

**PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL  
NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS:  
A FOUCAULDIAN ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSES**

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy of the  
University of Stirling**

**JULIE ALLAN**

**Department of Education**

**December 1995** *del v*

## CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>(i)</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>(ii)</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Wandering voices and shifting identities	1
Outline of the thesis	5
<b>2. Review of Literature</b>	<b>8</b>
Theorising special education	8
Integration	12
Pupils' accounts of integration	18
Summary	22
<b>3. Methodology</b>	
<b>(a) A Foucauldian Analysis of Special Educational Needs</b>	<b>24</b>
The aims of the research	24
The research approach	25
Foucault and special educational needs	26
The subject and power	27
Surveillance	28
Spatialisation	34
Archaeology, genealogy and Foucault's analytical tools	35
Applications of Foucault	42
Criticisms of Foucault	46

<b>(b) I'm an Undercover Agent Working for My PhD</b>	<b>52</b>
The cover of convention	53
Foucault and duplicity	58
Occlusion	62
Subjectivity: a question of cover?	66
<b>(c) Deafness: A Lesson in Disability</b>	<b>70</b>
Learning the language?	77
Searching for the 'essences' of deafness	79
<b>4. Positive Thinking: Discourses on Special Educational Needs</b>	<b>83</b>
Discourses that shape special educational needs	84
The Warnock and HMI reports	89
The special needs 'person'	91
Special educational needs and the grip of medicine	102
The right to be educated?	106
Scoring curriculum goals	110
Professionals and parents	119
Warnock, economic discourses and individualism	126
<b>5. Resistance</b>	<b>130</b>
Resistance to what?	131
Forms of resistance	135
The sporting hierarchy	143
Government tactics: 'talking out' disabled people	146
Government policies	149
Silent voices?	151

<b>6 (a) Introducing the Pupils</b>	<b>153</b>
(b) Raschida and Laura: On the margins of disability	157
Overview	178
(c) Brian, Scott, Sarah and Graham: Doing what's best for 'them'	184
Overview	203
(d) Susan, Barry and Phillip: Hide if you don't want to be a star	207
Overview	220
(e) Peter: Is he really special?	224
Overview	231
(f) Fiona: Between two worlds	233
Overview	239
<b>7. Disturbing the Margins of Disability</b>	<b>243</b>
The pupils' discourses: in the wake of uncertainty	243
Resistance	247
What counts as resistance?	247
The pupils' resistance typology	250
Governmentality	256
Gender and sexuality	259
The value of a Foucauldian perspective	261
Implications of findings for the mainstreaming of pupils with SEN	267

## References



(i)

## ABSTRACT

This research focuses on pupils with special needs in mainstream schools. It is concerned with how their identities and experiences are constructed at a formal level, within official documents, and informally, in the way the pupils are talked about. A Foucauldian perspective provided the framework for analysing formal and informal discourses and the power/knowledge relations these contain.

Formal SEN discourses were examined by analysing the Warnock and HMI reports and earlier official documents. At an informal level, accounts were obtained from eleven pupils with a range of special educational needs and their peers. The pupils were also observed within mainstream classrooms and playgrounds.

The pupils' accounts challenged the appropriateness of conventional binary divisions, for example disabled/able-bodied; integrated/segregated, for understanding the identities and experiences of pupils with SEN. The data suggest a much more continuous process of construction, characterised by oscillations, uncertainties and ambivalences and by resistance from the pupils with SEN.

A number of implications for the placement of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools are considered. These relate to how schools might build on mainstream pupils' existing understanding of disability and ensure that integration is a positive experience for all.

(ii)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Skill in making acknowledgements is the hallmark of the thoroughbred scholar . . . Research without indebtedness is suspect and somebody must always, somehow be thanked (Eco, 1994, p172).

I want to thank, above all, the pupils with special educational needs and their mainstream peers who took part in this research. They spoke to me with a frankness which was, at times, disturbing and always revelatory. They taught me to listen.

Professor Ian Stronach (principal supervisor) and Professor Sheila Riddell provided constant support and encouragement and I should like to thank them both warmly.

Finally, I am grateful to the Scottish Office Education Department, whose funding enabled me to undertake this research in connection with a comparative study of mainstream and special schools.

## INTRODUCTION: WANDERING VOICES AND SHIFTING IDENTITIES

This research focuses on pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools. The voices of eleven pupils with SEN and their mainstream peers are central, but their accounts are not intended to be read from either positivist (connecting truths to objects outside of language) or phenomenological (connecting truth to the consciousness of individual knowers) standpoints (Liggett, 1988). Rather, their accounts are treated as discursive effects of the 'power/knowledge knot', which is not supposed to be unravelled (Simons, 1995, p27). Foucault's 'box of tools' (1977a, p205) enables these power/knowledge relations to be scrutinised more closely<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the pupils' identities and experiences can be interpreted, not as fixed essences (eg disabled or excluded from mainstream), but as 'effects' of a series of oscillations, within a multiplicity of discourses.

Special education has been surrounded by great deal of 'benevolent humanitarianism', making it difficult to criticise (Tomlinson, 1982, p5). There has also been inadequate scrutiny of the motives behind integration, which Barton and Tomlinson (1984) argue are rooted in 'economic, professional and social interests' (p65). The notion of integration itself is unsatisfactory, suggesting that 'something is done to pupils with difficulties' and that 'success is measured in terms of how well they have been absorbed into the mainstream' Hegarty (1993, p10). It also implies that integration is a once-and-for-all event.

The domination of the medico-psychological paradigm within special education has predisposed researchers to quantitative methods (Clough, 1995) and has made them unable to shake off the 'methodological individualism' inherent in positivist social

---

<sup>1</sup> This was argued in a paper to be published in *Disability and Society*. Part of Chapter 3a is also contained in this paper.

research of all kinds (Oliver, 1992a, p107)<sup>2</sup>. This has contributed little to understanding the experience of disability other than as 'caused by their individual impairments' (Oliver, 1992a, p108) or as 'inventories of human and physical resources' (Slee, 1993, p351). Consequently, there have been many calls over the last fifteen years or so for research in special education which is more sensitive to the experience of learning difficulties (eg Schindele, 1985; Clough, 1995).

Considerable criticism has been levelled at researchers, whose work has proved 'alienating' (Oliver, 1992a, p103). Researchers, in this context, have failed to take account of the perspectives of disabled individuals, silencing their voices in a research process which has made them, not participating subjects, but objects upon which research is done (Rowan, 1981). Where they have been asked to speak, they have been constrained to respond within those professional discourses which construct them as objects of knowledge (Armstrong et al, 1993; Cooper, 1993). Barton (1993a) notes the increasing anger among disabled people over disabling practices (for example Morris, 1991; Finklestein, 1993) to which researchers have clearly contributed. Disabled writers such as Finklestein (1985) have suggested that a principle of no participation (in research) without representation, while others (eg Oliver, 1992b) have questioned whether the able-bodied should be researching disabled peoples' lives at all.

Appleby (1994), a lesbian who experienced a temporary disability, claimed to be only partially qualified to research the experiences of disabled lesbians. Her subjects took the view, however, that it was 'the responsibility of able-bodied lesbian women to identify and challenge their able-bodied assumptions' (p28). On the one hand, able-bodied researchers may lack empathy and run the risk of 'colonizing' the subjugated experiences of disabled people (Opie, 1992; Appleby, 1994). On the other hand, they

---

<sup>2</sup> In a paper presented to the International Special Education Congress, Birmingham, 10-13 April, 1995 (Allan et al, 1995a), it was suggested that the current educational climate had forced researchers of disability to abandon ostensibly more enlightened social theoretical models and to return to individualistic models.

may be well placed to challenge oppression by exploiting the privileges which come from their social position (Clough and Barton, 1995). Oliver (1990a) argues that both the disability movement and non-disabled sociology have a part to play in 'eradicating the social restrictions and oppressions of disability' (p131).

Researchers, whilst recognising the limitations of medical and charity discourses and individualistic models of disability, have found it difficult to detach themselves from them. Merely denouncing them and claiming to be doing more enlightened and emancipatory research, however, is insufficient. Clough and Barton (1995) call for a more 'sensitive and self-conscious research practice' (p143) and others have argued for radical changes to the social relations within which research takes place:

Disability research should not be seen as a set of technical, objective procedures carried out by experts but part of the struggle by disabled people to challenge the oppression they currently experience in their daily lives. Hence the major issue on the research agenda for the 1990's should be; do researchers wish to join with disabled people and use their expertise and skills in their struggles against oppression or do they wish to continue to use these skills and expertise in ways in which disabled people find oppressive? (Oliver, 1992a, p102).

A new approach, according to Oliver, would be centred on principles of reciprocity, gain and empowerment. What is also required from researchers, before they can contribute to emancipatory knowledge, is scrutiny of the power and knowledge relations within which the identities of both disabled and able-bodied people and their experiences are constructed and a surveying of the 'closure in our own thinking' (Roth, 1992, p695).

This research examines how the identities and experiences of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools are constructed through discourses. This occurs both formally, in official statements and policies, and informally, in schools, classrooms and playgrounds. At a formal level, the research tries to trace how integration emerged as a heuristic within policy statements and searches for both consensus and resistance among educational policy makers and interest groups. Within classrooms and more informal school settings, the research examines what is said to pupils with SEN. The concern here is not with the pure essences of these formal and informal discourses, but with their 'discursive effects'. It is necessary also, therefore, to analyse the relationship between discourses (and the knowledge they yield) and power. This is desirable, argues Foucault (1976), since power/knowledge relations are reciprocal. He demonstrates this in relation to sexuality, for which special educational needs can readily be substituted:

What were the effects of power generated by what was said? What are the links between these discourses, these effects of power, and the pleasures that were invested by them? What knowledge (savoir) was formed as a result of this knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality in our part of the world? (p11).

The significance of the isomorphism of power and knowledge for special educational needs is discussed in Chapter 3a.

Accounts were obtained from pupils with special educational needs and their mainstream peers. Attempts were made to map out the informal discourses on special educational needs and the power/knowledge relationships they concealed. As Foucault (1976) points out:

the rationality of power is characterised by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed (the local cynicism of power) (p95).

The pupils' accounts suggest that the binary divisions of disabled/able-bodied; normal/deviant; integrated/segregated and others are inappropriate ways of understanding how their identities and experiences are constructed. Thus, the pupils were not identified as, say, deaf and placed in or out of mainstream as a singular event. Rather, identification and placement were continuous processes, and liable to change at any given moment within the ambivalences, contradictions and oscillations which characterised the mainstream pupils' discourses. Mainstream pupils seemed to operate a mini-regime of governmentality (Foucault, 1988) which governed their own conduct and that of others (including the pupils with SEN). This is interesting, given that few mainstream schools attempt explicitly to cultivate positive relationships between pupils with SEN and their peers. The pupils with SEN were not passive recipients of the discourses which constructed their identities and experiences. Rather, they contested and resisted these discourses, but often found that the mainstream pupils reconstructed their resistance as something else (eg as naughtiness or further evidence of 'difference'). This thesis aims to map out the power/knowledge relations within the discourses, where this endless 'agonism' occurs (Foucault, 1982, p222).

### **Outline of the thesis**

Chapter 2 reviews three relevant aspects of the literature on special educational needs. It begins with an overview of approaches to theorising special education, then focuses on the plethora of literature on integration. The chapter ends with a review of studies of pupils' experiences of integration.

A Foucauldian analysis of special educational needs of this kind does not appear to have been attempted before. The appropriateness of Foucault's analyses and methods has been acknowledged by Liggett (1988), Fulcher (1989) and others, but this appears to be the first study to focus on classroom discourses and practices in relation to SEN. It also differs from Foucauldian analyses of education (eg Ball, 1990a & b; Jones, 1990) in attempting to examine discourses at both formal and informal levels. For these reasons, methodology is discussed at length and in three sections. It begins with an examination of the Foucauldian perspective and its applicability to special educational needs. Chapter 3b takes a more reflexive stance and explores the experience of conducting research of this kind alongside more conventional policy related research. This is an account of alleged subversion. Chapter 3c reports on my experience in a school for the deaf (as part of my day - policy related research - job), and of being marginalised within the deaf environment. It was here that I began to understand and empathise with what some of the pupils were saying about their experiences within mainstream.

Chapter 4 begins the analysis of the discourses on special educational needs at a formal level. It describes the significant SEN discourses (medical, charity and rights) and the ways in which they construct the child with SEN within official policy statements. It begins by identifying the discourses, then looks at their proliferation (especially of medical and charity discourses) within the Warnock and HMI reports. The subsequent analysis of the documents interrogates them in a number of ways (eg by asking about the identities they give the child with SEN and the kind of education they consider appropriate). From this watershed or 'benchmark' (Visser, 1993, p1) older formal documents (mainly from the Scottish Office) are examined, and points of discontinuity or resistance are explored as they arise.

Chapter 5 continues at a formal level, but focuses on resistance to the discourses identified above (eg charity and medical) and to disabling practices. In particular, it



examines the disability rights movement and the constraints upon it from inside (eg from opposition between groups) and outside (especially from the Conservative Government).

Chapter 6 moves to informal discourses, within schools, classrooms and playgrounds and features eleven pupils with a range of special educational needs. The pupils themselves and their peers have produced the accounts. My role has been to organise the accounts around their discursive effects and to try to map out the power/knowledge relations within them.

The concluding chapter begins by highlighting some of the striking features of the accounts, then explores further the construct of resistance (which the data has unsettled rather than resolved). It also considers the notion that the mainstream pupils operate within a 'mini-regime of governmentality', in which they establish (and just as quickly abolish) boundaries of equity and justice and monitor the conduct of themselves and others. Gender and sexuality emerge as important issues in the pupils' accounts and these are given closer scrutiny. The final part of the chapter considers the value of a Foucauldian perspective for special educational needs and addresses the implications for disabled people of exposing networks of power/knowledge relations.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature of relevance to this research is wide ranging and embraces both educational and disability studies. The most important areas, approaches to theorising special education and the integration or mainstreaming of pupils with SEN, are discussed in this chapter. It concludes by examining research on pupils' perceptions of integration. These differ markedly from the Foucauldian analysis offered in this research in that they adopt an essentialist perspective.

### **Theorising special education**

Two polarised models have tended to predominate the conceptualisation of children with special educational needs. An individualistic model attributes difficulties to **within child** factors and has tended to be associated with medical and charity discourses (see Chapter 4). A social model, on the other hand, looks for features **outside** the child and have reflected discourses on rights (although medical and charity discourses can undermine these). Individual and social models of disability might also be characterised as 'personal troubles' or 'public issues' (Wright Mills, 1970; Borsay, 1986a). Such polarisations, of course, reflect broader ideological pressures and are commonplace in educational and social theorising (eg Townsend, 1981).

Several writers (eg Barton and Tomlinson, 1981; Barton, 1993a; Oliver, 1988) consider special education theorising to have been part of the march towards modernity, in which individualistic notions of disability (with their medical and charity discourses, expressed in the language of categories and needs) have been abandoned in favour of social models, such as social constructionism and social creationism. Others (eg, Reindal, 1995) have questioned whether any of these perspectives have served the interests of disabled people or enhanced understanding

of their experiences. The social constructionist and the social creationist perspectives are examined more fully below.

### *The social constructionist perspective*

A social constructionist view dismisses individualistic notions of disability and attributes causes to environmental factors. These might include the teaching approaches used and the attitudes of those who interact with the child. Within this perspective, symbolic interactionists (eg Goffman, 1963) examine how individuals try to cope with their labels and control the information the public receives about them through strategies such as 'passing' as normal. Abberley (1993) contends that whilst this is helpful in looking beyond the child, we are left with a sense that 'shameful difference' is inevitable (p110).

Social constructionists aim to discourage the use of all labelling or categorisation (a major criticism of individualistic models). However, the anti-labelling stance of some social constructionists has been criticised by Soder (1989) as dangerous:

This well meaning denial of the problems of disabled people is developing as a professional ideology in a time when service structures are undergoing changes that in themselves tend to make the needs of disabled persons invisible. Segregation is abolished and integration, deinstitutionalisation and decentralisation is being implemented. The driving forces behind this development are twofold. First there is the well intentioned ideological commitment: not to label and treat separately, but to integrate. Second the financial crisis of the state that motivates the search for less expensive alternatives (p255).

Booth (1991), in a now legendary public debate in the *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, accused Soder of misrepresenting anti-labelling as an attempt to deny the reality of disability. Oliver (1992b) attributed the dispute to onanism, rather than to a genuine commitment to disabled people:

Intellectual masturbation may seem a harsh way to describe a legitimate argument but it is precisely because we regard such activities as legitimate that they need to be confronted polemically. What we had in their discussion were two academics with abilities, discussing the relevance of a theory developed by other people with abilities in the context of studies of groups who were deviant but not disabled, and all this debate took place, divorced from any reference to direct experiences of disability. Now that may be scientific, but I doubt if it is very useful in understanding the real nature of disability, or indeed, integration in modern society (p20).

Abberley (1993) argues that disabled people are disadvantaged by the failure to recognise their 'special', "abnormal" requirements' (p111), while Oliver (1992b) is highly critical of a 'linguistic attempt to deny the reality of disability' by referring to disabled people as 'people with disabilities' (p21).

### ***Social creationist Perspective***

An alternative perspective, proposed by Abberley (1992) and others (eg Fulcher, 1989; Oliver, 1990a) is defined by them as a social creationist:

The essential difference between a social constructionist and a social creationist view of disability centres on where the *problem* is actually located. Both have begun to move away from the core ideology of individualism. The social constructionist view sees the

problem as being located within the minds of able-bodied people, whether individually (prejudice) or collectively, through the manifestation of hostile social attitudes and the enactment of social policies based upon a tragic view of disability. The social creationist view, however, sees the problem as located within the institutionalized practices of society (Abberley, 1992, pp82-3; original emphasis).

A social creationist perspective views disability as oppression and takes account of the material, environmental, social and psychological disadvantage experienced by disabled people. The aim, according to Abberley (1992), is to connect:

the common features of economic, social and psychological disadvantage with an understanding of the material basis of these disadvantages and the ideologies which propagate and reproduce them (p244).

Whilst condemning the social production of impairment, the social creationist asserts the value of disabled living and demands 'that difference not be merely tolerated and accepted but that it is positively valued and celebrated' (Oliver, 1992b, p25). It is overtly political, demanding changes in state and welfare provision to improve the material conditions for disabled people.

The rights of disabled people to articulate their wants rather than needs is also a fundamental part of the social creationist perspective. There is, however, a plurality of voices among the disabled and able-bodied and there is no guarantee that a social creationist will allow all of them, particularly the least articulate and powerful, to be heard. It may not be possible or appropriate to establish a single theory of special educational needs which achieves the aims cited by Abberley for all disabled people

and Corbett (1993) warns against merely replacing one form of dominant discourse with another.

The extent to which the social creationist perspective has challenged the oppression of disabled people has been questioned by some writers. Jenkins (1991), for example, criticises social creationists as reductionists who fail to recognise disability as a social class in its own right. This, argues Fulcher (1989), is insufficient to account for oppression. Reindal (1995) goes further to suggest that this perspective could itself be oppressive since, taken to its extreme, prevention of impairments might imply an eradication of people born with impairments (eg through gene therapy or abortion).

Social constructionist and social creationist perspectives, then, have been criticised for doing little to improve the circumstances of disabled people and the extent to which these perspectives enhance understanding of their experiences has also been questioned. While both perspectives make differing attempts to locate disability within social contexts, their reluctance to theorise agency has implied a kind of passivity from individuals, unless they are part of interest groups or wider social movements (Ligget, 1988; Oliver & Zarb, 1989). Yet, as Ligget (ibid) points out, the price of agency is participation within the normalising society which constrains and identifies people as disabled. A further challenge to the effectiveness of social models of theorising comes from the current educational climate in which special educational needs provision operates and which has heralded a new wave of individualism (see Chapters 4 &5).

### **Integration**

Integration means different things to different people (Booth, 1988). Most of the commentary on integration implies that it is a good thing and teachers in mainstream schools have, in a sense, become victims of this, with little or no opportunity to depart from the 'moral and social imperative' of mainstreaming:

Those teachers still daring to actually *withdraw* children from their mainstream classes for *remedial tuition* must have felt like accomplices to some form of educational apartheid (Payne, 1991, p61; original emphasis).

Mittler (1985) suggests that 'the fervour of integration has taken on the language of a religious revival' (p9). However, as Booth (1988) notes, Mittler's urge to adopt instead a 'commitment to better education' or 'good practice' (p99) tends to mask social and political contexts and the role of integration in obscuring and subtly perpetuating inequalities. As Fulcher (1989) points out, because integration discourses are so complex and contain a variety of objectives, they are the subject of 'intense struggles' (p49). Despite this, people often aspire to a common understanding or working definition:

The term *integration* is generally used as a collective noun for all attempts to avoid the segregated and isolated education of students with special needs (Meijer and Pijl, 1994, p4; original emphasis).

This is so broad as to be meaningless. Warnock distinguished three forms of integration. **Locational** integration occurs when pupils with special educational needs are educated on the same sites as their mainstream peers. Opportunities for **social** integration might arise, in which mainstream and SEN pupils could interact. The most complex, **functional** integration, occurs when pupils with SEN participate in mainstream classrooms alongside their peers, pursuing similar curriculum goals. Functional integration has been criticised by Hegarty et al (1981) and others for being vague and more concerned with the location of the pupil than with the learning that takes place. Pijl and Meijer (1991) suggest the use of the term curricular integration, implying that pupils with special educational needs pursue similar curriculum goals to those of their peers, as an alternative to functional integration.

Fish (1990) reflects on the importance of the Warnock report in reversing a trend which was 'outward' in the sense that special education provision was considered optimum. Warnock, he argues, was salutary in forcing the trend 'inward' and encouraging ordinary schools to meet special educational needs. Now, however, he suggests that:

limitations of all kinds placed on schools, together with increased expectations may be expected to reverse the trend again . . . to an *outward* movement of children from primary and secondary schools (pp226-7; original emphasis).

The implications of this, he suggests, are serious, moving special education once again from the centre to the periphery. This outward movement could be read, in Foucauldian terms, as an example of 'dividing practices', similar to those which incarcerated lepers during the Middle Ages or confined the poor, the insane and vagabonds in a single hospital in the 17th Century (Rabinow, 1984, p8).

Several writers view both special education and integration as an intensely political process which serves vested social and economic interests (eg Barton and Tomlinson, 1984; Fulcher, 1989). At the same time, however, central government has been largely ambivalent towards integration (Barton and Tomlinson, 1984). This ambivalence, the authors argue, arises from contradictory educational, social and economic pressures. In this context they see segregation, not integration, as inevitable.

The work of Wolfsenberger (1980) has been highly influential in setting ideas about integration within a broader context of services for people with disabilities (Booth, 1988). Wolfsenberger's concept of normalisation stemmed from a perceived need to invent a new ideology. The old unconscious ideologies, he argued, perpetuate



prejudices and discrimination against disabled people. Normalisation aimed to end segregation in schools and other institutions and to encourage culturally normative behaviour:

A (potentially) deviant person should be enabled to emit behaviours and an appearance appropriate (normative) within that culture for persons of similar characteristics, such as age and sex. The term *normative* is intended to have statistical rather than moral connotations, and could be equated with *typical* or *conventional* (p 28; original emphasis).

His argument, then, is about the assimilation of deviants within the so-called normal society. This, however, is problematic on two counts. First, many writers (eg Goffman, 1963; Garfinkel, 1967; Foucault 1976; Liggett, 1988) have argued that the notion of 'normal' is suspect, an artefact of the 'normalising society' and dependent on deviance for its existence. As Marks (1994) points out:

With the shift to normalisation, there existed by implication, people who needed normalisation and people who did not need normalisation (p73).

Thus, normalisation is part of the binarism which plagues special needs discourses. Marks suggests that a new binarism 'the integrated child' emerged out of the 'noble intent of non-categorisation, which in theory at least, had potential to avoid the use of binarisms' (p74). Barton and Corbett (1993) also comment on the 'sterility of a rigid dichotomy between the virtue of integration set against the evils of segregation' (p17). A second problem with normalisation is that it implies a denial of the disability which is central to a person's essence:

We know that we do not just happen to have a disability or that we are people first; our disabilities are essential parts of self, to be affirmed and celebrated, not denied or relegated to an appendage; and as such we demand to be called disabled people (Oliver, 1992b, p21).

For deaf people, the notion of normalisation is particularly problematic since it denies them access to Deaf culture (see Chapter 3c).

Barton and Tomlinson (1984) are critical of research which describes attempts at integration, without examining critically the assumptions and contradictions underlying the concept. As Hegarty and Pocklington (1981) point out 'integration is not a self-evident goal and must be justified in a rational way' (p14). Yet, they too are criticised by Barton and Tomlinson (1984) for providing largely descriptive accounts of integration and ignoring the motives behind it, which are:

a product of complex social, economic and political considerations which may relate more to the *needs* of the wider society, the whole education system and professionals working within the system, rather than simply to the *needs* of individual children (p65; original emphasis).

My own work in this area (Allan, 1994) has illustrated some of the confusions which can arise between practitioners who lack a shared understanding of the meaning and purpose of integration. Hegarty (1993) suggests banning the term altogether and even Warnock (1992; 1993) offers a 'mea culpa', in the realisation that integration is more complicated than the Committee had envisaged. Several writers have argued for a replacement concept (eg Booth, 1988; Oliver, 1992b), which signals more meaningful participation in the academic and social life of a mainstream school and which avoids

the 'dangerous complacency' (Barton and Corbett, 1993, p17) into which the 'new educational orthodoxy' (Oliver, 1992b, p23) of integration has lapsed.

Inclusive education has crept up and become the new orthodoxy. Uditsky (1995) suggests that the change came about as a result of the practices of integration being found wanting. Barton and Corbett (1993) argue that a move from integration to inclusion demands 'significant changes to incorporate different expectations' (p17) and Jupp (1992) contends that this leap is a political act. Respect and egalitarianism are seen as fundamental to inclusion (Baker and Gaden, 1990; McDonnell, 1995) and Uditsky (1995) identifies inclusion as having a set of principles which ensure the student with a disability is valued. They include membership in the school community, a single curriculum for all pupils, effective schooling practices (used for all students), friendships and relationships built on reciprocity and support which is not exclusively attached to the student with a disability. These principles require substantial system change and Uditsky suggests this is likely to take several years before it is properly understood and practised. He also speculates that 'the term will grow in popularity and ambiguity, rendering it less than useful in the long term', but sees it as being 'useful in the short term as a conceptual change agent' (p88). There is a danger, however, that inclusion is simply a new name for past practices, or that such radical change is simply seen as a symptom or an effect of 'policy hysteria . . . creating a climate of confusion and contradiction for educational development' (Stronach and Morris, 1994, p5).

Payne (1991) argues that in the headlong rush towards integration, the views of the children have been ignored. There have, however, been some attempts to redress this balance and these are discussed below.

### **Pupils' accounts of integration**

Much of the research on pupils' perspectives on integration has focused on mainstream pupils and has largely ignored the pupils with special educational needs. Whitaker (1994), for example, describes the response of mainstream pupils to the transfer from special school of a group of pupils with severe learning difficulties as 'wholly or predominantly positive' (p13) but also found hostility among some pupils and uncertainty about 'how we should treat them' (p15). The author suggests that females experienced greater anxiety associated with social or sexual approaches. He was dubious, however, about the authenticity of claims of friendships:

Even where the term *friend* was applied to a relationship between a mainstream and a Birkett House student it was clear that these characteristics were lacking and it would be unrealistic to expect otherwise in all but in very rare circumstances (p14; original emphasis).

Lewis (1994) is equally sceptical about the possibility of equal and reciprocal relationships between disabled and non-disabled pupils. In a case study of the integration of a child with severe learning difficulties she noted that the mainstream pupils took on roles as guides to her. Lewis saw little evidence of this being reversed, but contended that there were benefits to both parties from interactions of this kind.

Other studies of mainstream pupils suggest that most of them hold benevolent attitudes towards pupils with SEN. Hegarty et al (1981), for example, found that in general pupils with special educational needs were accepted and that rejection or mere toleration was uncommon. Kyle and Davies (1991) reported that the majority of pupils interviewed felt 'kindness towards those with a mental handicap' (p106) The authors stress, however, the need to address the sort of 'devaluing kindness' frequently expressed by young people, for example through pity:

There is also a great deal of embarrassment and discomfort associated with the subject, much of which has to do with inexperience, unfamiliarity and hearsay, such as the beliefs that the mentally retarded by definition are more likely to be violent, have fits or exhibit bizarre behaviour. As one pupil said during the discussion: "Well, I'd go and visit them and be their friend, but I wouldn't want to, you know, go out somewhere with them, to a dance or something" (p106).

Lynas (1986) found some disapproval among mainstream pupils, when they sensed preferential treatment of deaf pupils in their class. One possible way to avoid this, she argues, is to raise the level of awareness of ordinary pupils about the difficulties faced by disabled children, a view endorsed by Whitaker (1994). Quicke (1985) also identified the need for a serious effort to teach mainstream pupils about disability. Most of the practice he had encountered was superficial and did not invite critical thinking from pupils nor help them to make links between different areas of experience.

Several writers (eg Katz, 1981; Gibbons, 1985; Soder, 1990) suggest that mainstream pupils' attitudes are best characterised as ambivalent, that is they are both positive and negative towards their disabled peers. Gibbons argues that disabled people also share this ambivalence about themselves.

Some studies have tried to understand the perceptions of the pupils with special educational needs of their experiences of mainstreaming. Official documents recommend the involvement of pupils in assessment and placement discussions (Dfe, 1994; SOED, 1994). Despite this, Armstrong, et al (1993) note that the pupils' contribution to assessment procedures is minimal. Part of this arises from the way professionals conceptualise children's needs, which in turn influences the whole

assessment process and the pupils' perceptions of it. The authors are highly critical of professionals' inability to gain access to, and take account of, the child's perspective. Their interviews with pupils (mainly with behavioural difficulties) indicated that they had much to say, even if it was constructed within a professional discourse. That is, they responded with the language of 'needs' and of what 'was wrong with them'.

Marks (1994) illustrates how students' subjectivity has been constructed through ostensibly enlightened educational policies. She argues that students' own constructions have been largely ignored, but offers insight into this process through the diaries and poetry of an individual with communication difficulties. This person depicted a life of despair, in which he constructed himself as a mole, 'safe, anonymous and hidden' (p78). He was unreachable, but was still asking for help:

Lost each day and waiting  
possibly for life,  
but not knowing if it's there  
The mute arrives and listens (p79).

Cheston (1994) interviewed leavers from special schools and found that they constructed a variety of explanations for being in special education. Some attributed it to an accident or factors beyond their control, while others 'blamed' experiences in mainstream schools. Most, according to the author attempted to minimise their deficits, but these responses might simply reflect the interviewing style. For instance, in one extract, the interviewer asks 'do you think anyone here is [slow or handicapped?]'. This may well have encouraged pupils to draw on defensive, rather than more broadly reflexive, repertoires. Nevertheless, these accounts suggest that the pupils do not merely subscribe to the discourses of professionalism.

Cooper (1993) reports on the experiences of (male) pupils formally labelled as disaffected. They complained about the teachers' disinterest and inhumane treatment of them. This often came on top of difficult family circumstances and made the pupils feel completely worthless. Yet, most pupils acknowledged that they were unruly and difficult to handle. They also suggested that mainstream pupils could not be expected to deal with them and their problems. Acceptance of this kind may be a good illustration of the boys reflecting the professional discourses which construct them as problem pupils, as Armstrong et al (1993) have suggested.

Within the medico-psychological paradigm, several writers have tried to measure the self esteem of individuals with special educational needs. Harvey and Greenway (1984) have observed the adverse effect of physical handicap on the measured self concept of both the affected child and their siblings. Resnick and Hutton (1987) suggested that poor self image was likely to invoke a negative comparison with peers and a perception of self as disabled. Wolman and Basco (1994) identified relationships with parents as an important factor in relation to self-esteem.

Other writers have contested the presence of low self esteem among disabled youngsters. Arnold and Chapman (1992) found no difference between levels of self esteem among students with physical disabilities and able-bodied students. Gibbons (1985) also found little evidence that disabled people suffered particularly low self esteem. She argues that the ambivalence they experienced encompassed both a negative impression of their own stigma and a favourable impression of themselves.

Sheldon (1991) reports the views of pupils with SEN on the demands of coping in a mainstream school. These included mixing with large groups of pupils with negative, or simply indifferent, attitudes, fending for themselves and struggling to understand the often very confusing classwork. In a study of the integration of deaf pupils, Lynas (1991) found that some pupils tried to avoid receiving preferential treatment or

appearing different. They did this by engaging in 'strategies designed to deceive teachers into believing that they were coping with their work when, in reality, they were not' (p32).

Notions of 'integration' are part of the formal discourses on special educational needs, explicitly ideological, and framed within a normative realm which implies that integration is desirable and expresses pragmatic concerns about how best to achieve. Within these discourses, pupils are constructed as objects upon which integration is to be exercised. How then, do we understand those attempts described above to give the pupils a voice? The authors seem to be trying to produce an authentic reading of what it is like to be a disabled person in a mainstream school. They offer an intrinsic interest and a novelty which is welcome. What they have not done, however, is to analyse the voices as part of the discursive effects which construct their identities and experiences. That is a task of a Foucauldian project.

### **Summary**

Approaches to theorising special education have shifted from individualistic to social theoretical models in recent years, but the latter have been criticised as inadequate and of contributing little to understanding the experiences of disabled people. Integration, according to the literature, is a slippery concept, which also obscures the political and economic interests served by it. Many writers have concluded that it is no longer useful as an orthodoxy and suggest that inclusion offers more political possibilities. Research which has obtained pupils' perspectives on integration has done so within professional discourses which construct them as children with needs and deficits.

A Foucauldian study, it is argued, could offer a substantial contribution to theorising both special education and integration, by focusing on discourses. It also aims to understand pupils' experiences in mainstream schools, not by seeking to capture these as essences, but by mapping out the patterns within the various discourses which



construct them. The next chapter describes the Foucauldian approach which has facilitated this.

### 3 (a)

## METHODOLOGY

### **The aims of the research**

The research aimed to explore the ways in which formal and informal discourses constructed the identities and experiences of pupils with special educational needs. It also sought to explore whether these constructions were resisted at an official level or by individual pupils. Research questions were identified at two levels:

#### *Formal discourses on special educational needs*

1. How have children been identified as having special educational needs within official documents?
2. What kinds of discourses have informed these constructions?
3. How have decisions about the educability of SEN pupils and appropriate curricula been made?
4. How have the roles of professionals and parents of SEN pupils been articulated?
5. Is there evidence of resistance to the 'official' discourses?

#### *Informal discourses on special educational needs*

1. How do pupils with special educational needs describe their identities and experiences in mainstream schools?
2. How do mainstream pupils describe the identities and experiences of pupils with SEN?
3. How do pupils with SEN and their mainstream peers account for their relationships?
4. Is there evidence of resistance among pupils with SEN to particular identities and experiences?

## **The research approach**

The analysis of discourses began at a formal level and involved the scrutiny of various official documents, but looked particularly at the report of the Warnock Committee (DES, 1978) on pupils with special educational needs and the HMI report (SED, 1978) on pupils with learning difficulties. Both documents have had a major impact on SEN provision in Scotland and the Warnock report provides the basis for the existing legal framework of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended. The analysis aimed to identify the prescriptions and contradictions within the discourses.

Having examined the formal discourses, the focus then switched to the schools and the informal ways in which pupils' identities and experiences were constructed. Eleven pupils with Records of Needs in primary and secondary schools were shadowed for between two and four days each. The pupils were observed within classrooms and in more informal settings, for instance in playgrounds and corridors. They were also asked to give accounts of their experiences and of their relationships with other pupils, as were their mainstream peers. At a school level, the mechanisms which exist within schools (both formal and informal) for the communication of knowledge about pupils with SEN were studied. This involved examining Records of Needs (the Scottish version of a statement) and school records and interviewing key personnel (for example, learning support and guidance staff). Pupils from a special school for the deaf were also included in the study, but as part of my own reflexivity: the experience of trying to function as a hearing person within a deaf environment provided a lesson in liminality.

The use of photographs had been considered as a device to initiate conversations with pupils about identities and experiences. Some were taken in the early stages of the research, but their use was abandoned for several reasons. First, they were likely to produce very static images, and as such were unhelpful in exploring the processes of identification. Second, the photographer is often unable to control what the

individual sees in a photograph. Barthes (1981) refers to this phenomenon as a 'punctum' (p45) in which elements of a photograph punctuate and disturb the viewer's relationship with the photographer's intentions. Third, many of the people involved in the research did not look disabled, therefore photographic images would have had limited value. Vlachou (1995) opted to use this medium to explore images of children with Down's syndrome, but these children do, of course, have very distinctive features and a range of accompanying stereotyped notions about them. In her case, photographs may have prompted people to reflect on these. Finally, it was less difficult to get the pupils to speak than had been anticipated. Photographs, therefore, were unnecessary.

### **Foucault and special educational needs**

The work of Foucault has significance to the study of special education in two respects. First, his analyses of medicine, madness and discipline and punishment are relevant to the experiences of children with SEN. Foucault describes how the patient, the madman and the criminal are constructed through disciplinary techniques. Children with SEN could be said to be constructed in similar ways. Second, he offers a methodology, or a 'box of tools' (Foucault, 1977a, p205) which makes it possible to analyse both the official discourses on special educational needs and those operating within schools and classrooms. The relevance of particular themes from Foucault's analyses and his methodology will be discussed in this chapter. The applicability of Foucault's ideas and methodology to related areas of enquiry has been observed by others, who have attempted similar analyses of psychiatry, dentistry, and education and their varying degrees of success will be explored. Finally, criticisms of Foucault's work will be examined. One of these has been his failure to undertake any empirical work within institutions, which this research aims to counter. Liggett (1988) argues that it is necessary to become conscious of the 'institutionalized practices in terms of which disability is constituted' (p264) in order to broaden the scope for political action. She warns, however, that the enormity of a Foucauldian approach

should not be underestimated, since it involves acceptance (or at least acknowledgement) of the normalising society.

### **The subject and power**

Foucault's main interest is in the ways in which individuals are constructed as social subjects, knowable through disciplines and discourses. The goal of Foucault's work:

has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture human beings are made subjects (in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p208).

In *The birth of the clinic* (1973) and *Madness and civilisation* (1967), Foucault traces changes through the ages in the ways in which medical and mental illness or abnormality were spoken about. Foucault employs a distinctive methodology for these studies, archaeology, which aims to provide a 'history of statements that claim the status of truth' (Davidson, 1986, p221). Foucault's later work, *Discipline and punish* (1977b) focuses on the techniques of power that operate within an institution and which simultaneously create 'a whole domain of knowledge and a whole type of power' (p185). This work is characterised as genealogy and sets out to examine the 'political regime of the production of truth' (Davidson, 1986, p224). Both archaeology and genealogy are concerned with the limits and conditions of discourses but the latter takes into account political and economic concerns (Shumway, 1989).

Foucault draws parallels between the disciplinary mechanisms within modern prisons and educational practices, seeing the mechanisms of power as being situated in the political economy of the body. Contemporary approaches to discipline and punishment appear far more humanitarian than the systems of the past, but Foucault

argues the converse. The effects of the mechanisms of power, he contends, are to construct individuals as subject in two senses: as subject to someone else, through control and restraint and as a subject tied to their own identity by their conscience and self-knowledge. 'Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to' (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p212).

### Surveillance

A central theme of Foucault's work is the way in which the 'gaze' constructs individuals as both subjects and objects of knowledge and power. In *The birth of the clinic*, Foucault illustrates how the medical gaze opened 'a domain of clear visibility' (Foucault, 1973, p105) for doctors, by allowing them to construct an account of what was going on inside a patient and to connect signs and symptoms with particular diseases. The space in which the gaze operated moved from the natural surroundings of the patient, the home, to the hospital, which became the site for the teaching as well as the acquisition of medical knowledge. The object of this knowledge was the body of the ill patient. The body of the madman was viewed as 'the visible and solid presence of his disease' (p159). Hence the medical gaze focused on the body and 'normalisation' or treatment involved either 'consolidation', 'purification', 'immersion' or 'regulation of movement' (Foucault, 1967, pp159-172).

In his genealogical analyses of discipline and punishment and of sexuality, Foucault describes how 'techniques of surveillance' which occur in what he terms the 'local centres of power/knowledge' (for example in relations between children and adults) have an individualising effect:

In a disciplinary regime . . . individualisation is *descending*; as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualised . . . In a system of discipline, the child is more individualised than the

adult, the patient more than the healthy man . . . when one wishes to individualise the healthy, normal and law-abiding adult, it is always by asking him how much of the child he has in him (1977b, p193; original emphasis).

Techniques of surveillance were so sophisticated, argues Foucault, that 'inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is everywhere' (1977b, p195). He identifies three mechanisms as particularly important during the eighteenth century:

- Hierarchical observation
- Normalising judgements
- The examination.

These techniques seem to shape the identity and experiences of children with special educational needs and are considered below.

### ***Hierarchical observation***

The perfect disciplinary apparatus, according to Foucault, 'would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything perfectly' (Foucault, 1977b, p173). Foucault describes, how the technique of panopticism (based on the design by Jeremy Bentham) was first integrated into the teaching relationship so that pupils could be observed at all times:

In order to help the teacher, Batencour selected from among the best pupils a whole series of officers - intendants, observers, monitors, tutors, reciters of prayers, writing officers, receivers of ink, almoners and visitors. The roles thus defined were of two kinds: the first involved material tasks . . . the second involved surveillance (pp175-6).

Foucault views this mechanism as both efficient, since surveillance was everywhere and constant, and effective, because it was 'discreet', functioning 'permanently and largely in silence' (1977b, p177). It also supervised those who were entrusted with the surveillance of others.

Provision for children with special educational needs in mainstream schools has elements of this kind of surveillance. Children with SEN placed in mainstream classrooms are usually supervised constantly. This supervision is hierarchical in the sense that many pupils are accompanied in mainstream classrooms by special needs auxiliaries; learning support specialists devise and oversee their programme of work and monitor how the mainstream teacher is coping with a child; headteachers also require to be kept informed of progress of recorded pupils in order to communicate this at formal review meetings to educational psychologists, parents or other individuals. The surveillance does not stop at this point, as a network of reciprocal power relations has been created:

this network *holds* the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another: supervisors, perpetually supervised (Foucault, 1977b, p177; original emphasis).

All children are the objects of scrutiny within schools, but for pupils with special educational needs, the gaze reaches further. They are observed, not only at work within the classroom, but also during break times. The way in which they interact with their peers, or integrate socially is often viewed as equally important, if not more so, than their attainment of mainstream curricular goals. All aspects of the child's interpersonal relations can, therefore, be brought under the vigilance of staff. The emotional well-being of a child with special educational needs is also cited as an important aspect of special education. This legitimises the search **within** the child for signs, for example that he or she is happy or gaining confidence, to an degree that



teachers would not scrutinise mainstream pupils. Surveillance of pupils with special educational needs enables staff to show concern for their welfare and acquire knowledge about their needs and their progress. It also constructs them as objects of power and knowledge.

### *Normalising judgements*

Foucault observes how the Norm entered education and other disciplines 'imposing new delimitations on them' (Foucault, 1977b, p184). While this standardised education and promoted homogeneity, it also had an individualising effect, 'by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another' (p184). Children with special needs are defined in relation to normality. The 'cut-off' point, where a child is or is not deemed to require to have a Record of Needs or a statement is in no sense clearly defined, however, and variations in levels of recording and statementing have been a source of concern to administrators. Some children who are not recorded or statemented, but who are seen as having special educational needs by parents or professionals, are thought to be disadvantaged by not having a label which distinguishes them clearly from normal pupils. In a climate of resource constraints, distance from the norm has become a valuable commodity.

### *The Examination*

This technique, argues Foucault, combines hierarchical observation and normalising judgement and 'establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them' (Foucault, 1977b, p184). In education it has taken a less ritualised form than, for example in medicine, where the medical gaze allows doctors to construct an account of what goes on inside a patient, connecting signs and symptoms with disease. Three features of the examination enable it to function as a disciplinary technique:

- It imposes a principle of compulsory visibility, holding subjects in a 'mechanism of objectification' (Foucault, 1977b, p187).
- Individuality is introduced into the field of documentation. This makes it possible to classify individuals, form categories, determine averages and fix norms.
- Each individual is established as a case and may be 'described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his very individuality'. This individual may also have to be 'trained or corrected, classified, normalized, excluded etc' (Foucault, 1977b, p191).

Foucault sees the examination as at the centre of the techniques that render an individual an object of power and knowledge.

In the assessment procedures leading to the opening of a Record of Needs, the child's individuality is established, both in relation to normal standards of ability and differentiated within a particular kind of difficulty. Thus, two children with Down's syndrome will be judged to be different, once factors such as difficulties experienced, personality and home background are taken into account. Before a multi-disciplinary assessment of a child with special needs takes place, the suspicion of abnormality needs to be voiced. This may occur at birth, when doctors observe chromosome defects or trauma affecting the brain, or later on, when parents or teachers become concerned. The nursery or school provides a space where children can be compared against norms and any gaps provide evidence of an abnormality.

By the time the child undergoes a formal assessment, there is usually little doubt as to the existence of an abnormality, or a special educational need. The multi-disciplinary assessment, conducted from a variety of perspectives, for example medical, educational and psychological, attempts to gain as much information as possible about the child and his or her or home background, but is primarily a political and social process (Galloway et al, 1994). This form of examination:

clearly indicates the appearance of a new modality of power in which each individual receives as his status his own individuality, and in which he is linked by his status to the features, the measurements, the gaps, the *marks* that characterize him and make him a *case* (Foucault, 1977b, p192; original emphasis).

Following the assessment, the child with special educational needs is marked out for perpetual surveillance throughout the remainder of his or her school career and beyond. Parents and professionals also come under scrutiny as part of the continuous review of the recorded child's needs. All are caught by a gaze which is 'always receptive to the deviant' (Foucault, 1976, p89) and the very existence of 'abnormalities', such as special educational needs, provides a further rationale for surveillance of the general population (Ryan, 1981).

### ***Resistance***

An important feature of surveillance is the way in which individuals resist it. Resistance is also one way of identifying how and where power is being exercised and it can be analysed in 'tactical and strategic terms' (Foucault, 1980a, p163). Children with highly negative or confrontational kinds of resistance, for instance those with emotional or behavioural difficulties, may engage in self mutilation, truancy or violence. There may, however, be other ways in which power is resisted which are less antagonistic.

A final aspect of Foucault's analysis which appears relevant to the experiences of children with SEN is spatialisation.

## **Spatialisation**

Foucault showed how the practice of medicine, which began as a classificatory discipline, underwent two metamorphoses, becoming a medicine of symptoms before emerging as the anatomico-clinical medicine which exists today. These were characterised by changes in the spatialisation of disease and of medical treatment. The medical gaze altered the perceived space in which illness has its origin and its distribution and the clinic 'was probably the first attempt to order a science on the exercise and decisions of the gaze' (1973, p89). The treatment of madness also underwent radical change with the birth of the asylum as a punitive space. Foucault described the asylum as:

not a free realm of observation, diagnosis, and therapeutics; it is a juridical space where one is accused, judged, and condemned, and from which one is never released except by the version of this trial in psychological depth - that is, by remorse. Madness will be punished in the asylum, even if it is innocent outside of it. (Foucault, 1967, p269).

The 'superposition' of the child and his or her special educational need, 'no more than a historical, temporary datum' (Foucault, 1973, p3), has led to an often emotive debate over the source of learning difficulties. Deficit and curriculum models, both of which have validity, also have their dogmatists. The space in which special education is provided is also significant in relation to claims that a child is integrated. Ideal notions of integration are largely concerned with children with special educational needs and ordinary children sharing spaces, with the most pervasive sharing perceived as the most successful. Locational, social and curricular integration tend to be regarded as progressive stages for pupils with special educational needs, but it is the increased physical proximity that is subjected to maximum surveillance and cited as evidence of integration. Changes in the spatialisation both of the special educational

need and the delivery of provision, advocated by Warnock and HMI, are explored in Chapter 4.

### **Archaeology, genealogy and Foucault's analytical tools**

Much of the methodology used in this research is based on the work of Foucault, which has exciting analytical possibilities for the complex area of special educational needs. The main value in Foucault's ideas lie in his search for discontinuity at the levels of both discourse and practice. Special education, with its apparently contradictory elements, for example integration and segregation or labelling and anti-labelling, seems to legitimate an analysis of this kind. An attempt is made to combine two approaches adopted by Foucault at different points of his career.

Archaeology, which characterised much of Foucault's earlier work (1967, 1972, 1973), facilitates a 'descriptive' account of discourses, essentially a history of statements that stood for the truth (Davidson, 1986). In special education, we should not be asking **why** we have become 'integrationist', rather **how** did integration and not something else come to be the dominant discourse within special education? This requires illumination of the discontinuities and oppositions within special education discourses. Groups representing individuals with, for example, hearing impairment, aphasia or specific learning difficulties, some of whom have advocated segregation or at least separate specialist provision, are part of this process.

Foucault's later genealogical pursuits (1976, 1977b) focus on power/knowledge relations within institutions and reflect a shift of Foucault's interests from discourses to 'discursive practices' and from a macro to a micro level of analysis. He urges others to analyse the 'micro-physics of power' (1977b, p29) by searching for 'points of resistance' (1976, p95). For pupils with SEN, this involves looking for evidence of them challenging the identity they are given or opting for alternative experiences.

This research aims to combine archaeology and genealogy by examining discourses at both macro, or formal, and micro, or informal, levels. In special education these appear to be connected by a meso level of discourses, in which a child is constructed as having 'special educational needs' within a Record of Needs. The opening of a Record of Needs and its subsequent role in determining special provision (or not) render the child different from so-called 'ordinary' pupils. The formation of statements in the document emerge simultaneously from the wider SEN discourses and from the practices within schools. The Record of Needs details what the child is thought to **need**, based on knowledge about special education and what it is possible to guarantee to **provide**, based on knowledge of existing practices and available resources. The final sanction of the document is given by the education authority, which also makes the stated provision. The features of archaeology and genealogy which are thought to be pertinent to this research are outlined below.

### *Archaeology*

Foucault's archaeology aims to describe, rather than explain, discursive practices through which statements that count as the truth have been produced. This is a subversive kind of description, 'from a point of view that shifted what would count as a plausible or relevant explanation' (Davidson, 1986, p223). Foucault offers a set of guidelines for the examination of the three discursive domains, the formation of objects, types of enunciation and formation of concepts and it seems appropriate to approach the analysis of the Warnock and HMI reports in this way. It involves the following procedures:

1. Define a group of statements in terms of the distance between them (in order to formulate their law of division).
2. Define the statements in terms of the relations between them.

3. Establish groups of statements by determining the system of permanent and coherent statements involved; analyse the interplay of the appearance of concepts and their dispersion.
4. Regroup statements, describe their interconnection and account for the unitary forms under which they are presented.

The purpose is not to present discourse as a fixed form. Rather, one should look for dispersion of points of choice and determine points of diffraction of discourse. These might include:

- Points of incompatibility: two objects, types of enunciation or concepts may appear in the same discursive formation without being able to enter the same series of statements.
- Points of equivalence: the two discursive elements become alternatives (for example either integration or segregation).
- Link points of systematisation: equivalent, yet incompatible elements, a coherent series of objects come to form discursive sub-groups.

Foucault also emphasises the need to consider opposition groups/lobbies and the authorities in a field of non-discursive practices. Fairclough (1992) adds to this a plea for analyses which offer 'real instances of people doing or saying or writing things' and examples of 'dominated groups opposing dominant discursive and non-discursive systems' (pp56-57). In special education this might include oppositions to the economic interests and social control served by particular segregative or integrative practices or by education more generally.

As well as looking at the statements within the Warnock and HMI documents, an attempt is made to trace their emergence during this century. This approach, which is also part of Foucault's archaeology, differs from conventional historical accounts,

by taking themes of the Warnock and HMI documents as a starting point, then pursuing them through earlier documents until disjunctures are found. The documents searched come from government sources, for example the Scottish Education Department and Health Board, and the teacher unions, through the Scottish Education Journal. They also include those voices which challenged the dominant discourses of the time.

### ***Genealogy***

Foucault's genealogy sets out to examine 'the mutual relations between systems of truth and modalities of power, the way in which there is a *political regime* of the production of truth' (Davidson (1986, p224). In common with Nietzsche, Foucault opposes the search for the 'origin', which presupposes that things are most precious and essential at the moment of birth (Nietzsche, 1974) and 'assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession' (Foucault, 1984a, p78). Instead, the examination of knowledge/power relations is an analysis of descent, which searches for:

the accidents, the minute deviations . . . the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us . . . truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents (Foucault, 1984a, p81).

Power and knowledge are seen by Foucault as reciprocal:

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative



constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute power relations (Foucault, 1977b, p27).

Foucault tries to discourage reification by stressing the need to examine the effects of the relations of power and knowledge on individuals. One aspect of power/knowledge relations that is important in relation to special educational needs is what Foucault calls the 'political technology of the body':

there may be a knowledge of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them (Foucault, 1977b, p26).

Foucault recommends that an analysis of power and knowledge relations should be conducted within institutions (in this case in schools), where it is possible to examine techniques of power:

This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise and which others have to recognise in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects (Foucault, 1982, p212).

Children with special educational needs and their parents seem to be the focus of techniques of power of this kind by professionals who claim to be acting in the best interests of the child.

Foucault cautions against a metaphysics or ontology of power which presupposes it has its own origin, nature and manifestations:

The exercise of power is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others. Which is to say, of course, that something called Power, with or without a capital letter, which is assumed to exist universally in a concentrated or diffused form, does not exist. Power exists only when it is put into action (1982, p219).

The analysis of power relations, Foucault argues, requires the establishment of a number of elements. These are considered in the context of special educational needs.

1. The system of differentiation, which permits one to act upon the actions of others. This might include the rules which enable 'experts' to determine the needs of and provision for SEN pupils.
2. Types of objectives pursued by those who act. In special education vested interests (eg economic or social) may be served by particular practices.
3. The means of bringing power relations into being. The Record of Needs, by affirming that a child is 'special', might legitimise particular power relations between staff and in relation to the child. There may be other means, for example surveillance or fund-raising events for the 'special class'.
4. Forms of institutionalisation. These can be varied, but for the SEN child, the school and the classroom is arguably a locus of control.
5. Degrees of rationalisation. The bringing of power relations into play as action may be more or less elaborate in relation to the effectiveness of the instruments, the certainty of results or the costs involved. This could involve consideration of the outcomes of special education provision.

Although this seems to provide a structure with which to examine the practices within schools, it does not, on the surface, allow one to see how power is exercised by the children with SEN or others. However, this could emerge within points of resistance, offering important clues to the ways in which power is being exercised upon them.

### ***Theory as a 'box of tools'***

The main 'tool' or strategy which Foucault uses within archaeology and genealogy is one of **reversal**. This entails examining official discourses which point to a particular conclusion, usually positive, and considering the implications of an opposite outcome (Shumway, 1989). In Foucault's studies of madness and sexuality he employs reversal to striking effect, showing, for example, that sexuality is not repressed and silenced, but is part of a whole proliferation of discourses. **Discontinuity**, another of Foucault's devices, encourages the search within historical discourses for gaps and disjunctures, because, he contends, this is where change occurs. This requires abandonment of conventional notions of history as continuous and progressive and seems significant for special educational needs, given the complacency with which the 'Warnock watershed' (Visser, 1993, p1) has come to signify enlightened progress. Finally, **specificity and exteriority** require us to seek to understand individuals and phenomena rather differently. Foucault encourages us to examine phenomena, such as special educational needs as part of the discourses which construct them. These discourses should also be viewed at their exterior, as unmotivated and unintentional (rather than having an internal rationality or irrationality). These strategies were helpful in examining both formal and informal discourses on children with SEN and the ways in which they constructed their identities and experiences.

Case studies enabled accounts of the experiences of pupils with special educational needs to be collected from them and their peers. These accounts were obtained through interviews, but the informal interactions among pupils, for instance in classrooms or playgrounds, and with teachers were also the focus of attention. The

kinds of knowledge about children with special educational needs within these accounts were examined in relation to the broader discourses, evident from the official documents. A discourse framework, derived from the analysis of the Warnock and HMI documents and discussed in Chapter 4, helped to begin the analysis of the accounts from pupils and teachers.

Davidson (1986) sees no difficulty in pursuing both archaeology and genealogy, arguing that genealogy does not so much displace archaeology as widen the kinds of analysis. Genealogy is generally perceived as the more sophisticated of Foucault's approaches because of its political dimension (Simons, 1995). In this study it seems appropriate to make use of both archaeology and genealogy, since each seems to offer distinctive, but not mutually exclusive, analytical possibilities. It is important to bear in mind, however, that there may be difficulties in reconciling the fundamentally different epistemologies they represent.

### **Applications of Foucault**

Roth (1992) notes the 'bewitching effect' that Foucault's ideas have had on people who have attempted to apply them to other disciplines. This partly arises from the authors' tendency to use Foucault's vivid language to convey their own ideas. The result, Roth claims, is often clogged passages that occlude, rather than illuminate, the issue under discussion. A more fundamental problem common to many of the applications is a failure to address some of the serious criticisms which have been levelled at Foucault's work.

Marshall (1990) notes that few studies have attempted to combined archaeology and genealogy. The work of Walkerdine (1984) on the way the developing child is constructed within developmental psychology and child-centred education adopts an archaeological approach. Her analysis demonstrates how (under what conditions) the developing child has become an object of scientific investigation, a move which she

argues has not been liberating. Attempts at genealogies have almost exclusively been derivative of *Discipline and punish* (for example Jones, 1990; Nettleton, 1992).

Despite the obvious relevance of Foucault's ideas and methodology to education, efforts so far have been somewhat uninspiring. In his introduction to a collection of papers on Foucault and education, Ball (1990a) fails to synthesise meaningfully the Foucauldian analyses presented by the authors. He avoids addressing some of the epistemological issues which Foucault's work raises, for example in positing knowledge as an activity, rather than a fixed entity. The result is a somewhat uneven collection, with a lack of any overall sense of purpose in pursuing a Foucauldian analysis of education. The introduction of Foucault's ideas into some of the analyses appear somewhat contrived and, as Chisholm (1991) points out, of little added benefit.

There are, however, some papers in this collection which merit closer scrutiny. Hoskins (1990) reveals Foucault to be a closet pedagogue, whose identity is masked by the hyphen with which he connects power and knowledge relations. The hyphen, according to Hoskins, signifies the 'centrality of education in the construction of modernity' (p29). The author argues that it is not only in *Discipline and punish* that Foucault speaks most explicitly as an educationist: in *The birth of the clinic*, he digresses into a documentation of the developments in medical training and offers an account of learning to be a doctor. This is significant, since an important question surrounding Foucault's analysis is its value in effecting change in education or in other institutions. This point is discussed more fully in the final part of this chapter.

Jones (1990) traces the emergence of the Victorian urban schoolteacher as a moral, rather than an intellectual, agent. He suggests, however, that it was 'from a mixture of fear, disgust and anxiety, rather than love' (p70), that a teacher approached a class of scholars. Teachers came to be perceived as having a significant capacity to regulate

the children's lives. This 'tutelary discourse' (p73) extended their influence, or their 'bio-power' into new areas of hygiene, physical training and housecraft. Whilst this new role brought the teacher closer to the child's home, it placed 'her' in a subsidiary relationship to medical practitioners and educational psychologists. The teacher's acquired semi-dependence within a 'tutelary complex' (p75) reduced her status to that of a semi-professional. The image of the teacher acting in loco parentis is evident in special needs practice. Teachers who perceive inadequate parenting, or who view parents as part of the 'cause' of a child's special educational needs, often seek to provide a counterbalance. They may, for example, allow a child who appears tired or irritable to rest rather than work. Difficulties could arise, however, if, as Jones argues, the teacher's professional status in relation to other practitioners is undermined as a consequence.

Ball (1990b) argues that appraisal techniques in educational management subjectify individuals by co-opting them into the process and suggests that school effectiveness research has encouraged schools to become agents of their own betterment. He also describes how technologies of management, market competition and systems of administrative rationality have gradually excluded individuals from decision-making. The language of management, he argues, is one of 'rationality and efficiency', which pushes problems, particularly those of individuals, to the margins. Some empirical examples of, say, appraisal interviews might have strengthened Ball's analysis of the process of subjectification, but his account is, nevertheless, a convincing one.

Dentistry was the focus of Nettleton's (1992) genealogy, but she ultimately fails to deliver an analysis of this kind. Her chapter on methodology reveals clearly and temptingly the aspects of dentistry which can be illuminated by examining techniques of power. In particular, she discusses how the techniques of surveillance and spatialisation render the mouth with teeth an object of both power and knowledge. In earlier chapters she explores practices involving the mother, pain, fear and sugar,

which she argues are part of discourse on dentistry. Ultimately, however, the author disappoints by failing to do what she applauded Bloor and McIntosh (1990) for accomplishing, that is revealing forms of resistance evoked by surveillance. This produced a 'contemporary exercise of power in professional-client relationship using fieldwork rather than documentary materials' (Bloor & McIntosh, 1990, p180). Why Nettleton chooses not to provide a similar analysis is unclear, since she devotes an entire chapter to the dentist's surgery. Instead, she attempts a descriptive account, interspersed with extracts from official discourse on dentistry.

Bloor and McIntosh's (1990) empirical study of surveillance and concealment in professional-client relationships seems to be the most insightful Foucauldian analysis to have been accomplished thus far. Its merit lies in the provision of actual empirical examples of power-knowledge relations. The authors focused on the interaction between working class mothers and health visitors and between patients of therapeutic communities and their care workers. A variety of forms of resistance to the 'disembodied gaze' of the professionals was uncovered:

- Collective ideological dissent
- Individual ideological dissent
- Non-co-operation
- Escape or avoidance
- Concealment.

The most common form of resistance was concealment. It was also the most successful because it 'provides a way of avoiding control without confrontation' (p176). One example of concealment which the mothers engaged in was to keep the health visitors unaware of having moved their babies onto solid food much earlier than had been advocated by manipulating the information available. An example

was also given of the therapeutic patients who entered into a kind of 'deviant conformity' (p177), in the way that Goffman (1968) has also reported.

The other forms of resistance which Bloor and McIntosh highlighted were more negative and confrontational than concealment and, interestingly, less common and successful. This is not entirely surprising, given the 'legitimacy' of the control being exercised through surveillance in both contexts. The authors point out that the health visitor, whilst there in a supportive capacity, also had responsibilities to protect the child against maltreatment. Equally, the care officers had a duty towards the safety and well-being of the residents. In both these situations, more overt displays of resistance might have been held to be unreasonable. The empirical examples of less antagonistic forms of resistance (eg avoidance or concealment) seem closer to what might occur in the special educational needs environment.

### **Criticisms of Foucault**

Habermas (1986) and Rorty (1990) see the problem with Foucault as lying in the tension between:

the almost serene scientific reserve of the scholar striving for objectivity on the one hand, and, on the other, the political vitality of the vulnerable, subjectively excitable, morally sensitive intellectual (Habermas, 1986, p103).

Rorty thinks it should be possible to be both objective and political, by making a more effective distinction between them and labels Foucault the 'knight of autonomy' (p2). Habermas, on the other hand, sees Foucault as ultimately unable to make value judgements and denounces him as a pessimist. This particular charge is an important one for education and is considered more fully in this section. First, however, is the criticism of his treatment of history.



### ***'Fast and loose' historian***

Foucault's approach to history is to isolate central components of social institutions and trace them back in time. In so doing, he shakes the cosiness that historians have traditionally enjoyed in the relationship of the past to the present, in which 'the seamless web of yesteryear leads slowly and inexorably into the present' (Poster, 1984, p74). As Shumway (1989) points out, he does not deal with a discipline directly, but rather describes its archaeology, 'which in this instance means the layers of intellectual sediment upon which it is built' (p159). Thus, his study of madness explores medical and other discourses which led to the construction of the insane. He has been accused of playing 'fast and loose' with historical data and time, selecting arbitrarily from sources (Megill, 1979) and Poster (1984) remarks that it is little wonder that he has been criticised by historians, since 'the evidential basis of the texts is odd and incomplete' (p73). Megill, however, also argues that to accuse Foucault of inaccuracy is to miss the point of his work. He suggests that Foucault is best treated as an animator, not as an authority (1985).

Foucault eschews the notion of searching for origins and seeks instead to:

cultivate the details and accidents that accompany every beginning;  
it will be scrupulously attentive to their petty malice; it will await  
their emergence, once unmasked as the face of the other (Foucault,  
1984a, p80).

By beginning with a diagnosis of the present situation, Foucault then makes it possible to ask 'How did we get here?' This requires attention to minute deviations within discourses which does not sit easily with charges of inaccuracy or selectivity.

## *Pessimism*

You would never guess, from Foucault's account of the changes in European social institutions during the last three hundred years, that during that period suffering had decreased considerably, nor that people's chances of choosing their own styles of life increased considerably (Rorty, 1990, p3).

Perhaps the most serious criticism of Foucault's work is that he offers no recipes for social change. Foucault advocates local and continuous action to effect small changes but as Shumway (1989) points out, 'his work does little to encourage or instruct anyone interested in undertaking such action' (p158). In addition, Foucault insists that power necessarily entails resistance but 'gives the impression that resistance is generally contained by power and poses no threat' (Fairclough, 1992, p57). This criticism is particularly important for educationists, who may feel that there is little to gain from pursuing an analysis that denies (or at least fails to acknowledge) the possibility of action. It has been argued that it was Foucault's intention merely to 'diagnose the contemporary danger' (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986, p118) and that it is for us to resolve the conflict between his analyses and social change (Said, 1986). Fairclough (1992) sees the problem as arising from his tendency to reduce practices to structures and the absence in his work of 'real instances of people doing or saying or writing things' (p57). This point is returned to later.

It may be that Foucault has been misunderstood and that he does indeed offer hope, especially for educationists. A key to this could lie in Foucault's interpretation of enlightenment. Kant's response to the question 'What is enlightenment?' was to define it in three ways; unconditional freedom to think, to think publicly and to submit thoughts to doubt before public. This is, however, to adopt a highly transcendental understanding which Foucault did not share. His notion of enlightenment is one which offers 'a critical ontology of ourselves', which:

has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them (Foucault, 1984b, p50).

This sounds far from pessimistic and for educationists, seems to offer prospects of rethinking and evaluating educational practices. If education is approached with a 'limit-attitude', characterised by 'dissimilarity, constant decentring, endless deferral and recurring doubt' (Kiziltan et al, 1990, p366), it could:

translate into endless reconstructions, bringing about transformations in various aspects of public education, ranging from curricular to organizational restructuring (Kiziltan et al, 1990, p366).

Rorty (1990) and Roth (1992) share the belief in the capacity of Foucault to transform education, providing, as educationists, we 'begin surveying the closure and repetitiveness in our own thinking' (Roth, 1992, p695). This requires us to 'overcome our prefabricated self and fashion a new one courageous enough to dwell, nay thrive, in uncertainty' (Roth, 1992, p693). As Kiziltan comments:

In the labyrinth-like environment of the limit-attitude, life is guided not according to the promise of light or universal sociability but by a commitment to the overcoming and thus constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects, an inherently collective project which always remains a beginning with each step we take, and

each rearrangement of the maze that we coinhabit together  
(Kitziltan et al, 1990, p369).

The autonomous subject, according to Foucault, is still subject to others, but is capable of transgressing limits and creating alternative 'aesthetic practices of the self' (Simons, 1995, p93). For disabled people, however, there is a double bind, since as Liggett (1988) points out, the price of speaking out about themselves is the acceptance of the disabled-non-disabled distinction, within the normalising society. This could well perpetuate, rather than challenge, disciplinary practices, but it is a risk which, arguably, is worth taking. Research has an important role in trying to find out how individuals become, not autonomous subjects, but constructed subjects. Knowledge of that process of construction could be regarded as a significant step towards some form of greater 'autonomy'. It requires attention to what goes on in classrooms and other institutions.

### *Empirical analysis*

This final criticism relates to Foucault's failure to undertake any empirical work within institutions, despite contesting that this is the key to uncovering power/knowledge relations. Foucault (1982) claims that it is vital that social institutions are studied from an internal standpoint since they:

constitute a privileged point of observation, diversified,  
concentrated, put in order, and carried through to the highest point  
of their efficacy (p222).

He is not, however, entirely convinced that institutions themselves are likely to yield conclusive evidence:

one must analyse institutions from the standpoint of power relations, rather than vice versa, and that the fundamental point of anchorage of the relationships even if they are embodied and crystallized in an institution, is to be found outside the institution (Foucault, 1982, p222).

Foucault has remained something of a global theorist, although as Fairclough points out, he claims to be talking about practice: 'his focus upon structures is intended to account for what can and does actually happen' (p57). This does not mean, however, that empirical analyses of institutional practices cannot be accomplished and there are already some persuasive analyses of educational management (eg Ball, 1990b), health (Bloor and McIntosh, 1990) and psychology (Walkerline, 1984). Yet even these do not show us how the disciplinary techniques work by providing examples of what is and isn't said. Foucault's box of tools might help us to understand the experiences of children with SEN in mainstream schools, by developing an analytical framework which allows the informal and formal discourses which have constructed children with SEN to speak.

What can a Foucauldian analysis of discourses contribute to our understanding of pupils' experiences of mainstreaming? It can at least promise to avoid meaningless accounts of integration, which say more about where a child is educated than about anything else. The kinds of experiences which pupils with SEN have in mainstream might become a little clearer if we start to look for ways in which these are constructed for them through discourses which depict them, for example, as 'objects of pity' or 'sources of inspiration' (Shapiro, 1993). As far as improving these experiences is concerned, this might be possible if we take up Shumway's suggestion to 'add Foucault and stir' (p161). That, surely, has to be worth trying.

### 3 (b)

#### **I'M AN UNDER COVER AGENT WORKING FOR MY PhD**

This research has been done in conjunction with a project funded by the Scottish Office Education Department, (SOED) entitled **A comparative study of mainstream and special schools in Scotland**. At the outset, the arrangement seemed suitable both to the funding body and me. The project would give me access to schools and pupils and in return I would bring to the project a wide reading of the literature on special needs and a high level of commitment. The lines of demarcation between the two activities seemed clear at first and the SOED were satisfied that I would give sufficient attention to the project. After a time, however, it became clear that my day (SOED) and night (PhD) jobs were becoming (con)fused. Occlusion of this kind, in which the space between the two activities is closed, is clearly inevitable and desirable. Nevertheless it did leave me with 'a kind of malaise' (Foucault in Kritzman, 1988, p7). Furthermore, there were times when my day job was interfering with my night job and inhibiting my ability to function within a Foucauldian perspective.

This chapter examines the two sets of discourses and practices and their tensions with me, the researcher, at the centre. These tensions were difficult, but not destructive: reflexivity enabled me to conduct both activities with a mutual scrutiny of the day and night selves. These were not two distinct selves, but several and they are described in the third part of the chapter. It ends by exploring the question of subjectivity more broadly. This chapter is not just about the process of doing a PhD: the message contained here is that in order to conduct a Foucauldian study, some deception is necessary.

### **The cover of convention**

The research project from which I earned a salary during the PhD period was defined in two ways. First, a specification, issued by SOED to all prospective tenderers, set out what was expected in respect of the grant offered. Second, prospective tenderers submitted proposals in response to the original specification and a winner was chosen. The proposal of the successful tenderer then became a contract between the funders and the researchers. As an unsuccessful bidder from one organisation, I joined the winners from another to undertake the research. These winners claimed to have a 'pragmatic' view of SOED funded research, taking advantage of much needed financial support, whilst recognising that this implied following a Scottish Office agenda. At the same time, however, they 'made every effort to maintain [their] critical perspective' (Riddell et al, 1995, p28).

The discourse of such policy oriented research in the field of special educational needs has a number of distinctive features which run counter to those within a Foucauldian framework. The critical perspective adopted by the research team led to a rejection of some of these features or compromises. Nevertheless, the constraints within research of this kind, which has led Humes (1986) to conclude that it is not properly independent, were significant and are outlined below. These constraints operated within a particular ontological and epistemological framework and constructed the being and knowing of my 'day job' subjectivity.

'Benevolent humanitarianism' pervades special education and makes it difficult to criticise (Tomlinson, 1982, p5). Pupils and their parents are subordinated within a professional discourse, making them the willing recipients of special education provision, rather than its active partners or critics. Research operating in this context is likely to report the various expressions of need of children with special needs uncritically and from the perspective of teachers and other professionals (eg Cooper, 1993; Cheston, 1994 - see Chapter 2). The SOED project was unusual in that it set

out to judge the effectiveness of provision in mainstream and special schools. In this respect, we sought to avoid the charge of 'benevolent humanitarianism', by looking critically at schools' practices. We acknowledged, however, the difficulty of making judgements of this kind and concluded that 'there is no golden solution to the problems of provision for children with SEN' (Allan et al, 1995b, p177).

Researchers enter into **professional complicity**, to help policy makers determine best practice and advise those in the field. This is not borne from a suspicion that practitioners are intentionally failing to act in the best interests of children with special needs: rather they are seen to be simply misguided or ill-informed. Research findings need, therefore, to be 'accessible by the intended audience' (SOED, 1993, p3). Despite attempts to create a distance from Her Majesty's Inspectorate, researchers may be perceived to be acting as 'quasi-inspectors', at least by school staff and pupils. The SOED research was conducted in the midst of local government reform and other major policy innovations. We became increasingly convinced of the damaging effects these were likely to have on SEN provision. Consequently, the report of our findings concludes with a series of implications for SOED, local authorities and schools in order to safeguard existing provision and ensure continuing development.

In order to **protect the innocent**, confidentiality must be maintained and researchers need to observe ethical protocols. By adopting this form of professional secrecy, they are given access to all kinds of information. This subordinates further children with special educational needs and their parents as 'needy' individuals about whom information is held. In this research, parents granted permission for their child to be part of the research; beyond that, however, they had little or no say over the control of information, often highly personal, which was released. In the course of the research, I was occasionally given access to Records of Needs before the parents had given their consent, under the pretext that 'they won't mind'. On these occasions I feared



alienating the professionals by asserting the moral high ground, but usually asked them to telephone the parents concerned. Sensitive management of research relations was necessary to ensure that ethical protocols were maintained.

Policy-related research, taking place in a climate of resource constraints, requires researchers to become **street level bureaucrats** (Lipsky, 1980). The task of the researchers here is to assist the policy makers 'to manage demand on resources through the exercise of discretion' (Hudson, 1989, p51). This is accomplished by addressing such research questions as 'What are the relative financial costs of mainstream and special school provision in the context of DMR?' (Brown and Siddell, 1992, p3). We sought to avoid operating submerged criteria which privileged some claims over others. Nevertheless, we failed to answer this question in any depth and in the research report spent a considerable amount of time explaining that if education authorities are unable to disaggregate the costs of mainstream provision, then we as 'outsiders to the whole financial scene of authority provision, were in no position to make estimates' (Allan et al, 1995b, p158). In other words, we had failed to act as 'street level bureaucrats'.

The tendering process aims to select researchers with '**the necessary professional, technical and management expertise** to undertake the work' (SOED, 1993, p3). These individuals also require to have a 'track record' in terms of 'quality and reliability in keeping to research timescales' (ibid). Researchers are expected to follow conventional methods of enquiry and to select a sample that guarantees that the findings will have sufficient **depth**. I obtained the research post by claiming to have experience in research methods and knowledge of the substantive area of special education. I felt confident that, joining with two of the most distinguished researchers in the field in Scotland, this would be a good piece of work. The project advisory committee, who, as part of the 'regulomania' (Fulcher, 1995, p6), monitored and

guided us throughout, assured us of the depth and significance of our findings. Thus, we felt satisfied that we had fulfilled our contractual obligations.

The research activities, geared towards 'intended outcomes', 'conclusions' and 'dissemination' (SOED, 1993, p3) provide a **collation of perspectives of the way things are**. This is obtained, largely, by calling on professionals to provide a descriptive account of reality and relies on researchers to convey these accounts in a way that captures authentically these essences (Maclure and Stronach, 1993). Researchers may also be asked to exercise their own professional judgements regarding, as in this case, the quality of children's academic and social experiences. Our task was to convey the 'essences' of their experiences by combining what we saw with what various people, including the pupils themselves, said about them. The case studies of twenty four pupils, contained in our final report, attempted this by taking account of key 'variables', for example disabling circumstances and enabling features.

Policy statements, within a technical-empiricist model, are conceptualised simply as **expressions of intent** by policy makers and administrators regarding the action they are expected to follow (Codd, 1994). Policy-related research is expected to accept this intentionality and to examine the factors which threaten to thwart intended outcomes. Thus, having identified the principles of effective SEN provision within local and national policies (eg in relation to differentiation and assessment) we searched for evidence of good practice. We also devoted a whole chapter of the final report to policy makers' perceptions of local policies and provision, recognising them as 'key individuals who play a vital role in shaping the context in which parents and professionals make decisions' (p21).

One important aspect of the findings is that special schools continue to have an important role (and high rolls) in Scotland. I hoped that the research report (and subsequent dissemination activities) would help to quell any doubts in this respect

and improve the low morale we found among special school staff. I also hoped the findings would influence policy and practice in the future.

Finally, it has been suggested that researchers, operating within the SOED framework, engage in **political neutrality**, for fear of risking future funding prospects:

A deafening silence from the academic community with respect to the politicisation process may stem from a preoccupation with securing research contracts at all costs and meeting the demands of periodic audits of performance (Jackson, TESS, 23 September, 1994).

In this context it is not censorship, but self-censorship which operates (TESS, 23 June, 95), with researchers exercising surveillance over themselves. At the same time, however, we acknowledged that all research is inevitably political. Surveillance of this kind is, of course, the kind of power which Foucault (1977b) says is highly sophisticated and effective. 'It is a power that seems all the less *corporal* in that it is more subtly *physical*' (p177; original emphasis).

These features of the 'day job' of policy related research implied a particular kind of researcher subjectivity. It placed me within the professional discourses, as a privileged member who could view practices with 'objectivity' and capture the 'already there' essences of special needs. I was also expected to offer some insight into the way things ought to be and to inform decision-making among policy-makers. In other words, research, in order to be good, had to be useful. My own conduct was regulated by ethical research protocols, but even these could be subjugated by the benevolent humanitarianism of the professional discourses on SEN. These discourses also allowed teachers' voices to subdue those of pupils and parents.

## **Foucault and duplicity**

To bring Foucault into research on special educational needs, it is necessary to enter the world of subversion and manipulation. The discourses outlined above had to be undermined in order to allow children with special educational needs and their peers to talk. For this, I am indebted to several individuals, including Graham Greene, Kim Philby, John le Carré and other exemplars of deception:

Espionage is an odd profession . . . for some it is a vocation, with an unscrupulous purity, untouched by mercenary or even patriotic considerations - spying for spying's sake (Greene, 1974, p104).

Benevolent humanitarianism, within a Foucauldian perspective, is seen as an **instrument of power**, exercised over children with special needs and their parents. The research seeks to explore the ways in which professionals take on this stance, through what they say and write about children with SEN and their parents. The professional discourse is not allowed to be in the foreground of other voices here; rather, informal discourses, from the pupils with SEN, their parents and peers, are 'up front'. In conversation with the pupils I assured them that there were no right or wrong answers. I also said to their parents that professionals may not always get things right because they don't listen to parents' voices. In other words I was trying to incite them to speak by inferring that by doing so, they were exercising a kind of counter-hegemonic power.

The Foucauldian researcher, instead of subscribing to the notion of professional imperialism, needs to operate with a measure of **professional breach**, without making normative judgements about what counts as effective practice. Equally, there should be little concern about recommending measures to improve efficiency and so no need to enter into 'street level bureaucracy'. Injustices against individuals may be apparent, but to comment on these would be to become an even greater part of the

network of power relations within the school. So, for example, when I observed pupils failing in classes, I did not ask 'how could they be helped to achieve more?' (although I did that as part of my day job). Rather, I attended to the network of power/knowledge relations within the classroom in which that failure was constructed and asked 'who is saying and doing what and to whom?'

The sense of protecting the innocent is displaced by a **distancing from events**. This is necessary, in order to observe and listen to the children's experiences as they are being constructed, but makes for a less comfortable time for the researcher and the children. For example, the researcher could offer help to a child with special needs or might minimise the number of negative things being said about him or her by mainstream pupils, simply by glaring at them. Again, however, this would render the researcher part of the 'micro-physics of power' (Foucault, 1977b, p29) within the classroom. The more marginal the researcher is perceived to be, the greater the likelihood of apprehending these power networks. On one occasion, Scott was having problems cutting string with scissors (he was using the wrong scissors). He tried to get help from one of his mainstream peers, then looked in my direction. I quickly looked away because I wanted to see what would happen next. Wearing my 'day job' hat, helping him would have let me look more closely at his 'manual dexterity' problems (and would have been an appropriate thing to do), but with the 'night cap' on, it would not have helped me. The mainstream pupil cut one piece of string, said nothing about them being the wrong scissors, then walked off, leaving Scott struggling.

**Professional, technical and management expertise**, much valued by the funders of policy research, and indeed by practitioners in the field, **has to be denied** if pupils are to be encouraged to talk. They need to see the researcher as someone to be trusted and therefore not in collusion with their teachers. It is important, therefore, to avoid being seen by the pupils as another teacher figure and to remain, rather, on the fringe,

however insecure for all: teachers may try to draw the researcher into their orbit and the researcher, in turn, may need to seek the security of a professional discourse. It is, of course, vital not to be so marginal as to be distant from the professionals as their voices, in turn, may be silenced. Hanging around in the playground helped to distance me from the teachers a little. I also found myself colluding with the pupils on occasions, for instance by keeping quiet about what they were actually doing whilst on the computer (drawing the faces of the teacher and other pupils) or by laughing at their less 'acceptable' jokes. When I took them out of class for interviews, I told them they were out for a 'skive'.

Rather than collating perspectives, mainly from professionals, of the way things are, **the pupils' discourses are foregrounded.** These discourses are interesting because they reveal the power/knowledge relationships within which the identities and experiences of the pupils with SEN are constructed and the ways these are resisted. Getting the children to talk openly is, however, difficult: they do not normally speak about their relations with disabled peers and disability itself is a silent issue. The children need to be convinced that their accounts of their experiences are highly important. They also need to believe that the researcher thinks that and so can be trusted. When I introduced myself to the pupils, I told them that I wanted to get 'the real picture' and said they (and not the teachers) were best placed to tell it. This might sound like the adoption of an essentialist position resembling the policy (perspectivist) research, but it is a necessary kind of subversion to incite the pupils to discourse. The risk here is of 'slippage' into a naturalistic/ethnographic study in which the pupils accounts are portrayed as representative of their reality. The pupils' discourses are indeed representative, but of 'social productions connected to particular language games or discursive practices within the human community' (Liggett, 1988, p264).

Policy documents are not read from a technical-empiricist perspective, but **alternative narratives** have to be constructed. Techniques such as reversal (Simons, 1995) involve exploring the implications of a different set of outcomes to those claimed in official discourses (just as Foucault does in relation to discipline and punishment and sexuality). Statements which claim the status of truth are examined in relation to particular vested interests. Policies are viewed here, not as statements of intent, but as instruments of power/knowledge relations through which the identities and experiences of children with SEN are constructed. The Warnock and HMI reports were examined in relation to the official claims made. These were then tracked backwards until a dissenting or merely different voice was heard, for example in relation to the education of deaf children.

In place of depth, a Foucauldian analysis produces **surfaces**, one-dimensional and descriptive maps of discourses, that is, what is said about children's identities and experiences verbally and in written form. The children with SEN are not at the centre of these discourses, although they are the objects of them; rather, they are decentred subjects, whose identities and experiences have been constructed for them. Foucault suggests that as subjects, they are simultaneously tied to others, through control and restraint, and to themselves, through their own self knowledge and identity (in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). For a long time, I worried that the analysis of the discourses would be too superficial and I agonised over the number of pupils in the sample and the length of time spent in schools. Once the analysis of the data began, however, the complexity expressed in these surfaces soon became evident.

Realisation of this complexity within the surfaces of the discourses (like contours on a map) was one of the most significant outcomes of the PhD process: I was astonished at how much the young people had revealed, yet they seemed to do so willingly. I then began to worry about the consequences of the incitement to discourse of a (still) relatively powerless group and this point is discussed further in the final chapter.

During the research period, I shifted from viewing mainstreaming as an event and something which was done to pupils to a sense of a much more precarious and continuous process and this view percolated into both day and night jobs. In the final chapter, I consider the value of a Foucauldian perspective for analysing children's experiences of mainstreaming. Here the inevitable occlusion of the two sets of discourses is examined.

### **Occlusion**

The night and day jobs have been polarised to help analyse them; in reality the two occluded naturally and often unproblematically. It was possible, for example, to use some of the same interview data from teachers and parents, but with different analyses. Nevertheless, whilst conducting the SOED funded project and the PhD research, I was aware of an uneasiness about the relationship between the two. At the time I interpreted it largely as an anxiety about accomplishing both jobs within the time available. Foucault, who experienced something similar, attributed it to the ambiguity of his own status whilst working in a mental hospital:

There was no clear status for psychologists in a mental hospital. So as a student in psychology I had a very strange status there . . . I was actually in a position between the staff and the patients, and it wasn't my merit, it wasn't because I had a special merit, it wasn't because I had a special attitude, it was the consequence of this ambiguity in my status which forced me to maintain a distance from the staff. I am sure it was not my personal merit, because I felt all that at the time as a kind of malaise. It was only a few years later, when I started writing a book on the history of psychiatry, that this malaise, this personal experience, took the form of an historical criticism or a structural analysis (in Kritzman, 1988, p7).



Foucault began to see his peripheral role as privileged, from which he could observe without the demands of being part of the 'network'. In an effort to become more at ease with my own discomfort at having a double life, I began to read spy novels:

Yet, as ever, nothing is one thing for long with Pym, and soon a strange calm begins to replace his secret missions. The silent, unlit country that at first sight appeared so threatening to him becomes a secret womb where he can hide himself, rather than a place of dread. He has only to cross the border for the walls of his English prisons to fall away . . . "I am a champion of the middle ground", he tells himself (le Carré, 1986, p542).

An internal seminar, given to members of the education department and, relating to PhD work gave a clear indication that occlusion was impairing my ability to see things from a Foucauldian perspective. The outline distributed to the participants made it clear that I was talking more about my SOED work than my PhD:

If we look at this document, we get 1- protecting the innocent and if we take that bit of text and say where does the writer of this stand in relation to these discourses? the answer is outside and above in an apparently morally superior position. But how can you be in both these positions? how can you acknowledge the professional play of power and knowledge and at the same time stand outside and have this kind of face. Is there a paradox here? (Principal supervisor, speaking at departmental seminar, 1994).

It wasn't enough just to excuse myself on the grounds of sloppy writing and I realised that the ghost of essentialism had accompanied me throughout the 'night job'. I felt disappointed that I had let the two halves slip together so apparently carelessly:

It should have been my other with his leickname for he's the head and I'm an everdevoting fiend of his . . . I'm very fond of that other of mine . . . I ought not to laugh with him on this stage. But he' (sic) such a game loser (Joyce, 1975, p408).

Yet it is perhaps not surprising that the two halves occluded with such ease, since neither was complete without the other. Burgess (1965) refers to this as the 'tragedy of insufficiency - half an egg, not half a double yolk' (p244). Furthermore, these separate research activities did not involve two distinct selves; rather, I was conscious of a multiplicity of selves interacting, competing and contradicting. The selves of which I was most aware were:

- **Marginal/subversive:** I felt a measure of success in adopting this self, perhaps because I had to work hard at it. I spent time in the playground (instead of the staffroom); I tried to avoid getting involved in any tasks which connected me with the 'teacher' role in the pupils' minds; a number of occasions arose when children were doing something behind the teacher's back and I either ignored it or gave them a look which tried to convey the message 'I won't give you away'. This 'performance' was sometimes subverted by teachers. On one instance, for example a teacher berated a pupil publicly, then turned to me and said 'this is what he does, you know'. In one moment, she had completely blown my cover, demonstrating that this particular research self was precarious and relied on the repetition of appearances in order to sustain it (Garfinkel, 1967) In other words, I had to keep **doing marginality/subversion**.

- Personal tragedy:** This discourse has already been identified within official documents about pupils with special educational needs (see Chapter 4). My cautious interaction with the children in the research stemmed from a fear of offending them and an awareness of the difficult circumstances they faced. This is not always a helpful perspective for disabled people, but it was an acute one as a researcher, particularly where the child's life expectancy was uncertain. Researchers, in this context, can do considerable damage. The notion of personal tragedy also helps to explain the difficulty I had in dealing with a situation in which a child with Down's Syndrome spent the first morning of my visit trying to hold my hand. I did not want to offend the child by resisting him, yet I sensed he was trying me out and that contact of this kind was not particularly encouraged in the school. In the end, I pretended to have to leave the table and when I returned I sat at a more comfortable distance from him.
- Professional/ethical:** - I observed the protocols of confidentiality and felt strongly about the need to do this, given the kind of information I was gaining access to. However, I became uneasy about the subordination of the pupils and their families in relation to the control of information. This was evident in the way school staff tried to get me to reveal what the pupils or parents had said to me during interviews or tried to rationalise what they thought they might have said (for example by referring to a parent as 'a bit highly strung'). I found myself becoming something of a guardian for the innocents (pupils and parents), protecting them from the professionals in the school. At the same time, it was important not to alienate school staff by adopting the moral high ground of confidentiality. I became well practised in the art of evasion and giving 'non answers' to questions.

- **Social justice:** I found myself, on occasions, appalled at some of the things I heard or saw. Yet I avoided confronting these injustices, because to do so would have been to be drawn into the network of power relations. So, when a child told me that his classmates called him 'brain dead', or when a group of mainstream pupils described a child with SEN coming into their class regularly in tears, I did and said nothing.
- **The incompetent teacher:** Inevitably, I found myself in situations where pupils with SEN sought help from me. Here I was anxious not to thwart anything the school staff were trying to do, for example by giving a child too much help with a task, if they were trying to encourage him or her to do this independently. When in doubt, I asked the teacher (or sometimes the pupil) and this also helped to distance me from the teachers in the pupils' eyes.
- **The teacher's friend:** I was aware of wanting to leave staff in the school with a warm glow and a feeling that my visit had been positive and supportive, not hostile or critical. This was sometimes difficult, given the quasi-inspectorial role some teachers placed me in, but I tried to play this down as much as possible.

These selves, then, emerged through the occlusion of the two (incomplete) halves. The final section of this chapter looks more broadly at the relationship between the researcher and subjectivity.

### **Subjectivity: a question of cover?**

The purpose of managing one's subjectivity is not to conquer it, in order to produce a sanitised version of the research process, but to remain sensitive to how the different selves interact with the process of data gathering. This was important in monitoring how much of a Foucauldian perspective was really in evidence. In other words, was I

doing what I said I would? Reflexivity is particularly essential for research in special educational needs in which the researched are particularly vulnerable to excommunication (Fulcher, 1995) or alienation (Morris, 1991; Oliver, 1992a; Barton, 1993a). Two aspects of the relationship between the researcher and subjectivity are explored here:

- The management of subjectivity
- The relationship between the researcher and the researched.

Subjectivity is now an accepted (and welcomed) part of qualitative research and instead of pursuing the heuristic of quasi-objectivity, the attention of most researchers has turned to finding effective ways of managing their inevitable subjectivity.

Heshusius (1994) suggests that subjectivity can be managed through 'participatory consciousness', letting go of the preoccupation with self and becoming completely attentive:

This temporary self-forgetfulness is not to be equated with loss of self, but points to the possibility of fundamental selfother (sic) unity in which egocentric thoughts, feelings, and needs are voluntarily released, but in which the capacity for autonomy is not relinquished (p18).

Gosh! Peshkin (1988) offers a more concrete version of management, by encouraging an articulation of the various selves in the way I have attempted to do in this paper. This seems more appropriate since it was only by identifying these selves that I became aware of their relationship with the data I was obtaining.

The relationship of the researcher and the researched has been explored by several authors, who have expressed different levels of anxiety about this. Cassell (1991) declares uneasiness about the moral imbalance of a relationship and asks 'Do we give good value for the benefits we receive from our hosts?' (p271). He acknowledges that it is difficult to measure these 'products'. Nevertheless, it is an important point, given that when we approach teachers, we usually offer them some kind of return for their time, even if it is merely a vague promise of improving practice. There has even been a suggestion that payment for research time may become necessary as schools become more parsimonious about how they spend their budgets. In contrast, researchers approaching pupils and parents tend to offer little in return.

Others, instead of wringing their hands, prefer to wash them. Wax (1992), for example, argues that manipulation and deceit is inevitable and therefore not worth agonising over. Truth telling, the author suggests, is unusual and tension arises in social research relations where the researcher offers the subjects a version of the truth. Knowlton (1992) describes the essence of the researcher as volatile (in his field of anthropology). He says they need to act as brokers, mediators or tricksters because of their obligations to at least two hegemonies. 'Thus we avoid having our caricatures challenged and our categories confused in the messiness of solidary sociality' (p78).

Greenman (1991) offers a metaphor of the research relationship as a dance, involving 'subtle and not so subtle deception and mutual manipulation' (p257). The researcher, with his or her vested interests impose 'etic' or secondary perspectives on the 'emic' or primary perspective data. Manipulation seems to be necessary for these structures to work, but Greenman suggests this is more pejorative than altruistic. The researcher needs to acquire a kind of kinaesthetic awareness in order to accomplish:

the code switching that occurs, both conscious and unconscious, in and between cultural contexts . . . One might feign ignorance in one cultural context to protect himself or herself in another (p261).

Greenman's approach, together with the notion of the double identity of the secret agent seems to offer the best kind of reflexivity, in order to undertake a Foucauldian project alongside policy related research. It allowed the kind of self surveillance which was necessary whilst helping to manage the deception.

The final methodology chapter reports on my experience at the margins of disability.

### 3 (c)

#### DEAFNESS: A LESSON IN DISABILITY

I felt anxious, embarrassed and ignorant. Everyone seemed to understand each other - everyone except me (fieldnotes).

The majority of the children in this research have been educated in mainstream schools. In each case, the research relies on the spoken accounts about the children's experiences, from them, their peers, teachers and parents. This chapter is concerned with a particular special school environment (associated with the SOED research) in which there was some difficulty in operating - in a school for the deaf. In this respect it is my own account of being disabled in the deaf world, which is salutary in three ways:

- Direct and personal experience of exclusion and an inability to communicate sensitised me to some of the experiences of disabled children, particularly those of Fiona, the deaf child, whose accounts of mainstreaming feature in Chapter 6.
- The distinctive 'Deaf culture', with its rejection of many aspects of assimilation and other SEN discourses, reveals their inherent contradictions.
- Discourses are central to this research and this experience may give some clues as to what is or is not missed by being unable to hear and/or speak. It may also help to focus on the 'silences' in SEN discourses, what is not spoken about.

The chapter begins with a personal account of my experience within a school for the deaf. It then examines my exclusion among competent communicators and how this led me to search for the 'essences' of deafness.



The words at the start of this chapter are mine and describe how I felt on my first full day at the school. This was my second visit to the school, but the previous one had involved a meeting with only the headteacher and there had been little contact with the children. On leaving, however, I had noticed some children sitting together and had been struck that I had no notion of what kind of interaction was going on. I couldn't even tell whether the exchange was friendly or hostile, whether it concerned a matter of importance to them or not. I simply had no idea.

On my first 'real' day at school, that is, involving contact with the children, I was welcomed by the headteacher. In her office, we discussed the programme for the week and general aspects of SEN policy. She then took me to the classes of Gordon and Karen, two pupils I planned to shadow, and as we walked, I could feel myself becoming apprehensive. Questions like 'how will I understand what is going on?' 'how should I behave?' were going through my head. Even simple things like 'who do I look at?' suddenly became a problem. We met Gordon and his class first, who were in English. As we walked in, the English teacher smiled and said hello. There were three in the class, including Gordon. He and Steven looked at me, but Valerie, who had her back to me, did not. The headteacher tapped Valerie on the shoulder, gently turned her round and said:

Can you all listen. This is Miss Allan, who's come to the school.  
She's going to be working with this class for part of the time and  
for the rest of the time with S4. Can you all now introduce  
yourselves?

As she spoke, the headteacher also used signs. I assumed this was the sign language I knew about (BSL), but I discovered later that it was a system of signed speech known as 'Paget Gorman', which is very different from British Sign Language. When the pupils introduced themselves, they did so using their voices and signs. It was

impossible to understand anything, but fortunately the headteacher translated as they went along. I stood there, smiling and cooing and feeling very stupid. The headteacher then asked if they wanted to ask me any questions and Steven asked me where I lived. When I answered, 'Edinburgh' I also made some sort of shape with both hands - meaningless to them, no doubt, and to me. As I spoke, I looked at Steven, then at the headteacher, who had already translated into signs for the pupils. She also repeated 'Edinburgh' (which made me wonder if I'd enunciated clearly enough) then 'where the castle is'. 'That's where Steven's brother lives, said the class teacher'. I found myself wanting to babble something about living near Holyrood palace, having tea with the Queen, and so on, but the moment passed before I could and so we left. A passage from Wright's autobiography immediately sprung to mind in which he describes:

an undramatic but not minor disadvantage of deafness, felt less positively by the deaf than their hearing friends: having to dispense with the easy exchange of trivialities that is oil to the wheels of conversation and to the business of living. The use of language as gesture, as reassuring noise rather than an instrument of specific communication, is largely denied the deaf (Wright, 1993, pp6-7).

This was happening to me. I lacked the communicative skills to interject and maintain the flow of conversation with the pupils. Outside the class, I said to the headteacher:

This is a new experience for me, speaking to hearing impaired children - is there anything special I should be doing?

She replied 'Just try to be expressive'. I thought that was what I'd tried to do, although I wondered what meaning my expansive 'Edinburgh' might have conveyed.

The headteacher took me to the S3 and S4 classes and in Karen's class (S4), she described me as someone who would be working with them. Again, as the children introduced themselves, she translated. This time, some of the children, including Karen, were quite easy to understand from their voice and not all signed. Marie in S3, however, only signed and the headteacher said to her:

Come on Marie, we want to hear your voice too.

She then spoke up, but I could not understand her. Outside the class, I asked the headteacher why they didn't all sign:

Some of them drop the signed speech as they get older, which is their decision. Some of them stop using their voice, like Marie. They have the British Sign Language, which we also teach them, but in school, we still encourage them to use their voice.

I spent most of the first day with Karen and her teachers in science, pantomime rehearsal, maths and a subject billed as 'British Sign Language'. In science, the teacher prompted Karen and the other pupils to describe their prototypes for the Scotvec module they were working on and then asked Karen to show me photographs from the project they had done at an agricultural college. After that, Karen made all the first attempts at conversation with me. I was pretty 'tongue tied' for most of the day (and was bemused at my use of yet another concept embedded in speech), but gradually began to relax with her. In some cases, she spoke via the teacher asking 'Does she know . . .?' and mentioned, for example, that she lived in another town, stayed at the hostel during the week, used to live in London, had divorced parents, and was going to Hong Kong. Increasingly, she spoke directly to me.

The science teacher said the three children in Karen's class were immature and did not get on. One of the pupils had gone to a secondary school to do higher physics and had matured, but it caused problems, she said, because he came back and tried to rule the others. The word 'compatible' came up in the context of electricity and she said (and signed) 'You three are compatible, you work well together don't you?' They didn't respond to the teacher's irony. She pointed out that the pupil being 'mainstreamed' was in no sense in a normal situation:

He may be a big fish in here but he can't function. When he goes up to the academy he has a teacher with him all the time so it's a one-to-one and at lunchtime, he has someone who can ask for things for him. If there was any more than that, he'd hate it and wouldn't go.

She went on to talk about the children generally:

The children are terrified of going into public. They just freeze and can't do anything. There was a time when the time of the train was changed and they couldn't use the phone, so they just sat there. Even when they get on a bus, they can write their destination down, but they're not always sure they're on the right bus.

The maths teacher explained the system of communication in the school, known as 'Total Communication'. The children were encouraged to use their voices all the time and to accompany this with 'Paget Gorman' a system of signed speech. This has a proper structure of grammar and syntax and is, therefore, slower to sign than British Sign Language, the language used in clubs for the Deaf and on the television programme 'See Hear'. The clarity of the children's voices varied enormously and

some had to be constantly reminded to speak. Others tended to speak more than sign and they were also chastened. When the children spoke together they signed only. At the age of ten, the children were introduced to British Sign Language 'to prepare them for the deaf world', a teacher said. Some of the children knew it already, either because they had deaf parents or because they stayed during the week at the school hostel, where BSL was 'spoken'. When I asked about the system used by the Mary Hare School (a Grammar school in England which some parents prefer), the maths teacher said:

Oh no they are completely oral. They even send instructions home to the parents forbidding them to sign. In schools like that where they are totally oral, they might make the children sit on their hands to stop them signing.

Gordon's parents were understood to be planning to transfer him to this school.

The pantomime rehearsal took place in the hall, with several classes joined together. When I sat down, Karen was with Heather, from another class, and they both smiled at me. Karen said (and signed) 'You're here to watch the teachers, aren't you?' The science teacher said that she had told them that; the headteacher said I'd come to work with the class. 'That's right', I said, nodding and smiling, 'I'm here to watch them, not you' They nodded and smiled. I suspected we had misunderstood each other, but, unable to fix it, I just nodded and smiled. The children went through their parts, and when not 'on stage', they sat in groups, most of them behind the teacher's back. At one point in the performance this exchange took place:

T Who are we doing this for?

P The little ones.

P For deaf people.

T We're doing this especially for the younger ones in room two and so you must remember to use your signs. You're all used to your voices but the little children in room two are not so good, so you must remember to sign clearly.

I was able to follow the sense of the play, but again I was struck by my inability to get even a sense of the informal interaction between pupils. Gordon was with Valerie, from his own class, and they and Rhona were absorbed in whatever they were 'discussing'. There was a lot of giggling, although they uttered no sounds, and some antics from Gordon, but I eventually gave up trying to interpret. Avoiding staring at children was difficult; Gordon did not pay much attention to me, but Valerie kept catching my eye. Several of the older children, including Karen, moved their chairs to a position where I, like the teacher, had my back to them. I still managed to see them out of the corner of my eye and there was some slapping going on between two of the boys and a girl, in what seemed like a playful fight. Although the teachers had urged them to use both sign and speech they were mostly silent among themselves and largely escaped the teacher's attention. In a separate episode, part of a conversation between two boys appeared to involve miming a vehicle. When one added noise, the other put his finger to his lips to shut him up. At a later point one of the boys wanted to resume the conversation, but his friend was looking the other way. Instead of moving to a position where he would be seen (what most children had been doing) he took a hold of his head and swivelled it round to face him, then began signing. I felt the old essentialist urge within me as I fought to understand what was 'really' going on.

## **Learning the language?**

The school staff listened patiently as I described my response to being 'on the outside' but gave the impression of having heard this before:

We get a lot of visitors and they all find it a very different experience . . . Every teacher should come to the nursery to understand what it's like for a child with absolutely nothing - no sense that there is even such a thing as communication.

The pupils were also aware of the difficulties experienced by outsiders understanding them. During the first day, when I was sitting with Karen and the maths teacher, she asked, 'Would you like to work with deaf people?' 'Yes', I replied, 'and I want to learn from everyone here'. I said this making a big, circular gesture, rather like the one for 'Edinburgh'. The maths teacher translated and she nodded. Karen then handed me the school newsletter, 'Watch' in which she had written an article on the front page. At last, help was on hand:

### **Do You Have A Problem? Watch!**

Hello! Are you listening out there? I want to explain to you about deaf people. Will you please try to talk to deaf people? Do not be afraid to talk to them! Deaf people really are not stupid: they are very friendly, just like hearing people. If you find it difficult to communicate with us, you could write things down on the paper or do a little mime. We will understand you when you say something.

### **The Facts**

It is not our fault to be deaf, it can sometimes happen because mothers catch German measles while they are pregnant. This can

affect the unborn baby's hearing. Please understand we don't choose to be born deaf - most of us would like to be hearing like you. But don't get me wrong! We enjoy being deaf too. We have great fun together. If you have a baby and the baby is deaf, would you feel the same way about deaf people?

### **Help**

Maybe you feel uncomfortable with deaf people. Next time you meet a deaf person, here is what to do. Smile and say hello with your hand. Speak slower and say what you want. If the person doesn't understand at all, write it down. It takes a little time but it works. Try it! (School newsletter).

At the end of my first day in school, I told the headteacher about the difficulties I had experienced trying to communicate and as I spoke, I was aware that again I had used the term 'hearing impaired', part of official attempts to generate a more positive discourse for talking about disabled people. Everyone else in school, however, had referred to 'deaf' children. The headteacher made no mention of this, but gave me a copy of the signs for the alphabet, which would, if I learned it, enable me to finger spell. She got me started with the five vowels and the signs for good and bad and as I left said 'you'll never know when you'll meet a deaf person you want to talk to'.

That evening I taught myself to finger spell and managed to respond to the headteacher's question 'What is your name?' the next day, albeit very slowly. I also tried to speak to Karen and Gordon, but it felt very artificial: in reality only proper nouns are spelled. Karen was very responsive and encouraged me with nods and smiles and asked me questions, such as did I have children? but she was a far more skilled lipreader than Gordon, so may have ignored my finger spelling. Our exchanges made me feel more confident, so when one of the teachers asked if I had



spoken to Karen, I said yes. The same teacher, however, crushed my confidence after hearing me trying to say to Karen that I was going to eat one of the mini Christmas puddings she had made:

JA Karen, tonight, pudding, me, yum [patted my stomach].

T It's very easy to lapse into that kind of pidgin English.

### **Searching for the 'essences' of deafness**

During my time in the school, I became aware that the deaf children possessed additional abilities which constantly surprised the adults who worked with them and which a hearing person could not possibly emulate. These related to their acute visual perception and the following two incidents illustrate this. On one occasion I was taken into an infants' class and introduced to the children. One of the children told the teacher that I had watched them the day before doing dance. When she translated for me I confirmed this and later the teacher said:

You won't have picked this up but when she said you'd been with them in dance, you must have been sitting like that [adopted my pose] because she mimicked you. The deaf have an incredible ability to capture people exactly as they were. Even when they don't know the person's name, you can usually guess.

A second incident occurred on the way to the library, based in the mainstream school academy. Gordon, Katherine and Steven stopped in the corridor and pointed to a picture of President Gorbachev, who had recently visited the city. Someone had added a beard, moustache and spectacles to the picture and the teacher said 'only a deaf child would have noticed that'. The teachers cited numerous other examples illustrating the attention to visual detail displayed by deaf children. In addition,

Gordon's teacher said that his 'extensive' vocabulary had come about from 'reading everything on the walls and noticing the most minute detail'.

These incidents distanced me from the deaf pupils in two ways. First, they made me aware of my own communicative incompetence and made me feel awkward, an outsider. Second, they forced me into an essentialist position in which I sought to discover the nature of deafness. Harris (1995) experienced similar problems in penetrating Deaf culture. A hearing signer, she also tried to capture the essence of Deaf culture but found that deaf people constantly rationalised and subverted her attempts.

One of the 'essences' I became interested in was the children's use of nicknames and this illustrated further the distinctiveness of the deaf children and my own quest to understand this. The children had 'sign names' for each of the teachers and, perhaps unlike mainstream schools, the teachers knew their own and those of the members of staff. Most of the names related to visual characteristics, for instance the wavy hair of one teacher was signified in her sign name. Interestingly, however, the name stayed with her, even after she changed her hair style. In the case of McDonald, the children arrived at a mime of a burger being eaten. Fascinated, I asked how such names were decided. 'How do mainstream children agree upon nicknames?' was the well deserved response.

In my (perhaps misplaced) efforts to understand what it was to be deaf, I began to suspect that it was a more significant disability than blindness, particularly if a child was born deaf. Deaf children, according to the teachers, were unable to take advantage of three central components of communication: noise, intonation and overhearing. Words had to be taught repeatedly; children may never grasp their meaning, but could learn to make the association between sight, sign and sound. One teacher mentioned that it was important, when the word chair was taught, that they

pointed to different chairs, in order to encourage generalisation among chairs. She also said that children in the infant classes, might learn the word tap and would see and touch it every day, but then might forget it as they got older. Several teachers mentioned their constant surprise on discovering that children, even those like Gordon with a high level of intelligence, did not know certain 'things we would take for granted'. These were often words, such as 'skyscraper' or everyday phrases, for example wine shop (Gordon had apparently mentioned going to the 'bottle of wine shop'). There were also some more complex miscomprehensions, such as this one, described by a teacher:

Steven's brother went off to university and it took six months for him to realise that he would ever come back again. What middle class hearing child with an older sibling would not grasp that situation? None. It was only when the parents were talking about him coming home for Christmas and Steven must have looked startled that his parents realised and she wrote in to me, saying "The things we take for granted!"

Staff also commented on the disadvantage suffered by deaf children through the lack of privacy their visual communication afforded them:

They have no secrets, because everyone can see them. That's what makes hostel living so hard, because everything is there for everyone to see.

I had gained the impression that teachers tried to give the children some privacy by not attending to certain elements of their communication, but one teacher disagreed:

You can't ignore things in the way you can with hearing pupils. If there's a problem, you have to confront it on the spot.

Staff said they were acutely aware of the pupils' sense of being different and one way of trying to help the children to deal with this was to employ auxiliaries and BSL teachers who were deaf. Another important strategy was to assist parents in learning to communicate with their children. Signing classes were held, free of cost, to all parents and friends and parents were encouraged to use both sign and speech with their children. Not all parents, however, were said to find signing easy and one teacher pointed out that parents may often stop talking to their deaf infant, because of the lack of response. There were also some deaf parents who used BSL and staff said it was important to:

Communicate to them that BSL is important, that we don't think it's pidgin English. Some of the auxiliaries say they're stupid, because their English is so poor and many deaf parents feel that way too. We try to tell them that it's just that they didn't get the opportunity to learn proper English the way the children do now.

This chapter has been about my own inability to function in the world of the deaf and my difficulties in communicating with deaf children. My reaction to being an incompetent among highly competent communicators was to search for the 'essences' of deafness and to escape into professional discourses (or into my day job). This detracted from focusing on the discourses, but was nevertheless a valuable experience of inversion and of sensitisation to the experience of liminality.

**POSITIVE THINKING: DISCOURSES ON  
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Here, 85 per cent don't leave their beds due to their physical disabilities. Some are strapped down because they bite. They await transfer to an adult unit, at some reasonless demarcation point in their empty existence. One doctor, who visited the children's unit recently said: "Young children with severe handicaps gaze at the ceiling, huddled together, watched by a guard. There is no communication . . . A blind baby was picked up for my inspection. He was five years old. He was put back on the bed to lie, motionless, thumb in mouth, a tiny scrap of humanity totally shut out from human contact. Children of 30 years, some grossly obese and half naked, were being fed in utter squalor. The stench of urine and excrement mixed with that of the food." (The Observer, 11 September, 1989).

One could be forgiven for thinking that this was a description of how the disabled were treated at the beginning of the century. However, this report of conditions inside an asylum on the Greek island of Leros was made in The Observer in 1989. There was an outburst of indignation from the public at such inhumane treatment of adults and children. The EEC pledged its support in the form of resources and much was said to try to discount the practice found on Leros as an aberration. This was not something, it seemed, that would be found in a society that respects the rights and freedom of the disabled.

There has been, without doubt, a shift during this century towards more positive ways of speaking about disabled people. It is no longer politically correct (Corbett, 1994)

to speak, for example, of the cripple; instead one must refer to him or her as disabled. Those once described as Mongols and spastics are now recognised as having Down's syndrome and cerebral palsy. How has this come about? At what point have these shifts in how people with disabilities are thought of and talked about occurred? This chapter examines the formal discourses within official documents and traces some of the changes. The purpose is not to conduct an 'ontological search for the determinant-in-the-last-instance' (Gordon, 1980, p243). Rather it seeks to describe the configurations of these discursive shifts. It begins with an account of the most significant discourses in relation to special educational needs and concludes by examining the current educational climate, characterised by new 'economic' discourses.

### **Discourses that shape special educational needs**

Discourse is important because it 'worlds the world' (Lather, 1993, p675), framing the ways in which we know and act within contested spaces. Fulcher (1989) reminds us that discourses have uses rather than inherent meanings, that is, they serve particular interests. They also construct individuals as objects of particular kinds of knowledge. A variety of discourses are discernible in relation to disabled people. Among them, the most voluble are medical, charity and rights. These do not function independently of each other, but interact, often in a subversive way. This interaction makes the construction of the identities and experiences of disabled people an ambivalent process.

### ***Medical Discourses***

Medical discourses define individuals by their deficits, rather than by external factors (Fulcher, 1989; Sandow, 1993). They are criticised for being heavily patriarchal (Corbett, 1993) and dismissing disabled people under a single metaphysical category, which buries personalities (Brisenden, 1986). Fulcher (1989) suggests that medical discourse also individualises disabilities as 'attributes' and professionalises them by

making them part of a person's technical trouble. Medical discourse, through its language of 'body, patient, help need, cure, rehabilitation, and its politics that the doctor knows best' (Fulcher, 1989, p27) has dominated special educational practices (Tomlinson, 1982). Corbett (1993) argues for a reconstruction, rather than abandonment, of medical discourses, giving disabled people power over their own bodies and healthcare.

### *Charity Discourses*

Within charity discourses, disabled people become tragic figures (Oliver, 1986) who need help (Llewellyn, 1983) and Shapiro (1993) notes that individuals usually become defined either as objects of pity or sources of inspiration. He argues that both are oppressive, since they do not reflect the 'day-to-day reality of most disabled people, who struggle constantly with smaller challenges, such as finding a bus with a wheelchair lift' (p17). Several writers (eg Nietzsche, 1961; Goffman, 1963; Sinason, 1992) have suggested pity is a way of overcoming fear or guilt towards individuals. The 'benevolent humanitarianism' (Tomlinson, 1982, p5) which surrounds special education relates to both medical and charity discourses (Fulcher, 1989) and 'the mask of philanthropy' conceals the most selfish interests:

and whoever dreams of finding a fine situation for himself in the new schools never speaks of children without tears in his eyes.

This is the everlasting comedy (Binet and Simon, 1914, p10).

The problem for special education, argues Tomlinson, is that it is difficult to criticise.

### ***Rights Discourses***

Rights discourses, characterised by 'self reliance, independence, and consumer wants (rather than needs)' (Fulcher, 1989, p30) are explicitly political, although not always adversarial. Indeed, rights discourses for some may reflect little more than discomfort over the unequal treatment of disabled people. Rights discourses which are politically oriented have a diversity which, as Oliver and Zarb (1989) point out, undermines their political strength. Movements such as 'People First' or 'Scope' have set out to subvert medical and charity discourses which deny individual identity. As well as trying to educate the public, for example through poster campaigns, some disabled rights activists have protested against charity events, such as 'Children in need'. Others, such as those involved in the campaign for a national disability income, have been more concerned with addressing material disadvantage. The resistance activities of these groups are discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

Corbett (1994) has examined the impact of 'political correctness' on special education. This has meant that the language of 'idiot', 'imbecile', 'moron' and 'spastic' is no longer acceptable and that there is greater sensitivity. Nevertheless, Corbett expressed her fear that:

there is a danger that this element of political correctness in special educational language is but surface deep. Underneath, the weight of redundant thinking holds back radical changes in service provision which are required if client-led needs are to determine practice (p19).

Looking back over the last thirty years, Corbett noticed a shift from a 'medical concept of need' to 'special educational' and drew attention to use of medical metaphors in special education in the sixties. Yet medical discourses are still part of the construction of children with SEN, as the accounts from the pupils in this research



reveal. Morris (1991), who is disabled, describes vividly the tragedy or charity discourse as she experienced it, first from a doctor:

I remember feeling outraged that the doctor who sat down at my bedside with a gloomy face, to tell me that I was permanently paralysed, should talk about how "tragic" it was. I felt that there was only one person who could say it was a tragedy and that was me - and I wasn't prepared to say that (p2).

and then from others, who began to see her as a source of inspiration:

During the years following my accident, I have on countless occasions been told by both strangers and acquaintances how *wonderful* they think I am. It took a while to realise why this kind of remark provoked such anger in me. After all, those who say it seem to think that they are praising me for struggling against the difficulties which physical disability brings. When I eventually unpeeled the layers of patronising nonsense I realised that at the heart of such remarks lay the judgement that being disabled must be awful, indeed intolerable. It is very undermining to recognise that people look at me and see an existence, an experience, which they would do everything to avoid for themselves (p15; original emphasis).

Hevey (1993), invokes the 'tragedy principle', to explain how the gaze of disability representation is a dynamic between the impaired body and social barriers. As a result, he argues, 'disablement means impairment and impairment means flaw' (p117).

Medical, charity and rights discourses, then, appear actively to shape the identities and experiences of disabled people. The accounts of pupils with SEN and their mainstream peers (in Chapter 6) oscillate between these discourses, creating highly ambivalent process of identification. This begins to challenge the notion that individuals have a fixed identity as disabled or normal, since they are caught in a continuous objectifying or identificatory gaze.

These contradictions are perhaps surprising given the explicit attempts initiated by Warnock (DES, 1978) and the Inspectors of Schools in Scotland (SED, 1978) in the late 1970's to implant a new way of speaking about disabled people. It is apparent, however, that this 'incitement to discourse' (Foucault, 1976, p17) was itself full of contradictions and ambivalences and only one of a number of contests which have occurred across this century in relation to disabled people.

An attempt will be made to trace historically shifts in the discourses of special educational needs. This analysis, however, differs from traditional historical accounts, in the sense that it does not simply idealise the continuity from the past to the present (Foucault, 1967, Macdonell, 1986). An approach of this kind is unhelpful because it 'traces a pure circle from the present to the past to the present, as if nothing ever really changes' (Macdonnell, 1986, p84). Instead, this account focuses on the particular historical disjunctures where change occurred, where it has been:

necessary and sufficient for people to use these words rather than those, a particular type of discourse rather than some other type . . . for people to be able to look at things from such and such an angle and not some other one (Foucault, 1980b, p211).

Arguably, one of the most significant disjunctures for special educational needs in Scotland took place after 1978, following the publication of the Warnock report and the HMI report on pupils with learning difficulties.

### **The Warnock and HMI reports**

There is widespread agreement within the UK that the Warnock report represents a watershed for special education (Gipps et al, 1987; Wedell, 1992; Visser, 1993). The Warnock report, however, is full of ambivalences and contradictions, ranging across different discourses. Within Scotland, most of the recent commentary on special needs cites the HMI report as equally influential, although its emphasis was largely on children experiencing learning difficulties (JCCES, 1988, Riddell et al, 1992). By examining this important disjuncture, it is possible also to consider points of resistance. This is necessary, to illustrate (but not explain) how some changes have occurred while others have not. It is interesting, for example, that many deaf and blind people have preferred not to become known as hearing and visually impaired, but have fought to retain an identity that emphasises, rather than euphemises, their disability.

There are five key aspects of the Warnock report and the HMI report that are important, since they mark a dramatic shift in the social construction of the individual with a disability:

1. What kind of person is constructed through the SEN discourses?
2. What kinds of knowledge about children with SEN are embedded in these discourses?
3. To what extent are children with SEN regarded as capable of being educated?
4. What kind of education is to be provided for children with SEN? How is this to be achieved and what are seen as desirable outcomes?

5. How is the involvement of professionals and parents in the education of children with SEN delineated?

The influence of both reports at an official level in Scotland was considerable. Warnock's proposals were enshrined in each of the 1981 Education Acts for England and Wales and for Scotland. The legislation in Scotland, however, was distinctively different in that it did not advocate explicitly the integration of pupils in mainstream schools (as the English legislation did). The ideas espoused by HMI were also given prominence in the policies on special education formulated by regional authorities in Scotland, following the introduction of the legislation. At an official level at least, children with SEN were being 'talked up' and one regional authority even proclaimed that 'every child was special' (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1993).

The two reports are different in their emphasis and in the population at which they were directed. Although Warnock suggested that 'up to one in five children during their school career will require some form of special educational provision' (DES, 1978, p41), most of the recommendations in the report referred to children with 'severe, complex and long-term disabilities' (DES, 1978, p45). The HMI report, on the other hand, concentrated on pupils previously deemed 'backward or retarded' (SED, 1978, p5), many of whom were already taught in remedial classes within mainstream schools. Warnock's central message was libertarian, proclaiming the 'right of the handicapped to uninhibited participation in the activities of everyday life, in all their varied forms' (DES 1978, p99). This included the right to be educated in an ordinary school. In contrast, the rationale for integration supplied by HMI was educational, supported by a vivid demonstration of the inappropriateness and ineffectiveness of the present system of remedial education.

Both reports asserted the need to adopt a more positive conceptualisation of individuals with a disability. Warnock proposed that the statutory categories of

handicap be replaced with a continuum of need, while HMI exhorted teachers to abandon a 'pupil deficit' notion of learning difficulties (because of its basis in medical discourses). Instead, all teachers (specialist and mainstream) were to look to the curriculum and their own teaching methods as the source of difficulties. Both documents promoted a shift away from charity and medical discourses, characterised by pity for the 'poor mites' and concern over the burden they would place on society, if left uneducated.

The starting point for the examination of the two reports is a consideration of how they construct the individual with special educational needs.

### **1. The special needs 'person'**

One of the striking features of the report on the asylum in Leros was the observation that the boundary between the status as child and adult had diminished. Some never crossed this boundary, remaining in the children's unit at the age of thirty. Others acquired adult status at 'some reasonless demarcation point in their empty existence' (The Observer, 11 September, 1989). The normally meaningful distinction between child and adult had become submerged in the 'disabled' identity of the inmates.

A central concern of Warnock was the negative effect that the existing statutory categories of handicap had on the identity of the individuals they defined. The emergence of these categories over the last century will be examined later, but here the concern is with how Warnock regarded the effects of these categories. They were seen as pinning a single label on a child, which could be difficult where children had multiple difficulties. Labels were irreversible and likely to stigmatise the child throughout his or her school career and beyond. The most damning indictment of categorisation was the confusion it promoted between the child's disability and the form of special education required. The Warnock report set out an alternative vision of special education which shifted the space of identification:

We wish to see a more positive approach and we have adopted the concept of SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED, seen not in terms of a particular disability which a child may be judged to have, but in relation to everything about him, his abilities as well as his disabilities which have a bearing on his educational progress (p37).

This view of children with special educational needs has rendered them 'objects' of the rational knowledge of special education, bringing more factors into the field in which the objectifying gaze operates. This could legitimately focus on all aspects of the child's existence, including their personality, behaviour and even their parents.

Warnock drew attention to the binarism associated with the notion of handicap, which meant that 'there are two types of children (p37). The Committee sought to eliminate this notion and proposed replacing the statutory categories with the notion of a continuum of need. However, at the same time as arguing for the abandonment of categorisation, the Committee defended the retention of categories for some pupils:

We have found ourselves on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand we are aware that any kind of special resource or service for such children runs the risk of emphasising the idea of their separateness, an idea which we are anxious to dispel, and of limiting the notion of special education to the provision made for such children. On the other hand, unless an obligation is clearly placed on local education authorities to provide for the special needs of such children, there is a danger that their requirement for special resources will be inadequately met (p45).

Norwich (1990) argues that the attempt to resolve this dilemma merely replaced one set of categories with another and that this was inevitable:

The use of categories is an inherent part of the practical administrative arrangements for special educational needs. What has changed with the 1981 Act is the terminology used and the way categories are used in the context of integration (p38).

In effect, little appeared to have changed. The Committee acknowledged the risk that it was merely replacing one label with another, but defended their alternative and euphemising conceptualisation:

The term we have proposed, which will be used for descriptive purposes and not for any purpose of categorisation, is preferable to the existing label because it gives more indication of the nature of the child's difficulties and is less likely to stigmatise the child (pp43-4).

It is not clear what distinction was being made between description and categorisation, but it appears that categorisation had the function of removing a child from mainstream education into special schools which matched the category to which they had been assigned. Warnock offered two concepts, special educational needs and learning difficulty. The latter referred to those who had previously been categorised as 'educationally sub-normal' and those who were the objects of 'remedial education'. Over the past ten years, the term special educational needs has come to include only those with 'severe complex and long-term difficulties', whom Warnock saw the need to protect and for whom Records of Needs have been opened. These, it was suggested, would account for approximately 2% of the school population, while the others, within Warnock's notion of 'one in five', would be considered to have learning difficulties. It has been suggested that the necessarily arbitrary nature of the cut-off point of 'special' (Gipps et al, 1985) and the influence of social interests and

vested power on the consideration of 'special' (Swann, 1981) presents an apparently implacable paradox (Wolfendale, 1990).

The HMI report also identified the need to abandon negative categorisations, but its focus was primarily on those children who had been taught in 'remedial classes' within mainstream schools. Such children were referred to as 'retarded' and 'backward':

Retarded children were those who were *temporarily unable to make progress* - without reference to their level of ability. *Backward* children, on the other hand, were those of limited intelligence who required special attention in the basic subjects if their whole development was not to suffer (p5; original emphasis).

The Inspectors sought to encourage teachers to move away from the notion of a pupil deficit as the source of learning difficulties. The alternative was to view the school curriculum, structure, content and pedagogy, as the main cause of difficulty and to try to remedy these problems. This dealt a fairly devastating blow to teachers, who were being told that they could no longer attribute failure to some inherent (and possibly unknown) defect in the pupil - in this new way of speaking, they themselves were at fault, through, among other things, inadequate teaching methods. This accusation was levelled, not just at the remedial specialists, but at subject teachers too.

The report had a particularly emotive tone, presenting a bleak picture of the school experience, written in the present tense, of a child with learning difficulties. This child (who is a male) begins school with deficits, which are not problematic at first, because he is able to work at his own (slow) pace. As he moves through primary and enters secondary school, however, he encounters a whole range of problems; these



become increasingly insurmountable and reinforce further his difficulties, not least of all to the child himself:

So he proceeds through the primary school increasingly conscious that he is different from his classmates, because the important reading skills of understanding, assimilation, and the interpretation of the written word have not developed apace (p10).

The problems which the child encounters are various and relate to the organisation of the school, teaching approaches and, in particular, the secondary curriculum:

Far from solving the problems of learning difficulty, the secondary school, almost in spite of itself, generates its own (p13).

The Inspectors also blamed the system of remedial education, in which the child was withdrawn from his own class for intensive tuition. In the early stages of schooling, withdrawal could serve a useful purpose, according to the Inspectors, particularly in terms of his relationship with his remedial teacher (assumed to be female):

He seems to respond to the fact that he is a member of a small group, and to the security which this generates. He seems to be aware of the extra personal attention he is getting, and the concern with which his teacher tackles his problems. As a result, any tension which may exist between him and the school tends to be reduced (p11).

Later on in his schooling, however, withdrawal merely adds to, rather than solves, his problems because:

It is increasingly irrelevant to his needs and the motivation which withdrawal provided in the early stages fades (p11).

Furthermore, he returns to his classroom to find he is out of touch with the work of his peers. Withdrawal from classes in the secondary school presents further problems, because he finds much of the work lacking in stimulus:

The sense of maturity which transition has given him is challenged, and he cannot relate what he is doing with his remedial teacher to his work in the science laboratory or the workshop . . . he may miss important lessons, and the continuity of subject instruction thus breaks down . . . His lessons have one thing in common: they are almost certainly beyond his powers (pp12-13).

Telling a single story of pedagogic distress acts as an homogenising device, implying that all pupils with learning difficulties will fare as badly. The report shifts from the particular child, which the Inspectors claim to be a 'composite picture' drawn from their broad survey, to include 'pupils like him' (p11), then broadens to 'such pupils' before casting the net to include 'all these pupils' (p12). The Inspectors saw these experiences as so discouraging to pupils that many were likely to 'drop out' before the formal end of their schooling or to 'take refuge in absence from school' (p14).

According to the Inspectors, the problem with the concept of remedial education was the implicit assumption that pupils could be helped to overcome their learning difficulties. They claimed to be more realistic about what constituted a learning difficulty:

It extends well beyond those pupils who have difficulty in learning anything at all and includes those who have trouble coping with

ideas and concepts, not to mention the language in which ideas and concepts are expressed. It also applies to those pupils whose problems are the result of discontinuity arising out of, for example, frequent absence or change of school (p22).

A second important feature of the shift away from the statutory categories of handicap, advocated by Warnock, was the separation of the delivery of special education provision from the special school as the locus of that delivery. The former categories, for instance blind and partially sighted, educationally sub-normal, maladjusted and delicate, defined clearly particular kinds of children and identified them with particular kinds of special schools. Furthermore, the function of ascertainment (under the Education Act, 1945) was to pronounce children as not fit for ordinary schooling and to establish which form of special schooling was appropriate.

The new conceptualisation of special education provision which the Warnock Committee provided was one which need not take place in special schools. In endorsing the principle that handicapped and non-handicapped children should be educated in a common setting so far as possible, the Committee proposed three progressive stages of integration. The least ambitious, locational integration, meant that handicapped and non-handicapped pupils shared the same site. Functional integration was seen as the ultimate aim, where they shared the same curriculum.

The shift from a separate to a common space where education was to take place was also advocated by the Inspectorate. They argued that since withdrawal caused, rather than remedied, the child's learning difficulties, it was to be discontinued where possible. Instead teachers were to provide support **within** the classroom, where:

deep-seated difficulties deriving from the structure and vocabulary of the language employed in teaching, or of a conceptual nature, require to be dealt with in the class or subject context in which they arise. Class and subject teachers cannot escape their responsibility for dealing with them (p22).

The mainstream classroom was to become the main site where learning difficulties were tackled by mainstream and learning support specialists. This required them to develop a completely new professional relationship and the report elucidated these demands.

The two reports, then, seek to reconstruct the child with SEN within more positive discourses. Warnock talks in a cleansing tone of elimination and abolishment and asserts the Committee's intention to establish a new way of speaking. The HMI report, in contrast, invokes a charity discourse by presenting a picture of a failing schoolboy, in order to relocate the problem as intrinsic to an educational discourse. Both reports shift the locus of the difficulty away from the child and alter the space in which this identification takes place. The child, in this new way of speaking, is constructed as a victim, no longer just of biologically determined circumstances, but of the ineptitudes of teachers and other external perpetrators.

Throughout this century, children with handicaps have been constructed within both charity and medical discourses. In particular, they were seen as objects of pity, since they were:

condemned to a life of distress from birth. They are severely handicapped at the start, and no matter what intellectual ability they may have it has to remain hidden away, as difficult to use as handicraft ability would be if one had only the paws of a dog with

which to express it. We teachers, try as we will, can do but little to help many of these children or to relieve them from any part of the burden laid upon them (Scottish Educational Journal, 16 October, 1931b).

Great sympathy was evoked among professionals, not only for the children, but also for their parents for the burden they had to bear in rearing a handicapped child. However, Mander (1934) observed that not all forms of handicap produced similar levels of compassion:

In our literature, deafness has produced more smiles than tears. Old Mrs Wardle of Dingley Dell, being only deaf, was an object of mirth. Had she been blind, Dickens would doubtless have portrayed her as an object of infinite pity. Nevertheless, the handicap of deafness is in many ways as great a tragedy as the handicap of blindness (Scottish Educational Journal, 16 March 1934).

The characteristics of the mentally handicapped or 'defective', as they were described prior to the 1945 Education Act, were regarded as homogeneous. Defective children fell into three discrete categories which identified their degree of incapability within a hierarchy. 'Idiots' occupied the lowest point, according to the Mental Deficiency Committee (1929):

Idiots are unable to protect themselves from the common physical dangers which threaten life; many of them are even lacking in the primitive instinct of self-preservation . . . they have to be washed, dressed and looked after all their lives like little children (B2).

'Imbeciles' were seen as standing above idiots, but:

They stand below feeble minded in that, whilst many of them can perform routine tasks under supervision, they are generally incapable of earning a living (B2).

The 'feeble minded' were regarded as experiencing the mildest grade of defect and linked 'imbeciles' with the 'dull or backward':

They are superior to imbeciles, in that they can be trained to perform work which will contribute materially towards or entirely pay for their keep. They are inferior to the lowest grade of the normal inasmuch as they cannot adapt themselves to circumstances outside their previous experience; they are lacking in certain features of intelligence, such as the capacity to look ahead and to make sensible plans for their future, and also in the control and common sense needed to achieve such plans and to maintain an existence independently of external supervision (B2-3).

Distinctions between the three groups were in terms of the degree of dependence and economic potential children were likely to have in adulthood. The Directors of the Royal Scottish National Hospital (1919) pointed out, however, that they never really grow into men and women. The Mental Deficiency Committee (1929) made its concerns explicit:

In short, the only really satisfactory criterion of mental deficiency is the social one, and if a person is suffering from a degree of incomplete mental development which renders them incapable of independent social adaptation and which necessitates external care,

supervision and control, then such a person is a mental defective (B3).

Defectives, as they were known collectively, were defined by their inability to contribute to society economically and by their lack of independence. It is a peculiarly depersonalising way of typologising individuals, promoting a hierarchy of humanity in which 'every empty head, fixed and classified according to the true reason of men, utters contradiction and irony, the double language of Wisdom' (Foucault, 1967, p35).

The statutory categories of handicap, introduced under the terms of the 1945 Education Act could be said to be more humanitarian than pronouncing people as either idiots, imbeciles or feeble minded. Yet, the function of the new categories was still the same: to remove children from ordinary schools and to segregate them in special schools, but education authorities now had responsibility to make educational provision. Nine new categories of schools emerged to provide for children with a particular deficiency, thus a child categorised as 'educationally subnormal' went to a different school from another identified as 'maladjusted'. Warnock sought to abolish these categories of handicap, seeing these as still too negative.

Mentally deficient children in general were seen as having homogeneous personal characteristics. One teacher described the pupils in her special class as 'cheery souls', who:

are tremendously interested in other people. The snag is that their interest is uninformed. They are completely at the mercy of their emotions and live in an atmosphere compounded of violent likes and dislikes. I may say that there are incessant feuds among the members of my class, and also continual friendships, all in a state

of flux, ebb and flow and complete changeover. This, more than play is their real interest. They exist to bicker and tease, to boast and incite (SEJ, 6 May, 1953b).

Looking back at how the identities and experiences of disabled people have been constructed, it does appear that the Warnock and HMI reports represent a disjuncture. They appear more libertarian than past economic discourses which dehumanised individuals, by classifying them according to their potential to function independently and earn a living. The reports issue the imperative to abandon categorisation or labelling, yet seem effectively to have shifted the labels and the space in which this naming takes place. In other words, the system of differentiation which 'constitutes individuals as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge' (Foucault, 1977b, p192) has simply been relocated.

## **2. Special educational needs and the grip of medicine**

Warnock sought to dislodge the vice-like grip in which medical discourses have held disabled children. The Warnock Committee took exception to the system of ascertainment, under the 1945 Education act, which sought to classify children into particular kinds of handicaps and to associate them with particular kinds of schools. Here, medical practitioners were the principal arbiters and the system of classification of conditions they used had much in common with medical nosology, the science of classification of diseases. Warnock aimed to replace this system with a conceptualisation of a 'continuum of special educational needs' (p94), which seemed simply to shift onto another branch of medicine, epidemiology. Warnock proposed to tackle what was seen as an unhelpful bipolarity:

we have made very clear our determined opposition to the notion of treating handicapped and non-handicapped children as forming



two distinctive groups, for whom separate educational provision has to be made (p100).

The proposal of a continuum of special educational needs was a significant displacement from a system of classification towards an epidemiological model. This 'new view' empowered professionals to search for causes of a disability, or at least contributory factors, that were found **outside** the person. It began to map out new trajectories of special educational needs, rather in the way Foucault describes the development of medical knowledge of the early 18th century. A symptom, he suggested, was situated within a disease, a disease in a specific ensemble and this ensemble in a general plan of the pathological world. Special educational needs, in a similar way, became situated within a map which related the child's disability to other features (eg behaviour, personality, attitude). These could be found by extending the gaze to the child's immediate environment (the parents and family) and the wider locale of the school. This new way of speaking legitimised extensive surveillance of the child.

The progressive specificity of medical knowledge, located within the clinic, opened up to the 'gaze' a 'domain of clear visibility' (Foucault, 1973, p105). All aspects of a patient's disease could be subject to scrutiny, for example through the practices of immunology or radiology. As a result, medical perception was:

freed from the play of essence and symptoms, and from the no less ambiguous play of essence and individual (p105).

The disability of the child, whilst at the centre of the special needs map, is circumnavigated within the Warnock and HMI documents. The focus of the gaze is instead on the rest of the child, his or her characteristics and the environment inhabited by the child.

The system of classification which Warnock proposed to leave behind had been crucial in separating children who could be educated, from those who required to be cared for throughout their lives. Great efforts were made to ensure that this system of ascertainment, managed largely by the medical profession, was accurate. This was said to be important, since:

Thoroughness of ascertainment and classification has been impaired by a feeling among parents and occasionally even among teachers and medical officers that an injury is done to a child by marking him as mentally defective and in need of a special type of education (Circular No 105, SED, 1937).

To minimise the risk of inappropriate ascertainment any child 'alleged' by a teacher to be defective was given the benefit of the doubt until a thorough examination was undertaken:

This is conducted usually in a sympathetic manner by the school medical officer who is, as a rule, specially qualified to test mental capacity (Memorandum, SED, 1945).

Alternatively, it was recommended that in 'doubtful cases' children should be given a 'probationary period' (Circular No 300, SED, 1955). The importance of the knowledge of mental deficiency held by the medical profession and their central role in ascertainment had been asserted by SED in 1937:

while the services of a psychologist or of a teacher trained in mental testing are of great value in the preliminary selection of cases the position of the school medical officer in any adequate scheme of ascertainment is of first importance. It is essential that

he should have knowledge and experience of testing mental capacity. Mental tests have passed beyond the stage of experiment. If applied with skill, tact and judgement and with due regard to the limitations of the intelligence quotient as an absolute diagnosis, they are very useful instruments and should form an integral part of every examination of suspected mental defect (Circular No 105, SED, 1937).

Difficulties were said to arise where medical officers, particularly in rural areas, had limited experience of ascertainment. This, together with the varying standard for certification in different parts of Scotland contributed to what Drever (SEJ, 19 July, 1935) saw as grave defects.

Medics attributed a variety of causes to disability, some of which arose from social, biological, environmental and other, less tangible, factors. In 1919, the superintendent of the Royal Scottish National Hospital in Larbert reported that:

Competent investigators have declared their belief that 75% of mental defect is hereditary and they base this belief on the fact that in at least that percentage of cases a family history of alcoholism, tuberculosis, insanity, neurasthenia or some other nervous trouble can be obtained (p2).

It was little wonder, the report went on to say, that notions had arisen of mental deficiency being a disease, removable by sterilisation, but the solution was not that simple. Dr McGowan, of Crichton Royal Institution, Dumfries, pointed out that very little was known about the heredity of mental defectives, but it was clear that the majority did not come from mentally defective parents (SEJ, 25 March, 1938). This was significant, given the pressure from those proposing birth control or sterilisation

(arising from notions that mentally handicapped were excessively fertile) and from eugeneacists, looking to inhibit the birth of defectives.

Classification clearly had an important role in distinguishing educable from ineducable defectives. Warnock saw no need for such a distinction, since all children were to be educated. However, the attempt to replace categories with the notion of a continuum was problematic. It encouraged professionals to see the causes of disability as being outside, rather than within, the child. This opened up to the 'gaze', among other things, the child's parents, invoking them as a cause of disability.

Attempts to demedicalise disability appear instead to have shifted the way in which the diagnosing gaze operated. This took place in an epidemiological rather than a nosological domain and still involved the attribution of causal factors. It also legitimised maximum surveillance of pupils with special educational needs.

### **3. The right to be educated?**

There was to no question within the Warnock report as to the 'educability' of all children, regardless of the severity of their needs. 'Special educational treatment' was to be replaced by 'special education', asserted Warnock. Similarly, the Inspectors noted that 'special remedial treatment' or 'training' had given way to 'remedial education', but that even this was seen as too narrow and inflexible. They advocated instead the notion of 'learning difficulty' (p22). There was consensus in the reports regarding the rights of pupils with special educational needs. These were the rights of every child with special educational needs to be educated per se, and to experience this, where possible, in an ordinary mainstream setting. Integration, or mainstreaming, was identified in both reports as the ultimate goal for pupils with special educational needs and Warnock endorsed Snowdon's definition of this concept:

Integration for the disabled means a thousand things. It means the absence of segregation. It means social acceptance. It means being able to be treated like everybody else. It means the right to work, to go to cinemas, to enjoy outdoor sport, to have a family life and a social life and a love life, to contribute materially to the community, to have the usual choices of association, movement and activity, to go on holiday to the usual places, to be educated up to university level with one's unhandicapped peers, to travel without fuss on public transport (Snowdon, 1976, p7).

The rights of the handicapped person to the same education as their peers was a central theme of the Warnock report. Yet, integration, it was warned, had to be 'compatible with the interests of other children in the class' (p103). This suggested that the rights of pupils with special educational needs to integration were capable of being removed just as readily as they had been granted.

Throughout most of this century, the education of the mentally defective was not a question of rights, but of their salvation. Education was seen as a means of 'rescuing unfortunate children who must otherwise inevitably drift far behind in life's race' (SED, 1902). Montegale described school as 'a refuge for these poor, delicate, feeble-minded little ones' (Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded, 1908). Such sentiments of pity and sympathy were, however, mixed with concern for social and economic interests. There was considerable fear of the consequences of large numbers of defectives being left untrained. The Egerton Commission spelled out what would happen:

The blind, deaf and educable class of imbeciles, if left uneducated become not only a burden to themselves but a weighty burden on the State. It is in the interests of the State to dry up the minor

streams which must ultimately swell to a torrent of pauperism  
(Egerton Commission Report, 1889, Introduction).

Questions of whether the expense of special schools was worthwhile were answered with reference to the social costs of not educating defectives:

If they did not spend the money to save the child in these special schools they would lose the child and have to spend it on prisons and asylums (SEJ, 17 October, 1924).

Worse still, if denied training and self-respect they would:

drift into the unemployable class, unstable, a burden to others and a misery to themselves no better in many cases than the beasts of the field (Frizell, 1947, p8).

Education, or at least training, was provided to as many as possible in order that they could become 'happier and more useful members of society, and more fit to contribute towards the sources of national strength' (Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded, 1908). There were, of course, degrees to which individuals were considered likely to become productive and independent citizens. Idiots were not seen as able to benefit from training, whereas imbeciles could be taught to perform routine tasks, but still would be unable to earn a living. The feeble minded could be trained to perform work which would contribute to their upkeep, but were thought to require some supervision in daily living (Mental Deficiency Committee, 1929). There was agreement that special classes should set a lower IQ of 50. Any attempt to teach children below that level was 'an undesirable arrangement, for it involved a stupid effort to grow roses on thistles' (SEJ, 19 June, 1931a). There was

less certainty about the upper limit, as at around an IQ of 80 or 85, children were indistinguishable from the dull and backward, who were taught in ordinary classes.

Education or training was seen as so important for mental defectives that the statutory school leaving age was raised to 16 in 1913, some 59 years before this was instituted for pupils in ordinary schools. Even this was not seen as adequate by some:

At the age of sixteen those defectives who had been certified as educable by an education authority were automatically decertified, and left the special class or special school where for years they had received an expensive specialised training; no further official cognisance was taken of their existence until they commenced to give trouble. At this age boys and girls were approaching physical maturity, and even in the case of normal persons it was the most unstable and irresponsible period of their whole lives. At no stage was some form of social supervision more urgently required and at no stage was there a greater opportunity to turn the occupations learned in the special schools into useful and productive channels (SEJ, 23 November, 1934).

Calls to extend the leaving age of mental defectives to 18 were considered by the Department of Health (1946). It recommended that education authorities accept responsibility for the training of all defectives between 2 and 18 years of age, although not on a statutory basis.

Educators had a strong sense of moral duty towards mental defectives, even those pronounced ineducable, 'to increase the self respect of those children and their parents' (Circular No 300, SED, 1955). The kind of education and training provided for mental defectives had a strong moral element:

We are at least trying to provide training for these children which may make them useful and honest, though humble citizens (SEJ, 6 May, 1953b).

The education of defectives, for most of this century, appeared to serve mainly social and economic interests, by striving for independence (reducing the obligations of the state) for as many as possible. Warnock's principle of education for all was founded principally on humanitarian concerns of equality and rights. These rights ushered a into the general population a group of pupils who would have been confined to hospitals and pronounced unworthy or incapable of being educated a process which affirmed their 'non-being'. Yet, these new rights were fragile, capable of being removed if they infringed those of the general population. Furthermore pupils with special educational needs were individualised and differentiated through the distinctive and special education they received.

#### **4. Scoring curriculum goals**

Warnock identified three ways in which integration might be achieved:

- Locational
- Social
- Functional.

Locational integration refers to a situation in which a special school or class and a mainstream school share the same site. Opportunities for social integration could enable children with special educational needs to interact socially with their mainstream peers, possibly at intervals, lunchtimes or school assemblies. Functional integration, the most demanding, takes place when pupils with special educational needs 'join, part-time or full-time, the regular classes of the school and make a full contribution to the activity of the school' (p101). Each of these forms of integration



locates the child with SEN in different relations to his or her school, peers and the curriculum. They each imply that integration is something done to the child to move him or her closer to so-called normal schooling. In short, integration is normalising.

Warnock made it clear that the educational goals for all children were the same, regardless of the severity of need:

They are, first, to enlarge a child's knowledge, experience and imaginative understanding, and thus his awareness of moral values and capacity for enjoyment; and secondly, to enable him to enter the world after formal education is over as an active participant in society and a responsible contributor to it, capable of achieving as much independence as possible (p5).

All children, according to Warnock, were travelling along the same path towards these two goals, but some would meet obstacles which were so daunting that their progress would inevitably be limited. The implied paradox here of the impossibility of all children attaining the same goals along the same route, has subsequently been questioned more explicitly, not least of all by Warnock herself, who has described the Committee as having been naive (White, 1991; Warnock, 1992).

The Warnock Committee appeared never to reconcile their desire for all pupils with special educational needs to pursue the twin educational goals of knowledge and understanding and independence with the recognition that:

For some, independence may in the end amount to no more than the freedom of performing a task for oneself rather than having someone else do it, even if the task is only getting dressed or feeding oneself (p6).

Children with SEN were seen by Warnock as requiring one or more of the following:

1. Providing special means of access to the curriculum through special equipment, facilities or resources, modification of the physical environment or specialist teaching techniques.
2. Providing a special or modified curriculum.
3. Paying particular attention to the social structure and emotional climate in which education takes place.

The second of these is the most important, since it specifies the need to change the curriculum and raises the question of whether the same curriculum goals can be maintained. This is somewhat ambitious, given the difficulties which some children experience. Most examples of claims that alternative methods can achieve the same goals turn out to have addressed different goals for different levels of activity (Allan, Brown and Munn, 1991).

Having identified the curriculum as an indisputable cause of learning difficulties, the Inspectorate went on to specify a set of competing demands, directed primarily at learning support staff. They insisted on:

1. Collaboration between mainstream and learning support staff on all aspects of curriculum planning and teaching.
2. The use of diagnostic testing procedures which avoided a sense of failure on the part of the pupil.
3. A curriculum which had the same goals for all pupils, but which provided opportunities for different routes or pace of working, was matched to individual pupil characteristics and was interesting, challenging and creative. Routine drilling was to be avoided and activities were to be contextualised, offering opportunities to experience success and promote self confidence.

4. Teaching methods which involved less whole class tasks and more group work, individual pacing and the use of educational technology.
5. An avoidance of extraction, unless necessary.
6. Co-operation between primary and secondary schools, to enable a full exchange of information about the pupils' difficulties on transfer.

Differentiation was identified as the key to pursuing the same curriculum goals, but few specific recommendations were provided as to how this might be achieved and schools were left to devise their own solutions. Learning support teachers were called upon to be the most imaginative of all, and suddenly found themselves thrust into a new pedagogic (or consultative) role with their mainstream colleagues.

Before the Warnock Committee published its recommendations, officials appeared to see segregation of mentally defective children from others as being in the best interests of everyone, including ordinary children:

It has possessed the advantage of freedom to adapt means to the required end, and its system of small classes has permitted full use to be made of this freedom . . . it has been . . . more practicable in the Special School than in the ordinary elementary school to deal with the child as a whole - with the physical and social sides as well as the mental - and to establish an effective association with the parent and the home (Mental Deficiency Committee, 1929, para 63d).

The special school was seen as having considerable benefits which made them well fitted to educate mental defectives:

special schools . . . help the ordinary schools by removing the difficult children; they help these children by removing them from competitive conditions, from the teasings and cruelties of the ordinary school, into a happy environment, where they are classified according to their abilities and where, being placed in much smaller classes they receive the individual attention they need from specially trained teachers. The general aim is to fit them for a normal after-life (SEJ, 6 March, 1953).

There were, however, a large number of teachers who:

doubt whether the wisest, best and kindest thing is being done for mentally defective children in segregating them in special schools (SEJ, 17 March 1927).

Drever (1935), for example, argued that the special education system was:

wrong and utterly indefensible. Under it the so-called mentally deficient child was regarded as a different species from ordinary mankind (SEJ, 19 July, 1935).

This view was rejected by other voices within the SEJ, who saw the need to issue a reminder of:

what great things these special schools have done for their pupils in the way of recovery and redemption . . . one third of their pupils ultimately made good in life, while another one third could do something under supervision, leaving only one third who required permanent control or segregation. This fact alone served to prove

that special schools and classes were making a definite contribution to the social betterment of defectives themselves and relieving the ordinary schools of a dead weight that hindered the progress of normal pupils (SEJ, 19 July, 1935).

Agreement existed, during the first half of the century, that the education required to meet the homogenous needs of mental defectives should differ in some way from that provided for ordinary children. However, educationists argued over precisely what they should be taught, until, as the Secretary of the Scottish Education Department observed:

the curriculum used to be too bookish. We might well introduce still more of the spirit of Nursery Schools into our Special schools and teach simple domestic work, good habits and manners. I have seen mentally defective children grappling with Arithmetic and Spelling that was of little practical use even for ordinary children. But wiser counsels are prevailing and more stress is being laid on practical and vocational work . . . the vocational trend of instruction given to the older pupils has proved as profitable to the children as it is popular with the parents . . . They are beginning to see, as teachers have long seen, that the years between 14 and 16 should be spent at school for they are critical years in the formation of character, and it is at this time that vocational training can be given with the greatest profit (SEJ, 19 June, 1931a).

Mental defectives were prescribed an education that was practical and vocational in its orientation, but which also had a strong emphasis on instruction in moral and personal habits.

The 1945 Education act was the first to make provision for the education of handicapped and ordinary children on equal terms, albeit different in nature and in location. In SED circular 300 (1955), the omission of the word special from the public titles of separate schools for the handicapped was recommended on the grounds that:

handicapped children should not be marked off from their fellows any more than is necessary . . . the handicapped child does not differ fundamentally from any other: for him the broad purpose of education is essentially the same as for his more fortunate contemporaries (Circular 300, SED, 1955).

This was the first time that such an assertion had been made at an official level, but the EIS claimed that these opinions 'have always been held' by them, thus laying a claim to an official voice which was representative of the profession:

It is the same world that they have to live in, but one which is even more difficult for them than for their more fortunate brothers and sisters, and therefore, as the report stresses, the method of instruction is of the first importance (SEJ, 1 April, 1955).

Much was made of the benefits defectives would derive from instructional methods and even the use of methods 'which may sometimes be regarded as formal and old fashioned' (SEJ, 1 April, 1955).

The teaching of deaf children was characterised by a fierce debate, which raged for many years among professionals, over the best approach. What became known as 'the methods debate' was initially between lip reading, signing or a combined approach. In the early part of the century lip reading was favoured and parents of children

attending the school for deaf and dumb were asked to support the aims of the school in 'the development of speech, lipreading and language and the suppression of signing' (Royal Institution for the education of deaf and dumb children, 1933). By 1950, Cowe observed that children in Donaldsons school for the deaf were taught by either lip reading, signing or a combination of the two (SEJ, 14 July, 1950). However, a number of languages in which deaf children could be taught to sign also emerged during this time, each of which had their advocates.

Teachers of mental defectives were urged to adopt an approach which enabled the children to develop strong characters. This implied silencing charity discourses. The Assistant Secretary of the Scottish Education Department made the following recommendation:

Defective children require much kindness and consideration. They should be encouraged and even praised but, withal, should be gradually prepared for the cold realities of life. Whatever the handicap, no self-pity should be countenanced, it is a dangerous habit and a misfortune to all those around. Lead them not to expect pity and you will save them from a great deal of sorrow in their after lives (SEJ, 19 June, 1931a).

Teachers of physical defectives were given advice of a similar kind:

While they should have general sympathy for afflicted children and be prepared to make proper allowances for their handicaps, they should at the same time seek to inculcate in the pupils a spirit of independence and self-reliance and to discourage self-pity (Circular No 105, SED, 1937).

Teachers, however, were also urged to give the child as much attention and devotion as possible, clearly invoking, rather than silencing, charity discourses:

The personal care and attention bestowed upon him leads him to believe that he is all important and that the teacher exists for him alone. This attitude removes the inferiority complex which results from being constantly at the bottom of the class in an ordinary school. As the headmaster of a special school told me, "Dignity is all very well, but it is a poor thing in a teacher of the mentally handicapped child." The teacher must always be thinking of the pupil as his equal. Sympathy, love, charity must ever be present in his attitude towards his helpless mites (SEJ, 29 June, 1954).

The 'integration movement', heralded by Warnock, represented a clear shift from the advocacy of special education as something that was distinctive from ordinary education. However, as Marks (1994) notes, integration has emerged as part of the 'new binarism' (p74) in which integration signals progress and its antithesis, segregation, does not. As Corbett (1993) notes, Warnock even uses the metaphors of travel and track to signify progress. There was, however, some ambivalence within the Warnock report about whether integration could be an heuristic for all children, especially in relation to the curriculum. The three tiers of integration, locational, social and functional, objectified the individual with special educational needs by requiring him or her to be placed in ascending degrees of proximity to school, peers and curriculum. Professionals were required to scrutinise this proximity and to make judgements about the success or failure of integration according to 'where' they found the child.



## **5. Professionals and parents**

The messages to the providers of special education, contained in both the Warnock and the HMI report, appeared to heighten what Tomlinson (1982) refers to as 'professional mystique', in which:

bureaucracies have harnessed the expertise of professionals to legitimate the ways in which the subordinate groups in society can be controlled (p84).

Professionals, engaged in special education are, as those in other professions, self-regulatory and this helps to preserve further their mystique. Yet they do not have the 'rigour' which Cabanis describes medical practitioners as having:

The medical body criticises itself to a greater extent than it protects itself and, by virtue of this fact it is indispensable in protecting the people from its own illusions and from the mystifications of charlatans (Foucault, 1973, p46).

Warnock called for close co-operation between professionals involved in the assessment of and provision for children with special educational needs:

We recognise that the development of such relations is necessarily a slow process, depending as it does on the establishment of trust between different professionals and understanding of each other's functions (p295).

An important feature of these relations was the sharing of information between professional groups, but Warnock acknowledged that this need may in practice be subordinate to 'considerations of confidentiality' (p296). The report called for the

exercise of 'professional judgement' regarding who should have access to information, but did not identify which professional groups ought to exercise judgement over others.

Learning support specialists were exhorted by HMI to adopt five distinctive roles, which included providing help to individual pupils. The Inspectorate recognised the specialist knowledge of the 'remedial teachers' and saw them as:

the proper people to deal with certain problems, such as help for pupils who have failed to master the early reading and computational processes (p22).

At the same, the clear central message of the report was that the education of pupils with learning difficulties was the responsibility of *all* teachers in the school. Collaboration between mainstream and learning support, the HMI report insisted, was the key to providing a differentiated curriculum.

In the past, the medical profession were the main arbiters of special education provision. Barton and Tomlinson (1984) argue that this came about because the medical profession had been struggling for recognition during the nineteenth century and sought to enhance its interests by laying claims to education of defective children. The 1944 education act formalised the role of the medical profession by giving them a statutory right to diagnose handicap and prescribe treatment (both medical and educational). The need for co-operation between medical and educational professionals was noted by Frizell (1947) as having 'the makings of dissension and rivalry' (p7).

The teaching of defectives was thought to require compassionate and sympathetic individuals:

I feel that the chief qualification that such teachers need is an exceptional share of sympathy, patience and kindly tact (SED, 1902, p121).

Monteagle agreed that such teachers should be sympathetic, patient and fond of children. She also suggested that 'they should be able to play the piano and sing' (Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded, 1908). In the annual report of the Royal Scottish National Hospital, Larbert, the teachers were thanked for their 'fidelity and devotion to trying and often discouraging duties' (RSNH, 1919, p15).

There were calls for greater recognition of the burden on the special education teacher and the improvement of financial rewards:

These are just reasonably accomplished professional people but with those qualities of personality and outlook which make for success with handicapped children - patience, understanding, generous sympathy and an interest in the development of these young lives despite the apparent hurdles with which they are faced . . . Work with the handicapped brings its reward in the gratitude of the children and their parents and in the satisfaction of a job well done: but more tangible returns are necessary (Frizell, 1947, pp7-8).

Teachers involved in the education of handicapped children appeared to have been viewed as having very special qualities and it could be said that this has helped to sustain the mystique which continues to surround special education today. It is interesting that within both the Warnock and HMI documents, teachers are credited with the skills to overcome children's difficulties but are also seen as the source of

these. More generally, professionals are legitimised arbiters of special education, deciding who is entitled to receive it. Yet, whilst they are practitioners of this knowledge, they are also objects of it. They too are caught in the objectifying gaze.

Both reports identified parents as key players in special education provision and their support was seen as crucial to successful integration. Warnock also went some way towards legitimising the knowledge parents had about their own child's condition and sought to embed this knowledge within the statutory assessment procedures. Yet, both reports speak of parents in a highly paternalistic way. Warnock, for instance, referred to the need to help parents to understand and accept their child's difficulties:

The sense of acceptance by the family is likely to be a prerequisite of the successful integration of an individual child in an ordinary school (p107).

An entire chapter of the Warnock report is devoted to the advice and support seen as being required by parents. Parents are described as partners in the educational process, bringing distinctive knowledge and understanding of their child's needs, but this partnership is constructed in a way which is far from equal. Many parents, the report says, 'have their own burdens to bear'. They have 'special needs', consisting of their 'attitudes', 'resources' and degrees of 'independence' (p150) and these will determine their ability to cope and the amount of support they will require. Parents appear in the report to have become, like their children, objects of the rational knowledge of special education.

'Confidentiality' of information is described in the Warnock report as being in the 'interests of the child', particularly where this could be 'shameful', or 'embarrassing' (p297). At the same time the report calls for the sharing of information among professionals. Which of these two competing principles can be allowed to determine

practice is dictated by the 'interests of the child' (p297), the overriding concern, according to Warnock. It is, of course, the professionals who are called upon to make this judgement and the report makes it clear that they may breach confidentiality where they see fit. If, for example, the parents of a child do not give consent to the passing of information, this could take place if 'the child's welfare is considered to be at risk' (p299). Schostak (1984a) points out that another effect of taking decisions 'in the best interests of those who must abide by the decisions' is the violation of intelligence:

Intelligence is thus being prevented from working upon the environment to transform it to meet the needs, feelings and desires of the individual because of the systematic reduction in the opportunities of an individual to act (pp86-7).

It could be argued that parents, who also become objects of the special educational needs knowledge, experience a similar violation of their own intelligence, by being prevented from challenging authority.

The HMI report stressed the need to sustain the interest and support of parents, and gave this message to teachers:

when signs appear that parental support is beginning to flag, they must do all in their power to revive it (p30).

There was no sign in the HMI report of a partnership, merely an indication of the need for parents to co-operate with the teachers' attempts to tackle learning difficulties.

Riddell, Dyer and Thomson (1990) point out that the legislation which followed from Warnock and the HMI report, the Education (Scotland) Act, 1981 clearly made some moves towards according greater power to parents, but at the same time limited the extent to which they can actually exercise this power. Parents cannot, for example, appeal against Part V of a Record of Needs, containing the measures proposed by the authority to meet a child's needs and arguably the most important aspect of the document.

Parents' knowledge, particularly of the handicapping conditions of their child, was given legitimacy in the Warnock report. Before that, parents of handicapped children had very little say in the ascertainment process or in the subsequent provision made, but were compelled to attend the medical examination of their child:

and if a parent upon whom such a notice is served fails without reasonable excuse to comply with the requirements thereof he shall be liable on conviction by a court of summary jurisdiction to a fine not exceeding five pounds (Education (Scotland) Act, 1945, 40: 2).

At this time, some regard for parents' feelings was evident in the concern not to offend them through inaccurate ascertainment of their child. Parents were considered objects of both pity and mistrust and had little or no say in the provision made for their child. Parents of 'alleged defectives' could be fined for not submitting their child to medical examination and moves were made to protect children from parents considered unfit to act 'in the children's best interests':

When the child is older and may be turned to account for gain, there would be nothing to prevent unscrupulous parents or guardians from withdrawing the child, very much to its detriment and possibly to its ruin. Some means of protection must therefore

be provided, and we recommend accordingly an extension of the curatorial system, not on the basis of the preservation of property, but on that of the safeguard of the person (Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded, 1908, para 1039).

Parents, in this context, were considered a potential threat to their children's welfare and so the state's pastoral duty was to offer protection. Henderson (SEJ, 16 April, 1926) contended that parents were often 'far too loath and far too lacking in confidence in themselves to be of much help to their children'.

Some concern was expressed for parents of handicapped children, 'many of whom are hurried into ill health or an early grave by the burden that fate has imposed upon them' (Frizell, 1947, p2). Yet, the regard authorities seemed to have for parents' feelings was matched by an awareness, evident in the Warnock report, that parental consent and support had to be secured for effective provision to be made. The SED recommended that:

the exercise of patience, sympathy and tact by teachers, medical officers and others concerned will secured the desired result . . . the parent can thus be led to appreciate that the object of the transfer is to make the child happier at school and to prepare him more effectively for after-life (Circular No 105, SED, 1937).

It was mentioned previously that parents of deaf and dumb children attending the Royal Institution were asked to support the schools aims by suppressing signing. They were also requested to visit no more than monthly and were advised that all written communication with their children would be scrutinised by staff.

Concern for social interests, characterising the treatment of parents of disabled children for most of the century, appeared to have been less prominent within the Warnock report. The rhetoric of partnership with parents was aimed at giving them a say in their children's education, rather than regarding them as a threat to it. Within the document and the subsequent legislation, however, the boundaries of parents' knowledge were very rigorously circumscribed and parents themselves appear to be objects of the knowledge of special education, rather than active 'partners in the education process' (p150).

Parents and professionals are objectified within the Warnock and HMI documents both as causes of and sources of help for children's difficulties. This binds them even more tightly in a network of power relations in which they must supervise children and also be part of that surveillance. Records of Needs procedures provide a system of 'permanent registration' which ensures that 'inspection functions ceaselessly' (Foucault, 1977b, pp195-6).

The final part of this chapter considers the current climate and the possible emergence of a new set of discourses.

### **Warnock, economic discourses and individualism**

The Warnock and HMI reports encouraged a reconstruction of the identities and educational experiences of disabled people. There appears not, however, to have been unequivocal success in this shift and, indeed, there are signs that we may have reached another watershed for special education provision. Recent government mainstream education policies have heralded a whole new set of discourses which invoke education as a consumer commodity, place individual parents in a more powerful role, with rights and choices, and encourage competition between schools. Where children with SEN stand in relation to these discourses is still being determined by policy makers and others.



In England and Wales, LMS (Local Management of Schools) is thought to encourage the 'cut and thrust of the market', which leaves pupils with learning difficulties vulnerable because of the extra costs their needs impose on schools trying to compete with each other (Lee, 1992). It also sets out to empower schools as consumers in a way they have never experienced before. In Scotland, the introduction of devolved school management and local government reform are seen by policy makers as likely to disadvantage children with special educational needs by making them less attractive to mainstream schools (Allan et al, 1995b).

The current economic climate, however, is just one aspect of the new phase we appear to have entered in special educational needs provision. Some features of this appear to be direct consequences of the Warnock recommendations in so far as they represent a backlash. Others reflect more general changes.

The education of children with special educational needs in the 90's appear to be characterised by the following:

- (i) A higher profile of **special needs interests groups**, each fighting for recognition of their identity and for specialised provision, which may be within a special or a mainstream school. One of the most prominent in recent years has been the Dyslexia Association, which has placed enormous pressure on local education authorities to make extra resources available. In a climate of economic constraints, these groups have become more vociferous in an effort to secure resources for children experiencing particular kinds of difficulties. Special educational provision has consequently acquired a kind of legal framework with placing requests, appeals and tribunals which places parents and local authorities potentially in opposition.

- (ii) **A return to categorisation** of children, according to their difficulties, implying a rejection of the notion of a continuum. There is currently raging a debate on disability, in which anti-labelling theorists have been criticised of de-dramatising disability, by trying to remove the label of handicapped (Soder, 1991). This essentialist position is not unlike that of gay, feminist and ethnic minority groups and in some ways makes resistance difficult (see Chapter 5) Many of the special needs interests groups see a return to categorisation as a necessary step towards recognition of the needs of their child and appropriate specialist provision. In this respect, categories have become valorised and commodified.
  
- (iii) **A crisis in recording**, with education authorities facing demands to record more children than ever, because of the resource implications. Warnock herself has gone on record as saying that statementing should be abolished because those who do not have statements are forgotten (1993). The perceived significance attached to a Record of Needs or a statement inevitably makes those who have such a label distinctive in the eyes of parents, teachers and children. Educational Psychologists may be called upon refuse to open Records of Needs in an attempt to minimise costs, encouraging parents further towards litigation.
  
- (iv) **Increased support for segregation** and a slowing down of the trend towards integration. This appears to have arisen mainly from the influence of parents and other interest groups and concerns about the high costs of mainstreaming. The dogma of integration, apparent in the 1980's, seems to have given way to talk of appropriate education and parental choice.

(vi) **The politicisation of parents** by central government, with an emphasis on individual rights rather than on collective welfare. Parents seem to have responded to this by supporting segregated school provision just as much as mainstreaming.

An exploration of the discourses within the Warnock and HMI reports suggest that they do signal new ways of speaking about disabled people as they claim. It seems less clear, however, that they represent the definitive watershed that many have asserted. One reason for this relates to the ambivalences and contradictions within the reports which this chapter has explored briefly. The medical and charity discourses, identified at the beginning of this chapter have continued to dominate the construction of pupils with special educational needs. Tracing these discourses historically has illustrated just how formidable they have been in the past and suggests that they cannot merely be 'dumped' by issuing a new set of formal statements.

The 'marketisation' of education generally has signalled a new way of speaking about disabled people which is more explicitly individualising than past discourses. The rights of individual children with SEN seem to be protected most effectively by highlighting their differences from 'ordinary' children, rather than promoting the collective welfare of all children. The danger, of course, is that those with loud voices, or with protagonists who can shout on their behalf will be advantaged.

Chapter 5 explores some of the ways in which disabled people have resisted the formal SEN discourses.

## RESISTANCE

Chapters 6 and 7 attempt to map out the ways in which the identities and experiences of pupils with special educational needs are constructed through informal discourses. The pupils are not, however, simply recipients of these discourses; rather they resist and transform these (albeit to varying degrees) within their mainstream schools and classrooms. This chapter examines more formal kinds of resistance, in particular the activities of the disability rights movement. The discourses which construct the 'movement' depict people engaged in antagonistic struggle against their oppressors, society, and fighting for empowerment. Yet, what follows is not a tale of empowerment, but of an apparent failure to challenge the status quo. A number of elements seem to have undermined their collective political strength. The diversity of the groups within the 'movements' (Oliver and Zarb, 1989) has reduced their 'solidarity' and eroded their capacity to resist. They have also been constrained to function as part of the discursive practices which define them as marginal, or disabled within a normalising society (Liggett, 1988). Perhaps the biggest barrier in recent years to their effectiveness in bringing about change has come from the Conservative government. Ministers could be said to have failed to listen to the demands of disabled people. On the other hand, their 'talking out' of the anti-discrimination legislation in parliament could be construed as a deliberate infringement of the rights of disabled people.

This chapter begins by trying to identify what is being resisted and by whom and examines the discourses of this 'struggle'. It then considers the oppositional discourses which limit the political strength of the so-called 'movement' from both inside (eg among different interest groups) and outside (eg from the Conservative Government).

## **Resistance to what?**

It is very difficult to describe social isolation to people who have never experienced it but the truth of the matter is we have little or no contact with society, we're shut away in institutions, very often prisoners in our own home. We can't access the environment, we can't get onto transport, we don't have jobs, we don't have decent education. We are an oppressed people within our own society (People First, 5 December 1994).

The person speaking here describes an active and intended violation of rights of various kinds (material, environmental, social and psychological) and others (eg Oliver, 1990a; Abberley, 1992) have documented the widespread oppression of disabled people. While there is agreement over the extent of oppression, there is, however, considerable divergence over the causes of it. As was seen in the section on theorising special education (in Chapter 2) individualistic views of disability or special educational needs appear to have been abandoned in favour of ostensibly more enlightened social theoretical models (although recent Government market led policies have tended to reinforce individualism). Social constructionists have attributed the problem of oppression to environmental factors, including attitudes. Social creationists, on the other hand, view disadvantage as arising from the 'institutionalised practices of society' (Oliver, 1990a, p83). Not surprisingly movements have set out to resist different things, depending on how they understand the causes of disadvantage. Some have focused on disabling attitudes and have adopted an anti-labelling or integrationist stance. Others have tackled causes of material disadvantage. There is, however, one point which unifies the various disability groups:

The disability rights movement, after all, is a rebellion against being cast by society as pitiable victims. This is one minority group that

understands that claiming the role of victim is self defeating  
(Shapiro, 1993, p104).

Oliver (1990a) links the growth of the disability movement to the gradual failure of the Welfare State to provide adequately for disabled people. Some of these groups mirror social movements in other areas (feminism and anti-racism), in so far as they represent a struggle for participatory democracy, social equality and justice. They also have a discursive unity with these groups, talking a common 'game' of struggle, resistance and rebellion. Other groups represent single issues (such as the Disability Income Group) or advocate on behalf of people with similar disabilities (eg Down's Syndrome). The difficulty for all of them is how they manage their relationship with those they seek to resist, whilst recognising that they require to be recognised by them. This means that in order to be heard, they have to speak as disabled people, using the labels which are part of the oppression they seek to denounce.

It is worth looking briefly at the development of disability movements and Oliver (1990a) offers a typology of disability organisations:

1. Partnership/patronage
2. Economic/parliamentarian
3. Consumerist/self-help
4. Populist/activist
5. Umbrella/co-ordinating.

The first voluntary organisations emerged alongside the growth of capitalism and organisations such as the RNIB (founded in 1868) set about representing the interests of blind children and adults. These groups had a paternalism and self interest which is still evident today. They have also tended to operate within medical and charity discourses and in partnership with the state, which has made them politically impotent

(Oliver, 1990a). In other words, they were not established as resisting organisations, but set out to care for and protect individuals. Furthermore, as will be seen at a later point in this chapter, Government market led education policies have forced voluntary organisations to adopt individualistic, rather than social, perspectives and to fight only for those with particular kinds of needs. Recently, voluntary organisations such as Mencap and Scope have altered their images and have tried to balance an educative role with their continuing quest for financial support. Single issue groups, such as the Disability Income Group, have been more expressly political, with parliamentary lobbying and other tactics, but they have also tended to exclude broader issues (and people) in their pursuits. Self help groups (eg the Derbyshire Council for Integrated Living) have had some success in terms of empowering individuals to achieve a level of independence (Oliver, 1990a; Oliver and Zarb, 1989). These groups often began with a practical outlook, but then 'combine[d] their power to influence social and political decisions that affect their lives' (Crewe and Zola, 1983. pxiv). Populist/activist organisations (eg the British Deaf Association and Sisters Against Disablement) have, according to Oliver, worked at consciousness raising among the public and empowerment of its members. Davis (1993) notes the particular significance of the British Deaf Association in marking a revision of outlook among disabled people 'from personal to collective struggle' (p287). Finally, umbrella organisations such as the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (BCODP) and the Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) have sought to co-ordinate and support the political activities of what they recognise to be very diverse groups.

Several writers (eg Oliver, 1990a; Hasler, 1993) make the important distinction between organisations 'for' and 'of' disabled people. This was made explicit during the International Year of Disabled People, in 1981, which began as a year 'for' disabled people, but was changed, following representation. Lobbyists argued that 'its very title reinforced the idea that disabled people should have things done for them' (Oliver, 1990a, p115). The divisiveness between the 'fors' and the 'ofs' was increasingly

fuelled by those among the latter groups who resented organisations being run by able-bodied people, operating within medical and charity, rather than social, models of disability. Furthermore:

these groups are criticised on the grounds of the interests they actually serve, whether they be of the establishment, the careers of the professional staff or the personal aggrandisement of key individuals through the honours system (Oliver, 1990a, p115).

Another commentator suggested that within these organisations, people quickly lost touch with the reality of poverty and disability. 'Life looks different from the inside of a BMW' (Brandon, 1988, p27).

Civil rights campaigners in the UK have sought to emulate the success of their counterparts in the USA, epitomised by the introduction in 1992 of legislation for Americans with disabilities. The impetus behind the American civil rights movement was the frustration that to be disabled meant to fight someone else's attitude, not the impairment itself (Shapiro, 1993). The reasons for its impact were less clear, but Shapiro suggests that there was both empathy among politicians and other authority figures and a kind of respect for the movement. Empathy came from the 'hidden army', among them George Bush (who had two seriously ill children, one of whom died, and a child with learning difficulties) and James Brady (former White House secretary who was shot in the head in the assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan). Boyden Gray, counsel for George Bush, responded in almost reverential tones to the resistance to the proposed education reforms which would have adversely affected the rights of disabled:

The protest was spontaneous and it was swift . . . Obviously it was not a cynical, political thing, co-ordinated in a cynical, political way.



It was a genuine response. And that demonstrated to me and to [Bush] that this movement had enormous impact (quoted in Shapiro, 1993, p120).

Despite the apparent success of the US civil rights movement, however, there seems to have been little impact on the consciousness of the American people. Shapiro (1993) describes the Americans with Disabilities Act as both 'an earthshaking event for disabled people' because they began to see themselves as a political force and 'an odd victory' since 'non disabled Americans still had little understanding that this group now demanded rights not pity' (pp140-141).

The disability 'movement' in the UK has a number of apparently contradictory features. It does not have a unity which might be necessary in order to engage in struggle. Rather, it is made up of disparate groups, with different interests. Yet, the discourses of the movement (or at least of some groups within it) depict antagonism and anti-hegemonic struggle against oppression and affect solidarity in public. Victory for Oliver and others implies a kind of essentialist acceptance of individuals' disabled realities, and empowering them to live as they choose, although he recognises the risks of being marginalised. This is rather different from Foucault's interpretation of resistance, which involves a more permanent (and ultimately never attainable) struggle. Given the diversity within the disability 'movement', it is not surprising that their activities have been equally varied. These are discussed below.

### **Forms of resistance**

The activities which are discussed here range from direct political action to more educative approaches. My decision to interpret them as resistance connects to the dissenting discourses among disability rights organisations, at least, in terms of their self-representation. Even the humour, used by the comedian 'Steady Eddie' and others could be viewed as acts of resistance, designed to shock the public into confronting

their own prejudices. The question of what counts as resistance is discussed more fully in the final chapter. Hasler (1993) notes the increasing willingness of disabled people to 'sit down and be counted' (p284) and Phillips (1995) suggests that disability is now 'hot politics', sitting alongside gender race and sexual orientation 'in the forefront of political debate and controversy' (The Observer, 7 May, 1995). It may well be the case that disability rights are shifting onto political agendas, yet disabled people continue to suffer oppression and lack protection of their civil rights. Furthermore, their actions appear not to have challenged significantly those discourses which construct them as objects of pity or of medical knowledge.

### *Direct Action/Civil Disobedience*

In December 1994, disabled protesters caused 'ugly scenes' in Harrods, bringing Christmas shopping to a standstill. After they had demanded to see the manager to complain about the store's policy on wheelchairs, security guards dragged the protesters into the street. During the 'Children in Need' fund-raising event, protesters chained themselves to headquarters of BBC, demanding 'rights not charity' and on 9 July 1994, following the demise of the Roger Berry Bill on anti-discrimination (discussed later in this chapter), over 2,000 protesters took to the street and attended a 'Rights Now' rally in Trafalgar Square, London. These actions have not been isolated incidents, capable of being dismissed as extremist behaviour, but have been coordinated on a grand scale by organisations such as Direct Action Network, the Campaign to Stop Patronage. This group uses 'American-style confrontational tactics to highlight injustices against disabled people' (Tredre, The Observer, 11 December 1994) and speaks of 'fights' against being treated as 'second class citizens'. The 'enemy' is constructed as the state and individuals or groups who erect barriers, preventing disabled people from undertaking those activities which others take for granted. Direct Action argue that it is necessary to 'take to the street to get general public support' (People First, 5 December 1994) and this seems to involve shifting public perception of the acceptability of these barriers. For example, a disabled person,

protesting at being asked to relinquish her wheelchair in Harrods, said 'People who do not use wheelchairs are not asked to change their shoes when entering Harrods. Why should we change wheelchairs?' (Scotland on Sunday, 11 December 1994). One protester suggested that the public protest events had brought more people, including some 'new faces', together and had heralded a new level of solidarity.

### ***Pressure Group Activity***

The emergence of pressure groups, around the mid-1960s, reflected a growing concern over the failure of the Welfare State to provide for disabled people and a recognition that traditional politics were not representing their interests (Oliver and Zarb, 1989). These new groups (eg the Disablement Income Group or Shelter) tended to focus on single issues (such as employment or housing) to the exclusion of others. This tended to limit their power to exert influence, even through extensive lobbying. A more restrictive factor, however, was said to be the 'corporate' nature of most organisations (Borsay, 1986b; Oliver and Zarb) which required participation with, rather than opposition to, the Government:

This partnership does not inevitably banish the needs and opinions of physically disabled people from sight, but the allegiance of corporate professional interests to economic development stacks the cards against their faithful representation in the shaping and administration of policy (Borsay, 1986b, p15).

Oliver and Zarb (1989) cite RADAR's support for Government attempts to abolish the Quota, established under the Disabled Person's (Employment) Act 1944 and the Spastics Society's opposition to anti-discrimination legislation as examples of this 'allegiance'.

A further limiting factor for pressure groups is that they are required to function as part of the discursive practices which construct them as disabled. This means acceptance of the normalising society:

In other words, the price of becoming politically active on their own behalf is accepting the consequences of defining disability within new perspectives, which have their own priorities and needs. The new perspectives then become involved in disciplining disability (Ligget, 1988, p271).

Disabled people, argues Ligget, have to participate as disabled and as a minority group, rather than as individuals with equal status to 'ordinary' people.

### *Educating the public*

In recent years, some disability organisations have gone to considerable lengths to educate the public into a more positive conceptualisation of disabled people. This seems to be an unusual form of resistance, in which attempts are made to 'clean up' discourses and replace offensive constructions of individuals with more acceptable locutions.

Disability Scotland (Undated) issued a guide to journalists on media representation, advising that:

Stereotypical images of disabled people as objects of charity or heroes remain at odds with a new reality, wherein people with disabilities ask that their right to dignity and freedom as individuals is recognised. If disadvantage and discrimination are to be avoided, descriptions of disability must accord with that used by disabled people, rather than reinforce patronising and inaccurate images (p3).

Curiously, the terms 'disabled people' and 'people with disabilities' are used interchangeably in the document, which is a point of contention between some individuals or groups:

Booth and Soder constantly refer to disabled people as people with disabilities. This is a linguistic attempt to deny the reality of disability - disabled people are people first who just happen to have a disability - and one which disabled people have rejected (Oliver, 1992b, p21).

The document does, however, list the more negative or emotive words and phrases which should be avoided (such as describing someone as a 'victim' or as 'confined to a wheelchair') and counsels 'when in doubt, ask the person or people concerned how they wish to be referred to' (p8). Voluntary organisations have also tried to adopt an educative role. As charitable bodies, however, they have to balance this with generating enough sympathy from the public to encourage them to dip into their pockets. The recent activities of Mencap and Scope, described below, illustrate this tension of being 'caught between the competition of the market place and the campaigning of the civil rights groups' (Corbett and Ralph, 1995, p12).

Mencap, the organisation for mentally handicapped, has traditionally focused its advertising campaign on the heart (and purse) strings of the public. Mencap, like other charities, have faced increasing competition for scarce resources, but this organisation has the additional disadvantage of having a 'mental' connotation (Lloyd, 1993; Corbett and Ralph, 1995). Until recently, Mencap relied on producing negative images of disabled people (Hevey, 1992; Corbett and Ralph 1995). This was embodied in little Stephen, a pathetic child, 'certain to convey pathos and exact sympathy' (Corbett and Ralph, 1995, p6). A new image was established for Mencap and this was launched in 1992. Five photographs of people doing everyday activities (eg playing) replaced 'little

Stephen' and each was accompanied with the strapline 'making the most of life' (Corbett and Ralph, 1995, p8). This signalled a new kind of advertising, which promoted a 'brand image' of a charity and raised awareness about disabled people (Scott-Parker, 1989).

The Spastics Society changed its name to Scope in 1994, because of the negative connotations associated with the term 'spastic'. One advertisement read:

Pillock

Nerd

Spastic

Moron

Spot the odd one out. If you didn't, then maybe now you can appreciate why the Spastics Society has changed its name (Observer, 7 May 1995).

The renamed 'Scope' set out on a major advertising campaign, aimed at educating the public to think more positively about people with cerebral palsy:

Cerebral palsy often impairs the ability to communicate. Yours, not mine. I know it's difficult to understand what I say. But it would be easier if people tried. It's the muscles in my jaw and my tongue that are affected, not my mind. That works as clearly as you're reading this. And I don't care how many times you ask me to repeat myself. I'd rather you do that than just nod and pretend you understand. For all you know, I might have just told you that you've got a face like a bull-dog sucking a wasp. Not that I would . . . it's about time that everyone with cerebral palsy, however severely disabled, was

allowed the scope to live normally. Which means not having our rights and abilities ignored. Scope are as keen to talk to you as I am. Call them . . . (Observer 7 May 1995)

Scope distributed a leaflet (within the Observer newspaper) which combined a survey of public opinion with a request for donations. The questions focused on the incidence of cerebral palsy and the role of Scope in helping people 'reach their full potential'. This is an interesting approach which seemed to go for the minds, rather than the hearts, of the public.

Resistance from organisations such as Scope and Mencap appear somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, they have sought to dislocate the negative discourses by encourage positive constructions of disabled people. Mencap did this by portraying individuals in 'ordinary' circumstances such as within families. On the other hand, these organisations rely on public support and have needed to foster this through marketing. Thus, disabled people have been simultaneously been depicted within campaigns as needing help, but not pity. Scope's invitation to 'call them' signals a seductive shift towards their oppressors, the public, perhaps with a view to exercising more control over their oppressive behaviour.

### ***Steady Eddie and the Wheelchair from Hell.***

The first time I saw a sign saying "disabled toilet" I went off to find one that f\*\*\*ing worked (Performance recording).

Steady Eddie, a comedian with cerebral palsy, toured his 'Quantum Limp' show around the UK in 1994. He was introduced as a person whose chat up line was 'do you want to come back to my place and see the only part of me that's straight?' This was a shocking performance which confronted audiences with their own disablism. It was funny and discomfiting at the same time. Yet the joke was on us, the public. Most

loved him, but he received the wrath of both critics and disability groups for okaying 'cripple gags' and being insufficiently political (O'Kelly, 1994). He was too much for the douce folk of Tunbridge Wells, who voiced their 'disgust' and cancelled his show. He has spoken publicly of his material gains from being disabled:

You cannot change the way you are. I'm a spastic, and that's that. I accept it, I'm glad about it - it's made me masses of money (quoted in O'Kelly, 1994).

Disabled groups appear to resent this attitude above all. They contend that whilst making a fast buck, he is doing nothing to tackle the disadvantages suffered by disabled people generally. He is seen by them as merely opportunistic, exploiting his (and their) disability for cheap laughs. In this context, his performance could be interpreted as a way of internalising repression, rather like Jews telling anti-Semitic jokes or Lenny Henry's early career, before he discovered 'political correctness'. Alternatively, it could be argued that by breaking silences and taboos (and forcing the public to do the same), he is shifting the boundaries of the discourses and is thus engaging in resistance. It might also be argued that this kind of activity is more likely to encourage reflexivity among the public than political correctness. The latter is possibly under constant threat of breach, given the shifting space in which identification takes place and the 'shifting boundaries between barbarism and civility' (Bhaba, 1994, p41).

Karen Shook's show, 'the Wheelchair from Hell' was more overtly political, but has been confined to disabled audiences. Shook, a former social worker, realised, on becoming disabled, how patronising she had been and made this the focus of her routine. Her jokes were so specific that they would probably be over the heads of mainstream audiences (referring, for instance to the Government's consultation document on disability and the take-up of disabled parking spaces by non-disabled shoppers). Her disabled audience was responsive, but perhaps there is a certain futility



in being political to those already on the same side. On the other hand, the ways in which groups generate and reproduce solidarity depends on a celebration of difference of this kind.

The accounts of Raschida and Laura, reported in Chapter 6, describe ways in which they used humour to repair transgressions which threatened to highlight their disabled identities. This is not to suggest that they acted as quasi-comedians, presenting themselves as objects to be laughed at. Rather, the girls' humour seemed to be an important feature of their agency, in which they participated in the construction of their own subjectivity. In this respect, there are parallels between what might be interpreted as a proactive form of resistance and the kind of resistance practised by the comedians. Both focus on public apprehension about disability.

### **The sporting hierarchy**

The participation of disabled people in sport has recently been surrounded in controversy, most of it fuelled by disabled people themselves. In the world of sport, there has been resistance both to oppressors (eg to official sporting bodies) and to other disabled people. Participation in sport has brought rewards to those who have 'fought' their way in. Those who have made it, seem reluctant to share their newly found success with others.

The 'Paralympic movement' has allowed athletes with physical and sensory impairments to compete against each other, within classification groups, determined by their level of disability. In recent years, elite competitors, such as Tanni Gray, a wheelchair user who won four gold medals at the Barcelona Paralympics, have flourished and gained considerable media attention. In some ways, Gray resembles Susan, a physically disabled pupil who features in Chapter 6 and who appeared to cultivate a kind of celebrity status for herself. The 'Special Olympics' has tended to be

reserved for individuals with learning (as opposed to physical) difficulties and, unlike the Paralympics, every competitor takes home a medal for taking part.

There have been recent moves to shake this hierarchy of competition, by allowing physically disabled athletes (meaning those within the Paralympic movement) to be integrated into the mainstream Olympics. Alternatively, suggestions have been made that people with learning difficulties should compete within the Paralympic movement. Both proposals have met with opposition, particularly from physically disabled athletes.

At the 1994 Commonwealth Games, in which disabled people had been integrated as an 'experiment', Arthur Tunstall, the head of the Australian delegation, referred to them as an embarrassment to themselves and the Games. He was unable to repair his gaffe (which he claimed he made because of the low number of disabled entrants) and was booed at the subsequent medal ceremony. This had the effect of arousing public interest in the disabled events and in the integration debate. The possibility of a similar experiment with the Olympic Games in the year 2000 is being proposed. Tanni Gray, who has had considerable success in both environments, said she preferred the Paralympic to the mainstream games, since the former was much better attended and had a better atmosphere (The Observer, 17 July, 1994).

The proposal to integrate athletes with learning difficulties with those with physical disabilities brought an angry response from the latter group, with some carefully chosen public comments:

Some athletes won't speak out against the inclusion of the mentally handicapped for fear of being accused of discrimination; but it's not that we feel there's a stigma attached to competing alongside them;

we simply don't feel that the Paralympics is the right arena for them  
(Gray, *The Observer*, 17 July, 1994).

Gray appeared anxious to avoid both appearing superior to athletes with learning difficulties and **being** inferior to them in competition, since:

One difficulty is that many of the mentally handicapped have no physical problems and if pushed and able to train with a coach, one-to-one, to the same level as an ordinary athlete, there's no reason why they shouldn't turn in performances comparable to anyone able-bodied (ibid).

The discourses of elitism and competition were being articulated by this athlete, but with an essentialist acceptance that physically disabled athletes and those with learning difficulties had different starting points and should not be required to compete together.

Physically disabled athletes were beginning to enjoy some of the financial rewards available to their able-bodied counterparts, through sponsorship deals and advertising. Manufacturers of wheelchairs were part of this, realising the advantages of being associated with an elite athlete in which performance is vital. Gray suggested that the rich pickings of success were even tempting those within the Paralympic movement to be dishonest:

There are already athletes who lie about the level of their spinal lesion in order to compete against people who are actually less capable than they are (ibid).

Sport provides an interesting example of resistance, not to disabling or oppressive practices, but to moves to integrate physically disabled athletes with either able-bodied

athletes or other athletes with learning difficulties. High level competitors such as Tanni Gray have resisted such moves because they see it as a threat to their status at the top of the disabled sporting hierarchy. The 'enemy', constructed by physically disabled athletes appears to be able-bodied athletes and those with learning difficulties. Both, it seems, threaten to dissipate their achievements as elite competitors. Sport, then, appears to offer an environment in which disabled people can achieve success and the accompanying rewards, providing their disabled identity is affirmed, rather than challenged.

So far, a variety of forms of resistance have been discussed and it has been suggested that these have their own ambivalences and contradictions which have ensured that resistance is 'doomed to perpetual defeat' (Foucault, 1976, p96). The next section examines the opposition of the Conservative Government to attempts to establish disability rights legislation and the considerable anger this has provoked among disabled people.

### **Government tactics: 'talking out' disabled people**

Despite the efforts of disability rights campaigners over several years, there is still no UK legislation to protect the civil rights of disabled people. In 1994, Roger Berry MP, took up the 13th attempt to introduce anti-discrimination legislation, similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990). If enacted, it would have granted disabled people full civil rights in employment, transport and education and would have established a Disability Rights Commission to ensure legal protection. Barnes and Oliver (1995), however, criticised the Bill for being too heavily embedded in a medical, rather than a social view of disability. In any case, its 'death warrant' (a phrase used by a disabled commentator) was signed by Conservative MPs who effectively talked the Bill out of parliament, after it had gone through the Lords with majority support from both Houses. Just before its 3rd reading, Lady Olga Maitland put forward 82 amendments and Nicholas Scott, the then Minister for the Disabled, assured the House

that no members of his office had a hand in the drafting of these. This was a statement which he was later to retract, when he apologised to the House. Lady Olga received a strong rebuke from the Speaker for her behaviour which 'fell below the standard expected from the House' (Hansard, 25 May 1994) and she too apologised. The damage, however, was done. The Bill ran out of parliamentary time (helped further by Nicholas Scott's hour long speech). Conservative ministers called a quorum vote on the day that most MPs were attending John Smith's funeral. And so the Bill was laid to rest. There was much anger among disability groups at what were described as 'dirty tricks' (People First, 5 December 1994).

The problem with the Bill, as Conservative ministers saw it, was the costs to employers and so it was placed 'out of the question at a time of tight public spending controls' (Giddings, 1994, p19). Their 'guesstimate' of £17 Billion to implement was dismissed by disability organisations who said the figure was closer to £5 Billion. They also argued that savings would be made by enabling more disabled people to enter the workforce. Ministers' previous justification for rejecting anti-discrimination, that widespread discrimination did not exist, had now been abandoned by most officials (White, 1995). Nevertheless, they argued that 'discrimination can best be tackled through education and persuasion, backed by practical help' (Giddings, 1994, p19). The attention of the press, in reporting this event, centred on the 'public spat' (Jones, 1995) between Nicholas Scott, the Conservative minister for the disabled, and his daughter Victoria, an active disabled rights campaigner and his most vociferous critic. The question of whether they would speak to each other at the dinner table was given more space than the contentious issues they had battled over. Yet, Barnes and Oliver (1995) note that the press coverage was broadly supportive of the Bill, 'with the exception of a few patronising twitches from the right' (p112). For the record, daughter eventually won: while father did not offer his resignation, the honourable course of action implied by daughter, he did lose his job in the subsequent Cabinet reshuffle.

The Roger Berry Bill was replaced by two Bills, only one of which made it through parliament. Labour MP Harry Barnes sponsored what was effectively the previous (defeated) Bill under a new name, the Civil Rights (Disabled Bill). It was defeated at the Committee stage, again running out of time to hear the 100 Conservative amendments. William Hague, the Conservative MP who replaced Nicholas Scott as minister for the disabled put forward the government's Disability (Discrimination) Bill. This covered discrimination against disabled people in the areas of employment, buildings and goods and services. Education, transport and health were left out, as were steps to enforce the quota for employers to employ 3% of any workforce from disabled people (established in 1944 legislation, but often disregarded). In place of the Disability Rights Commission, proposed within the defeated Bill, the Government offered to set up a National Disability Council. This new body would have only an advisory function, would draw up codes of practice and would investigate individual grievances, but no more than that and there was much disappointment among civil rights campaigners:

the record of *quangos* is not very impressive and the proposed council is more likely to manage and control disabled people than to eradicate discrimination against us (Barnes and Oliver, 1995, p113; original emphasis).

William Hague argued that a council would enable him to achieve through conciliation what a commission might wreck with conflict (White, 1995). Those campaigning for legislation saw things rather differently:

Gentlemen's agreements might have been ok for landowners and aristocrats; for a disabled person on a low income with no access to legal aid, they are worse than useless (Oliver, quoted in White, 1995).

Hurst (quoted in White, 1995) described the Disability Discrimination Act as aptly named, since 'it does discriminate against us' and Barnes and Oliver (1995) have warned that disabled people could be worse off as a result of the new legislation. With the Government's Bill virtually guaranteed a place in the statute book, White (ibid) envisaged a reopening of the split between organisations 'for' and 'of' disabled people. Put another way, there could be a division between those who decide to accept the new legislation and work with the Government (for instance by joining the new 'Council') and those who continue to oppose it. Inevitably this would challenge any acquired unity within the disability movement and undermine its overall political strength.

The Government appears to have opposed disability rights campaigners, by using the discourses of 'education' and 'persuasion', but the actions of struggle and subversion. The dissenting voices of disability groups have been silenced both by liberal discourses, appealing to rationality and patience (and marginalising protesters) and by counter-attacking strategies which silenced the Bill in parliament. The ministers' actions in parliament were, interestingly, referred to as 'talking out' the Bill, implying a discursive coup. More generally, Conservative Government policies have disadvantaged individual disabled people and in so doing have reinforced individualistic rather than social constructions of disability. These are discussed below.

### **Government policies**

Warnock has entered the market place (Riddell and Brown, 1994) and as Barton (1993b) notes, competition and choice are the slogans for the 1990's. Government policies, such as the delegation of resources, opting out, the publication of exam results and local government reorganisation intend to reward individual success (of schools and pupils) and punish the losers.

The impact of these policies on children with special educational needs is clearly evident, leading, for example to high exclusion rates of children with EBD (Pyke,

1992) or a reconstruction of such children as disturbed (Armstrong and Galloway, 1994). The huge increases in recording and statementing seem to reflect a desire to protect the interests of vulnerable children by ensuring their needs are recognised. At the same time as government policies undermine justice and equality (Barton, 1993b) the drive for recording and statementing reinforces individualistic models of disability.

Parents are also instrumental in reinforcing individualistic models of disability. As members of voluntary organisations, they can exert considerable influence over local authorities. These organisations tend to represent parents of children within particular categories, such as autism, Down's syndrome or deafness and their advocacy seldom reaches beyond, for example to pupils within other categories. Individual parents may also decide to challenge a local authority over the assessment, placement or resourcing of their child. These parents are unlikely (understandably) to be sympathetic to the needs of other pupils in their quest for recognition of their case. Thus, there is little possibility of collective resistance among parents or of solidarity in challenging authority, just individuals fighting for their own child.

Increasing numbers of parents are searching for acknowledgement among professionals that their child has a particular problem, hitherto unidentified. Success for these parents is marked by an acceptance that their child has dyslexia (rather than problems with reading), dyspraxia (and not clumsy) or an attention deficit disorder (instead of hyperactivity). Recognition of these may well bring additional resources; it certainly reinforces individualism.

In April 1995, the Government's 'incapacity benefit' replaced 'invalidity benefit' and established a highly negative points system. To qualify, individuals are required to amass 12 points, achieved by claiming to be unable to do certain things. This is then checked by a Government doctor, specially trained to spot malingerers. Concern has been expressed that people on the margins of disability will be caught in 'a twilight



world - too fit for incapacity benefit, but not fit enough to work' (Jones, 1995). More generally, this is an approach which reinforces the deficits and weaknesses of individuals.

The 'marketisation' of special education, with its discourses of competition, choice and consumerism, has clearly allowed some parents to exercise resistance on behalf of their children and to compete for scarce resources. Resistance of this kind, however, may challenge the actions of individual pupils to resist disabled identities by actively reinforcing them. For example, the parents of Susan and Barry (two physically disabled children who feature in Chapter 6) were active campaigners for resources. Susan's mother had established a fund-raising group and had 'taken on' the education authority in an effort to secure physiotherapy support and Barry's mother had involved him in a television campaign to obtain equipment and transport. Both parents had been highly successful and had accomplished this by giving their children a celebrity status. Whilst Susan appeared to welcome this, Barry said he found it excruciatingly embarrassing and had persuaded his mother to end the campaign. This example illustrates the tensions which can emerge between formal kinds of resistance and those exercised by individual children within the micro-regimes of their own classrooms.

### **Silent voices?**

The politics of disability has clearly fought its way onto political agendas and there appears to be a greater awareness of the oppression experienced by disabled people. Much of this has occurred through the acts of resistance of groups and individuals, willing to 'sit down and be counted'. Yet, disabled people are continually discriminated against and lack the all-important legislation to fight this. Their political strength as a civil rights movement is undermined from inside (by conflicting stances of groups) and outside (recently from Conservative Government 'dirty tricks'). Oliver (1990a) argues that the politics of disablement, in order to be successful, needs to move away from the traditional left-right framework, which relies on the representation of interests. Until

this happens, the voices of these interest groups are likely to remain silent and unchallenging:

The myriad of disability-specific programs and policies, the segregation of disabled people, the inability to gain access to organised society, to experience an integrated and adequate education, to obtain meaningful employment, and to socially interact and participate has resulted in a politically powerless and diffuse class of people who are unable to coalesce with other groups of disabled people on common issues, to vote, to be seen or heard. This class has accepted the stigma and caste of second-hand citizenship and the incorrect judgement of social inferiority (Funk, 1987, p24).

The eleven pupils who feature in the following chapters may not have experienced the full extent of the oppression described above. Few, if any, encountered problems of physical access within the protective environment of their school, so there was little need to do anything as dramatic as the disabled activists' 'sit-down' protests. Nevertheless, the pupils did try to challenge the disabled identities which had been constructed for them by teachers and their peers. Their stories reveal more sophisticated acts of resistance than those described here, yet they are often just as politically ineffective and unchallenging.

## 6 (a)

### INTRODUCING THE PUPILS

The accounts of the eleven pupils are presented as a set of 'stories' consisting of informal discourses about each pupil. What do they tell us? They suggest that the children do not have a fixed identity, as disabled or 'normal', but have a set of identities, within a variety of discourses (eg medical, charity and rights). The accounts, obtained from the SEN pupils and their peers oscillate within these discourses, making the pupils who are the objects of them in a process of **continuous identification**. Furthermore, the ambivalences and antagonisms which characterise this process ensure that the pupils are constructed as neither 'disabled' nor 'normal', but in 'the disturbing distance-in-between' (Bhabha, 1994, p45). It is not only their identities, but also their experiences which are precarious and the accounts also display the pupils' movement in and out (and indeed around the margins) of mainstream. This has emerged through interrogation of the discursive identities given to the pupils with SEN (which often construct them simultaneously as one kind of person and another and shift them in and out of mainstream) and of the ways these are resisted and reconstructed.

The moment and space at which identification takes place is referred to by Bhabha (1994) as 'splitting' (p44) and it is here that we find another distinctive feature of the accounts in so far as the pupils, who are the object of the discourses, also appear to resist and transform them. Most of this is not antagonistic or aggressive resistance on the part of the pupils. Rather, the kind of resistance explored here is referred to by Foucault recognises it as agonistic, more of a relationship of perpetual resistance (Simons, 1994). Alternatively, he recognises it as a creative power of (disabled) individuals in which they govern themselves and their own conduct:

I am referring to what might be called the *arts of existence*. What I mean by the phrase are those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria (1985, pp10-11; original emphasis).

The accounts speak about the identification of pupils with special educational needs, and, following Bhabha's analysis, they evoke a space between the relationship of self and other, between normal and disabled, between being integrated and not. This relationship between self and other is a kind of two way 'gaze' 'with the figure of authority turning its gaze on the victim and the victim looking back' (Macannell and Flower Macannel, 1993, p214). The inappropriateness of binary divisions, on the grounds that they polarise the victim and authority, is examined more closely in Chapter 7, but here we simply need to be prepared to undermine the static qualities that have been typical of so much of special needs thinking. It means that the accounts, themselves sites of splitting (by being neither one thing nor the other) and of resistance, are not definitive:

The *atmosphere of certain uncertainty* that surrounds the body certifies its existence and threatens its dismemberment (Bhabha, 1985, p45; original emphasis).

This might help us towards a new way of thinking about the relationship between disabled people and ourselves and, as Bhabha suggests, is a good place to begin a political project:

This hybridity initiates the project of political thinking by continually facing it with the strategic and the contingent, with the countervailing thought of its own *unthought*. It has to negotiate its goals through an acknowledgement of differential objects and discursive levels articulated not simply as contents but in their *address* as forms of textual or narrative subjections - be they governmental, judicial or artistic. Despite its firm commitments, the political must always pose as a problem, or a question, the *priority of the place from which it begins*, if its authority is not to become autocratic (p64-65, original emphasis).

Such a project involves abandoning a search for the 'essences' of the pupils' identities, since as Bhaba (*ibid*) points out, these essences are evaded in the in-betweenness of identification. Furthermore, the discourses cannot be seen as enabling the discovery of the pupils' identities and experiences, since they are active in shaping these. As Lather (1993) contends, 'discourse worlds the world' (p675).

The accounts of the pupils with SEN and their peers were obtained through informal discussions with them. The pupils with SEN were asked to describe themselves and their peers were asked to describe the pupil with SEN. Beyond that, all pupils were asked to talk, in an unstructured way, about how they 'got on together'. Accounts from teachers and parents are brought in where they help to illuminate the pupils' accounts and are not used to validate them. Raschida and Laura's teachers, for example, often subverted the girls' strategies. Fiona's mother was deaf and therefore had interesting things to say as a member of the 'other', Deaf, world. Nevertheless, the risk that these are used as 'empirical tests' needs to be acknowledged, since, as was discussed in Chapter 3b, the ghost of essentialism has stalked through this entire research.

Raschida and Laura, both visually impaired, provide the starting point for the accounts with striking stories of how the ways in which they have resisted identification as 'disabled'. The four pupils, Brian, Scott, Sarah and Graham, whose accounts follow, have all been categorised officially as having moderate or severe learning difficulties. Although there are many aspects of the informal discourses which move these four pupils into and out of mainstream in different ways, they have something in common: their mainstream peers reduce their identities to a generalised 'them' and govern their own conduct towards them within a kind of micro-regime of governmentality (Simons, 1995). Three physically disabled youngsters, Susan, Barry and Phillip are the focus of the next set of accounts and each resist their disabled identities differently. Next is Peter, a pupil with emotional/behavioural difficulties, with accounts from his peers which revealed their difficulty in identifying him, because of his apparently normal, yet odd, behaviour. Peter's resistance to this is to try to redefine himself as an individual with more visible special needs. Fiona, a hearing impaired girl, concludes the accounts with a story of living between the hearing and deaf worlds.

Each set of accounts ends with an overview which attempts to build an analysis of the pupils' resistance and their micro-regimes of governmentality. These are, however, complex themes and they are examined more comprehensively in the final chapter, alongside gender and sexuality.

**RASCHIDA AND LAURA: ON THE MARGINS OF DISABILITY**

The accounts of Raschida (17) and Laura (15), both visually impaired, are very different from those which follow in two respects. First, the two girls offer a very striking self-representation, not characteristic of the other pupils (with the exception, perhaps, of Fiona, who is deaf). Second, the accounts reveal how they resisted discourses which threaten to identify them as disabled. This involved a high level of self-awareness on their part with which they patrolled the margins of disability. Their resistance was usually successful, but sometimes only partially so, since this sometimes became interpreted as an act of heroism. Thus, the work of erasure is never ending. Let Raschida and Laura provide their own introduction.

I usually get on with most people and, like, have a good laugh . . . I sometimes do worry quite a lot, but other times I don't really worry about anything, like my exams. With my prelims, I never really worried about them, but then last minute panic and I never done so well . . . My friends at school, like, they never realised how bad my sight was and then when they'd want me to go out with them, I don't really want to go out with them, because they don't realise how bad it is. Because I'm at school, I know where things are and, like, everything's in place, but see when I go out where I've never been before, where it's busy, it's just hard, so I don't like going out and making a fool of myself or whatever (Raschida).

I'm quieter than Linsey. But I talk a lot. I talk to everyone probably . . . I think it's just good to have people who are in the unit as well, because then we can talk about things that happen outside, because people outside can sometimes make you nervous

. . . I'm a bit of a worrier. . . I get nervous, well, easily embarrassed; I'm self-conscious (Laura).

Both girls used the terms 'partially sighted' and 'visually impaired' interchangeably, but not 'blind' to describe themselves; I will do the same throughout this chapter.

Raschida and Laura indicated that pupils in their mainstream classes (and some of their teachers) found their 'difference' difficult to deal with. One effect of this was that issues about seeing and not seeing became taboo in their presence and the girls were aware of the difficulty and embarrassment caused by trying to deny the existence of their disability:

They're frightened to mention about my eyes and that . . . like in first year they used to be dead wary in case they said anything (Laura).

Laura and Raschida's peers also talked about a seeing/not seeing taboo, which forced them to avoid any subject which might be connected with sight, however tenuously. Rhona said she felt unsure of Raschida when she first got to know her, 'being visually impaired and stuff':

I'm ok now, it's just I wasn't really sure what to say. I was a wee bit nervous about saying things, like "oh look at that, isn't that funny?" and her not being able to see it, I thought "that's a bit nasty, I'll need to watch what I'm saying, but it's ok, I still think she's fine with it, so it's not too bad . . . I suppose I was apprehensive, I mean I was apprehensive about talking to Raschida and stuff, but she was apprehensive in talking to us and all, in case we didn't like her



and stuff, so I think it's coming a bit from both angles, but more so ours.

Rhona's account has a kind of delicacy and carefulness which is uncharacteristic of so-called 'normal' interaction. Raschida mentioned a student teacher's attempt to avoid the taboo of seeing/not seeing:

She's really nice, but she never says "see" to me - she says "I'll give you this and you can listen to it" and it's a sheet of paper and she never likes to use the word see, or anything to do with the eyes and you can tell when people are trying to avoid that. It puts you off.

Raschida thought this was amusing and indicative of the embarrassment her impairment had caused, but said the student had found it difficult to communicate with her. Both girls found most teachers did make explicit references to their disability, for example by checking that they were able to see something properly, but said that they paid too much attention to their 'difference':

It's just, like, sometimes they always move you to the front of the class when you don't want to and you don't even need to be at the front sometimes (Laura).

Some teachers went 'over the top' needlessly, in their efforts to be as helpful as possible:

They always ask you to come down to the front, in front of the whole class and things like that and I don't really need to be at the front because I can't see the board in the first place anyway and if

it's television, I prefer sitting at the back, because I've got tunnel vision and I can see it better (Raschida).

Raschida's comment illustrates well the paradox of integration for her: it involved distinguishing her and highlighting her impairment in order to help her be part of the class. However, the teachers, by trying to help her, were effectively disabling her even more by making it more difficult to see. Laura's peers also accused the teachers of giving her unnecessary 'special treatment':

I think they sometimes go out of their way to help her, but she doesn't like that, she likes to be treated normally. She much prefers to be treated normally; she doesn't like any special treatment (Linsey).

I think she likes to be treated normally. If anybody makes a fuss of her she gets really embarrassed and she just doesn't like it. She's always complaining if people make a fuss of her. She'll say "Oh God, I wish they hadn't done that". She just likes to be treated like everyone else (Margaret).

The phrase 'treated normally' is interesting because it implies that the person is not considered normal in the ontological sense, that is, their being or essence is not regarded as normal. Margaret suggested that a fuss was more commonly made by supply teachers, because 'they don't know about her, they maybe make allowances or whatever'.

The extent to which the disability of Raschida and Laura was perceived as making them similar or different from mainstream pupils appeared to have a fluidity. This

quality was also evident in Raschida and Laura's attempts to resist the 'difference' of being visually impaired and thus move themselves into mainstream.

Raschida and Laura had three devices for resisting the discomforts caused by the taboo of seeing/not seeing. First, they attempted to 'pass' (Goffman, 1963; Garfinkel, 1967) as 'normal', seeing people, by reducing the visibility of their impairment. Second, they made self deprecating jokes in an attempt to dispel anxiety among others about their inability to see and finally, they escaped from time to time to the sanctuary of the special unit, where their disability was a necessary condition for their acceptance.

Both pupils shunned the visual symbol of blindness offered to them in the form of a long white cane. Raschida giggled as she told how she managed to lose hers in a lake, by testing the depth of the water; her teachers told the same tale with grim amusement, to illustrate the 'difficulty she had in accepting her disability'. She had subsequently been given a smaller one which could be folded up when not in use. The trouble with the cane, large or small, was the attention it drew to her. On one occasion, however, Raschida said the cane had come in useful:

I was meeting my pal at Central station on Saturday afternoon and I was dead late, so I got the cane out and there I was just running along with my cane and everyone just cleared out of my road.

One of the specialist teachers, referring to Laura's reluctance to use the cane said she understood 'the vanity thing . . . and the whole teenage reaction'. Rather than seeing this as an act of resistance, the teachers seemed to regard it as vanity, on a par with concern over spots or a wearing a brace. Both girls refused to undergo mobility training with a rehabilitation officer anywhere at home or at school where they might be seen by friends. This posed problems for the staff involved, since the 'point of the

training' was to teach them 'independence in their home environment'. Controlling their peers' awareness of their impairment, for instance by appearing to be coping with everyday tasks was important to the girls and this would be spoiled if they were seen 'with a white stick or a dog' - 'I'd die on the spot', said Laura.

Both had become so accomplished at making their way around the school that 'nobody really can tell, hardly' (Raschida). Outside school, Raschida still tried to control the information others had about her by not letting on she was visually impaired until she knew someone well enough. This included a boyfriend, who 'never realised that I couldn't see for ages'. She was only able to do this in an environment which, like school, she knew well, but even then, her cover up was elaborate:

I usually met him at nights and that and he was pissed and, like, I used to always pretend that I was drunk as well. I wasnae really, but I was just saying that so that he'd think, if I couldn't see anything, he'd realise [laughs] . . . I decided to tell him. Because we used to meet up at my friend's house and I knew her house quite well as well, so I never used to bang into things or anything, I'd just act normal, casual.

She eventually told him when she realised she could not keep up the deception. Her anxiety was not just about how he would react to being told that he had been lied to, but how he would feel about her being unable to see and so she worried about 'spoiling things':

he couldn't take it, he couldn't believe it . . . It changed things for a while, then we got closer I think in a way, I don't know. It was just better in a way, but I was really worried then.

Difficulties arose for both pupils when their vision deteriorated (apparently a common occurrence during teenage years); Laura made no mention of this in her account, but Raschida recalled:

I couldn't stop crying . . . in fourth year, a couple of years ago and it was just when I went out with my pal Karen . . . and she couldn't believe it, she thought I was kidding on because she was so used to me being normalish and then all of a sudden it just went worse and then I never used to hang around with my friends, I'd just be, like, myself and I never knew what to tell them. I never wanted to tell them either. Then I think they realised in the classes. I mean I get a teacher in; I never used to like that at all before, when the teacher used to come into the classes.

No longer able to pass as 'normalish', by, for example acting 'casual' and effecting some deception (Goffman, 1963), Raschida said she eventually settled down to learn Braille, 'not unlike learning Russian from scratch'. Her teachers described this period as one in which there was 'a lot of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth' and where 'she was resistant to the idea of learning Braille'. She seemed reluctant to undertake something which for her signalled a passage into the world of the 'blind'. One teacher, however, said she 'eventually came to realise that she couldn't just rely on us for tapes and to read for her'. Although Laura made no mention of the deterioration in her existing eyesight, her teachers and parents did. Both said Laura had tried to hide this, but eventually her 'cover was blown'.

Raschida found that minimising her 'difference' led to a new set of problems. Her school friends, she said, did not appreciate the difficulties she had out of school and the problems of travel because she appeared so competent at making her way around school. She said she needed to make excuses not to see them outside the school:

because I don't live here it takes me an hour to get from my house to here and then from here to wherever they're going. Because I live so far I've only been out no more than four times . . . and my mum doesn't like me going on the trains on my own. So it's quite difficult and I always try and think of excuses why I can't go. But I usually tell them it's because of transport. And some of them have just learnt to drive so they're offering "can I come and pick you up?"

On other occasions Raschida had been so successful in avoiding 'drawing attention to my eyes', for example during evenings out, that she then became reluctant to 'spoil things' by doing anything that would 'remind people' of her disability.

Raschida and Laura's mainstream peers indicated that they were well aware of their disabilities; they also acknowledged the importance to them of resisting labels of this kind and appeared to be collaborators in this process, rather than the focus of Raschida and Laura's resistance. Linsey described Laura, above all, as 'quite a good friend' who was 'good to talk to and trustworthy and loyal'. Margaret said Laura was:

funny, she's clever, she's just a normal person - there's nothing different about her. She's just like any ordinary person would be. She's quite wicked [laughs].

Margaret's signification of Laura's normality and her indication that she is 'just like any ordinary person would be' immediately gives her a status of difference, however close she may be to what is claimed to be normal or ordinary. As Shapiro (1993) points out, the denial of disability is the often the highest tribute non-disabled friends can think of. Asked to give an example of Laura's sense of humour, Margaret said 'I don't think I could repeat what she says . . . I don't think she knows she's being funny

but she is'. This comment seemed to give Laura another kind of status, as different because she was funny, rather than as different because of her disability.

It has already been said that mainstream pupils were highly critical of teachers who singled Raschida, Laura or any other of 'the VIs' out for 'special treatment' or paid them too much attention. Laura received perhaps the ultimate accolade from her friend for resisting such behaviour publicly:

For instance, there was one time, people were talking in class, it was, like, a group of us, just girls in my group and one of them was talking to Laura and so one of them got a punishment exercise and Laura didn't, because she's visually impaired. So Laura spoke up and said, "I'd like one too - there's no point in treating me differently, because I don't like that, I just want to be treated normally." So some teachers are like that and others just treat her normally and I think she prefers that. And she doesn't like getting separated, like they put the VIs all in a group and she doesn't like that, she likes to sit where she wants to sit and if she wants help they can help her. She doesn't like to get separated, kind of thing - she thinks that's embarrassing.

The teachers (both mainstream and specialist) had, in a sense, a vested interest in difference rather than similarity, because their role was to give the pupils as much individual support as possible. The specialist teachers of the visually impaired argued that to do this they needed to encourage children, such as Raschida and Laura to accept their disability and the help they could provide. The kind of resistance to disabled labels which has been described was, for them, a hindrance. Both girls, on the whole, 'accepted their condition very well', according to one teacher. Raschida, however, during the period when her vision had 'dipped' was 'extremely difficult

about accepting that she required help' and was 'trying to pretend to be able to read print which we are aware is too small or too obscure'. Mainstream teachers, when asked about either Raschida or Laura, tended to generalise about 'the VIs'.

I'm not concerned with their social side, but I find, just as an observation, they tend to stick together. Except for one, I've come across, they all seem to stick together and come to the unit.

This maths teacher clearly identified Raschida, Laura and the rest of 'them' as different from the generality of pupils in his class.

The pupils' attempts to pass as normal were challenged in the mainstream classrooms by the specialist teachers who came to support them. The teachers helped only those with visual impairment and often sat beside them to do so. Specialist staff said this was 'a bit of a shame', but inevitable in order that they could provide the necessary help, for example in reading aloud to pupils. One teacher commented on how she had 'not minded' a mainstream pupil sitting beside Raschida, but in the end the constant talk between Raschida and the teacher proved too distracting for the pupil and she moved. The previous year:

it was the Higher and it was her and her brother both in the same class and I sat in the middle and at one point we had Abdul's friend sitting with us, so we had four desks all put together, so it wasn't very practical, but I wouldn't put a stop to it because I think it's really good if they do have friends sitting beside them. And the other kids, they really are very good, most of them. They're maybe not totally aware of all their problems, but they're quite understanding. They'll read things out from the board and help them.



This appears to challenge Raschida's efforts at passing as normal in mainstream. The teacher said she 'wouldn't put a stop' to her brother's friend 'sitting with us', implying it was a hindrance, yet acknowledged the social benefits. She also described the mainstream pupils as 'quite understanding' and helpful, which sounds rather different from the accounts provided by Raschida or Laura or the mainstream pupils themselves.

One of Raschida's devices in maths, at which she was very able, was to do as many of the operations as possible in her head. There was little point, she said, in writing things down because she could not then read them. It might have also helped her to 'pass as normal' by avoiding dependency. The teachers, however, tried to thwart this. From the point of view of examinations, of course, this is required and teachers did everything they could to encourage her to reveal what was going on in her head. A maths teacher who had taught her in the past remarked upon the 'great shame' that Raschida did not write down her 'workings'. A specialist teacher accompanied her to each maths class and acted as an amanuensis for her or read aloud anything she had written. In other classes, Raschida was encouraged to use the Braille machine, similar to a very loud typewriter. Laura seemed to 'manage' with 'raised diagrams' and enlarged versions of resources used by mainstream pupils. All of these devices, which the teachers saw as important forms of support for the pupils, often appeared to threaten the girls' efforts to 'pass as normal'.

Laura's parents commented on how 'he has always lied through her teeth' about her eyesight, 'not letting on she has a problem'. Whilst they did not like this dishonesty, they said it was reasonable because 'she wanted normality' and colluded with her in this. They had deliberately stopped visiting the school as much as they had previously done because 'she is a 14 year old teenager now and they don't want your mum and dad down at the school'. At the same time, they relied on the specialist teacher to tell them 'if they needed more contact' and when Laura's vision

deteriorated, they visited the specialist teacher without telling her. They saw her as having 'fought' her way into mainstream:

I think she wanted normality, "I want in," and fought hard and worked hard and studied hard and once she got in she would not go back. In fact there was a reason why she had to go back to the unit, to learn typing or something. They had to send kids who were normally sighted back to the unit with her. I thought that was brilliant what they did so she wouldn't look as if she was different and they all wanted to go with her . . . it was lovely, her friends enjoyed the change and it helped Laura overcome this anti-unit [feeling]. She didn't like to be singled out for anything.

They said she was gaining the 'normality' of mainstream, but this depended on the specialist teachers of the visually impaired behaving 'sensitively and maternally', planning things which would make her feel normal or keeping information from her (such as their visit to the school). Their view that 'she has proven to be too normal' had been corroborated by a specialist teacher who had said more than once to them 'I sometimes wonder why she is in here [the unit]'.

Raschida's parents told a rather different story. 'In our country, mostly we marry the first cousin and that's what causes [her impairment]. I've spoke (sic) to my family about it but there's nothing can be done. There's not a cure for it'. Raschida, they explained, was one of many in the extended family with this condition, including her elder brother. Unlike Laura's parents who described their daughter as wanting normality, Raschida's parents said she needed to be 'looked after'. School staff, they said, gave her a great deal of help, but she was a 'clever girl' and they hoped she would do well. Their main worry, they said, was that she wanted to go to university away from home and thought she would be unable to cope without the family's

support. They hoped she would go to a more local university because she could then 'be looked after and get her washing done' at home.

Humour was an important strategy for both girls, in which they tried to pre-empt potentially embarrassing situations (for them and others) by cracking jokes about themselves:

Usually, if I do something stupid, I just laugh at it myself, before anybody else does, so it's just a laugh (Raschida).

I think at the beginning, everyone was dead wary to mention it, but I just make a fool of myself and tell them not to bother (Laura).

Like sometimes people are uptight about, in first year I remember, like, in the beginning everyone was uptight about your eyes, but you just make jokes about it all the time and just forget about it. Especially Raschida and me, we always seem to make a fool out of each other (Laura).

The two pupils seemed to undertake a kind of socialisation process, aimed at educating their peers out of their embarrassment. They said this had worked well, as 'everybody's so used to laughing now, like, they treat it as a joke'. Raschida also said that a 'slagging off' she had received from other pupils for ignoring them in the street, knowing full well she couldn't see them, signalled a breakthrough in her relations with them. Laura cited an example of how her best friend had not only responded to her jokes, but had also begun to make some of her own:

I don't know, like in first year, they used to be dead wary in case they said anything, but I remember a couple of weeks ago, Linsey

was going on about OIS [Office and Information Skills]: she's always looking at the keys and she's always getting into trouble. I says to her, "I never look at the keys, I just look at the screen" and she says, "I know, you'd get caught." She never used to be like that, she used to be dead wary, but she's used to me now, because I'm always saying something like that.

Raschida and Laura pointed out that being visually impaired 'wasn't really a bundle of laughs' but it was there and they couldn't change it. Things were much easier for them if people were not constantly 'uptight' or 'falling over themselves to help or say the right thing' The girls seemed to suggest that humour was a positive device for making their peers less uptight and for managing the information about their disabilities.

Laura's parents said that the whole family shared her 'joking approach' to her disability. Her older brother and sister had called her 'wally eyes' and 'other names she was going to be called outside, affectionately'. Her younger sister 'stole the chips from her plate' and once, after she had been walking the dog, they asked 'if it had done anything?' 'How would I know?' was Laura's reply. Raschida's parents gave no indication that there was any humour associated with her visual impairment. The teachers described both girls as 'lively', with 'great personalities' and 'lots of friends', but not as individuals who had used humour as an act of resistance. This is explored more fully in the overview of this chapter.

So far, the two pupils have suggested that they tried to educate their mainstream peers out of any embarrassment over their disability, which might translate into pity or sympathy. They also sought to avoid pity by passing as normal, thereby minimising the 'difference' of their disability. One danger in this might be that the pupils, instead of being pitied, could become 'stars', sources of admiration or class clowns. None of

these identifications is likely to place the pupils inside the mainstream, which they said they strove for and which they tried to regulate by constructing a kind of 'comfort zone' around themselves, family and friends. The boundaries of this zone sanctioned some conduct and excluded others, judged in terms of what they were likely to want or 'feel ok about'. Raschida and Laura seemed to try to extend these boundary walls by socialising their peers and allowing in more of the jokiness which they themselves practised, but which their peers had avoided. Thus, their examples of being 'slagged off' by their friends illustrated their success in shifting the boundaries around themselves. The notion that mainstream pupils' conduct is circumscribed within a micro-regime is explored more fully in Chapter 6c.

Raschida and Laura seemed to have guided their peers' conduct successfully and encouraged them to treat them 'normally'. The main problems of pity seemed to lie outside school, where their regulating micro-regime could not operate:

I was once doing cane training and this big tall man came over and says "do you know where you're going?" and all this. I don't like getting attention and that's why I don't use it because everyone just comes up to you or jumps out your way or something. I don't like that.

Raschida's description of the 'big tall man' in the street asking if she knew what she was doing or people 'jumping out of your way' was the kind of thing Laura and she hated. It was also difficult to resist, for example by trying to crack jokes. Laura said the silence was worst of all when she knew she'd done something 'stupid':

There was one time when I went out for a meal with my mum and dad and my sister and instead of pouring vinegar on my chips I actually poured the water from the flower vase on my chips. I

could hear everyone stop eating and they were all looking at me, thinking "what a shame", I could tell. I just wanted to disappear. The only thing I could do was burst out laughing, then everyone else did as well.

The looks, she said, were coming, not from her family, but from other people in the restaurant. Her family did nothing until she rescued them by laughing. Her parents described the same incident, citing it as an example of her sense of humour 'seeing her through' difficult moments. At the same time, however, they said they 'really felt for her'. There is a suggestion here that even where resistance is transgressive, erasing discourses of pity, this may be only partially attainable. This point is returned to in the overview.

The mainstream pupils suggested that whilst they tried to show their acceptance of Raschida and Laura, by 'treating' them as 'normal' they still felt feelings of sympathy because of 'how hard it is'. Rhona said that 'nobody's really patronising or anything' towards Raschida. Linsey, said 'Laura's sight was a problem for her' and she felt 'sorry for her' but knew this was 'wrong' so tried to avoid any behaviour which would reveal these feelings:

I used to, because I didn't know what to do, but she told me not to, she didn't like it. Everybody treats her like, "do you need help? are you alright? do you want me to read it out for you? can you see this?" If she wants help she'll ask us, kind of thing. She won't tell us to stop it, but she feels more comfortable if we treat her normally.

Margaret said that she often did not know how to behave towards Raschida:

Sometimes I don't like to, I'd feel as if I'd patronise her by saying "here's a seat over here", but at the same time I'm trying to help her. I just don't know what to do sometimes . . . I'm afraid, afraid I'm doing that sometimes, but I don't mean to. I'm just trying to, like, go out my way to help her a wee bit.

The pupils said teachers were often the worst offenders, by drawing attention to the girls' impairment needlessly. They thought this occurred where teachers felt sorry for them, but said that this was the wrong attitude to have towards them. Raschida's peers criticised a 'patronising' teacher of another two pupils with visual impairment, who had treated them as objects of pity. Linsey commented on the inappropriateness of grouping Laura with other visually impaired pupils for the convenience of providing support, because it made her feel embarrassed. Rhona mentioned a teacher of two other visually impaired pupils who was very patronising towards them:

I mean, she was going on about the fact that they couldn't see properly, she just kept going on and on, and just wouldn't stop. If you ask Marie she'll tell you, because Marie told her mum and dad and they said just don't do anything, just wait and see if she does it again, because she didn't want to stir anything up. She was being really really bad, because I'm in Marie's English class. She was being really really horrible to her and Gaphar.

Laura's parents said they viewed her as a 'wee success story', partly because 'she did not want any sympathy'. The family, by adopting their 'joking approach' had helped to avoid any pity, but there were still times, such as in the restaurant episode, when they felt extreme pity. Laura, they said, wanted none of this and they told of how she had been working excessively (often until midnight). They thought she was attempting to 'prove herself' and worried about the stress it was causing. Discussion with a

specialist teacher seemed to confirm that the amount of work she was doing was unnecessary and she was encouraged to do less. Raschida's parents did not articulate feelings of pity, because of, they suggested, the inevitability of this condition within the family. They did, however, emphasise the need for her to be looked after, a notion often associated with pity or charity discourses.

The mainstream pupils said that the jokes cracked by Raschida and Laura about themselves had the intended effect of making them 'less uptight'. Beyond that, Laura's 'sense of humour' was seen by her peers as setting her apart from others, giving her a high status and bringing her swiftly into mainstream. The intellectual abilities of both pupils were also given value and seemed to minimise their disability for their peers:

[Laura's] not any different from anybody else, she just can't see as well as everybody else, so it's not as if she's an invalid. She's very capable in working. She's bright, she's clever (Linsey).

I find that in some classes [Laura] does a lot better than what I do. Like in physics, for example, she's getting better test marks than what I get. She's got no problems as far as I'm aware. We help each other in physics and it's usually her that's telling me the answers. She's really good and I don't think she's got any problems (Margaret).

The girls' intellectual abilities did not appear to be judged by their peers in relation to their impairment, for example as a source of admiration, considering their difficulties (rather in the way Dr Johnson described women priests). It suggests, perhaps, that whilst the pupils acknowledged their own feelings of pity, they had overcome these, and had done more than just display acceptance towards the pupils. Indeed,



Raschida's peers, who described her as 'brainy', especially in maths, also referred to some resentment of the special treatment she had received in third year by those who felt she neither deserved nor needed it:

What quite a lot of people don't understand though is, in my third year English class, a lot of my friends were saying, "Oh aye, Raschida" and she was sitting there in the maths class and she had the VI person to tell her what to do and they thought "Oh aye, she's getting all this special treatment and stuff" and they got really bugged off about that. But they just don't understand that she needs it, do you know what I mean? They think "oh that's not fair, she's going to pass all her exams and we won't" and they were getting dead bugged off about that and I'm going "She needs it, shut up". That was the only thing I could think, that people were kind of hostile.

This comment suggests considerable ambivalence among the pupils regarding principles of equity and justice. The notion that Raschida's peers saw her as a threat to their own success, by getting better exam results appeared to draw her into the mainstream, on an equal footing with them. Interestingly, although acting in her defence, her friend was moving her back out of mainstream by invoking her need for special treatment. This point is explored more fully in Chapter 7.

Raschida and Laura could escape from mainstream if they wanted to. They were timetabled for short periods to be in the school's unit for the visually impaired and they spent some of their intervals there. Laura said she welcomed the solidarity with fellow visually impaired pupils. She also said she liked the spatial distance from the mainstream, which gave her a rest from time to time. Raschida, however, described a

difference in reactions of the unit people compared with family or mainstream pupils to mistakes she made:

I find that if I go out with other partially sighted girls from the unit, they seem to laugh about the thing. If I go out with my big sister or my pals and if I do something stupid, sometimes they just totally ignore it and pretend it never happened and just continue on. It's just that people react differently.

Raschida described how an outing was successful as the result of planning and team work:

The day I went to Edinburgh [Royal Blind School] I was with a blind girl and she was with a guy who has a sight problem, but his is really good sight, just now. But she got the train to Central and we were supposed to meet, I was supposed to meet her and the guy, but I hadn't seen the guy before and he hadn't seen me, but I told him I'd meet them at this place, then they came and we found each other and then I told them what platform the train was and then when we reached Edinburgh, the guy, he found our way out of Edinburgh station and we got a taxi and that was it.

There are two interesting points here: the first is the hierarchy of sightedness she invokes, in which they all pull together, but in which more is expected of the person with the best sight; the second point relates to the temporal nature of the hierarchy in which the 'guy' has 'really good sight just now', but with the suggestion that things could change. This could relate to her own recent experience of deteriorating vision or to a more general stance on disability, such as those taken by disabled rights activists, who use the term TAB to denote a 'temporarily able bodied person' (Shapiro, 1993,

p35). On a different occasion Raschida was surprised to find how one of the girls from the unit had behaved when a group of them went out together:

Susan's got the best sight of all of us and she was so, like, bitchy towards me because I couldn't see and instead of warning me that there was something coming up she would just walk away and she was in a huff all the time, but when I'm with my fully sighted friends it's just so different and I would have thought it would have been the other way round. The other (visually impaired) girls were fine about it, I don't know what it is, it's just put me off going out with them.

Raschida seemed to feel let down by Susan, who might have been more supportive, but who apparently chose not to. Perhaps Susan did not welcome the opportunity for 'escape' offered by being with similarly disabled people and may have been attempting to exercise resistance of a different kind. Susan did not offer her account, however, so further speculation is inappropriate.

The teachers and parents of both pupils spoke of the abilities and the personalities of both pupils 'standing them in good stead' and seemed to connect these with their impairment. According to them, the two girls were accepted by their peers because of their abilities, diligence and sense of humour, without which their disability would have been more obvious.

## Overview

Raschida and Laura set out to resist being identified by their peers as disabled, which threatened to make them objects of pity to their peers and keep them outside of the mainstream. Their particular act of resistance seemed to be to influence this identification process by 'acting normal'. The normality attributed to Raschida and Laura, however, had a kind of surreal quality in the sense that for most it is an unspoken, taken-for-granted quality. It is only individuals with a marginal status, for whatever reason, who find their normality articulated and scrutinised:

It's only if a man's a gentleman that he won't hesitate to do an ungentlemanly thing. Mortimer is on the boundary line and it makes him careful (Somerset Maugham, 1910: Act I).

Raschida and Laura's 'normality' had a fragility, with nebulous boundaries and across an abyss of potential abnormality and rejection from mainstream. They therefore had to patrol what Goffman (1971) calls the Umwelt, 'the region around a person from which the signs for alarm can come' (p297). These signs might come from their own transgressions or from the discourses of others, including the silences and awkward moments as well as what was said to them. They were neither wholly inside mainstream nor outside, but at the doorway, like Janus, with one head looking in and the other looking out.

The discourses (including the silences) from mainstream pupils and teachers signalled some pity for Raschida and Laura, despite attempts to erase this. Nietzsche suggests that pity masks the real fear one person has for another:

To show pity is felt as a sign of contempt because one has clearly ceased to be an object of fear as soon as one is pitied (in Hollingdale, 1977, p155).

The mainstream pupils, in describing how they 'felt sorry for' Raschida and Laura, expressed their own anxieties about what to say or do in their own company and Laura referred to her friends as 'frightened'. Resentment of Raschida gaining advantage through extra support in maths, recounted by one of her friends, could have been a displacement of the mainstream pupils' fear. The mainstream pupils' main tactic appeared to be pretence that all was normal, avoiding references to seeing/not seeing, including all visual images. This was not easy, however, and it was often the very act of trying to remain silent which made seeing/not seeing taboo:

Taboos are prohibitions which, when violated produce automatically in the offender a state of ritual disability - *taboo sickness* - only relieved, when relief is possible, by a ceremony of purification (Webster, 1973: viii; original emphasis).

Raschida commented on the embarrassing difficulties this led to and her account of the student teacher 'avoiding the eyes' had elements of the farce in the Basil Fawlty sketch in which he was told 'Don't mention the war'. Foucault (1976) argues that the taboos and prohibitions which accompanied discourses on sex 'ensured the solidification and implantation of an entire sexual mosaic' (p53). The effect was that sex became talked about at length. In a similar way, the mainstream pupils' efforts to avoid visual imagery and be discreet in the presence of Raschida and Laura risked giving their disability a greater prominence. Foucault regards discretion as not the absolute limit of discourse, on the other side of a boundary of acceptability; rather, it is a discursive element that functions alongside other things said:

There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is

authorized or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses (Foucault, 1976, p27).

Raschida and Laura's acute self awareness enabled them to patrol the boundaries and 'oscillate between being off guard and on guard' (Goffman, 1971, p287), repairing acts of indiscretion by others (or inept discretion, such as 'don't mention the eyes') and any behaviour of their own which might appear extraordinary. The boundaries did not represent a binary division between mainstream and outside or of acceptable or unacceptable discourses. Rather, they were a space in which the girls were ready to react to constant interrogation of their 'normality'. This might have occurred in the most apparently mundane events, such as walking into the sixth year common room and finding a seat without disturbing the flow of conversation; alternatively the girls might have had to rescue a situation caused by a transgression of their own which had caused embarrassment and was responded to with pity by their peers or others. Each interrogation demanded a singular accomplishment of normality; there was no cumulative effect, allowing them to remain inside mainstream because they were identified as normal or keeping them outside because they were not. Their accomplishments were a partial success: they provided the purification which Webster (1973) identifies as necessary to overcome the 'taboo sickness', which in this case was expressed as pity. This erasure was, however, temporary and incomplete: the residue left behind when pity was removed spoke of admiration for the girls' ability to function 'just like a normal person' and laugh at themselves when things went wrong.

To explore this point, it is necessary to look at these two interrogating events in more detail. From Margaret's account of Raschida's entrance into the common room, there appeared to be some collusion by some of her peers to enable her to accomplish this

'ordinary' act. Aware that Raschida would not know where there were spare seats, she wanted to direct her to one but didn't because she would be 'patronising'. Instead, she called out 'Hi, Raschida', to which Raschida responded by walking towards her and the empty seats. In her path, however, were some other seats and Margaret could have moved them, but chose not to, whilst also feeling guilty about this. As Raschida banged into one she uttered a 'woops' and a giggle, as if she had done something fairly ordinary, but silly. Thus, she entered and sat down without major disturbance, but still provoked attention by her accomplishment of an act which in others is thoughtless and unremarkable.

The second, more precarious, interrogation occurred when Laura needed to repair a gaffe of her own. Although this occurred whilst she was with her family, it is a good account of the strategy both girls used in school to get out of difficult situations. After Laura had poured water from the flower vase on her chips, came a long silence, which spoke to her of the public pity for her because she was impaired and had made a fool of herself. Laura responded by moving in on the silence and translated the episode from a disastrous to a comical one, by laughing at her own 'stupidity':

One cannot be surprised if whenever something sudden and unexpected in word and deed happens without occasioning danger or injury man becomes wanton, passes over into the opposite of fear: the anxious, crouching creature springs up, greatly expands - man laughs. This transition from momentary anxiety to short lived exuberance is called the comic (Nietzsche, in Hollingdale, 1977, p151).

'Playing the fool' could be interpreted as an act of resistance which shifted the public gaze away from their disability onto a more ordinary kind of difference. The discourses of pity were erased temporarily by the shared exuberance, but left behind

was relief and admiration for Laura's ability to laugh at herself. This vestige of admiration was not a clear departure from pity, but a mutation of it: they admired her when she played the fool because she was impaired. The discourses of pity could not be silenced entirely and could appear with the next transgression of the girls' normality.

Raschida and Laura could, if they wanted, retreat into the unit for the visually impaired. Here, they could look away from mainstream with their second Janus head, everting their own self into one which was disabled. Within this space, they could accept help and attention from specialist teacher which, when offered in mainstream, challenged their attempts to pass as normal. This might have allowed them to relax for a time, without needing to patrol the boundaries of mainstream, but the two girls found the unit had its own oppressive characteristics. To Raschida, the other visually impaired pupils were a far more critical audience than those in mainstream, particularly when they went out of school. There, far from retreating into a supportive network, Raschida became part of a normative hierarchy, based on the amount of sight each person had. The more an individual could see, the more was expected of them and transgressions were ridiculed (as opposed to pitied, as they were in mainstream). Laura said she welcomed the chance to go there now and again, but had resisted this in her earlier years at the school. Her parents' comments seemed to suggest that she was only willing to spend time in the unit, once she had established clear boundaries around herself within mainstream. Satisfied with that, she had enjoyed occasional forays there, sometimes with her mainstream peers.

Raschida and Laura appeared to be neither wholly inside or outside mainstream. Rather, they seemed to operate within a space at the boundaries, facing both inwards and outwards and trying to guide the actions of their peers towards them. The boundaries around this space shifted as the mainstream pupils became less fearful. The clarity of Raschida and Laura's self-interrogation, combined with vigilance for



interrogations by others, allowed them to react swiftly and to erase discourses of pity, which threatened to shift them to the edges of mainstream. They accomplished this with only partial success, however, leaving a trace of pity in the form of admiration and having to tackle each interrogation anew.

6 (c)

**BRIAN, SCOTT, SARAH AND GRAHAM:  
DOING WHAT'S BEST FOR 'THEM'**

This group of four pupils were also in mainstream schools, but their identities and experiences had been constructed in very different ways to those of Raschida and Laura. The accounts of Brian, Scott, Sarah (all aged 12) and Graham (16) are presented. Each was designated officially as having learning difficulties, but Brian and Scott had additional labels of 'Down's syndrome' and 'Tuberous sclerosis' respectively (the latter a condition like epilepsy and controlled by drugs). There are a number of interesting features of these accounts. The first is that the mainstream pupils' discourses gave the four pupils a kind of unity with each other and with others 'like them'. They appeared to strip the pupils of their personalities (except where it was seen as 'quirky' and confirmed their disability) and of feelings about their experiences. The pupils' physical appearance seemed to be their organ of difference (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p100). Brian and Scott looked different and the behaviour of all four pupils appeared to reinforce their identities for their peers as a collectivity of 'them' or 'others'. It also made resistance more difficult, but some of this was in evidence. This resistance, at times, came from the four pupils, but most was done by their mainstream peers, who acted on their behalf.

The four pupils appeared more passive than Raschida and Laura in that the mainstream pupils accounts described what they did 'to them' or how the mainstream pupils 'treated them'. This was couched, not, as in the girls' cases, in terms of what they thought they wanted and were most comfortable with, but in terms of what was considered best (or least harmful) for them. It suggests a different kind of interaction between the pupils from that implied by the accounts about Raschida and Laura. The girls' peers tried to guess their likely reaction before they acted and screened out some behaviours and allowed others. In contrast, the mainstream peers of these pupils

exercised much more generalised and depersonalised judgements about behaviour towards 'people like them'. The boundaries around the four pupils within mainstream, determining what was acceptable conduct towards them, were patrolled on their behalf. Their 'Umwelt' did not cover the four pupils' own recognition of alarm, rather what the mainstream pupils recognised as permissible, taking account of their own circumstances and their own tensions between demand and desire as pupils (Bhaba, 1994). They seemed to guide the conduct of themselves and others, within a mini-regime of governmentality:

One governs one's own conduct while government guides the conduct of others. Government is the conduct of conduct (Simons, 1995, p36).

Yet, their desire to be accepted and liked by other pupils sometimes had a silencing effect on their behaviour.

The discourses about the four pupils did not contain similar silences to those of Raschida and Laura's peers, in which the mainstream pupils tried to steer round their impairment, albeit sometimes unsuccessfully. The discourses of these mainstream pupils had an air of recognition and forgiveness of the pupils' disabilities. Pity was not only legitimate here, but seems to have had a cleansing quality in which those who exercised it, exorcised their own guilt. Pity emerges in its most unrestrained form in relation to Brian, the pupil with Down's syndrome. Elsewhere it appears displaced and inverted as derision, resentment and indifference.

## **Brian**

Brian's peers talked about him with warmth, affection and frequent laughter because they 'loved being with him' and 'he was such a lot of fun', despite being 'a bit of a handful'. They said he hadn't been 'as lucky as them, when he was born', but 'they are humans', so should be 'treated the same as us'. 'They're really quite intelligent', pointed out one pupil, 'if you ask them the right things'. Already, Brian had been homogenised with others with a similar label, though not with the two others in his class with a Record of Needs. Ralph, for example, was 'not as bad as Brian'. Two features which marked Brian out as an individual, however, were his tendency to cuddle everyone, especially Denise, and his 'don't know or shut up moods'. The description of his affection provoked laughter among the mainstream pupils:

He's always kissing Denise, she's his favourite . . . The worst thing that Brian can do - he's just had his Milky Way, he's not had a drink and if you don't tell him to go and wipe his mouth he'll come over . . . and give you a kiss . . . You've got a white shirt or a blue one, he'll give you a kiss and it goes right over your shirt [laughter]. Especially if it's a Monday and you've just come in with a clean shirt. You've got to go home at three o'clock . . . and have a clean one for Tuesday.

Kissing Brian was seen as legitimate, yet the pupils made it clear that this was not acceptable behaviour towards anyone else. They said they had no qualms about crossing this normally well defined boundary with Brian. Their main concern, however, was the Milky Way stain which usually followed such an exchange and, shifting to an educational discourse, said he was 'getting better at cleaning his mouth' after his Milky Way:

You'll maybe need to remind him sometimes, but mainly he'll go and kind of try and do it himself. Which is another good sign, because, like, you know he's learning.

Denise, the main object of his affection, said she did not mind his attentions and laughed as she recalled:

I got a big kiss and a cuddle from him at lunchtime today. I couldn't exactly refuse.

Denise, like Brian's other peers, found his affectionate behaviour both unstoppable and desirable, explaining it to themselves and to me as the usual way people like Brian behave (eg exuberant and friendly etc). When it appeared more than that, for example involving close contact and touching, with possible sexual overtones, Denise said she felt uncomfortable, yet having sanctioned behaviour not usually open to other pupils it was difficult for her to redraw the boundaries, for example by pulling away from him:

Sometimes, it's a little bit embarrassing because sometimes he does it in front of the whole class, like, when I was in the class last year with him, he did it in front of the whole class. Like, if we were just about to go for gym or were sitting in the hall for assembly, he would sit and he'd rub my knee or he'd rub my hand. It was if he was trying to, like, I don't know, kind of get closer to me. Not as in a kind of friendship way, but something else.

An air of amusement accompanied the pupils accounts of his refusal to co-operate, by ignoring them or telling them to go away:

Another speciality of Brian's - if it's a wet playtime or it's a cold playtime and Brian doesn't want to go out, it's got to be tapes that go onto the tape recorder [laughter]. And when Brian's listening to his tapes and somebody comes over and says "hi Brian", he goes "go away" [laughter] . . . he doesn't even turn round half the time.

Brian's refusal to interact with them could be interpreted as an act of resistance. He didn't want to go out into the playground or, as on other occasions, answer endless questions about colours or numbers so he engaged in non-compliance. One teacher described him as having 'taken an opt out clause for the morning'. The mainstream pupils, however, did not see it this way, and translated his behaviour as another amusing feature or 'speciality' which, nevertheless, they felt they had to counter, for his own good:

But when you're asking him a question, sometimes he'll go "don't know, don't know" when he does know. And you've got to keep asking him or he'll never know. You've just got to keep giving him attention and stuff at him, so that he'll know, because he knows all his colours and stuff and if you point to a colour he'll just say "don't know that" or he'll say "go away".

The pupils said no-one had told them 'how to behave', but felt what they were doing 'would help him'. On one occasion he escaped completely, to be found later in the cupboard and the pupils co-operated with the teacher in disciplining him, despite finding the episode hilarious:

She walked past the cupboard and all she heard was this "ah" and she looked in the cupboard and there was Brian sitting in the corner. They had given him into trouble and we were outside and

he was sitting there crying [laughter]. It was dead funny, but . . .  
we weren't to laugh at him because he'd done wrong.

The mainstream pupils seemed to see themselves as agents of Brian's discipline and his academic and social development. If he was being mischievous, they needed to be 'stern with him', otherwise 'he thinks it's a joke'. Brian's reaction was often to be upset and refuse to speak to them:

That's when you really feel sorry for him because sometimes he turns away and he says "I'm not talking to you". . . When he's like that, we just say to Steven "oh well, Steven, Brian's not talking to us today". . . Then Brian comes over. Or sometimes I'll go over to Brian and say "oh Brian, you've made me cry" and he'll grab you, he'll actually grab you.

The pupils converted Brian's resistance to their treatment or his tantrum into pity, and forgave his breach when he became his 'normal' affectionate self once more. They declared themselves satisfied with the improvements Brian had made generally, through being in their school and learning 'some of the same stuff' as them. The pupils were also pleased that they were the instruments of Brian's progress, through their governance of his conduct:

- J We like to be with them, help them what we can.
- D Help them to get better every day.
- M So that they will live up to, near enough, our standards, because near enough they need to go.
- D And also the feeling that you're actually doing something.
- J For other people.

D Instead of just for your pleasure. Because they're getting a lot of pleasure out of it as well . . . Also, it's good experience for in later life, if there's someone in your job, if there's someone, like Brian, with Down's syndrome comes and works with you, it's good experience because you kind of know what to expect.

The governance within the pupils discourses had a heavily pedagogic element, which made it distinctively different from that of Raschida and Laura's peers. This involved depersonalising and generalising the pupils and determining appropriate conduct towards 'them'. It also engaged them in a kind of self training and development through experience. This governmentality appeared to be constructed for, rather than by, Brian, with less agency from him than was apparent from Laura and Raschida. The mainstream pupils appeared to have set limits to the amount of care and pity that should be shown to Brian. They were critical of others who overstepped the boundaries and became too sentimental towards him:

J Well there is (sic) some people that overprotect them, overtreat them, instead of treating them equally.

D They make it more obvious that they are actually special.

J They hold hands with Brian and they don't need to do that.

D They make everything really simple for them, but we can attempt to make it a wee bit more difficult, just for them to understand, so that they're learning every day, but they can still kind of basically communicate with us. But a lot of them, they'll just . . . And if there's no answer from either of them, then they'll just keep repeating it, whereas if we're saying it, we'll just say it the once, maybe twice, but after that we'll just leave it because we'll know that they have heard it.



They also took to task some of their classmates who called someone who was stupid 'Jim' and often pulled a face at the same time. They saw this as abusive, because it referred to a person outside school called Jim, who, like Brian, had Down's syndrome. They were unsure of Jim's age, offering suggestions from 'in his twenties' to 'about forty' before concluding that, wherever he was within that range, they were sure 'he was really old'. They seemed to be less concerned that Jim got upset when the pupils did this outside school and chased them; rather, they objected to the inferred association with Brian:

If they say something about Jim it exactly means what they're meaning about Brian because Brian's just, he's not, like, the same as Jim but he's kinda a wee bit and we think that's not fair to do that to him when he hasn't done anything to them, so why should they do something to him?

There is some attempt here to differentiate between Jim and Brian and an acknowledgement of similarity. There is also a generalising comment about being fair to Brian and defending him on the grounds that he cannot do so himself. They said they had asked the other pupils not to use the name Jim, but had been ignored, so did not try further. This might have threatened their own status among their peers and seemed to be a price they were unwilling to pay. It suggests that their mini-regime of governmentality had its own limits, imposed by other regimes governing pupil conduct.

## Scott

Scott's other name was 'brain dead', at least that was the one he had heard his classmates call him. They said it was more usually 'Radar' or 'Alien', 'because of the shape of his head', which made him look as if 'he's come down from space'. Scott revealed this along with pupils who had also been the focus of scorn. A small boy had been called 'smout'; another, with big ears, was renamed 'jug'; another had been the focus of ridicule, with drawings and 'moustache' after a hair had appeared on his lip. Scott and the other pupils said they felt 'heartbroken' to be treated this way and Scott added:

I get really hurt when people call me brain dead . . . Nearly everyone is different, they've got talents and things they can't do.

The mainstream pupils described Scott's names amid much laughter. One boy, almost hysterical, said that 'everyone says that his forehead is like a radar', then added, 'I don't say that, I just find it funny'. They pointed out that people in the class had to be really different to earn a name like that, 'I mean look at Steven there with a flat face and no-one laughs at him'. The pupils seemed to see this naming as both sufficiently unacceptable to distance themselves from it, by suggesting that the perpetrators were everyone, and legitimate, because 'everyone has a name in the class'. These other names, however, were usually self selected. Their justification that Scott did not mind his names contained some uncertainty:

- L He doesn't bother.
- S He doesn't do anything.
- C He just laughs.
- L He sometimes laughs . . . or he tries to fight back.

In the playground, Scott was usually the last to be picked for games and this provided an opportunity for further ridicule:

Like, we were playing a game the other day called speedball and he was last to get picked and they were going "no we don't want him, you have him". . . . They weren't saying they didn't want him but they said "Oh no it's your go, you take him" and all that.

This was not, they said, done blatantly, but in a way that was not likely to be 'picked up' by Scott:

T Some of the boys say "we don't want you in our team, you go in the other team" then the other team don't want him. So it ends up that you don't exactly say it but it's a you're not having him, they're not having him.

C Or they'll say "he's good" and they'll wink at each other. He's always last to get picked and everything.

He was not, they said, able to apprehend what they were saying about him:

T They just sort of say things that everybody laughs at but he doesn't really know that they're talking about him sometimes.

JA Can you give me an example?

C Well, Tina called him a spazzy once to his face but she didn't call him it to his face, she called Neil it.

Scott's apparent inability to perceive these events had a licensing effect on the pupils, yet they acknowledged some resistance from him:

But sometimes he sticks up for himself because sometimes he can be very cheeky back.

The mainstream pupils' governmentality, then, was constructed with little agency from Scott. Indeed, his perceived lack of awareness seem to extend the boundaries of acceptable conduct to include fairly vicious exposure of his playground (in)competence. In contrast with Brian, they made particular judgements about his likely reactions rather than generalised ones about people with SEN. These judgements tended not to be pedagogic, but related to permissible levels of teasing which were likely to be missed by Scott but not by the other pupils. The mainstream pupils were, however, critical of treatment he received from one of their classmates who had stepped over their (very wide) boundaries:

M Brian sometimes teases him if they're playing at football.

A If they're playing at football, he's not that good with his legs, because of his thing and he usually misses it and he'll start shouting at him.

M Today he came up to him and said "I've got three times the energy of you - you can't even kick a ball. I'm in the football team, you're not."

They said they had also stepped in to stop Scott being 'picked on' by the school bully:

Sometimes with Scott at football training a boy called Pat always slags him and like bullies him. Like he was playing against him that Monday and his team won and at the end he just came at him and threw him down on the ground . . . and me, Gary and Brian just told him to stop it.

Scott's 'thing', mentioned by one pupil, referred to his medical condition, which made him 'a wee bit dizzy', but they recalled how he was much 'worse' when he was younger, when 'he used to take fits' and 'we used to lie him on á teddy'. This seemed to make him deserving of pity, 'it's a shame, the way he is', and of the need to limit the victimisation of him. They were unsure, however, of what 'state' he was in more recently, as he seemed to have 'improved':

C Scott used to take fits.

G He still does.

C He takes epileptic fits now.

L Does he? I didn't know that.

S Cos it used to be when he was away out playing, he'd to wear a special helmet.

C In case he fell.

L And there was always a teacher, like with Fergus.

They compared him favourably to another child with recorded special needs in the school who had 'nothing wrong with her', but who was 'just too lazy and doesn't feel like doing the work'. One pupil said 'I feel sorry for some of them, but not for Margo, because she smokes and drinks', expressing Scott as a generalised a class of 'them', as Brian's peers did to him. Scott also came out better than a third child, in a wheelchair, who was said to take advantage of his disabled condition to 'show off':

The week we were away . . . he was sitting there drinking his milk and he said "watch this" and he chucked his milk carton away and made [his auxiliary] go and get it.

Scott, to his mainstream peers, seemed to be an ambivalence of an ill person, deserving of pity and someone whose appearance provoked derision.

## **Sarah**

The only problem for Sarah, according to her mainstream peers, was that 'she just finds the work a bit hard' and 'teachers are always around her, helping her with her work'. They said she was 'glad of' this because 'she needs it'. Otherwise she was 'just the same as normal people' and 'she talks the same'. They pointed out, however, that 'some people might have the attitude where they think, "oh that's a sin" and all that' (signalling charity discourse). She was described as 'friendly with everybody', yet:

S Some people give her a hard time. Like Sam says "what are you looking at me for?" and she's doing nothing of the sort. He just noises her up and glares at her.

A It's no fair because Sarah doesnae do anything.

JA Why do you think he does it?

C Just to annoy her.

S I think she got a bit upset about that a while ago.

C She cries a lot.

A He was starting to threaten her a lot and she got really upset about that.

C Sometimes if I've come in from lunch you see her crying and that you know that cos her eyes are all watery.

The pupils spoke of more widespread resentment of her, over the help she received in class:

C Some people think it's unfair that Sarah gets easier work.

A Quite a lot of the boys think that and think it's unfair that she gets a lot of help.

JA What do they say about that?

S They say "when we're stuck they don't help us."

- C But they just can't help everyone, although they do if you need it.
- A They just resent her getting a bit more attention and they take it out on her.
- JA Do they say anything to her about that?
- C No really, but they tell everybody else. If she's sitting in a different group, they'll just list her faults.

It is interesting that Sarah's peers seemed to see her as undeserving of extra attention or help from teachers. Resentment of this kind emerged in accounts about Raschida, although some of her mainstream peers sought to dispel this. It suggests that the pupils' micro-regime of governmentality, which operated in the context of disability, seemed to clash with pupils' broader conception of school regimes. The latter view saw school as individualising, for example through examinations and competition, yet operated strict rules of equity and justice which made no allowances for individual difficulties and in which pupils were treated equally. Sarah and Raschida appeared to breach these rules by receiving extra support, even if it gave them no discernible advantage.

The mainstream pupils said Sarah was isolated in a variety of ways. In basketball, for example, no-one passed the ball to her 'because they think she's not good at other subjects'. She was also left out of the class repartee. Although they said Sarah 'usually keeps out of it', they were unsure how much of this was by choice:

- A I don't think it really bothers her.
- C But I think she sees other folk, like, enjoying themselves and she thinks she can't join in.
- A I don't think it really bothers Sarah that much to be, you know, left out. I think if it were to happen all the time, it would bother her, but I think it doesnae really bother her.

- C I think if everybody got along better with her she'd do better. She'd join in the stuff and that.
- S I think if Sam got on better with her it would make her feel better about herself.
- C She'd be more confident. Sometimes you think she's feart to come to school and it's because she knows that something's going to happen or someone's going to say something to her.
- A But it is really Sam who does it.

Their blame appeared to focus on Sam, although they were ambivalent about doing anything on Sarah's behalf:

- A Somebody needs to tell Sam that you can't treat people like that.
- C But sometimes you can't tell the teacher about that because they'd just annoy you even more.
- S I think she'd maybe not want us to say anything in case it started a big fuss over her.

The mainstream pupils were policing the 'Umwelt' on Sarah's behalf, as Brian and Scott's peers did for them. Here, however, they rationalised their own inertia on the grounds that to do something could make things worse for Sarah and for them. They were caught in a double bind of trying to do what was best for Sarah, yet maintaining their own stasis within the classroom. The 'somebody' who needed to stand up to Sam, therefore, became the teachers:

- C They should teach us how to deal with it and that. Because people don't know about it and they just think it's up there.
- A They should give us advice on how to treat them because people, like, say things. People wouldn't tease her as much.



Both these comments show a collective responsibility for and a distancing from her ill treatment which is interesting. They were saying that they should all be taught about how to deal with/treat 'them', within a pedagogic discourse, so that 'people' wouldn't tease her as much. They seemed to have been including themselves in this need for education and Sarah was both individualised and generalised about within this discourse. The mainstream pupils indicated that without this generalised guidance about how to treat 'them', Sarah faced a bleak future:

- C If people keep annoying her she won't have much of a future.
- A She'll be too worried about what other people are saying about her.
- S And she'd be too scared to go for jobs and get married and that, in case people say no.

Sarah painted a rather different picture, saying she 'loved school' , was 'getting on well in all the subjects' and 'everyone's nice'. French and science were her best subjects and her favourites, but she enjoyed them all and had 'no problems with any of them'. This was all said with a bright smile and was largely in line with what the teachers said about her. They saw her as 'lovely', 'bubbly' and 'very happy', despite experiencing great difficulties with her work. So how do we explore these apparent contradictions (without trying to ascertain who is telling the 'truth')? What is most interesting is the difference in the versions offered by Sarah and her peers, since teachers' professional perspectives (with their own 'vested interests') and their absence from much of the informality of mainstream experiences could explain their particular accounts. Raschida and Laura's teachers, for example, reduced much of their behaviour to 'vanity' or the 'teenage thing' or omitted other aspects, eg their sense of humour, which were clearly important to the pupils.

This leaves us with two versions, Sarah's and the mainstream pupils, which appear to contradict each other. It is futile to attempt to weed out the one closest to the 'truth'

(and that is not the point of this research). It is interesting, nevertheless, to reflect on the differences between these versions. Sarah may well have perceived me as a teacher figure and not someone to be 'trusted', so may have chosen not to reveal any difficulties to me. Alternatively, Sarah's insistence that all was well could be interpreted as a version of resistance, in which she was aiming to minimise the impact of the oppression she experienced by appearing to be undisturbed by it or insulated against the regimes which govern it. Sinason (1992) regards this kind of action as a 'secondary handicap', developed in response to the inadequacy of others to deal with the primary handicap, in this case Sarah's learning difficulties.

### **Graham**

The mainstream pupils who spoke of Graham made it clear that they had only a partial picture of him, since he was not always with them for mainstream subjects. He spent roughly half of his time in 'room 18' (a special unit), where he 'just learns stuff and [talks] about how he's getting on in his work and stuff like that'. They said he seemed to cope with the English work in 'their classroom', but:

K sometimes he makes a bit of a fool of himself, but that's just, like, ken, how he is, but you just ignore that and just get on with it.

Apart from that, it's ok.

JA What happens when he makes a bit of a fool out of himself?

K It's just some of the things he says to the teacher. He calls Mr Wallace "Sir". He's just different from everyone else, but no-one, like, we just leave him.

L He's louder than everyone else all the time.

The mainstream pupils appeared to accept Graham as different and forgave his idiosyncrasies, since they caused no discomfort and offered some mild amusement.

They said they mostly left him alone or ignored him completely and Graham reciprocated by staying out of their way:

He keeps himself to himself. I know he speaks to all the people in the unit, but other than that, he doesn't really speak to anyone else.

Graham also said that he did not mix with his mainstream peers, at least as far as classwork was concerned:

I don't really work with anyone in the classes. Usually I'm just working on my own, but I like it when it's busy.

Graham said he tended not to see mainstream pupils at intervals, as he 'usually just stayed in room 18'. He said he liked everyone and there was no-one he didn't get on with. His sister, however, was his best friend and he liked being on his own. The mainstream pupils said they talked to him occasionally, to 'humour him' and entertain themselves over his obsession with football:

L They just tease him a bit.

M Yeah.

K It's all, like, good fun, really.

JA What happens?

M They'll say things, like, "did you go to see the Aberdeen match?"

K Yeah, they'll tease him about another team playing against them and if they beat Aberdeen, they'll take the mickey out of him. It's all in good fun, really.

JA How does he react?

M He takes it as a joke.

Graham made no reference to such episodes, joking or otherwise. The mainstream pupils, however, said that he sometimes responded to teasing by saying that he was going to tell the teacher. That, to them, was going 'a bit far', since 'other people would just, like, take it' and so it marked him out as different from others. It also suggested an insulating divide between the mainstream pupils' governmentality towards Graham and more conventional pupil regimes of conduct, in which teasing was expected to be both given and received. Graham seemed to be disqualified from crossing this boundary by his inability to 'take it'. The mainstream pupils did not construe his objections to their teasing as resistance, rather as further evidence of his difference. Yet, like Scott's peers, they had established limits to the teasing which they saw as acceptable and beyond which they would feel uncomfortable:

If someone was doing something to him, like picking on him or something, we'd feel a bit of resentment towards them.

The pupils inferred a somewhat passive reaction in their imagined 'resentment' to any treatment of Graham which crossed their own boundaries of appropriate conduct. Yet, such a situation had not arisen, so it was difficult for them to be more than speculative. Beyond the gentle teasing, Graham was usually ignored or tolerated if he drew attention to himself by, for example, being loud. The pupils suggested, however, that Graham was benefiting pedagogically from being in their class and thought this should be extended to 'all of them':

K Putting him into ordinary classrooms, like our English classrooms. I think if he went to other classrooms, I don't know if he goes into other classrooms, but if he does, being with other people. I'm not quite sure. And I think other people should be able to go into normal classrooms and get used to it. I think it helps us, too, to have more respect for them, because I used to think people from

the special unit didn't actually have to do anything there, so I didn't have much respect.

- L They do seem quite immature when they're just in the unit. Like, I knew Graham when he was just in the unit, but ever since he's come into our class, he really has matured quite quickly. Because he used to just muck around, make quite a fool of himself. Like, he used to hit the girls and tell them to shut up, but he's changed quite a bit now.

Graham, they suggested, had made improvements as a result of exposure to them, although he hadn't stopped making a fool of himself (indeed that was one of his distinguishing characteristics for the mainstream pupils). They said they had learned some 'respect for them'. Yet, this was tinged with surprise, as if they had expected Graham and others to founder in mainstream. It appears not unlike the admiration for Raschida and Laura's accomplishments, such as walking into the common room, or what was left after they had erased transgressions, for example mistaking water for vinegar.

### **Overview**

These four pupils had in common the label of learning difficulties, which seemed to render them faceless and docile to their mainstream peers. Part of the mainstream pupils' governmentality involved identifying the pupils with SEN as belonging to an 'other' group, for instance referring to individuals as 'them' or 'people like them'. This status could denote a variety of things at any one time, including having a special need, deserving pity or unable to do something and membership was denied to those who lacked one of these qualities. Margo, for example, did not belong according to Scott's peers (although she did have special needs and clearly could not manage her classwork). Her smoking and drinking seemed to be transgressions which cancelled out any pity they might have for her and made her undeserving. Individuality on the

part of the four pupils was given the status of the bizarre and confirmation of their difference (for example Brian's 'speciality') or treated with indifference, since it neither challenged nor refuted their categorisation. This act of naming is, for Derrida (1976) the original form of violence, forcing people into contexts or situations against their will. Here, it identified the four pupils at a distance from mainstream pupils before they even began their attempt at a mainstream performance.

The micro-regime of governmentality of the mainstream pupils was constructed on behalf of Brian, Scott, Sarah and Graham, but with little agency on their parts. This makes it distinctively different from the much more proactive conduct of Raschida and Laura's peers, around a 'comfort zone' which the girls had actively established. In contrast, the peers of Brian and the others mediated their actions in relation to a generalised impression of how 'people like them' should be treated. Scott, however, was an exception, individualised by his peers through his apparent inability to perceive their derision. The pupils' discourses had a strong pedagogic element which guided their conduct further. Brian's peers, for example, told of how they tried to encourage him to answer them even when he didn't want to, while Scott's peers criticised a fellow pupil who had bullied him.

The mainstream pupils' governmentality appeared to be insulated from other rules governing pupil conduct. This relationship, however, was subject to oscillations, making the regimes sometimes rigidly separate and at other times capable of being breached. Thus, the pupils described occasions where they chose not to act, for example when Sarah had been victimised by another pupil, observing rules about interfering or being seen to be 'telling tales'. Instead, they blamed the teachers for failing to give advice on 'how to treat them' and kept quiet 'in case it started a big fuss over her'. Graham seemed to be disqualified from crossing the boundaries of the pupils' governmentality regime by his inability to 'take' their teasing. It was striking that they focused on his interest in Aberdeen FC which, outside this regime, could be

constructed as a realistically measured concern among males. Inside, however, it was interpreted as an obsession and another example of his difference. Brian was allowed to breach the so-called 'normal' boundaries of touching and kissing which operate among pupils generally. The main 'problem' this caused the pupils was the chocolate stain he left on their shirts, rather than any personal or sexual transgression, although Denise indicated some discomfort in this respect. Her concern was an uncertainty about which rules he was breaching by touching her in a public space and about how others read this breach.

Like Raschida and Laura, the four pupils acted out the role of an 'ordinary' pupil, but without the kinds of vigilance which the girls exercised. Unlike them, Brian, Scott, Sarah and Graham did not try to contrive casualness, 'subtly stating a natural attitude of carefully being casual and casually feeling careful' (Travers, 1994, p26). The performances of Brian and the others were more openly acknowledged as such and successful accomplishments were greeted with 'the sweet guilt of conspirators' (Goffman, 1959, p108). Sinason (1992) suggests that the guilt experienced by others at not being handicapped turns into a collusive identification with the omnipotent self (or essence) of the handicapped person:

A true understanding that we are all equal souls and all handicapped in different ways gets transmuted into a manic desire to erase difference (p43).

In the absence of agency from Brian and the others, their mainstream peers appeared to act as Janus figures on their behalf and acted as their gatekeepers to mainstream. As well as committing the four pupils into mainstream, their peers sanctioned the behaviour of others towards them. They were able to do this, by becoming part of the institutional mechanisms of surveillance and by exercising their own 'gaze' on them. Their gaze was one which normalised, medicalised and moralised the pupils

(Walkerdine, 1984) and allowed them to oscillate between feeling sorry for the pupils and deciding what was best for them.

The four pupils seemed to be caught, not only in a performance as mainstream (normal) pupils, but also in the gaze of their peers on whom they were dependent to accept and be part of their performance. This gaze was instrumental, making the four pupils objects of their peers' scrutiny, and identificatory, motivating them to perform to their peers' satisfaction.



## 6 (d)

### SUSAN, BARRY AND PHILLIP: HIDE IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE A STAR

The three pupils in this chapter had physical difficulties. Susan (11) and Barry (12) used wheelchairs and Phillip (12), whose condition was progressive, was likely to require one in the future. Their physical difficulties seemed to evoke pity from their peers, who treated them as celebrities, worthy of special attention and kindness, and their governmentality both individualised and generalised the pupils. Susan appeared to encourage special treatment of this kind, while Barry and Phillip sought to deflect attention away from their physical disability, yet the actions of all three pupils suggested resistance to disabled identities. In each case, the pupils were active agents in the process of their identification, with more in common with Raschida and Laura, than with the pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Phillip began his school career as an 'ordinary' schoolboy and his peers remembered him as such. His disabled identity was still being constructed by his peers and his movement between normal and disabled was erratic, further agitated by the mainstream pupils' lack of understanding of 'what was wrong with him'.

#### Susan

'One good thing about being in a wheelchair is that you get to meet lots of people'. So said Susan, after listing the variety of 'important people' who had been to see her. She also said she had been in the newspapers, as part of the publicity to raise money for a trip to the Hungarian Peto institute. She described herself as a 'person who can't walk' and 'whose legs didn't work'. She also asserted that 'people will always do things for me, because they know I can't walk'. Susan divided her time between the mainstream classroom and the school's special unit.

Two of her P7 classmates, with whom she spent part of the school week, emphasised that it was only 'the fact that she is in a wheelchair' and 'can't walk' that made her different from them. Otherwise, they said, 'she was just like them'. At the same time, however, they spoke of her having 'her own things' (eg physiotherapy equipment) and of belonging to her 'own class', the special unit, rather than as a permanent member of their class.

Susan's wheelchair was electrically operated which 'makes life easier', according to a mainstream pupil. Susan said it marked her out favourably from other pupils in the special unit and she had been annoyed when a boy had been given a similar chair. Her P7 classmates, according to one of them, were impressed by both the wheelchair and the lap top computer she took into the classroom:

J Everybody's interested in that computer she has with her. John likes it.

M He's jealous.

J Yeah, I think John's jealous. He says that he's got one, but he says that he has everything.

Susan's peers oscillated between wanting equality for her and seeing her as needing help in order to do the same activities as them:

G I'd say treat her just like us.

J Yes, but try and help her as well.

JA Yeah?

G Help her as well, yeah, but just treat her like us, no offence or anything.

JA What do you mean by no offence?

G Well, I don't want to make her feel left out or anything. I think she should just join in whatever way she can. The same as we do.

J But try and help if she needs help, but try and treat her like us as well.

G Yeah.

This extract has a number of interesting features. The first concerns the separate identity, of 'her', which they constructed for Susan and which was distinctive from 'us'. Their view that she should be 'like us' was not expressed in the ontological sense of 'being like us' but that she should be 'treated like us'. Indeed the notion of 'treatment' has particular resonances with medical discourses. These pupils, as did the peers of Raschida and Laura, showed some ambivalence in what they said, torn between a desire to treat her like them (even if they did not think she was) and displays of pity towards her (because of their recognition of her difference). Thus, their accounts oscillated between a desire to 'treat her like us' and a concerned 'no offence'; ensuring that she's not 'left out' and trying to 'help if she needs help'. In this case, the standards of conduct within the pupils' governmentality appeared to be expressed through medical and charity, as well as rights, discourses.

The mainstream pupils said it was important for Susan to spend time with people with similar disabilities, and not just with them, because of the need to help her feel better about her 'difference':

B I think they should be in both, like in our classroom and in their own class.

JA Why do you say that?

G Well, it would be nice to know that some other people are in wheelchairs and everything and again it would be nice to know that you can be with other people that haven't got the problems.

JA What do you think, Jane?

J I think that it's good for her to be in our class sometimes and then to be in her class.

JA So you think the same as Tony. Is that for the same reasons?

J Yes. She's got lots of things here now and she's got her bars to help her.

Part of their justification for advocating both the integration and the segregation of Susan came from a desire to find others who shared Susan's differences, and who were more like her and less like them. Thus, the pupils seemed to engage in both individualisation and generalisation about Susan, by wanting her to benefit personally from a greater solidarity among 'her kind'.

Susan's peers praised her for her dependence on them and her willingness to ask for help:

She asks if she wants something. She'll just come out with it. If she wants something different she'll just ask. She's not scared to say anything. It just comes out.

They seemed to appreciate her ability to be actively dependent upon them, which they compared to a more passive person who would 'just sit there'. Yet, there was a carefulness about the help they gave her. Two pupils, for example, spoke about the help they had given her on a group task. She was having difficulties reading their writing, which referred to items copied from a book, so they gave her the book to read. They argued that her problems stemmed from their writing 'which was not particularly neat', but also said 'if something was hard, we'd make it easier'. They seemed to indicate that she would have more problems than most with everyday tasks, but that they ought to be not adding to them by their own carelessness (in this case with their writing) and so were checking their own behaviour. Susan, for her

part, had reinforced them in attributing the problems to themselves by saying 'I can't read **your** writing'. In other words, her difficulties with this task stemmed, from the pupils' incompetence rather than from her own special needs. Invoking the official discourses, it might be said that she was interpreting the situation from a social or curriculum, rather than an individualistic or deficit perspective.

As a kind of celebrity figure, Susan was made welcome and fussed over whenever she came into the mainstream classroom. Her class teacher saw this as a problem and likely to limit Susan's independence, so tried to discourage it:

When she first comes in, they make a big fuss and ask "can she sit at our table?" and I have to say "look Susan is part of the class, she's not here to be made a fuss of, she's here to come in and be treated as . . ." [pauses] you know . . . There's a few of them there that like to mother her and Susan likes that you know. Susan sits back and lets them mother her and you've got to try and get away from that and onto the idea that she's got to do things independently.

The teacher's pause is interesting and signals her sense of the paradoxical notion of normality for Susan - that it required special 'treatment', which in turn gave it an other than normal construction. The mainstream pupils mentioned only one person whose comments 'might have upset her'. The pupil concerned had made remarks about her wheelchair, suggesting, for example that she set it to 'full blast' in order to go faster but Susan was said to have ignored him.

Susan's mainstream peers were uncertain about what she did out of school, partly because she lived in a different village from them. There had been some contact with

her outside school, but it seemed more formal than the usual 'messaging around' of upper primary aged children:

Doreen's dad works quite near Susan's house and Doreen said that she sometimes goes over and plays with Denise. I don't even know where she lives.

The notion of 'playing with' Susan might suggest a fulfilment of an obligation on the mainstream pupils' part to do something for her, or could simply be a casual expression among upper primary aged children. Susan's mother indicated that much of Susan's difficulties in coming to terms with her disability had related to the physical lack of ease of social interaction. It was impossible, for instance, for her to 'hang out' with other pupils or to go to the shops when she felt like it. She said, however, that this had improved since the arrival of the electric wheelchair. The professional advice she had received had given her a sense of the precariousness of her daughter's identification during her teenage years:

Now and then she does [get upset]. In the last year and a half she went through a phase, but she seems to have calmed down again. Just about not being able to do this and not being able here, like, to go down to the shops by herself and meet her friends and things. You know, just the usual, I suppose it's the independence, but now that she's got the electric wheelchair and she's getting it back and fore to school every day now, the independence is starting to come a bit more now. I suppose, I would think, in another year or two it'll probably get a lot worse. The child psychologist has told us that when she hits the teenage years it's going to be hard for her and he said if she could come out the other end the way she is now, life in front of her could be pretty good, but depending on how she

comes out, you know if she gets depressed and not caring for herself or people or whatever. He said it's hard for any child but I think it's worse, especially for a child that's mentally, common sense wise, ok but I think it's harder than for a child that's mentally handicapped because they don't realise the same things like boyfriends, discos and boy talk and that, so I think it's harder for a disabled child that's mentally pretty ok, you know, common sense ways.

Susan's mother said she was uncertain about what lay ahead and pondered on the prospects of marriage and children although she had 'never actually went into that'. She reinforced further the tenuous quality of her identification:

Everyone seems to like her so far and, as I say, if she can keep her personality and her smile, you know, she's quite a bonny child, hopefully she might get somebody and get married and, hopefully, I can't see any reason why she can't have kids.

Susan's own view of this was that she would prefer to get pregnant without a husband, on the grounds that 'all men are stupid'. Issues of gender and sexuality are discussed in the final chapter.

Susan appeared to be resisting an identification of herself as an object of pity, where she might have been looked down upon by her peers. She had converted this to a kind of obligation on her peers to help her because of her disability, implying they ought to be rewarded by this. She seemed comfortable with an identification of herself as a 'star', which, as Shapiro (1993) notes, is still located within charity discourses. The mainstream pupils' governmentality seemed to have responded to Susan's construction in that they offered her celebrity status and praised her willingness to ask

them for help. They both individualised and generalised their conduct towards her, anticipating what she was likely to feel comfortable with and how 'people like her' might respond.

### **Barry**

Unlike Susan, Barry said he hated anyone fussing over him. He found that people either made him the focus of attention or ignored him, speaking to Carla, the auxiliary who accompanied him throughout the school day, as if he wasn't there. A large sum of money had been raised recently to buy him a special bed and his mother was about to be given a van which would hold his wheelchair. The trouble with this, Barry said, was that he had to endure endless publicity, including a television appearance, and, unlike Susan who revelled in the attention, he could not stand this. Much to his relief, his mother had begun to see his point of view and had refused further publicity.

He said he worked hard in the mainstream classroom (where he spent all of his time) so that he would do as well as any other pupil and 'stop people feeling sorry for me'. He said his teacher 'didn't need to do anything special' for him, although his auxiliary usually helped him with writing, 'which can be a bit slow sometimes'. Her main function was to help him with the toilet, but he said he tried to hold on during the day as it was a 'bit awkward'. He said he had not minded being helped to go to the toilet when he was younger, but now he had to be 'hoisted' onto the toilet and he would prefer not to have the 'hassle'. The auxiliary worried about the effects this could have on his health, but she understood his embarrassment. Barry's attempts at removing pity by working hard and 'holding on' to avoid embarrassing situations suggests a considerable degree of agency. The implications of the latter of these transgressions for his health, however, are terrifying.

Barry said he was friendly with two pupils, a boy and a girl, who acted as his 'helpers' during intervals and lunchtimes. He said he would have preferred to go home for



lunch, but was not allowed. He said, with irony, 'They don't let me out of their sight, even at intervals. I don't know what they think I'm going to do'. His two 'helpers' said he needed assistance, for example to get to lunch but 'it's not really that big a deal'. However, Anna said she was a funny sight dragging his tray and its attachment through to the dining area. It was important, said Anna, that he was not 'treated as a disabled person' but was 'treated like a normal person'. She said the only thing which singled him out as 'abnormal' was his auxiliary who sat with him in class, although he was also unusual in that he 'actually enjoys school'. The class teacher, according to Anna, explained parts of the lesson to Barry 'like he's another person', which implies some kind of uncertainty about his 'personhood' either on Anna's or the teacher's part.

Anna said she was critical of some of her classmates who:

don't take much interest in him. They sometimes don't pay a lot of attention to him. But most people are nice to him.

Non-attention might well have been the kind of attitude which Barry welcomed in seeking to avoid fuss, but Anna felt that he deserved more interest from other pupils. Within the classroom, his mainstream peers seemed to ignore him most of the time. He had much more contact with Anna and one other male pupil, but the person he spoke to most was his auxiliary.

Anna, like Susan's peers, described an episode in which she had helped him within the classroom. She crossed the room and told him that she and others had just made a mistake in one of the maths exercises (which meant redoing it). She said she wanted to save him the extra effort of repeating the exercise, but had also told her other friends, so argued that she was not 'treating him as a disabled person'.

Anna said she had a particular friendship with Barry which she could not have with other pupils, male or female:

He's nice. He's easy to talk to. He's easier to talk to because he doesn't make assumptions. Like, I've told him things that I wouldn't tell my best friend, for example, because he's easier to talk to.

She hinted at a kind of impotence on Barry's part that made any 'secrets' she told him safe and any feelings she expressed unlikely to be interpreted as an overture towards him. Her comment that he doesn't make assumptions seems to relate to their own relationship, which for her was asexual. It would have been fascinating to explore this further with both Anna and Barry, but propriety imposed its own limits.

Barry appeared to resist identification of himself as disabled, especially where this might draw attention to himself. He tried to do this in some ways, by, for example avoiding trips to the toilet during the day, but he needed someone to help him get to lunch. Within the classroom, he tried to escape the gaze by being a diligent pupil, who needed little help other than with some physical tasks. He seemed to reinforce an identification of himself as passive and this seemed to make him uninteresting to the majority of his peers, at least according to Anna. His attempts at transgressing his disabled identity, then, could be interpreted as both a success and a failure. He succeeded by removing the interested gaze of his peers and, in a sense, eroded their need to govern their conduct towards him. Yet, he also failed by creating a disinterested gaze which seemed to disconnect him from them.

## **Phillip**

Unlike Susan and Barry, who were born with a damaged spinal cord, Phillip began his school career like any other ambulant five year old. His condition emerged as he went through primary and he said that by the time he was properly diagnosed as having muscular dystrophy, he was relieved that there was an explanation for the difficulties he had been having. His parents had constantly nagged him to walk properly which he had tried to do. Now that there was a reason for being unable to do so, he said he felt he had been 'let off the hook'. At the time of the research, he was able to walk with the use of sticks, but often fell over and had to be picked up by his peers. Phillip indicated that he managed well with his disability, but it was likely to get worse and there were going to be greater demands on him as he got older in any case. Secondary school, for example would involve much more walking around than in primary and he worried about what lay ahead:

I sometimes wonder how I'm going to do all the things you have to manage when you're older.

Phillip suggested that people expected too much of him because he did not look particularly disabled:

Just because I look alright people think I can do things but if you're in a wheelchair, you know something's wrong.

This might be interpreted as a transgression into, rather than out of, a disabled identity in which recognition of this by others could have made life less demanding. Yet, he also said he wanted to be treated normally and to do all the things his classmates did. He said he was pleased that he was clever and was in the 'top group' for all subjects. He tried to plan ahead, so that he did not find himself in difficult situations. For instance, as a member of the school quiz team, he travelled to another school, but

checked beforehand that he would be able to get onto the stage before the other pupils arrived.

Phillip's peers did not know the name of his condition and thought he did not know either, but indicated that there was 'something wrong with his legs' which caused him to 'fall over'. They mentioned how he had got 'knocked over' in the playground, but he had quickly been helped up. This, they said, was 'not a problem' for anyone, including Phillip, since whoever was with him just picked him up, then got on with whatever they were doing. They also joked, however, about how one pupil in the class 'could pick him up by himself'. Even though 'he can't run and can't do PE', he often joined in for some activities. His peers said everyone liked him and he got on well with everyone, 'including some of the girls'. They also described him as 'dead brainy'. As well as individualising him as a competent pupil and a personality, Phillip's peers grouped him with other disabled people:

You don't try to make them feel that you don't want to talk to them.

You just try and talk to everybody.

They also mentioned that Phillip was 'walked home from school' in order to help him up, 'like if he falls or that' rather than, say, walking home with him. The pupils' version suggested some responsibility on their part for his welfare and safety. Here, their governmentality had a pastoral quality. Phillip's parents commented on the deteriorating nature of his condition (although it was impossible to predict its ultimate impact) and said they wanted him to enjoy 'normality' for as long as possible. They were surprised that he continued to 'go on about football'. They had tried not to mention it now that he could not play, but Phillip had maintained his interest. His peers, they said, had been helpful in accepting his condition in a matter-of-fact way:

His friends are very good. They just accept him as he is and just walk a bit more slowly, yank him up and make a laugh of it. . . you do see other children responding very well to someone who needs a bit more help. They seem to sense it's not something to laugh about, just this is somebody here and he does need a bit of a hand or whatever.

This might appear contradictory: Phillip's parents saw his peers as having a laugh about his falls, but not laughing at him. Yet it suggests a kind of collusion between his parents and peers to make him feel relaxed about his transgressions (by dismissing them with a joke) whilst recognising the extent of his disability as a kind of tragedy and not to be laughed at.

Phillip's resistance to his identification as disabled appeared somewhat ambivalent: in some ways he would have preferred to look more disabled, as it would have reduced the expectations of him, but he also wanted to remain 'one of the boys'. There seemed to be a tacit agreement between Phillip and his peers within the classroom or the playground to ignore his disability and this was only challenged whenever he fell over. These episodes tended to be very short and seemed to be read by the mainstream pupils as an inconvenience rather than as anything more significant. His peers seemed to have a very vague understanding of what was 'wrong' and little conception of the progressive nature of his condition. This is interesting, since they had been with him through primary and would have seen him experience more significant difficulties as he matured. Their notion of his 'problem' seemed both fixed and unfixed: he now had something wrong with his legs, but mostly it did not interfere with his capacity to function.

## Overview

Perhaps the most striking feature of these accounts is the distinctiveness of the pupils' resistance to identification as disabled. Susan and Barry, who both had similar 'conditions', sought to be identified in very different ways. For Phillip, a disabled identity came as a rational explanation for his problems in the past and offered an element of paradoxical relief, yet was still something to resist for as long as possible.

Susan, far from resisting an identification as disabled, seemed to reinforce this view of herself among others, by behaving like a celebrity. Yet, it could be argued that she was resisting an identification of herself as someone to be pitied or looked down on. Sinason (1992), suggests that 'handicapped' people smile more often than others, as an act of resistance to the inability of able bodied people to cope. It is interesting, however, that as a psychologist she uses a term (handicapped) which would not be considered appropriate within an educational discourse. Susan's peers seemed responsive to her stardom and reinforced her dependence on them. For example they praised her for being 'not scared' to ask for anything she wanted, unlike other disabled people who 'would just sit there'. Thus, they viewed her as a kind of passive-aggressive (or aggressively passive) person, who needed their help and was unafraid to demand it. The implication was that if Susan had been more passive, she would not have received the help, even if she needed it, because they would have been reluctant to demonstrate their pity.

Barry, in contrast with Susan, sought to avoid being identified as disabled at all, either as an object of pity or a star. He hated a fuss, yet had been required to endure this in the past, in order to receive specialist equipment from charity. The biggest problem for him in the school day was going to the toilet, because it involved elaborate lifting and much embarrassment. Rather than face this, he chose to hold on until he got home. Whilst this was evidently an effective form of resistance, since he was able to avoid the fuss, it might be more difficult to maintain at secondary school and beyond

and is hardly conducive to good health. Barry's peers appeared to have little interest in him as a person, disabled or not and the example of resistance cited above would possibly be of no concern of theirs.

Phillip, who was still in the process of being identified as disabled, appeared ambivalent about this. His newly diagnosed condition offered rational explanations for the difficulties he had experienced through childhood, when he had been accused of being lazy and not trying to walk properly. However, he was reluctant to succumb to a disability which was becoming increasingly dominant in his life (for instance, walking was becoming more difficult and he knew he would need a wheelchair soon). He tried to evade the process of becoming disabled (or at least others' awareness of this, for example by preparing for the school quiz 'away' fixture), but challenged this on the occasions when he fell over and needed help. When this happened, Phillip's peers seemed to oscillate between regarding him as permanently disabled and not. When he was down, they remembered that he had 'something wrong with his legs', but even these episodes were reduced to a kind of inconvenience.

The mainstream pupils' governmentality both generalised and individualised their conduct towards Susan, Barry and Phillip. For Susan's peers, this seemed to produce uncertainty regarding how much she should be helped and, by implication, pitied. Phillip's peers, in contrast, seemed to have assumed a pastoral duty, with responsibility for his safety. They also colluded with him to repair his transgressions such as falling. Laughter, in this context had a cleansing effect, as it had for Raschida and Laura, but laughing at Phillip was something they did carefully. The governmentality of Barry's peers seemed to disqualify any interest they might have had in him, regardless of how they identified him.

Halliday (1989) has noted how people respond differently to their physical disabilities, which, in turn can be interpreted variously:

Stigma continually casts the stigmatised into the role of 'other'. This notion of 'otherness' sets up a further divide from the norm. It may lead to feelings of powerlessness or to a sense of low worth, leading to apparent timidity or withdrawal. Conversely it may lead to a need to be more assertive which may be misinterpreted or exaggerated into aggression (p77).

Some similarities might have been anticipated within the accounts of Susan and Barry, since they both had similar disabilities. The absence of these and the apparently very different identification sought by each pupil leads to the obvious speculation on whether there was any 'gender effect'. Writers such as Morris (1991), Lloyd (1992) and Barton (1993a) are in no doubt that disabled women are attributed with a greater passivity than is ascribed to disabled men whilst Brittan and Maynard (1984) argue that the experience of disability is structured by the ideology of masculinity:

Whereas disabled men are obliged to fight the social stigma of disability, they can aspire to fill socially powerful male roles. Disabled women do not have this option. Disabled women are perceived as inadequate for economically productive roles (traditionally considered appropriate for males) and for the nurturant, reproductive roles considered appropriate for females (Fine and Asch, 1985, p6).

Yet as Oliver (1985) points out, the assumed passivity of disabled women may be connected to the general assumption that women, even when functioning 'normally' are passive. Susan most obviously courted identification of herself as passive and dependent, but it is difficult to say whether or not this related to her gender or to something else. Barry might be seen as the most passive of the three pupils, but this



seemed to stem from his desire to avoid attention rather than to any gender issue. It had also been accomplished with a considerable amount of agency on his part. None of the pupils were identified with reference to any intimate relations with other pupils, although Phillip was described as being on good terms with some of the girls in his class. Anna seemed to regard Barry as asexual, which had enabled her to develop a 'special' relationship with him. The informal rules governing the gender and sexuality of pupils seemed to exclude Susan, Barry and Phillip, making them unthreatening and uninteresting as prospects for intimacy. It is difficult to say more on issues of gender and sexuality at this stage, but they will be considered in more detail in the final chapter.

6 (e)

**PETER: IS HE REALLY SPECIAL?**

Peter (12) seemed to inhabit the margins of disability in a way which made him peculiarly indefinable to his mainstream peers. He had been recorded as having emotional or behavioural difficulties (EBD), an unusual practice in relation to this 'category' of pupils. His behaviour was described as swinging from being unremarkable to highly bizarre and back and at times he would 'go overboard'. Without evidence of a disabled 'condition', his mainstream peers tended to operate within an educational, rather than a medical, discourse, establishing their own boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Their governmentality was heavily pedagogic and individualising. It was difficult for the mainstream pupils to operate, however, because it continually breached boundaries of more general pupil discipline regimes. At one stage of his primary career, Peter had tried to exchange an identification of himself as someone with as a behaviour problem for one more clearly marking him as disabled. He did this by calling himself a 'spastic'.

'I'm someone who's always getting into trouble' is how Peter described himself. When asked why that happened he smiled and shrugged his shoulders. Pupils from the P7 class, where he spent part of his week (spending the remaining time in the school's special unit), described him thus:

K Sometimes he just gets carried away with himself.

B He does show off a bit, then he starts hitting people. That's all he really does, but when he gets used to you, he'll work with you and do everything with you.

P Sometimes he goes wild.

C But he stops it if the teacher gives him into trouble.

Peter's mainstream peers seemed uncertain whether or not he was able to control himself, hence their frequent qualification of him (eg 'He does show off a bit . . . but when he gets used to you, he'll work with you'). Nevertheless, they saw him as having improved greatly since he had been with them, largely through their influence:

B He used to really talk.

K He's getting a lot better.

JA What was he like before then?

B He would talk every time he saw you.

J Every time he saw anyone he knew, he'd just . . .

P When he tried to make a joke and it wasn't funny, you had to laugh or he'd keep on telling you the same thing over and over again.

Peter's classmates distinguished him from them by a careful use of pronouns (eg he and we) and took responsibility for improving his behaviour and his classwork:

If he writes something down wrong, we'll tell him to do the right thing, or we'll tell him how to spell something. Unless we don't know how to spell it.

I think he was just picked for us. We got Karen and Peter and the other half [of P7] got Susan.

We don't really see him in art any more. We used to get him in gym but don't any more.

The pupils' governmentality appeared to be framed within an educational discourse in which they saw themselves as quasi-pedagogues. Comments, such as he was 'picked for us' and 'we used to get him' set him out as both different from them and an object

for them to practise their judgements about good behaviour and classwork upon. They also suggested a degree of collusion with the teachers in order to help him.

Part of the children's ambivalence about Peter seemed to relate to their difficulty in understanding what was actually 'wrong' with him. Without the high visibility of a 'medical' condition or some other kind of clue to a disability, it was difficult for Peter's peers to make sense of his simultaneously odd and very normal behaviour. To them he looked just like any ordinary pupil:

C He's just a normal person, but has a disadvantage.

K He's just a normal person, but in a different classroom, with one or two difficulties.

They said he had begun his school career in their class (although one of the children only discovered this during the interview), had been removed to the SEN base in primary three and had been rejoining them on a part time basis for the last two years. Asked about why he was taken out of their class in primary 2, one boy answered:

Well it might have been that everyone else could draw better than him. All he did was scribbles, but everyone else made an effort, but I don't know if that was the problem.

The pupils were in agreement that his behaviour was his main problem, 'Sometimes he goes wild', but they did not see him as completely uncontrollable, 'he stops it if the teacher gives him into trouble'. There were no obvious physical signs of a problem and the pupils said they were unable to pinpoint characteristics of Peter as evidence of his difficulties. They seemed to see Peter as a boy who was capable of behaving, but who either chose not to or was unable to control himself from time to time. Yet, they

were unable to distinguish Peter's inability to do certain things from his apparent unwillingness:

In P6 our project was tripods and we had to make a tripod and whenever I said 'could you help me make it?' he would change the subject, so I had to make it all by myself. He's not lazy but when it's, like, using your hands or making stuff, he doesn't like doing it.

I expect that's his worst subject, making things.

This account wavers in a number of directions. The mainstream pupil, Colin, began within an educational discourse, in which he asked Peter to help him make the tripod. Finding Peter evasive, Colin became somewhat resentful about having to 'make it all by myself', but then checked himself by saying 'he's not lazy'. He ended his diffidence on whether Peter avoided things he didn't like because of laziness or inability, by giving him the benefit of the doubt, saying 'I expect that's his worst subject, making things'. This let Peter off, to an extent, by implying, if not a disability, at least an inability.

The pupils' speculations on how he would respond to the task of wiring a light bulb that afternoon showed the same high degree of oscillation:

J Watch out!

[All laugh]

JA What do you think will happen?

C Bang!

J He'll probably try his best and try to do it.

B He'll probably start messing around, but if you tell him to stop messing around he'll stop.

C Or he might not do anything at all.

P Yeah he might just sit and watch.

K He'll probably ask a few questions about how to do it and if you don't know, you'll say "I don't know" and he'll say, "but how?" so you can't really explain it properly, that that's what we're trying to find out.

The pupils seemed to believe that he would participate and that he would 'probably try his best and try to do it', but they also had strong doubts that he would do anything at all. An additional obfuscating factor for the pupils was Peter's apparent inability to use the knowledge and talents they thought he clearly had, as this discussion about sport suggests:

J He's not very good at sport.

B He's good at running, he's a fast runner.

J He's a fast runner, but like everything else, he messes around, like we were playing rugby and he just throws the ball up instead of (sic) passes.

K And he knows because everybody's told him, but about two billion times, he always passes forward and doesn't pass to the back.

B Yeah, so that's another problem he's got.

P When he's playing football, he tries to kick it straight, but it always goes squint or he always like misses it or that.

The pupils suggested that, despite his sporting ability, for instance in running, his participation in games became just 'like everything else' and here they seemed a little more diffident about the presence of a difficulty, saying 'he messes around' and 'he knows because everyone's told him' what to do. Yet Barry added a mellowing tone by saying that this inability to follow instructions is 'another problem he's got'.

The pupils tried to involve him in class activities but said he sometimes he 'spoil things' by going over the top:

C Yesterday we put in a couple of his ideas.

B But if you tell him to give too much, he'll just really go overboard and say "You've got to chop people's heads off".

The pupils' strategies for dealing with Peter's overboard behaviour involved mainly ignoring him or laughing at him (to encourage him to stop 'telling you the same thing over and over again'). They said both were usually effective in making him stop. Yet, their accounts of these were tinged with an uncertainty over whether he really merited special treatment. This uncertainty seemed to be at its greatest when he behaved more like them (at their most disobedient). When he seemed to confirm his 'oddness', their governmentality acquired considerable leniency.

The pupils indicated that some children in the school had called him names, in criticising this, they reinforced his 'special' identity arguing, for example that it was 'unfair to keep on calling him names, just because he's got special needs'. Speaking of the transfer to secondary school, the mainstream pupils harboured the usual doubts about how they would fare themselves, but appeared more concerned about Peter's fate:

When we're up in the Academy next year, I think the higher ones won't really know him and he'll get bullied.

Implied here is an intimacy with Peter and an understanding that despite his apparently normal appearances, he had significant problems. The pupils seemed to be protective towards him, fearing that strangers would respond to his odd behaviour superficially (that is, fail to see it as a disability) and would be aggressive towards

him. As far as his educational success in secondary was concerned, they seemed to envisage only a partial participation ('going round the classes') which would be difficult for Peter and the other pupils with special needs:

That's quite hard because they would have to go round the classes instead of staying in the special unit, but I would expect Peter would be allowed to come around the classes.

In their speculations, they generalised about the three pupils in their year with special needs, further distancing Peter from them in the process:

He [Peter] might miss out if he can't do it, the hard [secondary subjects]. I think Karen would as well, but Susan would maybe have to stay in the special unit.

Much was made by the teachers about 'the fact that he's good at games' which they thought would 'stand him in good stead [in secondary], because others will respect him for that'. The pupils in his class, as was already made clear, thought rather differently about his (in)ability in sport:

Peter's mother and his teachers described a phase he went through, where he had pretended to have physical difficulties:

There was a while when he had this thing about being a spastic, you know. "I can't do that, pick my cup up because I'm a spastic." You know you ask someone to pass over something - "I can't do that I'm spastic." "I can't feed the rabbit, I'm spastic" I think because he was being teased at school.



This could be interpreted as an act of resistance, in that if Peter had picked up the notion that children were more favourably regarded if they had a discernible handicap he may have tried to emulate them. This point is discussed in the final chapter.

### **Overview**

The absence of any visible or audible signs of disability seemed to make it difficult for Peter's mainstream peers to identify him (and his relationship to them). Their understanding of his problem, as connected to his behaviour, was constantly challenged by his apparently 'normal' functioning in his class, but was also confirmed by his aberrations. The difficulty for the mainstream pupils was Peter's uncomfortable closeness to them, which might imply that they were as deviant as he was but his overboard behaviour helped to create a space between him and them, or between disabled and normal.

The mainstream pupils' governmentality tended to operate within an educational discourse, rather as the peers of Brian (with moderate learning difficulties) did. They created boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour which they patrolled for Peter. It differed from the regime operating for Brian, however, by being more individualising. Thus, the pupils judged their actions in relation to his behaviour rather than to that of a generalised 'them'. When he crossed these boundaries in a significant way (for instance by talking about chopping people's heads off) they responded by humouring or ignoring him. This usually worked in that Peter began behaving 'properly' again. At other times, his behaviour tended to be closer to the margins of acceptability and the pupils' response was more ambivalent. At these times, generalising Peter alongside the other pupils from the special unit, seemed to provide a useful distancing effect. It also insulated him and their conduct towards him from the general behaviour/discipline regimes. This suggests that the pupils' governmentality had a considerable fluidity.

Schostak (1984b) notes that:

Behaviour modification and various forms of psycho-therapy together with Pastoral and Welfare institutions have refined our skills of manipulation, enabling us to dabble "therapeutically" within the heads of the "maladjusted". However, many studies . . . have begun to show us the ways in which pupils attempt to resist the reach of their teachers (p11).

Peter's own account was that he frequently got into trouble and he made no mention of the formal label of emotional and behavioural difficulties which he had been given. Indeed, he challenged the identification of himself as someone with 'EBD', by calling himself a 'spastic', possibly responding to the diffidence his marginality caused others. He might have been affirming, rather than resisting, a disabled identification by resisting a more normal (or marginal) version. He attended the same school and special unit as Susan, a child in a wheelchair and he may have been seeking some of the responses within a charity discourse which she had cultivated.

It is worth noting that others have observed the way in which behavioural difficulties have been reconstructed with a more definitive label. For example Armstrong and Galloway (1994) have reported a tendency to redefine disruptive pupils as 'disturbed'. The latter implies that such pupils are beyond the resources and expertise of the mainstream teacher and require specialist support. There is an interesting contrast here between the teachers, who by defining children as disturbed, aimed to move them out of mainstream, and Peter, who by redefining himself as disabled (or 'spastic'), was trying to get in.

**FIONA: BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

Fiona (15) lived in the space between two worlds, the deaf and the hearing. She was deaf, but only partially so and attended her local secondary school, rather than the school for the deaf in the city. At school, she was considered 'hearing impaired' by her teachers, though not by her peers or herself, as she preferred the term 'deaf'. At home, she was 'deaf', like her brother, mother and grandmother. Her sister and father both had normal hearing. The distinction between hearing impaired and deaf is more than mere semantics and both are emotive constructs. She had exposure, then, to both deaf and hearing worlds, but seemed to be fully part of neither. This is a case study of splitting. Like Raschida and Laura, Fiona set out to resist being identified as disabled, yet she also claimed her deaf identity in an essentialist way. Her mainstream peers' governmentality was similar to that of Raschida and Laura's peers, in that it was largely determined by Fiona and was both proactive and individualising.

Despite my experiences with the pupils in the school for the deaf (or perhaps because of them) I had expected to be able to distinguish Fiona from her hearing classmates. My first encounter with her was in a mainstream secondary classroom and I had half expected her to be at the front, with eyes fixed on the teacher, even though the learning support teacher told me she didn't need to be there in this particular class. I was trying to remain in the background, but this was shattered by the teacher, who, when I told him I was shadowing Fiona, bellowed, 'so it's your fault, Fiona'. No-one responded visibly, so I still had no idea who she was. It was only by reading all the names on the jotters that I was able to identify her, sitting in the middle of the class, and giving no clues that she might be deaf. Unlike the children in the school for the deaf, she did not wear a phonic ear (although I was told she was supposed to) and she did not use sign language.

Her voice gave the first indication of her deafness. She spoke like a deaf person, sounding very 'nasal' and uttering incomplete words. She described herself in both 'normal' and deaf terms, yet seemed unsure about how much of the 'normal' was appropriate:

I'm tall, with brown hair and I'm deaf. My mum and brother's deaf and so's my gran and I have a deaf cousin. Would you also say, like, that I'm mad about horses and I'm quite funny and always happy?

Fiona said her deaf cousin went to the same school and she talked to her regularly, but did not sign, because 'we don't need to'. She did not use sign language at home, although she had been taught it (one version by her mother and another by her peripatetic teacher for the hearing impaired). Sometimes, however, her classmates asked her to show her how to say something in sign language and so for Fiona, it was not an essential communication tool (as in the school for the deaf) but had a slightly exotic quality, to be enjoyed socially.

As far as the phonic ear (a battery operated device which amplifies sound) was concerned, Fiona said it was broken, which was reminiscent of Raschida's 'loss' of her long cane. She was not keen, she said, to wear the phonic ear once it had been repaired as it did not help very much and was very bulky. In primary school, her peers had called her 'phonic', another reason she had for not wearing it in secondary. She said she usually managed to hear most things, so did not really need it. Her mainstream teachers, however, had been reminded of the extent of Fiona's hearing impairment by her specialist teacher:

Please ensure she understands instructions by asking her to repeat these. Remember if you ask "do you understand?" Fiona will say

yes whether she does or not. Speaking slowly will increase understanding as Fiona can lip-read to a certain degree.

Her peers described what the teachers did in the classroom:

The teachers speak louder and make sure they're facing her when they're speaking to the class and make sure her phonic ear's on . . .

They make sure she's sitting at the front of the class.

Fiona's peers described her as 'deaf, but she can hear things ok' and drew attention to her obsession with horses. They said that because she was in a secondary school (rather than the school for the deaf) she was 'treated normally' and this, they said, was important because 'there's nothing wrong with her, apart from her deafness'. They saw her as more like them than like other deaf people:

Well she knows a couple of people who are deaf, but she's just like us really, just that she's deaf.

The mainstream pupils' governmentality was framed within a very specific educational discourse, in which they corrected her linguistic errors. At the same time, however, they were concerned about how she might interpret such help:

Sometimes if she can't pronounce words, we just tell her what it is, like the other day she couldn't say "brochure" and I just said it was "brochure" and then she kept saying it right . . . We try not to make her feel bad if she's not hearing right.

The mainstream pupils' conduct seemed to be mediated by the kind of proactive and individualising guesswork practised by Raschida and Laura's peers. Thus, they

sought to help her out, but tried to anticipate her likely response to this and adjusted what they said accordingly.

Fiona said her friends understood what it was like to be deaf and they helped her by 'not mumbling'. However, she said she often pretended she understood them, by nodding, preferring not to 'keep saying pardon'. She sometimes felt she had lost the thread of a conversation and to keep interrupting would be 'annoying for everybody else'. So she frequently just nodded, which was fine until she was asked a question, to which she usually replied 'I'm not sure'. This kind of neutral answer allowed the conversation to carry on offering more clues as to its content. Fiona seemed to be resisting a disabled (or deaf) identity which, she said, worked most of the time. When it didn't, she was left indecisive about whether to own up and ask for something to be repeated or to continue feigning understanding.

At home, Fiona was in the middle of a hierarchy of deafness. Her mother, who was profoundly deaf, could not answer the telephone. This job was normally given to her father or sister, the hearing members of the family, or to Fiona's brother, who had some kind of phonic connection to use with the telephone. Her mother said that Fiona 'used to' answer the telephone and could hear providing the person on the line spoke loudly and clearly and the television volume was turned down. On one occasion, however, she was unable to make any sense of the person speaking and 'she's never answered it since then - just if it's for her'. Fiona's mother had a 'matter-of-fact' delivery of the story of her daughter's deafness, which was similar to that of Raschida's father:

[The peripatetic teacher] came down to see how Stuart was getting on at the primary school. Suzanne, she was just two and Fiona was just ten months and she said to me "I think Suzanne's deaf as well," but I says "Oh no, no Suzanne" and she says, "Oh well just

make an appointment at the hospital for the speech therapist." That was ok, but she was. But when Fiona came too I says, "make one for Fiona," so that was when I discovered that there was something wrong with Fiona. She used to sit on my knee and we'd talk to each other and she used to turn my face round to her and that was when we discovered the hearing. So she got a hearing aid when she was four.

Fiona's mother marvelled at the opportunities available for young deaf people. When she was young all deaf children went to the school for the deaf, regardless of the extent of their residual hearing, which meant living away from home during the week. Fiona, she said, could enjoy being at home and going to school with people of her own age. She found that even sign language was different these days. Her own mother (also deaf) had taught her to sign (with fingers, not with hands as it is now). British Sign Language, used on the television programme *See Hear* was a mystery to Fiona's mother and grandmother but not to Fiona. It is interesting that no-one among Fiona's family seemed to feel they really belonged to the so-called Deaf world: Fiona appeared to prefer the company and interests of her hearing friends, while her mother and grandmother, more significantly deaf, seemed to have been left out of the apparent modernisation of Deaf culture.

The bridge between the hearing and the deaf world for Fiona was the teacher of the hearing impaired who came to see her in school each day. This teacher had accompanied Fiona throughout most of her primary career and followed her when she moved to secondary. During this time she said she had watched Fiona's growth with satisfaction:

I have worked with her for more than six years and have never seen her as happy, relaxed and confident as she is at present.

The purpose of the teacher's visits was to try to help Fiona overcome some of the language problems which came (inevitably) from being born deaf. Part of this involved explaining the common words and phrases which had confused her when she had interpreted them literally. For example, 'head in the clouds' and 'a sweet tooth' had thrown her recently and were the kind of phrases which the children in the school for the deaf found equally bewildering. Fiona's teacher spent one hour each day going through these, introducing new words, catching up on homework or simply talking to her. Their conversations often focused on Fiona's experience of deafness and her feelings generally about herself. Fiona said she valued these conversations and thought the teacher was 'really nice'.

Fiona said a great deal about her passion for horses and this, she said, had come about through the peripatetic teacher, whose friend introduced her to riding. After that, she had been 'hooked' and received lessons every week. Interestingly, she had benefited from being designated disabled in that the lessons were given free and the riding equipment (eg a riding hat, and boots) had been paid for by the Deaf Children's Society. Yet it had also erased some of her disabled identity by establishing her as 'horse mad'. Riding had, according to Fiona and her teacher, transformed her, giving her much more self confidence and 'a real buzz' and Fiona said she hoped to get a job working with horses.

Fiona indicated that she was very happy at school, and got on well with her friends. This, however, had not always been the case. In primary, she had put up with being called 'phonic ear', but had heard her brother tell stories of being bullied at secondary school. This had 'terrified' her and she was reluctant to move to secondary. She eventually told her parents and the peripatetic teacher, who 'sorted it out', at least that's how Fiona's mother saw it:



Before she went to the academy, she was a bit depressed and upset, just because of Stuart . . . he told me that they'd been tormenting him and he didn't like it, so I thought "deal with this before Fiona gets there." It's all sorted out now and she's been fine and great but if it hadnae been for that she'd have gotten the same. But she's fine now.

Fiona said she had met different people from other schools at secondary and she got along with them better than she had with her primary peers. She also said, however, that 'people don't always understand what it's like to be deaf '.

### **Overview**

Fiona seemed to move between the margins of both the deaf and hearing worlds, never quite a part of, yet not rejected by, either. She had learned to communicate using sign language, but it was of no use to her other than as a source of entertainment among her mainstream friends. She did not even use sign language with the few deaf people she knew (all members of her family). Yet, Deaf culture is much more than its language and Morris (1991) and Taylor and Bishop (1991) have pointed out that deaf people have their own values, history and, above all, a sense of community. Fiona appeared not to see herself as part of that community, although her deafness was central to her account of herself. Interestingly, her mother, who was more profoundly deaf, had received a more traditional deaf school education and had learned to sign, but also saw herself as outside Deaf culture.

Although not part of the so-called Deaf culture, Fiona saw her deafness as important to her identification, hence the rejection of the term 'hearing impairment' in favour of 'deaf'. Furthermore, her daily sessions with the peripatetic teacher addressed explicitly her deafness and the difficulties this presented. The opportunity to go horse-riding (and the financial support for it) had come about for her because of her

deafness. She became passionate about it, which for the mainstream pupils erased some of her disabled identity, suggested by their comparison of her with another pupil 'who's also mad about horses'. It is interesting that Fiona's passion for horses worked in all sorts of inclusive ways, bringing her closer to her mainstream peers, while Graham's interest in Aberdeen FC insulated him further from his peers.

Beyond this, Fiona worked hard at giving a normal appearance, much in the way that Raschida and Laura did. In each case, these 'performances' seem to be resistance to identification as disabled (in Fiona's case, as deaf). This had been easier for her, since she had ditched the phonic ear (although teachers and pupils saw this as only a temporary arrangement) and was usually successful. Raschida and Laura's transgressions were usually fairly obvious, for example pouring water on chips or bumping into chairs and required some sort of repair. In Fiona's case, transgressions came from losing track of a conversation. On these occasions, Fiona became undecided as to whether to interrupt the flow of talk or not, usually preferring not to. As time went on, it became more difficult to admit that she was not following the discussion. If no-one asked her to contribute, she could get away with simply not having understood what was said, but if they did, then she faced exposure. This potential embarrassment could be erased by giving a non-answer, but if she did this regularly, she would leave her mainstream peers with an impression of her as a poor communicator. It could be said that Fiona's transgressions, because they were less obvious than those of the visually impaired girls, had a less significant impact on their relationships. It is worth noting, however, Ladd's (1991) image of the social encounters of a deaf person in mainstream:

Meanwhile he misses the crux of just about everything; jokes, quick remarks, frantically flipping his head from one face to another like a Wimbledon umpire, trying to catch the last bit of whoever was talking and trying to piece together what so and so

did, what so and so meant . . . He begins to build up an image of himself as a stumbling, blundering retard, breaking off his sentences half way through because he is sure no one wants to hear what he wants to say, lumbering around hopelessly on the fringe of things. After a while, the initial goodwill extended to him by his school mates dries up. The truce is over and battle begins; he becomes one of the butts of all the digs and jokes (p91-92).

Fiona did not appear to be battling with her peers, nor was she the butt of their jokes. Nevertheless, access to the basic quickfire interchange (Kyle, 1993), so important to adolescents, was at times denied to her.

The mainstream pupils identified Fiona, much in the way that Raschida and Laura's peers did, as someone who was just like them, apart from their inability to see or hear 'properly' Yet, Fiona's peers recognised the difficulties she faced with language and communication, so tried to help her with any words she could not pronounce. They were indecisive about how to help her, which involved acknowledging her deafness, without making her 'feel bad if she's not hearing right'. Fiona's peers seem to have established a framework of governance, within an educational discourse, which sanctioned their correction of her pronunciation, just as they might correct a foreigner. Yet Fiona had created a comfort zone around these actions, similar to that created by Raschida and Laura. This encouraged a proactive and individualised form of helping from the pupils. By telling Fiona how to pronounce a word, they were not reinforcing her deafness, but their 'hearingness' because they were giving factual information. This suited Fiona, for whom the mainstream performance required learning all the rules, including those of language. Their relationship, then, did not appear relaxed, with the kind of quickfire interchange which Kyle describes; nor was it particularly tense, despite the difficulties Fiona sometimes experienced. Rather, it seemed to be

functional, in which the mainstream pupils colluded to help her perform as effectively as possible within the mainstream environment.

## **DISTURBING THE MARGINS OF DISABILITY**

In Chapter 6, the informal discourses disclosed how the identities and experiences of pupils with SEN were constructed. This final chapter begins by looking at the nature of the pupils' accounts and how they connect with the formal SEN discourses, then considers three important elements. The first of these is what counts as **resistance** within the pupils' stories. An attempt will be made to 'typologise' the different kinds of actions which could be characterised as acts of resistance and to begin to explore why they have been analysed in this way. A second important aspect of the discourses relates to the mainstream pupils' conceptions of justice and equality, which are suggestive of a mini-regime of **governmentality**. Finally, themes of **gender and sexuality** were prominent within the informal discourses and merit further discussion. The chapter ends by considering the value of a Foucauldian perspective on special educational needs and the implications for the placement of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools.

### **The pupils' discourses: in the wake of uncertainty**

Accounts from pupils with SEN and their peers had the following characteristics:

- Pupils with SEN did not have fixed identities (as disabled or normal), rather they were in a continual process of **identification**. The pupils were both subjects and agents in that process.
- The experiences of pupils with SEN were not static, placing them either in mainstream or out, but were much more **precarious**, ebbing and flowing from one moment to the next.
- Mainstream pupils' identification of pupils with SEN was an **ambivalent** process, full of oscillations, contradictions and uncertainty.

- Pupils with SEN were not passive, accepting the identities and experiences constructed for them, but engaged in **resistance**. Their resistance was multifarious and was often proactive, rather than reactive.
- Mainstream pupils operated a mini regime of **governmentality**, allowing them to draw boundaries around acceptable and unacceptable behaviour towards SEN pupils. This was both connected to, and insulated from, more conventional and formal school regimes (eg discipline). Their accounts oscillated between these regimes, destabilising further any fixed notions of 'proper' conduct.

These accounts were not isolated from the more formal discourses, explored in Chapter 4. Nor, however, were they merely derivative of the medical, charity and rights discourses which constructed the identities and experiences of children with SEN at an official level. The informal discourses were both part of the reproduction of existing power/knowledge relationships and objects of new knowledge production. Put another way, the pupils' discourses cannot be isolated from wider social contexts, eg school, home and government. Nevertheless, they constitute a 'privileged point of observation, diversified, concentrated, put in order and carried through to the highest point of their efficacy' (Foucault, 1982, p222).

The features of the pupils' accounts clearly disturb the conventional binary oppositions which have characterised so much of enlightened modernity (eg normal/disabled; ordinary/special; integrated/segregated; participation/exclusion). In special educational needs, this binarism has had elements of a religious revival (Mittler, 1985) in which integration is seen as a mark of progress and a necessary goal for all pupils, helping them to be 'as normal as possible'. The Warnock mantra even employs metaphors of track and obstacle to convey a sense of passage, with rights of way granted to individuals (Corbett, 1993). Segregation, exclusion and labelling as something other than normal are all equated with failure. The problem with binarism is that it constructs disabled people as the 'undesirable half of a binary pair' (Marks,

1994, p73). My reading of the accounts suggest that it is not helpful to think about pupils with SEN as having one kind of identity or another or of one kind of experience or another, since the process of construction seems to be happening in the **space between** these binary divisions. The pupils' discourses destabilise the notion of identity as fixed (Maclure and Stronach, 1995), by interrupting the 'voyeuristic pleasure' of the identifier:

That disturbance of your voyeuristic look enacts the complexity and contradictions of your desire to see, to fix cultural difference in a containable, *visible* object. The desire for the Other is doubled by the desire in language, which *splits the difference* between Self and Other so that both positions are partial; neither is sufficient unto itself . . . the very question of identification only emerges *in-between* disavowal and designation. It is performed in the agonistic struggle between the epistemological, visual demand for a knowledge of the Other, and its representation in the act of articulation and enunciation (Bhabha, 1994, p50; original emphasis).

In other words, what is happening in the 'space between' is both an attempt to identify (or label) **and** a deliberate failure to return the identificatory or objectifying gaze. This is the site of splitting:

The representative figure of such a perversion, I want to suggest, is the image of post-Enlightenment man tethered to, *not* confronted by his dark reflection, the shadow of colonized man, that splits his presence, distorts his outline, breaches his boundaries, repeats his action at a distance, disturbs and divides the very time of his being (Bhabha, 1994, p44; original emphasis).

A relationship of this kind between the identifier (in this case the mainstream pupils) and the identified (the pupils with SEN) suggests a level of reciprocity, which Foucault did not imply in his own analyses. It also suggests that the pupils with SEN, are not simply passive recipients of a disabled label, but are agents in their own subjectivity. They challenge the process of identification, yet are still tied to that process and so complete or permanent transgression is elusive. This reading of the accounts, which infers a considerable degree of agency, is perhaps a surprising outcome to a Foucauldian study. Yet, Foucault himself seemed to be moving away from the constructed subject to a more active version, or from docile bodies to active individuals (McNay, 1992). Naturally, these were viewed as not entirely autonomous subjects:

I am interested . . . in the way in which the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of self, these practices are nevertheless not something which the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his social group (Foucault, 1988, p11).

The 'practices of the self' of the pupils with SEN have proved equally interesting. These practices imply active participation of the pupils in constructing their identities and experiences, responding to (or sometimes pre-empting) cultural patterns proposed, suggested and imposed by others. Such patterns relate to the desire to fix cultural difference in a containable object (Bhaba, 1994) by labelling people 'disabled'. The pupils' practices of the self emerge through their refusal to return this gaze and I have interpreted practices such as the transgression of self and humour as resistance.



## **Resistance**

The pupils' resistance was not overtly aggressive or antagonistic. Rather, as was suggested in Chapter 6, it was 'agonistic', a much more continuous and varied form of resistance:

The word suggests a contest involving strategy, reaction and even taunting, as in a wrestling match. Agonism may be as serious as political domination or as light as child's play. It permeates all the different types of relationships (economic, familial, communicative and sexual) within which power relations are immanent (Simons, 1994, p85).

A question which needs to be addressed here is why the acts which were reported by the children with SEN, their peers or others should be interpreted as resistance and not as something else. It is important, first of all, to consider more fully the notion of resistance. The variety of 'acts' from the pupils' discourses which are at issue will then be examined within a typology.

### **What counts as resistance?**

For Foucault, the question of what counts as resistance is both straightforward and complex. Foucault contends that power is everywhere and is always resisted, so resistance is everywhere too:

These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or

violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations (1977b, p96).

This presents a problem for the researcher, since it provides a catch-all category, from which nothing escapes. Furthermore, as Hargreaves (1982) suggests, the concept of resistance acts as a kind of trawling device, which 'like a finely meshed fishing net, sweeps the oceans of pupil activity for "appropriate" examples' (p113). Thus, the catch becomes so overwhelming that it is difficult to distinguish between different types of resistance. Foucault also saw individuals as capable of achieving the ultimate transgression of limits through resistance, in which there was a flash of lightening, rather than daylight, and with it a sudden revelation of the truth (Simons, 1995). The only empirical examples he offered in this respect, however, were the so-called 'limit experiences' in relation to death, drugs and homosexuality, which do not help to interpret the pupils' actions as resistance. Furthermore, as Simons (ibid) points out, transgressions of these kinds, which involve violating the law and trespassing taboos are no guarantee of liberty and are more likely to reinforce power, for example through health education or anti-drug campaigns or more rigorous policing.

It is important to avoid analysing power and resistance in ways which are merely reductionist, in which everything is seen as bound up with the macro-economics of power within world systems (Giddens, 1987). At the same time, the kinds of power/knowledge relations and resistance which were evident within the classrooms cannot be divorced from wider social contexts. Willis (1977) attempts to illustrate how power and knowledge production occurred within institutions and at the same time recognised these 'penetrations' as only 'partial', since they are mystified by 'blocks, diversions and other cultural effects' (p119). He offers a series of suggestions which are, if not recipes for social change, at least hold the promise of survival for

teachers and of Monday mornings which are not merely socially reproductive. He has been criticised, however, for failing to connect his notion of ideology formation at a cultural level to a broader social framework (Gordon, 1984) and of considerable over-interpretation.

It is possible to suspend anxieties over what does and does not count as resistance, by avoiding dichotomising resistance and consent and seeing them instead as 'occurring together in the struggle over pulling pleasure and meaning from life' (Gotfrit, 1988, p128). Willis (1977) makes a similar point, arguing that 'the couplet accommodation/resistance is riveted tight. The terms do not often shake themselves loose and will not by mere wishing' (p185). Nevertheless, it has been important in this study to try to interpret how far the actions of the pupils with SEN, as portrayed within informal discourses, have a creative role in disturbing or disrupting the process of identification.

Bloor and McIntosh (1990) documented a variety of resistance strategies within professional-client relationships of health visiting and therapeutic communities. The most common of these were escape or avoidance and concealment and the authors presented these as partly positive forms of resistance, in the sense that the subjects avoided outright confrontation. Their typology was not applicable directly to the kind of resistance suggested in this research, but nevertheless had some similarities. Bloor and McIntosh indicated that they did not set out to conduct an analysis of resistance, but became convinced that the subjects were not merely being practised upon by professionals. They also signalled the irony that this analysis of client resistance to surveillance depended on their own surveillance of subjects, which may itself be merely an other form of excommunication (Fulcher, 1995). This point is returned to in the final section of this chapter. Below, the pupils' resistance typology is discussed.

## **The pupils' resistance typology**

The pupils' informal discourses suggested four kinds of resistance:

- Transgression of self
- Humour
- Escape
- Stardom.

These are discussed, with some illustrative examples from the data, below.

### ***Transgression of self***

Raschida and Laura's accounts suggested a kind of transgression of a disabled identity, in which success was indicated by episodes in which 'they can't tell really' (Raschida). This could be read as a proactive, rather than reactive, kind of resistance, involving manipulation of the information others receive and of the process of identification. Other accounts hinted at ways in which the pupils controlled the information flow and the identification process. Fiona, for example, pretended to hear what was going on, rather than interrupt conversations and in private she and the teacher of the hearing impaired worked at learning vocabulary which she could then use with 'rehearsed carelessness' (Garfinkel, 1967, p172). Both Laura and Phillip tried to hide their deterioration (in vision and mobility) until they were 'found out'. Phillip, expressed some relief that the struggle was partially over, while Laura seemed to be treated (at least by her parents) as having transgressed boundaries of honesty, rather than of identity. Peter had tried to reconstruct himself as a 'spastic', rather than as someone with behavioural difficulties, or who was seen as a troublemaker. This was an unusual kind of transgression into, as opposed to out of, a disabled identity.

These actions might also be interpreted as 'passing' (Goffman, 1963; Garfinkel, 1967), actions arising from the discomfiture of 'normal' persons and requiring that:

individuals with a stigma, especially those with a physical handicap may have to learn about the lines along which they must reconstitute their conduct if they are to minimize the obtrusiveness of their stigma (Goffman, 1963, p127).

The pupils, in order to manage the information received about them, seemed to patrol what Goffman referred to as the 'Umwelt', a kind of boundary around which the signs of alarm came. In Garfinkel's terms, this involved both an appearance of casualness and a constant vigilance, ready to repair transgressions which might reinforce their identification as disabled or as an object of pity. In Phillip's case, forward planning helped him to arrive at situations more easily (for instance, giving himself enough time to move). However, both Goffman and Garfinkel's notions of passing seem too static to depict the ways in which Raschida, Laura and others challenged their identification. As Travers (1994) notes, both constructs suggest frozen presentations. Taken together, on the other hand, they suggest the pupils both achieve and fail as 'unthinking hermeneuticians of normal appearances' (pp28-29). This becomes a more helpful way of understanding the pupils' accounts as a series of contingencies and as examples of the indeterminacy of interaction. Thus, 'analyses' contingencies are interactions' contingencies, interruptions and digressions within the flow of life' (Travers, p28). In other words, the pupils' discourses can never be isolated at fixed points, since they are always on the move. Inside these discourses, 'we become conscious only to cease to know what is going on, and yet must go on' (p28).

These pupils, then, seemed to transgress their static and fixed disabled identities by monitoring their own behaviour and the information others' received about it. They did not appear to transgress permanently or transcend this, since with any negative transgressions (of which the most notable was Laura pouring water on her chips) they slipped quickly back into the constructions of medical and charity discourses (eg evoking pity from others). Nevertheless, there were moments of momentary or partial

transcendence. Fiona's identification by her peers as 'horse mad' was one example of this, all the more interesting when compared with Graham, whose passion for football was received as evidence of his difference.

### *Humour*

Raschida pointed out that being visually impaired was not 'a bundle of laughs'. Nevertheless, for her and others humour seemed to be an important device for deflecting transgressions. The most notable example was Laura's attempt to repair her gaffe of pouring water (instead of vinegar) on her chips by making the joke at her own expense. In her account of this episode, she spoke of feeling the pitying eyes upon her and wiping this away by laughing at herself. Her self mockery seemed to both erase the error and leave a trace, an impression of herself as admirable (for being able to laugh in adversity). Thus, identification becomes almost a cyclical process in which disabled identities are resisted, revealed and covered up, in this case through humour, but never transcended. Pity remains inscribed in the discursive palimpsest.

### *Escape*

The pupils' accounts suggested a variety of forms of escape. Special units or classes were constructed by Raschida, Laura, Graham, Susan and Peter as a kind of refuge or retreat, offering escape from the 'hurly burly' of mainstream. The units did not, however, have labels invoking disability or 'special'; rather, most were referred to by room numbers or more generalised terms such as 'base', but these names may have had similar differentiating effects. The pupils could obtain support to help them in mainstream (eg learning Braille or catching up with classwork). For Fiona, it was a space where she could talk about her deafness (which she did not do in mainstream) and practise her mainstream performance, for example by extending her vocabulary. Yet Laura and Raschida appeared to find the unit too affirmative of their disabilities for comfort. Raschida also reported tensions among her disabled peers, rather than the solidarity she had anticipated. Special units, then, offered a brief escape to a

space in which it was acceptable, and perhaps even necessary, to be disabled and special. It was also a space with its own (sometimes hostile) power relations.

Brian's refusal to co-operate was often referred to by teachers and pupils as escape in the shape of an 'opt out' clause and treated with good humour. This attempt to escape from the interaction could be interpreted as a kind of resistance. Yet, the mainstream pupils seemed to reconstruct his escape as naughtiness, and as further evidence for his need to be guided and governed by them. In this respect, it was erased as an act of resistance and displaced onto a pedagogical discourse within which his resistance was interpreted as a lesson unlearned rather than a regime rejected. His complete disappearance into the cupboard was responded to, not as resistance, but as an act of defiance, which he had to be prevented from repeating.

### *Stardom*

Susan appeared to revel in her 'specialness' and highlighted the benefits and attention that 'being in a wheelchair' had brought her. She also said she made sure people did things for her. This could be seen as a kind of resistance, in which she was challenging an identification of herself as passive and someone to be pitied and celebrating her awareness as a disabled person. This is the kind of stance advocated by disabled people such as Oliver (1990b) and Morris (1991). Yet, in Susan's accounts, there is an absence of the solidarity among disabled people that Oliver and others affirm and which could be considered a hallmark of a resistance movement (see Chapter 5). Susan, in contrast, spoke of being jealous when another disabled pupil appeared to erode her star status by obtaining a similar electric wheelchair. Interestingly, her peers seemed to regard her assertive-passive behaviour as a kind of resistance, in which she showed them that she was not afraid to ask for help. Bordo (1993) and other feminists argue that compliance of this kind (here to the label of disabled) could be construed as resistance, providing the normalisation imperative is

accepted also. For disabled people, this requires simultaneously participating as disabled and finding a way of rejecting this label.

Not all of the pupils' informal discourses were suggestive of resistance. Scott spoke of how 'they call me brain dead' and of feeling 'heartbroken'. Yet, he seemed to suggest that he had to accept this. Interestingly, this conversation took place together with other 'victims' (eg 'jug ears' and 'smout'). When they had each 'confessed' and reached a consensus that 'heartbroken' was exactly how they felt, there was a long silence, where they looked at the floor and nodded. They agreed that it hurt, but also that it had to be tolerated. It was a price to pay, perhaps because there was nothing else they could do, of accepting, rather than objecting to mistreatment, of saying or doing nothing.

This moment of consensus could be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it could be seen as acting as a closing device, affirming the pupils' difference and excluding them from mainstream. Their accounts seemed to signal defeat and acceptance of this status, removing any capacity for shifting between boundaries and negotiating of identities. On the other hand, their acknowledgement of exclusion could be seen as empowering by creating opportunities for collective dissent.

The mainstream peers of Scott, Sarah and Graham were undecided over how much they picked up or were hurt by the teasing. Where sentience was acknowledged, the mainstream pupils gave the impression that this would not lead to active resistance and was therefore unproblematic. Graham's occasional threats to tell the teacher seemed to be dismissed as symptomatic of his difference from them, since others, they argued, would just 'take it'. This suggests that even insults were delivered ambivalently, both as part of the general quickfire exchanges and as having particular targets and effects.



The four types of pupils' responses, transgression of self, humour, escape and stardom, which I have interpreted as resistance, move between several poles, for example from proactive to reactive and from more to less control by the pupils with SEN. In many cases, the pupils' resistance appeared to be reconstructed by the mainstream pupils as something else. Resistance is, of course, just one reading of the accounts and one which is open to challenge, but it does seem to be a satisfactory way of trying to understand how the pupils with SEN appeared to undermine the medical and charity discourses which assigned them a fixed identity as disabled or special.

Resistance of the kind suggested by the pupils' accounts has not emerged in isolation but in response to the discourses (both formal and informal) within which the pupils with SEN become objects of the knowledge about them, or constructed subjects. Furthermore, there are no 'radical ruptures' or 'massive binary divisions', but more 'mobile and transitory points of resistance' (Foucault, 1976, p96). As Marks (1994) points out, 'adopting such a position [of resistance] does not necessarily guarantee emancipation or empowerment however but rather involves individuals in constant negotiation and renegotiation regarding the ways they are constructed' (p75).

It has been suggested that the identities and experiences of pupils with SEN are constructed within various informal discourses (eg medical and charity). Mainstream pupils oscillated between and within these discourses, enabling them to feel sorry for and to taunt pupils such as Scott at the same time. Their accounts suggest that their conduct was governed within a micro-regime of governmentality. This is discussed below.

## **Governmentality**

Foucault (1982) saw governmentality as having a pastoral quality, which made it possible to 'structure the possible field of action of others' (p211). Within the mainstream pupils' accounts, there seemed to be a kind of micro-regime of governmentality, characterised by notions of equity, justice, tolerance and their sense of what was 'right', but with the ambivalences and contradictions across different discourses. The mainstream pupils policed the boundaries of their micro-regime of governmentality, structuring, in Foucault's (1982) terms, their own conduct towards pupils with SEN and the possible field of action of other pupils.

The micro-regimes in relation to the eleven pupils can be read in terms of:

- Agency of the pupils with SEN in constructing the micro-regimes
- Agency of the mainstream pupils in responding to the particular pupil
- Interaction between governmentality and other pupil regimes.

Individuals, then, were regulated by themselves and by those closest to them. Bhabha (1993) denotes governmentality (at least among colonisers) as an avowed ambition to civilise or modernise. Similarly, the mainstream pupils' governmentality could reflect a desire to normalise, to make pupils with SEN more like them. This desire, argues Bhabha, provokes splitting or, as the data suggest, resistance.

In some cases, the pupils with SEN were active agents in constructing the micro-regimes around them. Raschida, Laura, Fiona, Phillip and others all set out to resist being identified as disabled and this in turn created a regime which was based on conduct which they were comfortable with. Other pupils (eg Brian, Scott, Sarah and Peter) were more passive and regimes were constructed for them. The degree of agency of the pupils with SEN in constructing the governmental regime affected the way the mainstream pupils participated in it.

Within some governmental regimes, the mainstream pupils acted in a proactive and individualising way, trying to guess the response of the pupils with SEN and acting accordingly. This occurred where pupils such as Raschida, Laura and Fiona had been agents in constructing their regimes. In other cases the mainstream pupils generalised about Brian, Scott and Sarah, as 'them' or 'people like them'. Sarah's peers, for example, commented on how upset she was by the bullying she received from a fellow pupil. They argued that 'somebody' [else] needed to tell the bully that 'you can't treat [any] people like that'. Some of the pupils' regimes were heavily pedagogical, for instance in relation to Scott, Brian and Peter. Fiona's peers also acted as mini-pedagogues but in a more closely defined (improving her language) and individualising way, with careful anticipation of her feelings.

The mainstream pupils' conduct of themselves and others oscillated in the space between a series of polar positions, listed below:

- Similarity/difference
- Deserving/undeserving
- Helping/patronising
- Equality/pity.

As was suggested in Chapter 6, the mainstream pupils tended to waver between these positions, in a state of indecision. So, for instance, Raschida and Laura's peers talked of the tension they felt between wanting to help and avoiding patronising them by doing too much for them. Susan's classmates described the importance of 'treating her normally' or 'like us', but also helping her if she needed it, prefacing this vacillation with 'no offence'. Peter's peers spoke of being prepared to tolerate his extreme behaviour and described their strategies for dealing with this. When his behaviour became less bizarre and more akin to indiscipline, they seemed less prepared to be lenient and began to question their own identification of him as special

and in need of their help. Phillip's peers seemed to have adopted the most pastoral kind of governance, in which they assumed responsibility for his safety and were ready to pick him up when he fell over, but also colluded with him, helping to repair these transgressions with humour.

The pupils' governmentality was both connected to and insulated from, more conventional school and home regimes, for instance discipline and 'politeness'. Each regime had its own rules and conformity in one might breach the rules within another. Sarah's peers, for example, oscillated between resenting the bullying she experienced, yet doing nothing to stop it because it involved breaching rules about 'telling'. Brian was allowed to breach rules regarding sexual conduct, yet his touching caused one pupil some discomfort. The extra help received by Raschida and Sarah was interpreted by some pupils as breaching rules of equality and fair treatment. Yet the mainstream pupils also tried to insulate these regimes from each other, for instance as they did with Graham and football or with Peter, when they sought to distinguish his behaviour from theirs. These examples illustrate the precarious relationship between different regimes, involving on-the-spot decisions about what to say and do.

The pupils with SEN were also part of an additional form of governance, the Record of Needs. This distinctive brand of juridical power constructed the pupils at a school (or meso) level as 'needs' and the focus of special provisions. It added another regime to the mainstream pupils' governmentality with rules about appropriate 'treatment' of and behaviour towards pupils with SEN. Records of Needs have not been discussed in detail within this thesis, but their significance in relation to the micro and macro discourses analysed here should be recognised. Far from connecting the macro and micro discourses relating to individuals, the Record of Needs often appeared as a disjuncture between the two.

Raschida's Record of Needs provides a useful illustration of this disjuncture. The document detailed her 'failure' to accept her disability and her parents' lack of understanding of the help she required. This sits rather oddly beside both the accounts from Raschida and her peers and the more formal discourses on special educational needs. Her attempts at transgression, for instance by losing her long cane in a lake, were interpreted by her teachers, not as transgressions of a disabled identity, but of a failure to accept help and submit to the juridical power inferred by her Record of Needs.

To summarise, the mainstream pupils' conduct towards the pupils with SEN was mediated through micro-regimes of governmentality. Some of the pupils with SEN were active subjects in their construction, through their own techniques of resistance, while others were objects of them. The mainstream pupils' conduct varied in its proactivity, the extent to which it individualised or generalised the pupils with SEN and its pedagogic thrust. These regimes did not operate in isolation, however, but interacted with other systems governing pupil conduct, both insulating themselves from and eliding with each other. This notion of governmentality is clearly untidy and not easily analysed. Yet, it denotes a high level of sophistication in the way mainstream pupils talk about disability and implies considerable scope for educationists. This point is discussed at the end of the chapter.

### **Gender and sexuality**

It is important to bear in mind here that issues of gender and sexuality emerged within the data, but were not an early feature of the research design. Research questions focused on pupils with SEN and their mainstream peers generally and were not gender specific. A different kind of study would have been required to provide a fuller analysis than is possible here. Nevertheless, some important features of the pupils' gender and sexuality emerged and these require to be explored.

There was a sense in which the sexuality of the pupils with SEN was erased from their mainstream peers' accounts about them. Barry's friend, Anna, described him as a good friend because he didn't 'make assumptions' about their relationship. Brian, who had Down's syndrome, was allowed to cross boundaries of personal contact with boys and girls which were closed to others. As Denise commented, it was impossible to refuse him and, in any case, the only problem was the 'Milky Way' chocolate smear he left on their shirts. So kissing was alright if he could be persuaded to wash his face first and he was, they said, becoming more 'obedient' in this respect. With Denise, however, he sometimes went a step beyond what she felt comfortable with and she began to suspect sexual overtures. She seemed more troubled, however, by others' interpretations of this as sexual (for instance when he touched her knee in assembly) than by what his intentions might be. Sexual taboos which operate under 'normal' circumstances, that is among mainstream pupils, seemed capable of being breached within the de-sexing discourses of disability. Denise had accomplished this breach with Brian, but only in private. Publicly, such a breach could be undone and intimacy could be construed as sexual.

The sexuality of the pupils with SEN was important to them and emerged in several of their own accounts. Raschida said she 'hid' her blindness from a boyfriend, by appearing 'blind drunk', until she felt unable to maintain this pretence. Peter offered to point out his girlfriend in the playground, providing I did not speak to her. Barry mentioned how he preferred not to have the embarrassment of going to the toilet whilst at school, whilst Susan indicated that she would like to have a child, but not necessarily in wedlock. More generally, attempts by children of both genders to minimise the visibility of their disability (by for instance doing cane training away from school, not wearing a hearing aid or, in Phillip's case, planning situations ahead of time) seemed to be connected to notions of femininity and masculinity. This, however, is a very complex area (and not something I was comfortable talking to the

pupils about, having not set out to do so). A separate study of gender and sexuality would be necessary to explore these issues more fully and sensitively.

Lonsdale (1990) suggests that disabled women experience a double bind:

It appears that women with disabilities are made to feel failures if they don't succeed and larger than life if they do (p67).

Raschida could be considered to experience a triple bind of gender, disability and ethnicity. She made no mention of ethnicity herself, although her teachers did and inscribed it as a source of her impairment within her Record of Needs. In addition, one of Raschida's peers commented on the 'absence' of her ethnicity as an issue and suggested that disability was more important to Raschida and her peers.

#### **The value of a Foucauldian perspective**

Does an intellectual emphasis on *resistance* really help us to describe and diagnose the politics of the body within the culture in which we live? Or rather, does it participate in key mystifications of that culture? (Bordo, 1993, p195; original emphasis).

Shumway's (1989) suggestion to 'take Foucault and stir' has, I think, been worthwhile. A Foucauldian perspective has contributed to understanding the experiences of pupils with SEN in a number of ways:

- It has disturbed the conventional binary divisions of disabled/normal; integration/segregation and others by revealing how identities and experiences are constructed continuously, in a highly uncertain process.

- It has departed from a view of integration which is static and is 'done to' pupils with SEN. Such a view is concerned only with spatial aspects such as where the child is taught and their proximity to other children.
- Pupils with SEN, within this analysis, are both constructed and constructing subjects, both objects of special needs knowledge and agents in the production of that knowledge.
- Highly sophisticated forms of resistance are possible. These are agonistic and often proactive, enabling pupils with SEN to manipulate their identities and experiences. Yet, these may become subjugated within technologies of power: 'if [power] comes up against any resistance it has no other option but to try to minimise it' (Foucault, 1982, p220).
- The informal classroom discourses are both connected to and distinctive from the formal discourses. Thus, the mainstream pupils speak within the charity, medical and rights discourses which were in evidence within the official documents. They are unlikely to discern particular discourses, since their own subjectivities are inextricably bound up within them. They shift between these in different ways, creating a whole new network of power/knowledge relations.
- This network is further distinguished by the mainstream pupils' own version of governmentality, which guides classroom (and playground) conduct. This sits alongside other regimes and accompanying rules (eg discipline and politeness), creating further ambivalences.
- Giving space to the voices of the pupils has allowed stories to be told and readings of these stories to be made which are normally obscured or subjugated by the professional discourses which operate in schools and elsewhere.

This last point is important in the sense that it marks a shift in the relations of research production which has been called for by Oliver (1992a), Barton (1995) and others. This involved subverting and manipulating research practices (see Chapter 3b) and was at times highly uncomfortable, but necessary in order to create an 'incitement to



discourse' (Foucault, 1976, p17). It is unlikely, however, that research of this kind can be of the emancipatory kind proposed by Oliver (1992a) for two reasons. The first is that emancipatory research implies an essentialist view of the subject, which research somehow aspires to set free, by placing the individual at the centre. A Foucauldian study, in contrast, displaces and de-centres the subject and 'foregrounds how discourse worlds the world' (Lather, 1993, p675). This could be said to be disempowering, however as Lather (1993) notes, much depends on how one reads the political possibilities that open up when 'truth' is seen as an product of power/knowledge relations within specific material practices. Second, the strong distinction between the researcher and the researched (Clough and Barton, 1995) has been maintained. Nevertheless, progress towards emancipatory research requires the adoption of more reflexive research practices of this kind (Barton, 1995) and perspectives which posit disabled people as active agents in the construction of their own identities and experiences. It also requires rethinking validity as multiple, partial, endlessly deferred and as a further 'incitement to discourse' (Lather, 1993, p674). In other words, validity becomes interesting, not for its legitimating and affirmative capacities, but for its transgressiveness and intractability.

Researchers, as Barton (1995) points out, have a responsibility to challenge the social relations of research production, by exploiting their own privileged position (and knowledge and skills) and tackling the oppression experienced by disabled people. They also need to examine how much their own writing and speaking contributes to or subverts domination:

The struggle in research, as in a series of practices which produce *knowledge*, becomes that of attempting to offer knowledge which is, for the moment, useful to the oppressed or less powerful . . . How could I research this topic without further entrenching the *object* of the research? (Fulcher, 1995, p9; original emphasis).

Fulcher's solution to this problem was to shift her 'gaze' to policy. Mine was to allow the gaze to focus on the pupils, not as objects, but as subjects, active in the production of knowledge about themselves. Choosing to interpret some of this knowledge as resistance could be considered inappropriate; it does at least avoid appropriating disabled people as passive recipients of the knowledge about them and begins to construct them as active agents in their own subjectivity.

There are, however, a number of problems with an analysis of this kind. Resistance, as it has been interpreted here, seems both inevitable (as is power) and inconsequential (Shumway, 1989). It is possible that this process of documenting resistance merely takes disabled people into a cul de sac in which resistance is positioned as part of the power/knowledge relations and is therefore constraining rather than liberating. Demonstrating these various dilemmas and double binds empirically is not likely to help disabled people to break out of them. If, however, resistance is seen as possible and desirable, two conditions are necessary. First, it involves participating in the normalising society which produces the binary divisions of normal/disabled, integration/segregation and others (Liggett, 1988; Marks, 1994). In other words, in order to resist disabling practices, disabled people have to participate as 'the disabled', accepting the very labels they seek to denounce. A second condition is that resistance has to be viewed, not as an antagonistic struggle, but a more positive and creative kind of challenge in which disabled people can develop new subjectivities. Foucault (1984c) calls this an ethic of permanent resistance:

My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous . . . If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism. I think the ethico-political choice

we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger (p343).

This implies that individuals should not seek a safe environment in which there is no struggle, but should seek the liberty of participating in it, with its endless opportunities to transgress their own limits. Simons (1995) suggests that 'this is not a cry of despair, but an affirmation of life as it is . . . at once playful and serious; both unbearably light and unbearably heavy' (p87).

A major criticism of Foucault's work was his failure to conduct analyses within institutions and to offer empirical examples of real people saying and doing things (Fairclough, 1992). Most of his work was confined to grand theorising of structures and processes of power and knowledge. This research illustrates that an analysis of informal discourses within schools is possible. A second criticism relates to Foucault's pessimism and is less easy to answer. On the one hand, this research demonstrates power and knowledge relations to be so highly sophisticated and constraining that they offer little scope for resistance. Many of the experiences of the pupils with SEN appeared to be highly negative or characterised by high levels of tension and vigilance. On the other hand, the analysis suggests that the pupils were capable of resisting or transgressing disabled identities and at least some of these negative experiences. This suggests a greater degree of agency than Foucault implied in his genealogies, but which he was beginning to acknowledge as he shifted towards a Baudelairean notion of the 'ethics of existence'. In this context, individuals are viewed as active agents of their own subjectivity and this seems to offer some grounds for optimism.

Future research needs to focus on classroom practices and the informal discourses operating within them. It should seek to map out relations between different micro-regimes and broader cultural frameworks. Notions of agency and resistance also

require further exploration, by collecting and analysing empirical examples of practices of the self. Research of this kind requires rethinking one's own subjectivity and behaviour as a researcher and there is scope for documenting this process, as I have tried to do here. The question 'what do you do with validity once you've met poststructuralism' needs to be asked but must remain 'the unthought in our thought' (Lather, 1993, p676).

There is a clear need for focused enquiry into young disabled people's gender and sexuality from fresh perspectives. Foucault's theories of power and resistance have already provided a useful analytical framework for understanding the oppression of women and its causes (Bordo, 1988; McNay, 1992; Ramazanoglu, 1993) and for analysing more creative or proactive responses by women (Gotfrit, 1988). In turn, feminist writers can probably offer new insights to future research in the area of disability, since they have had to wrestle with the paradox of challenging the notion of anatomy as destiny, whilst arguing for gender and body specific policies, relating to, for example, childbirth and contraception. As Liggett (1988) observes, disabled people encounter similar tensions between accepting the normalising society in order to participate in it and wanting to reject it as oppressive, because it constructs them as objects of knowledge.

The final part of this thesis addresses the implications of the research findings for the placement of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools.

## **Implications of findings for the mainstreaming of pupils with SEN**

The findings suggest a number of questions for mainstream schools:

### **1. *Are mainstream placements appropriate for all pupils with SEN?***

Some of the accounts from the pupils painted a fairly negative picture of their experiences and an immediate reaction might be to say that special schools would offer a better environment for at least some of the pupils. Yet, the accounts of the pupils with SEN suggest that at the very least they were being socialised into the discourses of 'normal' others. Furthermore, the mainstream school may lend itself to more active participation in the construction of their identities and experiences than elsewhere and as such may be important preparation for adult life. Nevertheless, it is clear that mainstream schools could do more to assist this than they do at present.

### **2. *What adaptations are necessary within mainstream schools to create more positive experiences?***

Schools need to be much more aware of the social relationships among pupils with SEN and their peers and to be alert to bullying incidents. They should take a firm stance on bullying, such as that experienced by Scott and Sarah, but should deal with this in ways which do not further entrench the pupils' disabled identities. Schools also have a responsibility to help mainstream pupils adjust to new relationships with pupils with SEN. There is scope for schools to engage pupils in discussions about disability (for example within personal and social development courses), ensuring that integration is an educative and positive experience for all.

### **3. *Can mainstream pupils be helped to develop positive relationships built on mutual respect and understanding?***

The mainstream pupils' accounts illustrated that they are already involved pedagogically within their mini-regimes of governmentality. Indeed, the pupils

were highly sensitive to the ambivalences and contradictions within their own discourses and schools could use this as a basis for teaching. This should not be done in a prescriptive way, telling mainstream pupils what to say and do, but should provide opportunities for reflexivity. Ware (1995) has already achieved considerable success with drama students, by encouraging them to act out scenarios from the point of view of a disabled peer without communication skills. In addition, the specialist staff in Raschida and Laura's school were developing a course for first year pupils which aimed to sensitise them to the experience of visual impairment.

**4. *Is there scope for encouraging resistance, in the positive and creative sense, among pupils with SEN?***

Yes, by engaging the pupils actively in discussions about their identities and experiences. This could be done with pupils individually and among groups of disabled and non-disabled pupils. Solidarity among pupils may emerge through discussions about more general kinds of difference, as it did with Scott's peers, rather than by focusing specifically on disability. This may create its own impetus for change within the school.

**5 *Can gender and sexuality be a focus of this teaching process?***

This is essential, if young disabled people are to leave school without a sense that their sexuality is a hazard or simply unimportant. They need to be given basic information to enable them to make choices and to be encouraged to articulate their own desires and personal feelings alongside and apart from their non-disabled peers. Young women in particular should have opportunities to examine connections between the constructions of female and disabled identities. Mainstream pupils are likely to become more sensitive to their disabled peers' gender and sexuality if relations between them are more reciprocal.

**6. *Can the accounts of pupils with SEN and their mainstream peers be used to judge the effectiveness of mainstreaming?***

The current climate within education demands reliable indicators of effectiveness and even special education can no longer escape the drive towards accountability. This research shows that the pupils, the consumers of this 'service' had a great deal to say about their experiences and it is time they were listened to. It requires, however, some rethinking about what 'effective' mainstreaming might be and a movement away from professional discourses.

**7. *Are mainstream schools likely to adapt to accommodate pupils with SEN?***

Relations between pupils with SEN and their mainstream peers are uneven and as, Goffman 1963 suggests, the disabled person must 'reciprocate naturally with an acceptance of himself and us, an acceptance of him that we have not quite extended in the first place' (p147). Whether or not schools are capable of extending an acceptance to disabled people remains to be seen. In the current climate of resource constraints and competitiveness, it is likely to be a question of whether they view this as a worthwhile investment:

But fie these are questions again. That is typical. I know no more questions and they keep on pouring out of my mouth. I think I know what it is, it's to prevent the discourse from coming to an end, this futile discourse which is not credited to me and brings me not a syllable nearer silence. But now I am on my guard, I shall not answer them any more, I shall not pretend any more to answer them. Perhaps I shall be obliged, in order not to peter out, to invent another fairy-tale, yet another with heads, trunks, arms, legs and all that follows, let loose in the changeless round of imperfect shadow of dubious light. But I hope and trust not. But I always can if necessary (Becket, 1994, pp309-310).

## REFERENCES

- Abberley, P (1992) The concept of oppression and the development of a social theory of disability in T Booth, W Swann, M Masterton and P Potts (Eds) *Policies for diversity in education*. London:Routledge.
- Abberley, P (1993) Disabled people and 'normality' in J Swain, V Finklestein, S French and M Oliver *Disabling barriers - enabling environments*. London, Sage Publications/The Open University.
- Allan, J (1994) Integration in the UK in S Riddell and S Brown (Eds) *Special educational needs policy in the 1990's: Warnock in the market place*. London: Routledge.
- Allan, J, Brown, S and Munn, P (1991) *Mainstream provision for pupils with non-recorded learning difficulties in primary and secondary schools*. Edinburgh: SCRE Project Report.
- Allan, J, Brown, S and Riddell, S (1995a) *Theorising special education: an overview*. Paper presented at the International Special Education Congress, Birmingham, 10-13 April.
- Allan, J, Brown, S and Riddell, S (1995b) *Special educational needs provision in mainstream and special schools in Scotland*. Final report to SOED. University of Stirling.
- Appleby, Y (1994) Out in the margins. *Disability and Society* 9 (1) pp19-32.
- Armstrong, D and Galloway (1994) Special educational needs and problem behaviour: making policy in the classroom in S Riddell and S Brown (Eds) *Special educational needs policy in the 1990's: Warnock in the market place*. London: Routledge.
- Armstrong, D, Galloway, D and Tomlinson, S (1993) Assessing special educational needs: the child's contribution. *British Educational Research Journal* 19 (2) pp121-131.



- Arnold, P and Chapman, M (1992) Self-esteem, aspirations and expectations of adolescents with physical disability. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* 34 pp97-102.
- Ball, S (1990a) (Ed) *Foucault and education: disciplines and knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- Ball, S (1990b) Management as moral technology: a Luddite analysis in S Ball (Ed) *Foucault and education: disciplines and knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- Baker, J and Gaden, G (1990) *Integration and equality*. Equality Studies Centre, University College, Dublin.
- Barnes, C and Oliver, M (1995) Disability rights: rhetoric and reality in the UK. *Disability and Society* 10 (1) pp111-116.
- Barthes, R (1981) *Camera lucida*. London: Vintage Press.
- Barton, L (1993a) The struggle for citizenship: the case of disabled people. *Disability, Handicap and Society* 8 (3) pp235-248.
- Barton, L (1993b) Labels, markets and inclusive education in J Visser and G Upton (Eds) *Special education in Britain after Warnock*. London: David Fulton.
- Barton, L (1995) Conclusion: many urgent voices in P Clough and L Barton (Eds) *Making difficulties: research and the construction of SEN*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Barton, L and Corbett, J (1993) Special needs in further education: the challenge of inclusive provision. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 8 (1) pp14-23.
- Barton, L and Tomlinson, S (1981) (Eds) *Special education: policy, practices and social issues*. London: Harper Row.
- Barton, L and Tomlinson, S (1984) *Special education and social interests*. Beckenham: Croom Helm.
- Bhabha, H (1994) *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Becket, S (1994) *The unnamable*. London: Calder.
- Binet, A and Simon, T (1914) *Mentally defective children*. London: Edward Arnold.

- Bloor, M and McIntosh, J (1990) Surveillance and concealment: a comparison of techniques of client resistance in therapeutic communities and health visiting in S Cunningham-Burley and N McKeganey (Eds) *Readings in medical sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Bordo, S (1988) Anorexia nervosa: psychopathology as the crystallization of culture in I Diamond and L Quinby (Eds) *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Bordo, S (1993) Feminism, Foucault and the politics of the body in C Ramazanoglu (Ed) *Up against Foucault: explorations of some tensions between Foucault and feminism*. London: Routledge.
- Booth, T (1988) Challenging conceptions of integration in L Barton (Ed) *The politics of special educational needs*. London: Falmer.
- Booth, T (1991) Integration, disability and commitment: a response to Soder. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 6 (1) pp1-15.
- Borsay, A (1986a) Personal trouble or private issue? Towards a model of policy for people with physical and mental disabilities. *Disability, Handicap and Society* 1(2) pp179-195.
- Borsay, A (1986b) *Disabled people in the community*. London: Bedford Square Press.
- Brandon, D (1988) Snouts among the troughs. *Social Work Today* 10 November.
- Brisenden (1986) Independent living and the medical model of disability. *Disability, Handicap and Society* 1 (1) pp173-178.
- Brittan, A and Maynard, M (1984) *Sexism, racism and oppression*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brown, S and Riddell, S (1992) *A comparative study of special educational needs provision in mainstream and special schools in Scotland*. Proposal to SOED.
- Burgess, A (1965) *Here comes everybody*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Cassel, J (1991) Subtle manipulation and deception in fieldwork: opportunism knocks. *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies* 6 (3) pp269-274.

- Cheston, R (1994) The accounts of special education leavers. *Disability and Society* 9 (1) pp59-69.
- Chisolm, L (1991) Book review: Foucault and education. *Sociology* 25 pp143-145.
- Clough, P (1995) Problems of identity and method in the investigation of special educational needs in P Clough and L Barton (Eds) *Making difficulties: research and the construction of SEN*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Clough, P and Barton, L (1995) Introduction: self and the research act in P Clough and L Barton (Eds) *Making difficulties: research and the construction of SEN*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Codd, J (1994) Educational reform and the contradictory discourses of evaluation. *Evaluation and research in Education* 8 (1and2) pp41-54.
- Cooper, P (1993) *Effective schools for disaffected students: integration and segregation*. London: Routledge.
- Cooper, R and Burrell, G (1988) Modernism, postmodernism and organizational analysis: an introduction. *Organisation studies* 9 (1) pp91-112.
- Corbett, J (1993) Postmodernism and the 'special needs' metaphors. *Oxford Review of Education* 19 (4) pp547-553.
- Corbett, J (1994) Special language and political correctness. *British Journal of Special Education* 21 (1) pp17-19.
- Corbett, J and Ralph, S (1995) *The changing image of charity advertising: A case study of Mencap*. Paper delivered to the fourth International Special Education Congress 10-13 April 1995.
- Crewe N and Zola, I (1983) *Independent living for physically disabled people*. London: Jossey-Bass.
- Davidson, A (1986) Archaeology, genealogy, ethics in D Hoy (Ed) *Foucault: A critical reader*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Davis, K (1993) On the movement in J Swain, V Finkelstein, S French and M Oliver (Eds) *Disabling barriers - enabling environments*. London: Sage Publications in association with the Open University.

- Department for Education (1994) *Code of practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs*. Central Office of Information
- Department of Education and Science (1978) *Report of the committee of enquiry into the education of handicapped children and young people* (The Warnock report). London: HMSO.
- Department of Health for Scotland (1946) *Report of the Committee on the Scottish lunacy and mental deficiency laws*. Edinburgh: HMSO
- Derrida, J (1976) *Of grammatology*. GC Spivak (trans) Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Disability Scotland (Undated) *Media representation of people with disabilities*.
- Dreyfus, H and Rabinow, P (1986) What is maturity? Habermas and Foucault on 'What is enlightenment?' in D Hoy (Ed) *Foucault: a critical reader*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Eco, U (1994) *How to travel with a salmon and other essays*. London: Minerva.
- Egerton Commission (1889) *Report on the Royal Commission on the blind, the deaf, the dumb and others of the United Kingdom*. London: HMSO
- Fairclough, N (1992) *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Fine, M and Asch, A (1985) Disabled women: sexism without a pedestal in M Deegan and N Broods (Eds) *Women and disability: the double handicap*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books.
- Finklestein, V (1985) Paper to *World Health Organisation meeting*, 24-28 June, Netherlands.
- Finklestein, V (1993) Workbook 1: Being disabled, K665. *The disabling society*. Milton Keynes: Open University.
- Fish, J (1990) Sensitivity to special educational needs: trends and prospects in P Evans, and V Varma (Eds) *Special education: past, present and future*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Foucault, M (1967) *Madness and civilisation*. London: Tavistock.
- Foucault, M (1972) *The archaeology of knowledge*. London: Tavistock.

- Foucault, M (1973) *The birth of the clinic*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M (1976) *The history of sexuality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Foucault, M (1977a) Intellectuals and power: a conversation between Michel Foucault and Giles Deleuze in D Bouchard (Ed) *Language, counter-memory, practice: selected essays and interviews by Michel Foucault*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Foucault, M (1977b) *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Foucault, M (1980a) The eye of power in C Gordon (Ed) *Power/knowledge Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. Brighton: Harvester.
- Foucault, M (1980b) The confession of the flesh in C Gordon (Ed) *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. Brighton: Harvester
- Foucault, M (1982) The subject and power in H Dreyfus and P Rabinow (Eds) *Michel Foucault: beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. Brighton: Harvester.
- Foucault, M (1984a) Nietzsche, Genealogy, History in Rabinow, P (Ed) *The Foucault reader*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Foucault, M (1984b) What is enlightenment? in Rabinow, P (Ed) *The Foucault reader*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Foucault, M (1984c) On the genealogy of ethics: an overview of work in progress in Rabinow, P (Ed) *The Foucault reader*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Foucault, M (1985) *The use of pleasure: the history of sexuality volume 2*. London: Peregrine.
- Foucault, M (1988) Technologies of the self in L Martin, H Gutman and P Hutton (Eds) *Technologies of the self: a seminar with Michel Foucault*. London: Tavistock.
- Frizell, J (1947) *The handicapped child*. City of Edinburgh
- Fulcher, G. (1989) *Disabling policies? A comparative approach to education policy and disability*. London: The Falmer Press.

- Fulcher, G (1995) Excommunicating the severely disabled: struggles, policy and researching in P Clough and L Barton (Eds) *Making difficulties: research and the construction of SEN*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Funk, R (1987) Disability rights: from caste to class in the context of civil rights in A Gartner and T Joe (Eds) *Images of the disabled, disabling images*. New York: Praeger.
- Galloway, D, Armstrong, D and Tomlinson, S (1994) *The assessment of special educational needs: whose problem?* London: Longman.
- Garfinkel, H (1967) *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Gibbons, F (1985) A social-psychological perspective on developmental disabilities. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 3 (4) pp391-404.
- Giddens, A (1987) *Social theory and modern sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddings, R (1994) Travails in my wheelchair. *The Observer* 20 March.
- Gipps, C, Goldstein, H and Gross, H (1985) Twenty per cent with special needs: another legacy from Cyril Burt. *Remedial Education* 20 (2) pp72-75.
- Gipps, C, Gross, H and Goldstein, H (1987) *Warnock's eighteen per cent: children with special needs in primary schools*. Lewes: The Falmer Press
- Goffman, E (1959) *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Goffman, E (1963) *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Harmondsworth: Pelican.
- Goffman, E (1968) *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*. Harmondsworth: Pelican.
- Goffman, E (1971) *Relations in Public*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Gordon, C (1980) (Ed) *Power/knowledge Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. Brighton: Harvester.
- Gordon, L (1984) Paul Willis - Education, Cultural production and social reproduction. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 5 (2) pp105-115.

- Gotfrit, L (1988) Women dancing back: disruption and the politics of pleasure. *Journal of Education* 170 pp122-141.
- Gray, T (1994) Why it's kinder for us to race apart. *The Observer*. 17 July 1994.
- Greene, G (1978) *The human factor*. London: Book Club Associates.
- Greenman, N (1991) Mutual manipulations. *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies* 6 (3) pp257-268.
- Habermas, J (1986) Taking aim at the heart of the present in D Hoy (Ed) *Foucault: a critical reader*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Halliday, P (1989) *Special needs in ordinary schools: children with physical difficulties*. London: Cassell.
- Hansard* 25 May 1994.
- Hargreaves, A (1982) Resistance and relative autonomy theories: problems of distortion and incoherence in recent Marxist analyses of education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 3 (2) pp107-126.
- Harris, J (1995) Boiled eggs and baked beans - a personal account of a hearing researcher's journey through deaf culture. *Disability and Society* 10 (3) pp295-308.
- Harvey, D and Greenway, A (1984) The self-concept of physically handicapped children and their non-handicapped siblings: an empirical investigation. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 25 (2) pp273-284.
- Hasler, F (1993) Developments in the disabled people's movement in J Swain, V Finkelstein, S French and M Oliver (Eds) *Disabling barriers - enabling environments*. London: Sage Publications in association with the Open University.
- Hegarty, S (1993) *Meeting special educational needs in ordinary schools*. London: Cassell.
- Hegarty, S and Pocklington, K (1981) *Educating pupils with special needs in the ordinary school*. Windsor: NFER Nelson.

- Hegarty, Pocklington and Lucas (1981) *Educating pupils with special educational needs in ordinary schools*. Windsor: NFER-Nelson.
- Heshusius, L (1994) Freeing ourselves from objectivity: managing subjectivity or turning toward a participatory mode of consciousness? *Educational Research* 23 (3) pp15-22.
- Hevey, D (1992) *The creatures time forgot: photography and disability imagery*. London: Routledge.
- Hevey, D (1993) The tragedy principle: strategies for change in the representation of disabled people in J Swain, V Finkelstein, S French and M Oliver (Eds) *Disabling barriers - enabling environments*. London: Sage, in association with Open University.
- Hollingdale, R (1977) *A Nietzsche Reader*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Hoskins, K (1990) Foucault under examination: the crypto-educationalist unmasked in S Ball (Ed) *Foucault and Education: disciplines and knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- Humes, W (1986) *The leadership class in Scottish education*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- Hudson, B (1989) Michael Lipsky and street level bureaucracy: a neglected perspective in L Barton (Ed) *Disability and dependancy*. Lewes: Falmer.
- Jackson, R (1994) *How to keep the SOED at bay*. Times Educational Supplement Scotland, 23 September.
- Jenkins, R (1991) Disability and social stratification. *British Journal of Sociology* 42 (4) pp557-576.
- Joint Committee of Colleges of Education in Scotland (1988) *Ten years on*. Edinburgh: JCCES.
- Jones, D (1990) The genealogy of the urban schoolteacher in S Ball (Ed) *Foucault and Education: disciplines and knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- Jones, J (1995) What price a life of compassion? *The Observer*. 7 May 1995.
- Joyce, J (1975) *Finnegans Wake*. London: Faber and Faber.



- Jupp, K(1992) *Everyone belongs: mainstream education for children with severe learning difficulties*. London: Souvenir Press.
- Katz, I (1981) *Stigma: a social-psychological analysis*. New Jersey: Eribaum.
- Kiziltan, M, Bain, W and Canizares, M (1990) Postmodern conditions: rethinking public education. *Educational theory* 40 (3) pp351-369.
- Knowlton, D (1992) No one can serve two masters or native anthropologist as oxmoron. *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies* 7 (2) pp72-88.
- Kritzman, L (1988) *Foucault, politics, philosophy, culture: interviews and other writings, 1977-1984*. New York: Routledge.
- Kyle, J (1993) Integration of deaf children. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 8 (3) pp201-220.
- Kyle, C and Davies, K (1991) Attitudes of mainstream pupils towards mental retardation: pilot study at a Leeds secondary school. *British Journal of Special Education* 18 (3) pp103-106.
- Ladd, P (1991) Making plans for Nigel: the erosion of identity by mainstreaming in G Taylor and J Bishop (Eds.) *Being deaf: the experience of deafness*. London: The Open University.
- Lather, P (1993) Fertile obsession: validity after poststructuralism. *The Sociological quarterly* 34 (4) pp673-693.
- le Carré, J (1986) *The perfect spy*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Lee, T (1992) Local management of schools and special education in T Booth and W Swann (Eds) *Policies for diversity in education*. London: Routledge.
- Lewis, A (1994) What Katy did; a case study in communication between a pupil with severe learning difficulties and non-disabled classmates. *British Journal of Special Education* 21 (3) pp101-104.
- Ligget, H (1988) Stars are not born: an interpretive approach to the politics of disability. *Disability, Handicap and Society* 3 (3) pp263-275.
- Lipsky, M (1980) *Street level bureaucracy: dilemmas of the individual in public services*. New York: Russell Sage.

- Llewellyn, R (1983) Future health services - a challenge for disabled people. *Australian Rehabilitation Review* 7 (4) pp24-31.
- Lloyd, M (1992) Does she boil eggs? Towards a feminist model of disability. *Disability, Handicap and Society* 7 (3) pp207-222.
- Lloyd, T (1993) *The charity business*. London: John Murray.
- Lonsdale, S (1990) *Women and disability*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Lynas, W (1986) Pupils' attitudes to integration. *British Journal of Special Education* 13 (1) pp31-33.
- MacCannell, D and Flower MacCannell, J (1993) Violence, power and pleasure: a revisionist reading of Foucault from the victim perspective in C Ramazanoglu (Ed) *Up against Foucault: explorations of some tensions between Foucault and feminism*. London: Routledge.
- Macdonell, D (1986) *Theories of discourse: an introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- McDonnell, P (1995) *Integration in education in Ireland: Rhetoric and reality*. Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, Bath, 14-17 September.
- Maclure, M and Stronach, I (1993) Jack in two boxes: a postmodern perspective on the transformation of persons into portraits. *Interchange* (24) 4 pp353-379.
- Maclure, M and Stronach, I (1995) *Eccentric subject, impossible object: a postmodern reading of Hannah Cullwick*. Presented to the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, 18-22 April.
- McNay, L (1992) *Foucault and feminism*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Marks, G (1994) 'Armed now with hope . . .': the construction of the subjectivity of students within integration. *Disability and Society* 9 (1) pp 71-84.
- Marshall, J (1990) Educational research in S Ball (Ed) *Foucault and education: disciplines and knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- Maugham, W S (1910) *The constant wife*. London: William Heinemann Ltd.

- Megill, A (1979) Foucault, structuralism and the ends of history. *Journal of Modern History* 51 pp451-503.
- Megill, A (1985) *Prophets of extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*. Berkely: University of California Press.
- Meijer, C and Pijl, S (1994) Framework, methods and procedures in C Meijer, S Pijl and S Hegarty (Eds) *New perspectives in special education: a six country study of integration*. London: Routledge.
- Mittler, P (1985) Integration: the shadow and the substance. *Educational and Child Psychology* 2 (3) pp8-22.
- Mental Deficiency Committee Report (1929) London: HMSO
- Morris, J (1991) *Pride against prejudice: transforming attitudes to disability*. London: the Women's Press.
- Nettleton, S (1992) *Power, pain and dentistry*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Nietzsche, F (1961) *Thus spoke Zarathustra*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Nietzsche, F (1974) *The Wanderer and his shadow no 3*. New York: Gordon Press.
- Norwich, B (1990) Decision-making about special educational Needs in P Evans and V Varma (Eds) *Special education: past, present and future*. Basingstoke: the Falmer Press.
- The Observer (1989) *The naked and the dammed*. 11 September.
- The Observer (1994) *Harrods throws out disabled protest*. 11 December.
- The Observer (1995) *Scope advert* 7 May.
- O'Kelly, L (1994) Ready Steady Eddy. *The Observer*. 11 September.
- Oliver, M (1985) The integration-segregation debate: some sociological considerations. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 6 (4) pp75-90.
- Oliver, M (1988) The social and political context of educational policy: the case of special needs in L Barton (Ed) *The politics of special educational needs*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Oliver, M (1990a) *The politics of disablement*. London: Macmillan.

- Oliver, M (1990b) Politics and language; the need for a new understanding. *International Rehabilitation Review* XL (3) p10.
- Oliver, M (1992a) Changing the social relations of research production? *Disability, Handicap and Society* 7 (2) pp101-113.
- Oliver, M (1992b) Intellectual masturbation: a rejoinder to Soder and Booth. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 7 (1) pp20-28.
- Oliver, M and Zarb, G (1989) The politics of disability: a new approach. *Disability, Handicap and Society* 4 (3) pp221-239.
- Opie, A (1992) Qualitative research, appropriation of the 'other' and empowerment. *Feminist review* 40 Spring pp52-70.
- Payne, T (1991) It's cold in the other room *Support for Learning* 6 (2) pp61-65.
- People First (1994) *Dirty Ticks, Angry Voices*. Channel Four Programme, 5 December.
- Peshkin, A (1988) In search of subjectivity - one's own. *Educational Research* 17 (7) pp17-22.
- Phillips, M (1995) A new rights agenda. *The Observer* 7 May.
- Pijl, S and Meijer, C (1991) Does integration count for much? An analysis of the practices of integration in eight countries. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 6 (2) pp100-111.
- Poster, M (1984) *Foucault, Marxism and history*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Pyke, N (1992) Into the exclusion zone. *Times Educational Supplement* 26 June.
- Quicke, J (1985) Teaching about disability. *British Journal of Special Education* 12 (3) pp121-122.
- Rabinow, P (1984) *The Foucault reader*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Ramazanoglu, C (1993) *Up against Foucault: explorations of some tensions between Foucault and Feminism*. London: Routledge.
- Reindal, S (1995) Discussing disability - an investigation into theories of disability. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 10 (1) pp58-69.

- Resnick, M and Hutton, L (1987) Resiliency among physically disabled adolescents. *Psychiatric Annals* 9 (4) pp1-7.
- Riddell, S and Brown, S (1994) (Eds) *Special educational needs policy in the 1990's: Warnock in the market place*. London: Routledge.
- Riddell, S, Brown, S and Duffield, J (1995) The ethics of policy-focused research in special educational needs in P Clough and L Barton (Eds) *Making difficulties: research and the construction of SEN*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Riddell, S, Dyer, S and Thomson, G (1990) Parents, professionals and social welfare models: the implementation of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1981. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 5 (2) pp96-110.
- Riddell, S, Duffield, J, Brown, S and Ogilvy, C (1992) *Specific learning difficulties: policy, practice and provision*. University of Stirling
- Rorty, R (1990) Foucault, Dewey, Nietzsche. *Raritan* 9 (4) pp1-8.
- Roth, J (1992) Of what help is he? A review of Foucault and education. *American Educational Research Journal* 29 (4) pp683-694.
- Rowan, J (1981) A dialectical paradigm for research in P Reason and J Rowan (Eds) *Human enquiry: a sourcebook of new paradigm research*. Chichester: John Wiley.
- Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded (1908) *Miss Lily Monteagle called and examined*.
- Royal Institution for the Education of Deaf and Dumb Children (1933) *Regulations for parents*.
- Royal Scottish National Hospital (1919) *Annual report*.
- Ryan, J (1991) Observing and normalizing: Foucault, discipline and inequality in schooling. *The Journal of Educational Thought* 25 (2) pp104-119.
- Said, E (1986) Foucault and the imagination of power in D Hoy (Ed) *Foucault: a critical reader*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Sandow, S (1993) *In special need*. London: Paul Chapman.

- Schindele, R (1985) Research methodology in special education: a framework approach to special problems and solutions in S Hegarty and P Evans (Eds) *Research and evaluation methods in special education*. Windsor: NFER-Nelson.
- Schostak, J (1984a) The violation of intelligence in J Schostak and T Logan (Eds) *Pupil experience*. London: Croom Helm.
- Schostak, J (1984b) The revelation of the world of pupils in J Schostak and T Logan (Eds) *Pupil experience*. London: Croom Helm.
- Scotland on Sunday (1994) *Wheelchair protesters carried out of Harrods*. 11 December.
- Scottish Education Department (1902) *HMI Mr Scougall's report*.
- Scottish Education Department (1937) *Circular no 105: The education and care of mentally and physically defective children*.
- Scottish Education Department (1945) *Memorandum: Departmental Committee on the Scottish lunacy and mental deficiency laws*.
- Scottish Education Department (1955) *Circular no 300: The education of handicapped pupils*. The reports of the advisory council on education in Scotland.
- Scottish Education Department (1978) *The education of pupils with learning difficulties in primary and secondary schools in Scotland: a progress report by HM Inspectors of schools*. Edinburgh: HMSO.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1924) *Problems of the mentally defective*. 17 October.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1926) *The role of education in the prevention of mental disorder*. 16 April.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1927) *The education of the mentally defective*. 17 March.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1931a) *Special schools in Scotland*. 19 June.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1931b) *Handicapped*. 16 October.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1934) *Deafness among schoolchildren*. 16 March.

- Scottish Educational Journal (1934) *The education of mental defectives*. 23 November.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1935) *Special schools conference*. 19 July.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1938) *Problem of mental deficiency*. 25 March.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1950) *Donaldson's school for the deaf*. 14 July.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1953a) *Clackmannan: special educational treatment*. 6 March.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1953b) *The special class*. 6 May.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1954) *Special schools in Glasgow*. 29 January.
- Scottish Educational Journal (1955) *The Education of handicapped children*. 1 April.
- Scottish Office Education Department: Research and Intelligence Unit (1993) *Policy-related research programme: criteria for assessing research proposals*.
- Scottish Office Education Department (1994) *Effective provision for special educational needs*. Edinburgh: SOED.
- Scott-Parker, S (1989) *They aren't in the brief*. London King's Fund Centre.
- Shapiro, J (1993) *No pity: people with disabilities forging a new civil rights movement*. New York: Times books.
- Sheldon, D (1991) How was it for you? Pupils', parents' and teachers' perspectives on integration. *British Journal of Special Education* 18 (3) pp107-110.
- Shumway, D (1989) *Michel Foucault*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Simons, J (1995) *Foucault and the political*. London: Routledge.
- Sinason, V (1992) *Mental handicap and the human condition: new approaches from the Tavistock*. London: Free Association Books.
- Slee, R (1993) The politics of integration - new sites for old practices? *Disability, Handicap and Society* 4 (2) pp351-360.
- Snowdon, P (1976) *Integrating the disabled: report of the Snowdon working party*. The National Fund for Research into Crippling Diseases.

- Soder, M. (1989) Disability as a social construct: the labelling approach revisited  
*European Journal of Special Needs Education* 4 (2) pp117-129.
- Soder, M (1990) Prejudice or ambivalence? attitudes toward persons with disabilities.  
*Disability and Society* pp227-241.
- Soder, M (1991) Theory, ideology and research; a response to Tony Booth.  
*European Journal of Special Needs Education* 6 (1) pp17-23.
- Strathclyde Regional Council (1993) *Every child is special*.
- Stronach, I and Morris, B (1994) Polemical notes on educational evaluation in the age of 'policy hysteria'. *Evaluation and Research in Education* 8 (1 and 2) pp5-20.
- Taylor, G and Bishop, J (1991) (Eds) *Being deaf: the experience of deafness*. London: The Open University.
- Times Educational Supplement Scotland (1995) *Pledge to protect Scots research*. 23 June.
- Tomlinson, S (1982) *A sociology of special education*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Townsend, P (1981) The structured dependency of the elderly: a creation of social policy in the twentieth century. *Ageing and Society* 1 pp5-28.
- Travers, A (1994) Destigmatizing the stigma of self in Garfinkel's and Goffman's accounts of normal appearances *Philosophy of the social sciences* 24 (1) pp5-40.
- Tredre, R (1994) Harrods throws out disabled protest. *The Observer*. 11 December.
- Uditsky, V (1995) From integration to inclusion: the Canadian experience in R Slee (Ed) *Is there a desk with my name on it?* Lewes: Falmer.
- Visser, J (1993) A broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum? in J Visser and G Upton (Eds) *Special education in Britain after Warnock*. London: David Fulton.
- Vlachou, A (1995) Images and the construction of identities in a research context in P Clough and L Barton (Eds) *Making difficulties: research and the construction of SEN*. London: Paul Chapman.



- Walkerdine, V (1984) Developmental psychology and the child-centred pedagogy in J Henriques, W Hollway, C Urwin, C Venn and V Walkerdine (Eds) *Changing the subject: psychology, social regulation and subjectivity*. London: Methuen.
- Ware, L (1995) *Sometimes I think we're just kidding ourselves*. Paper presented to a symposium on inclusion, Cambridge, 2-5 July.
- Warnock, M (1992) Special case in need of reform. *The Observer* 18 October.
- Warnock, M (1993) Foreword in J Visser and G Upton (Eds) *Special education in Britain after Warnock*. London: David Fulton.
- Wax, M (1992) The fieldworker as Odysseus or Socrates. *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies* 7 (1) pp61-71.
- Webster, H (1973) *Taboo: A sociological study*. New York: Octagon.
- Wedell, K (1992) Children with special educational needs: past, present and future in P Evans and V Varma (Eds) *Special education: past, present and future*. Basingstoke: The Falmer Press.
- Whitaker, P (1994) Mainstream students talk about integration. *British Journal of Special Education* 21 (1) pp12-16.
- White, J (1991) 'The goals are the same'....are they? *British Journal of Special Education* 18 (1) pp25-27.
- White, P (1995) The worm that turned. *The Observer*. 7 May.
- Willis, P (1977) *Learning to labour*. Farnborough: Saxon House.
- Wolfendale, S (1990) *Primary schools and special needs: policy, planning and provision*. London: Cassell.
- Wolman, C and Basco, D (1994) Factors influencing self-esteem and self-consciousness in adolescents with spina bifida. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 15 pp543-548.
- Wolfsenberger, W (1980) The definition of normalization: update, problems, disagreements and misunderstandings in R Flynn and K Nitsch (Eds) *Normalization, social integration and community services*. Baltimore: University Park Press.

Wright, D (1993) *Deafness: an autobiography*. London: Mandarin.

Wright Mills, C (1970) *The sociological imagination*. London: Penguin.