeveloped over time. The school recognised both the rights of those wishing not to take part and the rights of the water-fight initiators to make mistakes, break rules, and face the authority of the school meeting.

Metro's democracy appears in contrast to the image of Western democracy as a system of justice and order. There are images of citizens queuing quietly to hand over their voting slips or long-established institutions quietly going about their paperwork to guarantee citizens their rights. In the case of nations such as East Timor that have fought for democratic freedom, democracy is a restorer of peace and justice. Unlike the unruly character of democracy at Metro, and despite growing political fragmentation and disengagement in the Western world, the image of conventional democracy remains one of order and stability.

ERO have expressed concerns over Metro's school meeting since 1992:

> Although the importance of passive participation and of role modelling as students understand the process of democracy and gain confidence is noted, there are concerns about the quality of much of what is learned in school meeting.
>
> Observations of the process as it operates within the school demonstrate inadequate understanding of the essential principles of democracy. There is evidence that the process in practice allows decision making that is uninformed, has minimal regard for personal dignity, and encourages the exercise of power without responsibility of accountability. (Education Review Office 1992b)

Unfortunately ERO's description of democracy at Metro sounds remarkably similar to many people's experience of democratic politics in New Zealand. It could be argued that uninformed decision-making, lack of dignity, and power exercised without accountability is rather more routine in New Zealand politics than we would like to admit. It has certainly been argued that the reforms to the New Zealand economy in the 1984-1990 period were conducted in a less than truly democratic manner (Kelsey 1993). It may well be fair enough that ERO insists that schools uphold the principles of democracy, even if practices fall short of the ideal. However the process-over-product emphasis that Metro places on its democratic practices is clearly not favoured by ERO.

Metro has often been compared with Summerhill School in England. A number of a teachers at Metro are interested in, and have visited, Summerhill. Although Summerhill is a "Free School" based on fundamental child-centred notions of schooling, somewhat different from Metro, it does take a similar process-over-product attitude to its school meetings.

> Not only do the children have equal power in the school meeting; they also greatly outnumber the adults. The reaction of most teachers to this arrangement is one of acute apprehension. What would happen in a conventional school if the pupils outnumbered the staff in making the rules? Total anarchy? Loss of all moral codes? Maybe so – but pupils in those schools are not, as Summerhillians are, free. Freedom is the power to govern one's own destiny; Summerhill kids clearly understand that the Laws they make are for the smoother running of their own and one another's lives, and on the whole, they make sensible ones. If they find they have made a mistake, they can always change it. (Summerhill School 2001)

Following Metro's commitment to democratic decision-making, students suggested and voted on curriculum initiatives. The inversion of high culture with low or popular culture was enshrined in curriculum choices which, during the years I was there, included Tai Chi, Yoga, and Cooked Breakfasts and in earlier years had included: Star Trek, Board Games, Flatting, Multi-media, Witchcraft, Frisbee and Car Owning (Auckland Metropolitan College circa 1985). Grace and Tobin (1997) argue that, despite the child-centred theoretical nature of education policies, there is little inclusion of the everyday pleasures or interests of young people within mainstream schooling. Young people's savvy with regard to popular culture tends to threaten the taken-for-granted (childhood innocence) notion that young people are vulnerable to mass media and popular culture influence. It also threatens teacher supremacy – for example, young people often know more about the latest television programmes than the teacher - and challenges the traditional high culture/low culture division throughout the curriculum (Grace and Tobin 1997: 165). As one of the original teachers at Metro said in an interview:

> *Imagine how you feel when you realised that students didn't have to come to your class! It was such a challenge to you as a teacher. You suddenly had to really think about the way you taught. And what you taught and whether the students wanted that or not. (Former Teacher "K", 2001)*

Unlike Metro, Summerhill never granted votes to students on administration or curriculum matters.

> The administrational business of the school is not in the jurisdiction of the meeting. It does not rule on the hiring and firing of staff, teachers' pay, building work, and so on. The principle is that the children should have power over what is important in their everyday lives; bringing these subjects to the meetings would burden them with unnecessary worries rather than increasing their freedom. Having said that, at the Sands school in Devon – another school run on principles of self-determination – the community meeting decides questions of this sort, and they have found this works well for them. (Summerhill School 2001)

Summerhill's challenge to mainstream schooling lay more at the process level generally. Summerhill offers the following subjects: Science (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Astronomy), Maths, English, French, German, Japanese, Woodwork (CDT), Art and Pottery, Drama, History, Geography, Computing, Music (by arrangement). However Hoskins was clear his school had no relationship to Summerhill:

> *I've never been in favour of Summerhill. Don't talk to me about alternative education. I will tell you my idea and if you want to run with Summerhill, or if you want to run with laissez faire, fine, I will support you, but that is not what these ideas are about. I said I also have this very strong belief that there are limits and there is discipline but the discipline has to be self-imposed but in a co-operative group context. And people know the limits because they helped create the limits. (Hoskins, 1996)*

The passing of the 1989 Education Act compelled the school to teach the National Curriculum. It impacted enormously upon the third and fourth form students in particular (the senior students at Metro had always demanded exam subjects). This constituted a serious turnaround from the fundamentals of the school that students make and be responsible for their own learning choices. Ironically, devolution, community responsibility, and consumer choice were precisely what the legislation wanted to encourage, albeit in the particular forms discussed in previous chapters.

Legislative changes regarding the compulsory curriculum eroded the school meeting's authority. The appointment in 1999 of a new Director who also shifted the emphasis onto writing policy and instituting thorough management practices also changed radically the nature of the school meeting. The Meeting is still held twice weekly and but one of those meetings is a forum for a guest speaker. The Director does not regularly attend and the school meeting no longer makes resourcing decisions. Following the threat of closure instigated by ERO, democracy at Metro has become a less grotesque and more tidy affair.

The State of Play

As I discussed in the previous chapter, teachers who spend a lot of time *with* students (as opposed to spending time doing measurable things *to* them) look unprofessional. The unprofessional conduct of Metro teachers is further evidenced by the amount of play in the school. Carnival involves a strong element of play with no differentiation between performers and spectators; everyone is a participant, carnival is lived by its participants. And teachers and students at this school stressed the importance to them of the lack of differentiation, what they see as caring.

Many teachers at Metro would argue that play is essential – not perhaps in terms of a carnivalesque discourse, but in the terms available to teachers today – that of a developmental needs discourse. The former principal described the water-fights to me as a developmental need. One senior teacher also used a developmental needs discourse to explain the teachers' support of play at Metro, claiming that many students arrived at Metro lacking in play experiences because of unfortunate circumstances or conditions in their lives:

> *I've done all sorts of interesting things here – whodunit classes, mystery classes, you know, taking the kids out on heaps of activities. Which is all what they need. They need that constant exposure to lots of different experiences. I mean there are kids here who have literally never been in the sea. And they don't have the normal experiences of*

going to the zoo, of playing. And that's one thing you notice about our kids here – they play a lot. Because they actually haven't had enough playing in their young lives. When we take them on camps, for a lot of them it's their first experience…We took them to Motutapu one year and the kids were camping round in the bay and they'd all sort of disappeared off and we'd taken a very disparate bunch as usual. And I thought, I wonder where they've gone and I wandered round and…they'd organised this game on the beach and…something to do with having to hit a ball and you had to run – they'd made it up – and if you were out or something you had to go and sit in this nest. And they built a nest out of seaweed…and it was just extraordinary going round and seeing these great big kids sitting in this nest. And they were really playing. And that's what they need. It was really good to see them co-operating and these were kids who don't co-operate in a group situation, these are kids that won't participate in a group situation. And there they were happily organising and sitting in their nests. The sort of thing that you would expect nine or ten year old or even younger kids to do. They were playing at that level…So we do lots of play fun things like that. I've had them out there, the whole school doing hopscotch and tiddlywinks…I introduced hopscotch. We showed them how to play hopscotch and we did elastics. They were all out there doing elastics…and they were skipping…(Teacher "D", 1997)

While schooling in the West has historically been conceived of in instrumental terms (see Marshall 1988), there has been a post-World War II shift to child-centred notions of learning and teaching. Play, formerly considered frivolous and incidental to schooling, a relief from work and the true purpose of school (because children were fragile, still being socialised, and needed a break), has been theorised and is generally accepted now as important to the cognitive development of children[33].

Play is considered important only up to a certain age. Play had been a feature of early childhood in New Zealand from the 1920s (Middleton and May 1997). However the idea of play at a secondary school, such as Metro, is immediately suspect. A keyword search of the University of Auckland library catalogue of books turned up no references at all in relation to "play and education" that were not related to pre-school age children (20 references) unless they were theories about play-therapy offered to children or young people (never adults) who had had particularly traumatic experiences (22 references, e.g. *Playtherapy with Children: A Practitioner's Guide* (Jennings 1993), *Play Therapy Techniques* (Schaefer and Cangelosi 1993)). Other references to "play" were anthropological (e.g. *Yoruba Ritual* (Drewel 1992), or numerous conference proceedings of the Association for the Anthropological Study of Play). In these, the study of play in cultures perceived to be "other" to that of the (Western) researcher is interesting *because* it is "other". Implicit in the notion of studying play in this way is the idea

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[33] These theories of play are based upon child development theories developed from Piaget's work. Writers such as Walkerdine (1984, 1986) have critiqued Piaget's child development theory and theories that "show" child-centredness to be liberating to children. Philippe Aries' (1962) book *Centuries of Childhood* is an excellent historical study that shows the very idea of childhood as being a construct linked to the idea of family and demographic revolution in West, rather than being something biological.

that play, though not necessarily a "bad thing", does belong to the less civilised, more primitive and child-like world. This less sophisticated world might be one where there is no formal, compulsory, institutionalised schooling.

Play's centrality to child development is taken as self-evident and repeatedly "proven" and re-theorised with the addition of further techniques. (For examples of such texts see: *Affect and Creativity: The Role of Affect and Play in the Creative Process* (Russ 1993), *Play as a Medium for Learning and Development: A Handbook of Theory and Practice* (Bergen 1988), *Children at Play: Clinical and Developmental Approaches to Mean and Representation* (Slade and Wolf 1994), *Teaching Through Play: Teachers' Thinking and Classroom Practice* (Bennett, Wood and Rogers 1997), *Playing and Exploring: Education Through the Discovery of Order* (Hodgkin 1985) and *Childhood's Domain: Play and Place in Child Development* (Moore 1986).

Freud's work on early childhood presented it as a blissful state of freedom (but not innocence) where the child could pleasure itself and play,

> its instincts and desires still unformed, unfettered by constraints that would soon descend…babble and drool to its heart's content, experiment with sounds and words with supreme disregard for meaning or sense…indulge erotic and aggressive fantasies unhindered by punishment or prohibition. (Bates 1999)

For Freud, later adult freedom lost for good this playfulness to a prevailing state of repression. The civilisation into which the child is born – to which it is required to conform – represented a series of forces and agencies which acted on him as it acted on his sexuality, controlling impulses, regulating desires. From the prison-house of repression came the release of the joke that began as play and harked back to the early period of childhood. Jokes could be understood as highly developed play (Bates 1999).

Although play has been elevated to *the* way of learning for very young children, educators have distinct ideas – related to innocence, nurturing a child's potential, freedom, and naturalness – of the role and value of play. One research project into Reception Teachers' Theories of Play funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (see Bennett et al 1997) found strong ideological and theoretical support for play-based curriculum in early years but, despite the many and varied theories about play, no single theory has ever explained the significance of play in children's development and the pedagogical implications. One of the biggest tensions

occurs between ideas about play that would have the educator's role be passive and those other ideas that suggest the educator needs to take an active role.

Bennett et al's (1997) study also found that teachers organise themselves to be involved in work, and children to be involved in play. For the children, their being allowed to choose their activities equated with play and teacher-directed activities with work. Play was often used as a reward when work was finished; play was seen as recreational rather than educational. There is a general mistrust of play, which is based on a binary that values work over play: if children are playing, then they are not working. Play is often regarded as a process that promotes learning (Moyles 1989) but may not necessarily result in tangible outcomes. In today's education climate where teachers must provide evidence of learning (e.g. Education Review Office requirements), this makes play very easy to criticise because it is notoriously difficult to evaluate, particularly if spontaneous and unpredictable. Bennett et al (1997) also found an emphasis on children playing with other children rather than with adults militated against the sorts of adult involvement that could enhance learning and make informed assessments possible.

Young children's play has been seen by teachers generally as integral to learning because it provides ideal conditions for learning (exploring, investigating, experimentation, and intrinsic motivation). It was also seen as helping children to develop positive attitudes to learning – helping them become independent, make choices, develop self-esteem, and learn about control and ownership. In short, play allowed a kind of autonomy to be exercised by children. It also enabled children to identify what is understood to be their own needs and interests, which in turn provides apparently useful insight for teachers and curriculum planners into children's behaviour and development.

That play is considered so important means that teachers and other practitioners or professionals *must* regulate it; this is their job. Indeed children must learn from play and must learn certain things and, to this end, only certain types of play are acceptable. The idea that play allows children to be free and natural can certainly be challenged (Bennett et al 1997). Free choice in classrooms was not a real option as all teachers structured the range and type of play on offer as part of their management of learning. These activities were underpinned by a range of intentions that were recognised as work-like (teacher-directed) rather than play (child-initiated). Even where children did make their own choices from within the available frameworks, they could not always play according to their own agendas. Some forms of play were seen as unacceptable – noisy or disruptive and therefore of little educational value (Bennett et al 1997).

Play at Metro is at odds with the research into early childhood education (see above) where the educational value of play depends on the active and regulating role of the teacher. Despite some teacher input, teachers do not regulate much of the play at Metro. The developmental "needs" argument put forward by some of the teachers at the school is unconvincing because of the age of the students and the playful activities simply look frivolous in stark contrast to the seriousness of secondary schooling today, and with the pushing down of the academic curriculum onto younger and younger children (Tobin 1997)[34].

Despite some differences across theories of play and cognitive development, many hold that play is an ordering space. It is how children learn the business of becoming adults. It is the fount of all creativity and civilisation in the world (Bates 1999) and, as such, is a space where experiences and feelings may be sampled safely, once removed from the "real world".

> Play can hold the mirror up to nature; it can caricature or subvert that nature; it can stylise nature out of all recognition, or escape from nature far into fantasy. But whether it reflects, refracts, or retreats from nature, play is always an elsewhere, a second world which exists apart from the real world of work, meaning, exchange. (Bates 1999: i)

Such theories assume a distinction between work and pleasure. As people come into adulthood, play becomes leisure, hobbies, or sport. Work becomes seen as productive, useful, and important and leisure is something confined to the times we can't be expected to be working or as a way to "recharge our batteries" so that we may live to work another day. Idleness is associated with the devil. The self-development shelves in many bookshops show an industry which has built up around "time management" in an attempt to balance work and leisure demands. And like work, leisure is a demand; we must plan and use it well and it is regulated through everything from "lifestyle" magazines, television advertisements for 4WD cars, television shows devoted to "make-overs", to shops peddling "adventure clothing". Considering that the word leisure, supposedly "our own time", comes from the Latin *licere* (to be allowed), it is not surprising that it is subject to classed, raced and gendered notions about what counts as proper leisure. The free time of the working class was often perceived by the middle classes to be a threat to order (Cresswell 1996), just as the playful and parodic aspects of the schooling of Metro's students and the apparent lack of proper attendance to their needs by the teachers poses a threat, a risk, to society generally. This can be expressed through moral panic about youth generally and about "at risk" youth specifically.

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[34] See also the New Zealand early childhood programme Parents as First Teachers, a general growth in the provision of early childhood care, and infomercials for teaching your child to read soon after birth ("give your child a head start!).

> In the best of times, the category "youth" gets articulated as an "absent presence". In times of moral panic, however, "youth" becomes "known to adults" as a visible spectacle, invoking either familiar nostalgia for the times of "outlandish fun" and "momentary but irresponsible abandon" or a strange iconography of late modern society-in-crisis. (Roman 1996: 1)

When combined with what ERO calls poor teaching quality, play at Metro becomes a spectacle of school ineffectiveness. As we saw in chapter four, the "at risk" student has been understood as one who fails in "making the transition to work and adult life" (Centre for Education Research and Innovation (OECD) 1995). Moreover in the same report, *Our Children at Risk*, the OECD conceptualises school as a "convoy" which students join to become adults (Centre for Education Research and Innovation (OECD) 1995: 82). The implication is that if you fail school, and/or if your school, as a "school at risk", has failed you, then you may have failed to reach a "proper" adulthood.   It seems that both Metro's students and teachers have failed to reach or display the appropriate signs of adulthood.

> If play orders our development, our work, leisure and civilization as individuals and as a society, then what the carnivalesque may do is question whether there really is anything, any order beyond play. It could be argued that our mistake is to assume there is something more beneath the surface, that order lies behind illusion and is reliable, substantial, good. (Bates 1999)

Order and the Erotic

Although play can be seen as an ordering space for the very young, it is not a credible argument for the older students. Their order must come from somewhere else, from "appropriate" *work* in an effective school.

As we saw with the TeachNZ advertising in chapter five, being a professional teacher means being properly caring. Proper care tinged with passion but also a caring tempered with a particular form of reason. It's all very well to "ignite lives" (TeachNZ) but not to the extent of Mr Keating in *Dead Poets Society*. Like the other school and teacher movies, such as *Dangerous Minds*, *Lean On Me* and *Stand and Deliver*, the relationship between students and teachers tends to be understood in terms of a binary that pits order against disorder, with teaching occurring or learning taking place only after the establishment of order.

The formality of accountability in schools and the characteristics of the effective school promote this image of an orderly, well-oiled machine recording and responding to the clearly identifiable needs of students, adding value to them, and counting up that value. Thus the effective school moves sweetly through the processes made orderly and rational by managerial goals and procedures. The emphasis on order through classroom management as central to the

possibility of allowing academic learning can be seen below (particularly in item three) in the excerpt from a secondary school teaching course.

Section A: Management Principles and Section B: Style and Approach

Preventative Management Strategies   **Corrective Management Strategies**
(reducing the likelihood of problems)   (what to do when things go wrong)

1. Preparing for the Inevitable
    "Teachers must be realists. They have to accept that students are going to misbehave in school…. (Charles, C.M. 1992, p158)

2. Teacher Stress
    "Discipline, class control, classroom management – by whatever name you call it, keeping order in the classroom is a teacher's greatest concern….(C.M. Charles 1981 cited in Bernard, 1990, p221)

3. Academic Learning Time
    Perhaps the most compelling reason for planning class management is the influence such a plan can have on academic learning time.

Figure 9: Management Principles and Management Strategies from Diploma in Teaching (secondary) course 1998, University of Auckland

Metro teachers are especially vulnerable when viewed in light of classroom management because they place so little emphasis on order in classroom management terms. Until recent years, students were allowed to exercise a high degree of choice over their school attendance, school policy, and curriculum. Disorder is a feature of the school and "Dare to be different!", one of the school's mottos, exemplifies this.

Managerial discourses posit that teacher stress is likely to be due to a failure to implement managerial solutions and practices well enough.

> When teachers are not successful in helping students learn and enjoy school, the reason is likely to be, in large measure, the difficulty they experience in managing classroom behaviour. Many teachers who become discouraged, feel "burned out", or leave the profession attribute their unhappiness in teaching to their difficulty in managing students' behaviour...What experienced teachers tell us, what we read, and what we see in schools...tells us that disruption, aggression, disinterest (sic) in school, social withdrawal, and other forms of undesirable behaviour are increasingly common in nearly all schools. Without effective strategies for dealing with unacceptable and troublesome behaviour, teachers are unlikely to seek a career in teaching and even less likely to enjoy and be successful in their chosen profession. Furthermore, students are very unlikely to learn what they should when their teachers are unhappy and feel defeated. (Kauffman, Mostert, Trent and Hallahan 1998: xi)

Metro teachers do feel burned out to some extent and they find that aggression and lack of interest in school undesirable and difficult to deal with. However they also do not conceptualise much of the disorder in their classrooms or in the school as problematic or a stress due to a failure to manage properly; instead Metro teachers it is part of the learning process itself.

The idea that disorder could be an educationally valuable foil to order has been argued in terms of the concept of the erotic (Anne M Phelan 1997), with its basis in the Greek noun or verb form of *eros*. While the god Eros symbolised sexual desire, he was also "a force of nature, one of the fundamental primal building blocks of the cosmos" (Thornton 1997: 13). Lorde (1984) claims the "erotic is a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. It is an internal sense of satisfaction to which, once we have experienced it, we know we can aspire" (Lorde 1984: 54). Eros can be understood as a motivating force (hooks 1994) as well as:

> …the drive that impels human beings toward union. The desire for union and communion manifests itself in classroom moments of joy, laughter, and pleasure. A shift from the normal state of classroom order to that of erotic desire presupposes a partial dissolution of the binary opposition of teacher and student. During erotic moments, boundaries are blurred and established patterns of relations are disturbed; these are moments of exuberance and excess for teachers and students, moments that are unreserved, lavish, and joyful. (Anne M Phelan 1997)

Certainly the emphasis on pastoral relationships between teachers and students at Metro can be seen to exemplify a notion of union and could be considered erotic in that sense, as can the disorder at the school. While the education mainstream strives to have the business of teaching and learning become ever more structured and ordered through NZQA unit standards and accreditation, quality assurance through ERO reviews, and increased management with accountability practices at that level on down, teachers at Metro tended to resist the pleasures of order. Instead they emphasised the disorderly and discontinuous nature of their teaching practice and the school's day-to-day (dis)organisation. Metro teachers made reference to the more ordered practices and policies of other schools. While the popular conception of good schools is that they are ordered, many wide-ranging accounts of teaching point to quite a different and disorderly picture of teaching experiences in general (Biklen 1995; Britzman 1991; Clandinin and Connelly 1995; Kozol 1993; Kupferberg 1996; Stewart 1993).

The idea of disrupting the teacher/student relation through erotic union puts it in direct conflict with notions of individualism so crucial to governmental rule or liberalism. Devolution, a key mechanism in the New Zealand neo-liberal model of government, involves a conception of the community as a collection of individual consumers who act out of self-interest. Other forms of

behaviour such as altruism or erotic union must be rationalised against a market of consumers. Consequently, "a failure of schools at the level of the community, or of a school at the level of the individual, can be located within the community or the self as the outcome of individual or community choices" (Robertson and Dale 2001: 5). Supporting such a notion of individualism is a notion of school *work* as opposed to play or the erotic. Work as aligned with rational development (of the irrational, uncivilised) child involves regulating both the desires of teachers as well as those of uncontrollable impulses and will. This regulation has often been cast in terms of teacher-centredness bound up with schooling as tradition, rigid and static, justified out of habit (Dewey 1938).

Despite Metro teachers' claims that disorder (or perhaps lack of order) has led to meaningful results in their lives and the lives of their students (and despite the possible appeal of thinking there could be something unaccounted for, something delicious and erotic about learning and teaching), the idea that disorder itself is erotic or that disorder constitutes a useful disruption to order is suspiciously like trying to argue for disorder as some kind of emancipatory truth. However disorder is not only not necessarily better than order but it does different things than order. There is no fit between the disorder of Metro and the accepted model of school effectiveness. Surveillance and measurement, and therefore also treatment, cannot easily be mobilised against disorderly practices in school.

In another sense, disorderly practices at Metro were simply orderly ones within a different discursive framework. While both strands of progressive education underpinning Metro – social reformism and child-centred – had a slightly different focus, both were strands of liberal humanism, a form of governmental power relations that had concern with the lives of each and every individual, whether it be to allow that individual the space to express their "true inner nature" or to work with that individual to create a more equitable world. Thus students and student-teacher relationships were ordered according to particular notions of human nature. These views of human nature did not fit with neo-liberal views of human nature as individualistic, self-interested, and enterprising (to consumeristic ends).

Order in terms of human nature can also be explored in terms of gardening or agricultural metaphors of growth, (plant) training, and crop production, which have often been used in relation to education. Bushnell (1996) explores gardening metaphors, arguing that early popular humanist conceptions of the teacher were of the teacher as gardener and the student as seed, plant, or soil. This had on the one hand an industrial capitalist bent since the teacher could be seen to be cultivating the student's mental garden for greater profit. On the other hand, the child

was seen to have a specific property or nature that the teacher could not alter but merely draw upon and draw out.

The analogy used for training children was that of a vine tied to a tree so that what was "proper" could harden into habit. Thus teachers were to imitate attentive farmers who rigorously train the yielding shoots to cast off their wild nature before they harden. Similarly shaping with children aimed to transform them into something useful and human. During this time, nature was not valued or recognised in itself except insofar as it resembled and served human beings; the wild had no meaning and cultivation was a moral imperative (Bushnell 1996). Alongside these trends came the idea of labour producing profit and without it, the earth would grow wild with brambles, weeds and wilderness, just as a recently ploughed field must be sown or else thistles appear. Erasmus compared the child with freshly ploughed soil, hence the "blank slate" theories of education.

Therefore, as with gardening practice during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, education could either be about "imposing order and uniformity on England's moral landscape" (Bushnell 1996: 76) or highlighting the particularity of the child's development and the lack of control by the teacher.

Gardens and schoolrooms overlapped most clearly where the human body and mind were understood to emulate or even share a plant's nature. Bushnell argues that so close was the relationship of trees to human society that their treatment, like that of horses or children, fluctuated according to changing educational fashion. So "when trees were clipped, lopped or bleached, so were children beaten and violently restrained, and when attitudes towards pruning changed, so did educational theory" (Thomas cited in Bushnell 1996: 91).

Certainly current educational theory around student learning needs and learning outcomes seems to hark back to these times, with the teacher/gardener imposing uniformity on a disorderly nature in order to foster the chosen child/plant and increase the added value and potential contribution to society. No longer a blank slate, the student's properties or capacities must be developed by the teacher. Without the teacher/gardener's intervention and imposition of order, society was in danger of decline, the land would revert to the wild, and people would turn into beasts (Bushnell 1996). The lack of credibility of Metro's play as a developmental need for its students appears to correspond with early notions of the situation teachers had to mediate.

> Just as the early modern teacher fluctuated between their call for play and their drive to work, they also tried to combine their respect for the child's development with their anxiety about time's passing. They worried that the teacher might miss the critical point to intervene in the child's growth before the green sapling stiffened to hard wood. (Bushnell 1996: 109)

When compared against neo-liberal-inspired education policy the gardening/agricultural metaphor takes on a whole new meaning. One of the phrases printed on the inside cover of ERO's National Education Evaluation Reports – "Strip away the bark. Expose the heartwood. Get to the heart of the matter" – highlights the importance of surveillance of an orderly system which can be measured, audited, and made more efficient to proper societal ends. It is perhaps significant that, as one education consultant pointed out, stripping away bark generally kills the tree.

The Grotesque Family

Many teachers and students I talked to often mentioned the word "family" to describe their relationships and the atmosphere at the school. As we saw in the last chapter, pastoral care and has been a noted feature of Metro since its inception. Students frequently made reference to a sense of "belonging" at Metro, in stark contrast to stories of their experiences at other schools. Teachers and students alike referred to the "Metro family"; indeed at a school meeting I had been given a certificate of merit that made me an "Honorary Member of the Metro Family". The family-school association is significant in terms of the carnival metaphor of collectivity, upside-down hierarchy, and grotesqueness. What could be more grotesque than linking school to the private space of the family where all your pissing and shitting and fighting and wailing and drooling takes place?

The significance of the word "family" to school is not limited to the carnival metaphor. The family has been a central ideal and mechanism for governing the social field (Donzelot 1979). Foucault (1979) made the important point that for governmentality, or more specifically that for liberalism to emerge, it was necessary for the family to become not so much a model for governing (as in pastoral power or the Christian doctrine), but an instrument through which to govern. However, since the operation of power becomes intensified through its continual dispersal and thorough coverage of every corner of our lives, government does not occur through the family on its own; notions of family link up with welfare and with schooling to form a social web of governing so that individual conduct conforms to broader liberal principles.

Formal institutionalised schooling became established in the late eighteenth century and became another pivotal site of rehabilitation. Schooling was linked to the family, performing, on the one hand, a social control function for the working classes, managing both children in danger and children who were in themselves a danger to society (Donzelot 1979). On the other hand, school also used a mechanism of enticement (Donzelot 1979) such as a development of the child for the middle classes; for the middle classes, social control was linked to tutelage and psychiatry.

As Foucault argued in "The Politics of Health" (1977d) and in *The History of Sexuality* (1980), the family during the eighteenth century becomes more than a system of kinship and property organisation; it becomes an environment where child and parent can be continuously monitored and developed in a system of norms. The family as the primary unit of socialisation was then indispensable to liberal rule.

The former model of a sovereign family meant that the security of the state relied upon the family head being accountable for its members; an exchange of state protection for the head guaranteeing members' faithfulness to the public order (Donzelot 1979). As Rose (1992) argues, from at least mid-nineteenth century, diverse projects sought to use human technology of the family for social ends – eliminating illegality, curbing inebriety and restricting promiscuity, imposing restrictions upon unbridled sensualities of adults and inculcating morality in children (Rose 1992). However, with the advent of industrialisation, added pressures were brought to bear upon the family unit as the workplace shifted from family to factory and poverty grew, with the family increasingly unable to contain its members to the family order and ensure their socialisation to the public order (Donzelot 1979).

Donzelot (1979) documented the welfare system which was set up to contain these people, now constructed as a risk to the security of public order of society. The philanthropy movement sought to couple an "assistance pole" and a "medical-hygenist pole" and at first this took the form of almshouses and hospitals that sheltered those who had come to be known as beggars and vagrants (Donzelot 1979). However one of the major problems with the system of welfare during the eighteenth century was its propensity to produce, through creating dependency and rewarding laziness (Donzelot 1979), more of the problem it sought to correct. It was these problems with welfarism that were highlighted by the Treasury and the political right in New Zealand.

According to Donzelot's account, increasingly the almshouses and hospitals also became sites that bred a discontent and a further dependence upon the state, constituting an even greater risk

to society (Donzelot 1979). A way to make welfare provision contingent upon demonstration of potential rehabilitation into the family or some form of socialisation and containment was required.   To this end, certain strategies such as savings schemes (Donzelot 1979) were implemented, whereby people were required to deposit a portion of their earnings into savings accounts; assistance became tied to the ability to help oneself to a certain extent. It was also tied to the "autonomisation" (Donzelot 1979) of the family; a system in which the family was "set up as both the cause of each of their [the family's] problems and the privileged site of their resolution" (Bell 1993:392). In other words, the family could be held responsible for the lack of control over its members and at the same time gain an autonomy and freedom from state interference by normalising its own members.

> In one sense, the family became, through saving, a point of support for reabsorbing individuals for whom it had been inclined to relinquish responsibility, calling upon the state instead as the agency politically responsible for their subsistence and well-being. In another sense, through a consideration of the complaints of individuals against its arbitrariness, the family became a target; by taking account of their complaints, they could be made agents for conveying the norms of the state into the private sphere. (Donzelot 1979:58)

The paradox contained in liberalism here was that the family was construed as quintessentially private yet it was simultaneously accorded all sorts of social consequences and social duties, a sort of concurrent privatisation and responsibilisation (Rose 1992). Rose argues (1992) that as with the shift from a focus on maladaptation to the production of normality itself has occurred, the family can now meet its social obligations through promising to meet the personal aspirations of its family members, maximising wealth, capacities, and opportunities. Teachers, perhaps now more than ever, as "capable" professionals, are well placed to resolve the liberal paradox to a certain extent. They are the experts at the intersection of family and neo-liberal economic and social goals.

What is especially interesting at Metro is that the notion of family does not necessarily govern activities and lives in line with school effectiveness models. Instead the form of governing used by the school – the school meeting – appears as the "maladaptation" itself. Not only has the school meeting been criticised by ERO for not meeting accepted versions and images of democracy in action, but it has failed to restore order and govern in accordance with a school effectiveness model. ERO's questioning of the legality of school meeting decisions (Education Review Office 1992b; Education Review Office 1995) suggests that school meeting has also usurped other forms of governance crucial to a devolved State such as the Board of Trustees.

The School meeting also appears as an example of mis- or over-representation of students that are usually regarded as minor interests. Metro was a maladaptation of school effectiveness through the smoking policy at the school, which until 1999 was that smoking was allowed in the school grounds though not inside the school buildings[35]. Young people have been variously linked with notions of evil and innocence throughout history but have certainly become more closely associated with innocence over the latter part of the twentieth century. Children are considered fragile physically and emotionally and not considered able to exercise choice wisely in many matters. To be smoking and doing it at school, and because the students voted for it over the so-called authorities (the teachers), appears to fly in the face of what we accept as reasonable. Smoking has associations with coolness, movie stars, and adulthood. It also has associations with the oral, ash, chemicals, drugs, and rebellion. The civilising of children's volatile bodies, complete with its various leakages and seepages from various orifices is one of the battles that teachers, particularly those of young children, are expected to regularly engage in (Leavitt and Bauman 1997). That Metro teachers do not control access to, or expression of, the various leakages, rebellions, and drugs, is once again indicative of their failings as "good teachers".

The Director, who had voted against smoking, explained it in terms of democracy and valuable learning for both teachers and students alike:

> *…I think the whole smoking thing is brilliant. I do have that worry that maybe we are not just condoning it but encouraging it and it comes up every year. Students say why don't we build a shelter and what we've always said is the school won't spend money on a smoking shelter because then we would definitely be encouraging smoking. We've always said, you build a shelter if you like, and students have always made a lean-to. Now [with] the occupational hazard and safety thing, they can't even put up a lean-to because it's dangerous and we've got to watch those legals. But I remember a time five or six years ago, it was decided and then it was reiterated that no smoking within the school grounds. What was brilliant was that they set up a leper colony on the road. They just all went and took cushions from school, thirty or forty, and -*
>
> *[INTERRUPTION: Teacher "F" walks in announcing that he is calling a school meeting because something been stolen from his bag].*
>
> *- And that's an interesting thing, I don't know if you know that, but if there's a theft, we always call a school meeting. Just on the grounds that [if you] move fast, the number of times it turns up stuff is brilliant. Anyway these smokers, they did the whole ritual, they wouldn't let me talk to them and then when cars came down the road, we were all embarrassed. And what they [the students] said was: you've turned us into lepers and we're going to have our own society. They forced the rest of the school to bring, not just them back into the school, but to bring the problem back into the school. And that was good. (Former Director, 1997)*

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[35] There is currently, in 2001, no smoking allowed in the school buildings or the school grounds.

The idea that students learn from the process of voting in a pro-smoking policy or successfully demanding acceptance as smokers is interesting. However it also seems facile at a time when smokers are being punished (or assisted, depending on your viewpoint) by the government with prohibitive pricing and barring from many public establishments. To show that teachers learn from the experience of student smoking demands is even worse in the current conditions of professionalism discussed in the previous chapter. The smoking issue is an apparent refusal of teachers to assert their proper authority and engage in proper relationships with the students.

> *When I came here, I didn't realise people would swear at the teachers. (Student "L", 1996)*

> *You can do things here that other schools kick you out for. Like smoking. And if you stay out late on a school night and you come to school and you're tired, you can just sleep in the common room. You don't have to do anything until you're ready…Here the teachers respect you. People don't always agree with what you say but you can say it here and people respect how you feel. At other schools there was stuff I wanted to talk about but when you start to, teachers make you feel like a freak. (Student "M", 1997)*

The whole Metro family starts to look sick generally; the intractable diseased lung in a society that has given up smoking as too costly and too anti-social. It's a far cry from the "decent society" of the National Government of 1990 and conservative governments in Britain in recent decades which have championed a return to the "proper" nuclear family and "proper" moral values via legislation to privilege the "core family unit" (Boston 1992), launching attacks on single mothers and the unemployed, the liberal or "loony left", and other social detractors – many of whom have been the kind of people likely to attend Metro or send their children there.

The Transformative Potential of Carnival

Does a "carnival of the school" offer a political critique of schooling generally? Mainstream schooling has been understood to have a liberatory or emancipatory aspect to it, embodied in aims such as the promotion of social mobility and the creation of an informed, educated citizenry. Progressive education, from which alternative schools such as Metro emerged, was built upon a kind of protest against what was seen as the formalism, inequality, and irrelevance of mainstream or traditional schooling. Alternative schools were to be more liberating of children particularly and liberating of humanity generally. Many also addressed the specific interests of drop-out ("at risk") students and, in some cases, the working class who were traditionally excluded from the educational and social spoils attained via the hidden curriculum of school. The question of whether Metro is emancipatory in any way is almost inevitably raised against this backdrop of progressive education.

Emancipatory potential for schooling has tended to been seen in terms of resistance against schooling because sociologists of education understand school itself as (re)-producing existing and powerful inequalities in society through entrenched practices which reflect and re-embed selection processes and values in society. Resistance itself has been questioned in terms of its success in challenging such entrenched processes and values (Jones 1986). Grace and Tobin (1997) refer to Willis's *Learning to Labour* study where the resistance of "the lads" ultimately reinforced the status quo and reproduced their low socio-economic position. The lads' misogyny also reproduced patriarchal discourses. Walkerdine also found this in her 1990 study of young children's banter. She argues that such talk, though resistant and transgressive, is far from emancipatory. The boys resist the authority of the teacher (by sexualising her) but reinforce patriarchal power. However Grace and Tobin maintain that despite these persuasive arguments, educators have erred in underestimating the significance and value of opening up a space for carnivalesque moments in the curriculum. They argue that "…children's sexual, grotesque and violent play and expression can be ways of working through rather than just reproducing dominant discourses, and undesirable social dynamics, and ways of building a sense of community in the classroom" (Tobin 1997: 179).

However Stallybrass and White (1986) warn against essentialising carnival as either conservative or radical. They do claim that carnival can be seen as a catalyst and site of actual and symbolic struggle since there are many examples of carnival and violent social clashes occurring together as well as examples of authorities trying to eliminate carnivals, thereby politicising the carnival.

In Trinidad, for example, calypso music features at the annual carnival. Calypso began as songs sung by slaves working on plantations. The content of the songs was and still is satirical, mocking, full of insults and biting social and political commentary as well as lots of sexual innuendo. Carnival often coincided with canboulay (the burning of sugar cane – sometimes accidental, sometimes as part of the harvesting cycle) and there were associated riots that made officialdom nervous.

> Some feel that the Carnival if left alone will die out…Others urge that the Carnival should be stopped altogether, on the ground that in itself it is a senseless and irrational amusement, and affords a pretext for the indulgence of unbridled licentiousness on the part of the worst of the population. But…However objectionable some of the features of the Carnival are, I believe it is looked forward to as the only holiday of the year by a large number of the working population of the town, who derive amusements from it and I think to stop it altogether would be a measure which would justly be regarded as harsh and might lead to serious dissatisfaction on the part of the working classes. (R G Hamilton in his report to the Colonial Secretary, the Earl of Kimberly, following the Canboulay riot of 1881. Quoted in Cowley 1996: 3)

Carnival has political potential for emancipation of some groups within society. Davis (1975) makes a case for inversion and "world upside down" challenging the world order despite many studies by anthropologists arguing that inversion through ritual serves to strengthen existing hierarchies and orders. Using examples from literature, she argues that the unruly or disorderly woman with switches in sex roles (e.g. disguised as men – Pope Joan) often used their power to support legitimate causes, not to unmask truth about social relationships but show the good that could be done by the woman out of her place; inspiring other females to exceptional action and causing feminists to reflect about the capacities of women. Davis (1975) cites examples throughout Europe of officialdom being threatened by carnival. In France on St Stephen's Day or New Year's Day men dressed as wild beasts or as women and danced in public. The Feast of Fools in France saw clerics and laymen disguised as females who made "wanton" and "loose" gestures.

These instances alone did not challenge the patriarchal family or relations between the sexes. However the inversion did not expend itself during the carnival; it spilled over into serious (non-comic) life. There is some evidence that the female grotesque in carnival had political importance in allowing a redeployment or counter-production of culture, knowledge, and pleasure (Russo 1986). The ambiguous woman-on-top in the world of play (festival) made "unruly" women's behaviour more conceivable within the family. Women were at the centre of tax revolts and bread riots and a tax revolt in Montpellier 1645 was started by a woman who claimed tax collectors were taking bread from children's mouths (Davis 1975). Women at the Greenham Common camp protesting cruise missiles, most notably during the Thatcher years, voiced "women's concerns" and suggested an essentialism – that women would never start wars (Cresswell 1996). Thus elements of carnival could be brought from the "second life" into the conventional realm of life.

Stallybrass and White (1986) argue that modern-day carnival may possibly mount no serious political challenge because it is a licensed affair, a permissible rupture. Instead carnival can be seen as a form of social control or a release valve. Modern-day examples of such release valves would include festivals and carnivals where "the people" or those who are "king for a day" are the ones who are generally subordinate or marginalised within society. On carnival day such people may "dance in the streets", take over, and reclaim the physical space of the street or city as their own. Modern carnivals such as these include those in Venice, Rio de Janeiro, Trinidad, Notting Hill, Mardi Gras in Sydney and Hero in Auckland.

Certainly Freud eventually saw play as mounting no serious challenge to the status quo (Bates 1999). While jokes were thought to subvert order and challenge civilisation's excessive demands by bridling against that order, Freud saw them as a limited, contained rebellion; they disrupted but did not destroy civilised patterns of life (Bates 1999). The limited disruption could be seen as a temporary diversion or safety valve and, as with street parades which supersede the earlier carnivals, perhaps jokes and play are really about the smooth running of the societal machine.

The permissible rupture of carnival also contained examples of problematic behaviour and representations that did act to challenge the status quo. There are certainly plenty of historical examples of carnival often (violently) abusing the weakest (women, ethnic minorities, those who don't belong) in a process of "displaced abjection", an uncritical populism, in a licensed complicity with official dominant culture. The parodic "praize-giving" at Metro (like the parodic representations of ethnic minorities and blind and deaf children in a children's video production in Grace and Tobin's (1997) study) makes us nervous and uncomfortable within a discourse of caring and inclusiveness. On the other hand, the inclusiveness of carnival means that nobody, no teacher, no student, and no members of any specific group within the school are immune from parodic treatment. As Grace and Tobin (1997) note in their article detailing a video-making exercise in class where the children's ideas were not censored by the teacher: "… these videos worked to reduce, though not erase distance and hierarchy…No disability was too terrible to be lampooned, no difference too great to be represented" (1997:182). Applied to video-production this suggests that while children necessarily imitate and cite images, there is always an element of newness and creativity in what they produce. This is indicative of the informal, collective, and fluid aspects of carnival.

A modern day example of this might be the June 18 anti-globalisation protests. In 1999 this day was proclaimed an "international day of action, protest, and carnival aimed at the heart of the global economy" (http://bak.spc.org/j18/site/). The web site devoted to organisation and information distribution about the activities provides details of activities in each country along with a world map with carnival hot-spots pinpointed upon it as reports from organising groups came in. "Our resistance is as transnational as capital" headed up the world map and globalisation as the target actually forms the basis for and mode of protest. Protests around the world included an "Anti-Business Lunch" and a "Scumbags Tour" of corporate HQ, a mass "Friday Night Office Party" street procession at peak hour in Sydney; a Critical Mass bike ride in Wales; a street rave party in Milan; a Carnival of Resistance in the financial square in London; a spoof trade fair in Uruguay; performances by artists and musicians for Liberation

from Debt in Buenos Aires; National Garments Workers Federation activities in Bangladesh, and in India, the National Alliance of Peoples Movements took to the streets.

Such a carnival-protest is an attempt at transformation through the kind of fun and laughter in the original idea of the carnival; the degrading significance pitted against enlightened aspirations to transcend the material world (Russo 1986) or even just an act of faith in a world fraught with danger and despair (Jenkins in McWilliam 1999a). This can be seen through the modern-day carnivalesque schooling ritual of Comic Relief Day in England – a holiday where students pay money to see their teachers volunteering for a soaking in synthetic slime, in a ritual reminiscent of the medieval stocks (Sutton 2001: 16).

Bakhtin (1968) emphasised that carnival laughter was firstly a festive laughter, rather than an individual reaction to some isolated comic event. Carnival laughter was the laughter of all people, universal in scope; directed at everyone including the carnival's participants (the ambivalence aspect). The entire world was seen in its droll aspect, in gay relativity. Bakhtin singled out this ambivalent laughter as the essential difference between people's festive laughter and modern satire. With satire, the satirist is above the object of mockery or is opposed to it. So the wholeness of the world's comic aspect is destroyed and that which appears comic becomes a private reaction. The people's ambivalent laughter expresses the point of view of the whole world; the one who is laughing also belongs to it.

Concluding Comments

Carnival makes the particular ethics of care in schools today problematic because carnival is *care-free*. With carnival laughter diminishing the distance between you and me, people do not care about each other in the sense of offering "proper" care such as that discussed in the previous chapter. With care-free-ness comes a certain loss of individuality in favour of the chaotic but united multi-voiced body of a carnival. This care is not about watching (surveillance) and normalising, but instead is about living.

McWilliam (1999a) argues that Bakhtin understands the fate of carnivalesque humour in modernity to have shifted to sarcasm and irony. She picks irony as having the most useful relationship with play – keeping ideas "in play", constantly moving, making trouble, and refusing to settle for *the* account. Just as the value of Metro's play to its staff and students relies on knowing how the mainstream works (and then parodying it or modifying it), irony unfixes words and meanings by using them against themselves. Ironists, claims McWilliam (1999), are serious about their pleasure and like Metro are of absolutely no use to liberalism's problem-

solving through the distant governing of social workers, truancy officers, family counsellors, and child advocacy workers.

Metro can be understood as disrupting notions of an individualised enterprising culture in relation to a particular articulation of neo-liberal thought at this particular time in history. The teachers at this school are increasingly less able to speak what is unspeakable – pleasure and fun, hanging out and taking time, being with each other, and laughing at officialdom. There is no discourse available to speak these things that accords professional esteem or ERO approval. The carnivalesque appears frivolous, unprofessional, and grotesque. The students are seen by ERO and the Ministry of Education to require better opportunities (than Metro offers) to transcend their own ("at risk") grotesqueness. The grotesqueness of the students is a learning (or developmental) need to which teachers are duty-bound to respond with "proper" care, suitably distanced from their students.

Examples of the carnivalesque in modern-day society appear disparate and unconnected, suggesting that they have little political influence. However Foucault described the character of the parodic in terms of genealogy as "a history in the form of a concerted carnival" (Foucault 1974: 161). Thus, as Bakhtin (1981) suggests, it is not movements, sweeping waves, or mandates where the changes occur, but in the minute alterations in our day-to-day lives and relations; our world is created moment to moment in our speech and actions. The importance of carnival as political critique as practised at Metro may lie at the micro-level of Metro teacher and student interactions, and the policy processes rather than outcomes.

The politics of carnival at Metro has implications for uncritical talk about "at risk" youth. Mainstream schooling within the market may have to consider abandoning or moving beyond discourses that position youths as subjects of blame, deviance, and pathology.

> If we accept the proposition that when youths make a spectacle of themselves by going out of bounds or out of control they are doing something more than making interesting or bizarre fashion statements, then we must consider the possibility that such transgressions may represent challenges to particular notions of civility, belongingness, and voice. (Roman 1996: 22)

This can be applied equally to the teachers and the school more generally for:

> At the heart of the politics of humanist education is the question of freedom: the freedom of the teacher, the student, and the academy itself. We still ask whether the classroom is quite different from the home and the *polis* and whether it must always reproduce political relations and indoctrinate the students into social conformity. We wonder whether it is a place where politics should not be discussed or where nothing *but* politics should be discussed. (Bushnell 1996: 186)

The metaphor of carnival is not the answer but it does raise interesting questions. Instead of thinking of carnivalesque moments, ruptures, heterotopias, or liminal spaces as peripheral to the aims of education, giving them scant attention in our research, we might look at the ways they might challenge democracy and freedom – two long-held important values in education – in their critique of the tendency to assume an act of liberation can sustain liberty. We might also look at the ways the carnival makes many concepts we take for granted in education, particularly those about space and time, the grotesque and the classical/mainstream, seem less self-evident, forcing us to suspend our judgement for a time to ask better questions about our educational practices (McWilliam, Lather, Morgan and with Kate McCoy 1997).

Chapter Eight

CONCLUSION

The Limits of Proper Schooling

As I described in chapter one, the idea for this thesis came from seeing a school which was supposedly about choice, freedom, community involvement, and flexibility, being publicly criticised as failing and threatened with closure. I wanted to know how it was possible that this school, formerly popular and considered innovative, was failing in the current educational context which appears to foster choice, freedom, community involvement, and flexibility.

I used the novel approach to this thesis of combining post-structural, Foucauldian, and more traditional ethnographic perspectives to form a "post-structural ethnography" (Britzman 1995). This did not make for research findings in the traditional sense, particularly not those of a problem-solving nature, so much in favour in education currently. However this approach did allow me to find out about what is speakable, or what is reasonable or proper, what is within and outside the boundaries of success in schooling today. My work has shown that we are at the end of a liberal humanist era in terms of educational aims to draw out the inner nature of the child or allow free expression and gentle shaping of what lies naturally within the child. Instead, in a neo-liberal political rationality, we produce people and we constitute ourselves in terms of capacities that correspond to certain social and economic imperatives. This aspect of my work, in particular, provides an overarching view of the governmental power relations – that "tricky combination" of the totalising and the individualising in political structures today (Foucault 1982) – at work within the New Zealand schooling system.

Exploring the discourses of the professional teacher, the effective school, the market placement of "at risk" students and the shifting meaning of "alternative" in education, shows up the boundaries around what it is possible to say, do, or be educationally. It shows up our understandings of what is "right" and what is proper for schooling aims and outcomes.

The boundaries around the say-able or do-able in education were explored in chapter three in particular and based upon the arguments that truth itself has a history, and notions of progress (greater access to the truth, liberating discoveries about human nature or the human condition, and greater freedom) are not self-evident. Therefore my study could not attempt to "tell the truth" about Metro or ERO. It could only show what we are now through the discourses that

shape what we "know" to be true about certain schooling policies and practices, students, teachers, and effectiveness.

The benefits of using Foucault's work on governmentality allowed an account of liberalism (and neo-liberalism) as underpinning many current educational discourses. This account gave us a way into understanding the totalising/individualising paradoxes at the heart of liberal rule that have impacted upon Metro and these were explored in more depth in chapters four through seven.

Chapter four put the New Zealand education reforms that reshaped education theory, policy, and practice into a governmental context, particularly with regard to ERO who operate as disciplinary institution. ERO are shown to exercise normalising techniques through surveillance, enclosure, standardisation, and ranking. These act to *discipline* certain schools that stand outside the norm. ERO also produce the *discipline* (knowledge) of what it is to be an effective school, or perhaps more accurately, what it is to *demonstrate* one's school as effective. This has in turn informed and created a disciplinary knowledge in the area of school effectiveness.

ERO's approach tended to focus on issues of compliance, producing an emphasis on quantitative over qualitative measures of evaluation. This immediately disadvantaged Metro who had relied on anecdotal evidence and professional judgement about student learning outcomes. The lack of any official alternative status for Metro as well as ERO's tendency to standardise reviewing practices meant Metro was reviewed by ERO as a mainstream school. Moreover it was also criticised by ERO for not being alternative enough. At this point, Metro was clearly caught between ERO and Ministry of Education's struggle over authority. Metro has never had a commissioner appointed – usually the case when a school is seriously at risk of being closed. Instead Metro has had numerous consultants and advisors visit the school through the Ministry of Education's Schools Support Project, had a new director appointed from outside the school, and a monitor appointed for two years to oversee enhancements to management practices.

ERO's policy of using publicity to enhance consumer (parent) choice has impacted negatively upon the school and compromised at least one of the points in Metro's agreement with the Ministry of Education (1998) – that its roll increase to 110. The roll has in fact continued to drop and other schools have identified Metro as "a school of last resort" (Education Review Office 1996, November).

Chapter five explored the impact of market processes upon Metro through a contrasting of Metro's now typical "at risk" student and the encouraged "typical" or successful enterprising student. Where students are now conceived of in terms of learning needs, capacities to be developed, and collections of skills *vis-à-vis* human capital theory, Metro students lack the appropriate life skills and choice-making faculties to make them successful. Instead their backgrounds of truancy, expulsion and suspension, drug and alcohol problems, pregnancy, etc enable them to be categorised as "at risk" of educational failure and failure to contribute to society (Centre for Education Research and Innovation (OECD) 1995).

An alternative school such as Metro is not considered suitable for such "at risk" students since they cannot be considered able to exercise choice properly as evidenced by their opting for "pop" curriculum choices such as "cooked breakfasts" and "car owning" and voting to smoke in the school grounds. Ironically as Metro's student population become further categorised as "at risk", their school curriculum narrows, choice reduces, and the school has more such students dumped on it by other schools.

Metro is considered as an example of a liminal space – a space that is disturbing (of the status quo), abnormal, and temporal. Adolescence is generally seen as temporal and often also as an abnormal state (for example, heightened hormonal activity, intensified periods of physical and sexual growth, moodiness, experimental behaviour). Metro teachers tend to see their students this way also but current educational discourses about fulfilling the learning needs of students and fostering particular capacities preclude this approach being taken seriously as a good learning or teaching practice.

This liminality of student together with a liminality of market place push Metro into a sort of black hole of schooling. In fact the situation could be understood as a sort of Bermuda triangle of "at risk" students, unprofessional teachers, and market pressures.

Chapter six explores discourses of managerialism and care in education that intersect as teacher professionalism. Teacher competency becomes teacher competencies as ERO define what it is that counts as good teaching in measurable, quantitative, and codified ways. Continuing the theme of student learning needs from chapter five, it is shown that Metro teachers are slowly abandoning their previous approach of teaching "the whole person" in favour of an approach that conceives of students as learning needs, capacities and skill factors since measuring a teacher's professionalism is now done through evaluating the value they add to students.

Chapter seven contrasted an effective and well-ordered image of a school with Metro's carnivalesque approach to schooling. The notion of family as a domain through which many other areas are governed was explored. Metro's (students' and staff's) colloquial references to itself as a "family" were shown as an apparent refusal to be governed as a proper family "should" in current educational discourses. Instead Metro's care-free-ness, through parody (the "praizegiving", Uniform Day) and play (the annual spring water-fight, hopscotch, popular culture classes) at the school, were seen as examples of the grotesque, lowering or degrading the image of the classical (ordered, beautiful, effective) school.   The notion of carnival as transformative was explored insofar as it challenged the accepted mainstream ideas.

Telling (Realist) Tales: The School Without Walls Becomes the School Without Staff or Students

The ethnographic aspects of this work were provided for through gathering interview data from current and past Metro staff and Board of Trustees members, Metro students. As a case study, the work also included analysis of recent Ministry of Education and ERO documentation (letters, reports, submissions), and recent and archival school records (roll figures, school meeting minutes, student profiles, year books, submissions).

An aspect of my work was to recount a tale that could highlight contrasts and similarities of (school) culture. This aspect of the ethnographic work was a "realist tale" (Van Maanen 1988) and lay in tension with the post-structural and Foucauldian aspects of my work. However the realist tale aspect formed a necessary part of the background and context against which the post-structural concern with the structuring of meaning could push.

In other words, there is a realist tale that can be pulled out of every chapter of this thesis and it is not only an unavoidable but a necessary part of the work. Gaining access to the school, the staff, students, and school records was not the ethnographic profit for a trade-off against post-structurally important matters. The concerns and narratives of the people involved were an integral part of what constituted the historically-specific research and formed one point of disruption against the apparently seamless narratives of the good school, the good teacher, and the good student.

Auckland Metropolitan College was not just any school; it was the last alternative state-funded secondary school in the country. At the time of writing, in September 2001, it seems probable that Metro will be closed given that this is the eighth ERO report in as many years to identify

problems with, or deficiencies within, the school within the available and accepted context of what is school effectiveness. The first director of the school has said that Metro has always had the option of becoming a specialised school, either an arts college, an activity centre, or a more circumscribed or precisely detailed alternative school (interview, 2001). However, no matter what happens, this makes my research all the more important in a realist sense insofar as a documentation of historical processes involved in the school's emergence and demise and a commentary of policy processes (and gaps) which have left Metro without any support as alternative. These issues pertain not only to Metro but to the New Zealand schooling system as a whole in relation to tensions between innovation and/or alternative education and a quasi-market (enterprising) context in which schools must operate.

I did not conduct any interviews with ERO or Ministry of Education staff since I had access to their documentation, either directly or through the school. ERO's emphasis on consumer rights through their policy of public disclosure of school evaluations meant I was able to easily access their "side of the story" in terms of a realist tale.

I provided an account of a school in transition over time through a somewhat painful and intensive case study. That my research took place over some five years showed up interesting changes to the school – a decrease in roll and change in roll composition at Metro, changes to Metro's management personnel and practices, shifts in Metro's policies and practices - in this period over this time. I also showed up some changes to ERO practices during this period such as reporting being changed from Effectiveness Reviews and Assurance Audits to Accountability Audits, a shift from public criticism of ERO and former CRO Judith Aitken shifted to public praise of ERO as holding the line against supposed creeping mediocrity in school standards, and increased academic and educationalists' criticism of ERO's methodology.

My research has generated further realist questions such as: Does our current education system allow for difference across and between schools? Does ERO have any expertise or expert reviewers in alternative education? Should they? Is there any place for alternative education that is *not* activity centres or units for "at risk" students? Certainly the schools which responded to the 1997 Ministry of Education canvas of opinions on whether or not Metro should close, and the likely impact upon neighbouring schools, suggested strongly that there was indeed a place for alternative education to serve "at risk" students – just not in their school!

Either way, there is certainly a worthwhile realist project in further documenting the emergence and potential or actual loss of the last alternative state-funded secondary school in the country. A historical study could focus on interviews with past and present students, teachers, and board

members of Metro. This history could be contextualised within New Zealand's involvement and contribution to progressive education, particularly in child-centred education. What happened to other "schools without walls" around the world?

An overtly political line could be taken in a further study, incorporating interviews with Ministry of Education and ERO staff and ex-staff members. Metro's position, caught between the two institutions, and its positioning as a political embarrassment, could be further explored from here. Is it more of an embarrassment that Metro stays open and shows up the inequalities and contradictory tendencies of the market? Or is it more of an embarrassment that Metro be closed down, thereby closing down an opportunity for greater diversity and choice, supposedly sought-after values in education and the market place more generally? The Ministry of Education brought in all these experts to Metro and yet ERO still say the school has failed. How might this be explained? Has the Ministry of Education failed? Or is it just that the old staff of Metro, or the new staff, or the new director, or the board of trustees are terminally incompetent? Or is it that the students at Metro are bad to the core? Or that the parents of the students who choose Metro are "bad choosers"?

Other schools which have been closed down could be compared with Metro. Has this process been in line with others? Why or why not? Why was a commissioner never appointed to the school? Why did the original Department of Education not assist the school to attain a special status as alternative in the first place? Does the fact that Metro resides on prime real estate and that New Zealand governments have sold off many school sites over the past few years have anything to do with closing Metro? Will that site remain a government-owned site? Does the fact that Metro is expensive to run, having very small staff-student ratios in comparison with other secondary schools, sway the Secretary of Education towards closing the school? Many educators have claimed that small staff-student ratios will improve learning outcomes and decrease teacher stress. Can the claim that Metro has failed be used to justify not decreasing staff-student ratios in other schools?

As recent New Zealand governments re-embed alternatives as "a good thing", there is increased interest in school alternatives (Clark, Smith and Pomare 1996; Ministry of Education 1998b). There is an interesting project to be had in exploring what possibilities there are for disaffected youth. This is a project that would have to go beyond the more traditional sociological categories of gender, class, and ethnicity in education, for disaffected young people are increasingly to be found across interesting intersections of all of these categories and more as-yet unclassified groupings. As Dahlgren points out, it is a curious paradox that so many in the world who do not have democracy are willing to risk their lives to attain it and that so many in

the West who do have democracy seemingly switch off to it (Dahlgren 2001). Could there be an alternative school for these students (instead of activity centres) that involves students, that practises democracy, and does not reduce or withhold choice from them until certain outcomes are reached? Or is the alternative school today an oxymoron?

This of course leads us to a question that results directly from this thesis – where do the students and teachers of Metro go from here? Other schools in Auckland have made it clear they do not want those students. Many of the teachers are under no illusions that they could get teaching jobs elsewhere now that they are tainted with the failure of the school. The director who came in specifically to improve and pull the school up by its bootstraps has failed to do so and this must weigh heavily as a professional disappointment, despite the fact that this thesis shows that blame (and certainly not individual blame) is not the issue.

In terms of further approaches based on the theoretical one I have taken in this thesis, Foucault's work could be applied and developed further. Both Foucault's strength and limitation lies in his inattention to the question of *who* decides and controls educational values and goals. Educators have continued to argue convincingly that this is still a vital question for educators committed to democratic schooling (Apple 2001) and that an equal society demands a conceptualisation of democracy beyond that of parental or consumer choice (Hall 1983).

Foucault is useful in suspending questions about who decides these conceptualisations and this allows us to explore discourses that shape and produce our practices without over-attention to forms of authority (although this is one aspect of governmental power relations) or the state. However the insistence that liberty be a practice rather than a state or condition (Foucault 1988), and therefore that political activities cannot be deduced from a theory, require more thought and more applied research so that we might see what this really means for us. A post-structural ethnography can be used here, providing insight into the government of individualisation, allowing us to identify and perhaps resist the practices of normalisation, limits of identity, and boundaries around the apparently self-evident in education. Some of what it is to do post-structural ethnography is necessarily unresolved and remains in tension with itself, particularly since the subjects involved "live" a realist tale. What I have tried to show is how those tales are invoked and that they are not necessarily self-evident. The work of post-structural ethnography as a "regulating fiction" which itself produces textual identities and regimes of truth (Britzman 1995) can be used to help us re-conceive of ourselves *in terms of* post-structural accounts of the practices that invent schools, students and teachers, both "proper" and "improper" (McWilliam 1999a). As Foucault argues, "maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are" (1982: 216).

Appendix

ERO Reviews of Auckland Metropolitan College

1. Review Report: August 1992
2. Discretionary Assurance Audit: August 1993
3. Assurance Audit: April 1995
4. Discretionary Assurance Audit: February 1996
5. Discretionary Assurance Audit: November 1996
6. Discretionary Accountability Review: June 1998
7. Discretionary Accountability Review, July 2000
8. Discretionary Review Report: August 2001

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