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Panoptic Schooling's Confused Lessons: A Philosophical Investigation of Discipline in the School

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PANOPTIC SCHOOLING'S CONFUSED LESSONS:
A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION OF DISCIPLINE IN THE SCHOOL

by

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ABSTRACT

How does the school instruct us? What is it like for a student to learn in a school? The following thesis construes the school as a site for disciplinary technology purportedly oriented toward educating students. My conceptual analysis rests on the intersection between the sociohistorical practice of schooling and the lived experience of students. I contrast schooling (the organization of a primary planned environment for instruction) and education (an existential facet of growth and social connectedness) at the center of the essay. My argument has three parts. First, I examine Michel Foucault's concept of disciplinary technology as it pertains to the school. Second, I develop the existential presuppositions of Foucault's argument through evidence from the field of phenomenology. Third, I sketch a normative conception of education, supported by the philosophy of John Dewey and elaborate on the dangers of discipline through a reading of Martin Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology." While this thesis thoroughly problematizes a central aspect of modern pedagogy, it does not provide simple solutions and merely hopes to examine the complicated intersection between "disciplinary" pedagogy and lived experience in order to deepen our understanding of each of these fields.

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INTRODUCTION

QUESTIONING THE SCHOOL

My thesis research began with the apparently simple and direct question: “how have I been educated?”. Such a question carries weight by being familiar, personal, relatable, and yet it is not a question that is easily approached. It is plainly philosophical in that the question does not in itself beget the application of a particular method; moreover, answering it requires introducing many further questions as well as many varied attempts at addressing such questions. At the outset, I find myself opening onto a field that is both “supersaturated” and also one with numerous points of entry, innumerable objects for possible study, several methods of approach, and many academic fields that could be utilized. In this introduction, I discuss the field of concern that motivates this essay and also layout the scaffolding for the particular path I have chosen to take to explore that concern further.

I am senior at the University of Maine, studying philosophy and political science. This spring will proffer another academic ritual for me--college graduation. My B.A. will be the conclusion of a decade and a half of studies in the United States. I am at a moment where I need to decide what comes next, and like many before me I want to reflect on and consult what I have already decided--that is, where I have been. Here my question shifts with the words “so many before me.” Sure, I experience my singularity and ipseity, but I can also recognize my substitutability. Standing in line at graduation, sitting in a desk during classes, paying loans: from a certain institutional standpoint, I am

exchangeable. I am anyone. For this reason, the question of how *one* is educated has taken on a specific significance for me at this stage of my life.

This brings me closer to the field of concern that situates a still more specific thesis question. “How is *one* educated?” is a question that I find as interesting as it is inaccessible given my current skill set. It falls into similar pitfalls as the personal question I asked, “How have I been educated?”. It is by working with these questions that I arrive at my project.

In addition to its personal roots, this thesis grows from my intersecting studies of phenomenology and politics. My engagement with the former has developed my concern for the personal and relational, while the latter directs my attention toward a deep concern for institutionalized power structures. From my interest in phenomenological philosophy, when I think about education, I consider the precarious, ongoing, and unavoidable project of personal development that each of us undertakes in relationship to the world and to others. From my studies in political science, when I question education, the political institutions that aim at educating, namely schools, also come immediately to mind and into question. The school is a collectively supported institution, and yet each student needs to develop personal strategies in order to navigate through it. From this intersection, I selected a philosophical project. I ask the still open-ended question: “How does the school instruct students?”.

In order to address this question thoroughly, I evaluate the school as a place of application for disciplinary technology, a form of power relations examined in Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*. This allows me to examine Foucault’s thesis that society can invest individuals with forms of behavior and value systems. Furthermore, I am interested

in moving “behind” *Discipline and Punish* in order to explore a complementary level of analysis: the lived experience of students. In this direction, I apply several concepts from the field of Phenomenology to discuss how the institutional practice of “schooling” intersects with the personal project of “dwelling” or becoming at-home in the world. Through these two directions of analysis (sociohistorical and experiential), and by arguing for a normative sense of education that contrasts with “schooling,” I further problematize disciplinary schooling and begin to offer alternative directions.

We all act, and are acted upon in manifold ways throughout our lives. We develop our personal identities within each of these dimensions of experience. Maurice Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenologists are useful in understanding identity construction, because of their commitment to describing the experience of involvement in the world as it appears in a first-person manner. Furthermore, I observe that *we*, sociohistorical collectives of persons, organize spatial arrangements, temporal durations, cultural objects, and behavioral styles for *us*, experiencing agents, to inherit. We “inherit” such collective projects by sustaining, altering, or abandoning them. Critical social theorists, like Foucault, focus on the way that such collective practices delimit the possibilities for individual development. While these personal and collective practices intersect, the temporality of these collective practices does not coincide entirely with the time of our personal development; our personal process of self-development is interrupted by (and interrupts) this social activity.¹ While one necessarily depends upon guidance from others, and common institutions of meaning (like language, normality, animality, etc.) in order to maintain effective relationships to spaces, times, objects, and others, one cannot

¹ Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 35-36.

ultimately depend on others to construct these relationships for oneself. This existential work is always, inexplicably “mine” for each and every one of us. Each of us needs to develop such relationships, whether we recognize that we are doing so or not.

When one considers the guidance that we give and receive from others, one is faced with the reality that the cultural world is segmented. Deleuze and Guattari creatively explore such segmentarity at length in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

We are segmented from all around and in every direction. The human being is a segmentary animal. Segmentarity is inherent to all the strata composing us. Dwelling, getting around, working, playing: life is spatially and socially segmented. The house is segmented according to its rooms' assigned purposes; streets, according to the order of the city; the factory, according to the nature of the work and operations performed in it. We are segmented in a binary fashion, following the great major dualist oppositions: social classes, but also men-women, adults-children, and so on. We are segmented in a circular fashion, in ever larger circles, ever wider disks or coronas, like Joyce's 'letter': my affairs, my neighborhood's affairs, my city's, my country's, the world's ... We are segmented in a linear fashion, along a straight line or a number of straight lines, of which each segment represents an episode or "proceeding": as soon as we finish one proceeding we begin another, forever proceduring or procedured, in the family, in school, in the army, on the job. School tells us, 'You're not at home anymore'; the army tells us, 'You're not in school anymore' ...²

One can begin to experience the weight of such segmentarity in the very style of this staccato paragraph. The school, a complicated and prevalent institution of modern society, is the “segment” of life that I am bringing under philosophical investigation. Perhaps it is obvious that the school itself operates by enforcing segmentarity, but such common sense should not prevent us from exploring this phenomenon. Instead, the provocative claim that “the human being is a segmentary animal” should help guide us

² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 208-209.

into the rich question this thesis hopes to explore: how does the school “school” us? What segments does it create and how do we inherit them?

At the outset, the central terms “education” and “the school” should be preliminarily defined. Both of these terms circulate commonly and can seem to be immediately comprehensible, but for a systematic analysis their meanings should be as clear as possible. Following a Deweyan distinction between these terms, education lends itself to two broad and interrelated definitions, while the school should be initially understood as a means of education. The two definitions for education that I suggest follow the distinction that we have begun to explore between social and individual temporality.

At the social level, education is a necessity for the continuity of the life of any group or collective practice.³ It is common to discuss the life of a nation, a tribe, a club, or any group, but (as noted above) the time that these groups occupy is not synonymous with the life of any particular individual. A group can disband without any members dying, and it can persist when many of the constitutive individuals perish. As any living thing, John Dewey argues, societies survive by constant renewals. All constituent members of a social group begin their lives without comprehensive language, beliefs, values, norms, and the re-creation of such social practices allows the life of the group to persist. The renewing activity that allows society to exist is education. Education is this communication of habits of thinking, doing, and feeling. As Dewey elaborates, to give or receive communication is to have “an enlarged and changed experience.”⁴ When

³ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, (New York: Free Press 1944), 2.

⁴ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 5.

listening, one shares in the thoughts and feelings of another, and insofar has her own experience modified. When conveying an experience, one must formulate the experience while considering how it would appear to another, and necessarily has her own attitude toward the experience modified. The social necessity of education leads organically to the individual definition.

To the individual, education is the broadening and deepening of experience: it is synonymous with growth. Said in another form, insofar as an activity broadens and deepens experience, it is educative. The human infant is highly dependent on others in order to persist, and begins with plasticity--the ability to grow.⁵ Humans begin with a vibrant social environment and the ability to learn from experiences. Partaking in the reconstruction of the values, beliefs, aims, and norms of the group is educative for the constituent members--especially in those social groups that establish the growth of constituents as a primary value. Educative lessons can also occur outside of interpersonal communication, as when an individual struggles with a personal challenge alone, but as fundamentally interdependent beings no activity takes place entirely outside of the social background.⁶ The growth of individual members, in turn, provides a basis for the growth of social groups, as the new members creatively modify the traditions they inherit. Each level of our definition of education leads to the other. Education is the broadening and deepening of a person's experience, and (insofar as it is connected to social beings) accounts for the continuity and growth of social groups.

⁵ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 42

⁶ *Ibid.*, 44. Dewey memorably chastises the illusion of complete self-sufficiency as “an unnamed form of insanity which is responsible for a great deal of the remediable suffering in the world.”

Schooling is the organization of a planned environment for education. While many places and experiences are educative, the school is an institution formally intended to direct the youth toward sharing and shaping the common life of the group. Living always affords educative opportunities, but many of these are lessons are incidental. In contrast, the *raison d'être* of school is in its effect on the quality of conscious life. It provides a place for directing the growth of the students. Directing the students' growth is an accurate explanation of teaching, because

the only way in which adults consciously control the kind of education which the immature get is by controlling the environment in which they act, and hence think and feel. We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment.⁷

Schools are an established medium for the tuition of the young. This environment could be thought of as a unity of many orders (symbols, social roles, norms, concepts, exercises, periods, spaces, etc.) with which the activity of the students must vary. The activity of the students is a constitutive element of the school environment. A school is an environment designed with the deliberate intention of educating.

While these preliminary definitions are important, I doubt that a satisfactory response to the question "how does the school instruct us?" will become clear from deduction alone. Discussing the school, for example, will require us to step beyond the concept of a school as a planned instructional space, to the concrete relations internally organized in schools. In this direction, I take up a reading of a recent critical philosopher, Michel Foucault, in order to focus on the ways that we are acted upon within the school, and I explore presuppositions in Foucault's argument to understand the activity of students within the school. While in their intention, schools may be a means for

⁷ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 18-19.

educating, in practice schooling and education may have a more complicated relationship.

Foucault would agree with Dewey that the school is modern society's primary planned environment for instruction, but by analyzing the predominant power structures in the school, Foucault argues that it is also an institution that has been indelibly tied to an exhaustive form of social control--"discipline." Foucault seems to extend the observation that one can only direct the education of another person by controlling the environment, by arguing that a very particular environment can invest a person with predetermined values, ideas, and behaviors. By reading Foucault, I hope to understand "the political investments of the body that [the institution] gathers together in its closed architecture."⁸ I want to understand how the school may in fact invest our bodies with behaviors, attitudes, and concepts. Foucault argues that modern schooling normalizes students into the attitudes, habits, and concepts that allow for a directable, efficient, but politically ineffectual social body.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I establish the concept of discipline. I then briefly explore Foucault's engagement with power relations and the modern form of power relations that he distills in *Discipline and Punish*--namely, the Panopticon. I then step back to discuss the particular ways that Foucault suggests that panoptic principles develop and operate in the school. This process focuses my analysis on the structuring of spaces, times, and object relations in school to see how such segmentation leads to what Foucault calls "docile bodies."⁹ I consider how such "docile" students are subjected to

⁸ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977), 31.

⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 135-169.

“correct training” by means of normative judgments and hierarchical observation in order to enact the total form of disciplinary power.¹⁰ Throughout this section, I will supplement Foucault’s particular examples by my own schooling experiences, in effect arguing that discipline continues to be an effective organizing principle for understanding schooling.

In the second chapter of the thesis, I explore the irreducible forms of embodied behavior presupposed in the concept of discipline. In order for discipline to function, the subjected persons need to skillfully deploy instruments, develop practices into habits, and experience anxiety under the weight of surveilling gazes. I explore these forms of behavior through several key phenomenological concepts--namely Heidegger’s encountering through “readiness-to-hand,” Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of habit-body, and Sartre’s conceptualization of “the look.” These phenomenological concepts enrich the foundations of discipline, and provide important points of contrast to disciplinary power.

Finally, in the third chapter of the thesis, I explain the tremendous danger of the school’s disciplinary aspects, and I contrast this sense of schooling with a normative concept of education. I expand upon the problems of panoptic schooling by elaborating on the dangers of this “technology,” through a reading of Martin Heidegger’s essay “The Question Concerning Technology.” Then I contrast schooling with an existentially-informed sense of education, connected to the philosophy of Dewey and the project of becoming at home in the world.¹¹ Disciplinary technology risks making students mere resources of society, rather than recognizing their essential role in shaping their society,

¹⁰ Ibid., 171-194

¹¹ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 10-22

therefore I argue that a moral sense of education is antithetical to the political “docility” described by Foucault.

CHAPTER 1

THE SCHOOL AND DISCIPLINE

“We are segmented from all around and in every direction. The human being is a segmentary animal [...] forever proceduring or procedured, in the family, in school, in the army, on the job.”¹²

In this chapter, I describe the ways that we are “procedured” *and* “proceduring” in the school. I begin by exploring how we are procedured in the school. I want to get a sense of how thoroughly we are shaped by this institution, and to do so in a systematic way. In order to structure this aspect of schooling adequately, I follow Foucault’s discussion of power relations in the school within *Discipline and Punish* to see how student behavior is directed by the school environment. The segmentarity that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari describe may seem to be such a ubiquitous aspect of the creation of a place for the school in society at large, and of organizing the internal operations of the school that I do not want to merely raise a truism. Foucault argues that much of the segmentarity in the school is not arbitrary, but part of a comprehensive process of investing power in bodies called “discipline.” I begin this chapter by presenting this central term, and then briefly explore Foucault’s engagement with “power,” since discipline is constantly referred to as a form of power. I then discuss the model of disciplinary power (the “Panopticon”), and the emergence and adjustments to this model in actual scholastic settings. Effectively, this chapter hopes to explore the

¹² Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 208-209.

continued relevance for the concept of discipline in understanding schooling. Let us begin to see how this is so.

Foucault uses “discipline” as a technical term: it is an emergent technology for organizing social relations that has a history. Rather than providing a fixed definition for discipline from the beginning of his argument, Foucault names the third part of his book “Discipline” and lets the meaning of the term unfold across the argument.¹³ This could be because the meaning that discipline has as a familiar vocabulary word can help to illustrate the technical term: it is a means of adjusting behavior and habits. Selecting this familiar word suggests that Foucault does not want discipline to be thought of as an inaccessible abstraction. It is practical and accessible, but its history needs to be closely studied. Many historical quotes that Foucault selects even use the word themselves.¹⁴ From this historical analysis, Foucault analyzes “discipline” as a referent applied to a series of practices that individuate, supervise, and coerce behavior from bodies. Discipline is the unifying principle for the historical ascendance of a new power of punishment by coercion that accompanied the formation of republican states. The following indicates more fully the meaning of discipline as a technical term:

Discipline may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology.¹⁵

¹³ Michel Foucault, “Part III: Discipline,” in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977). My analysis of Foucault largely draws from this part of *Discipline and Punish*, which is composed of three chapters: “Docile Bodies,” “The Means of Correct Training,” and “Panopticism.”

¹⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 16. “‘Discipline must be made national,’ said Guibert. ‘The state that I depict will have a simple, reliable, easily controlled administration. It will resemble those huge machines, which by quite uncomplicated means produce great effects.’”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 215.

Discipline is the technology of power relations that came to predominance across the 17th and 18th centuries. In fairness to Foucault, I do not want to strip the word of its accessibility any further; instead, the meaning will become clearer over the course of this chapter. For now, discipline should be thought of as techniques for correcting the behavior of bodies.

Foucault observes that the demands on the behavior of the body in modern society are extremely pressing: one must continually act in the proper manner, toward the right objects, in the correct spaces, over the expected duration, alongside others, with an awareness of oneself. There is a tradition of thought that has long considered virtue to make such demands on human behavior, but Foucault examines the concrete mechanisms by which society directs human behavior more exactly toward such norms.¹⁶ Human bodies have “always been in the grip of very strict powers,” but with disciplinary power “there is a [new] modality: it implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the process of the activity rather than its result [...] and it partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement.”¹⁷ Through his analysis of discipline, Foucault argues that much of our individual behavior is actually the result of an investment in us by exhaustive relations of control. Tracing the development of the power relations that can make such sustained demands on the body, Foucault uncovers a specific form for disciplinary

¹⁶ Aristotle, W.D. Ross, and Lesley Brown, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). In Book II, Chapter 6, Aristotle argues that “[Moral virtue] is concerned with passions and actions, and in these there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. For instance, both fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain may be felt both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of virtue. Similarly with regard to actions also there is excess, defect, and the intermediate.” The intermediate and best expression of passions and actions are done in variation with self, others, objects, means and times.

¹⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 136-137.

power: the Panopticon.¹⁸ Before we address this form, we should briefly explore Foucault's conceptualization of power.

Foucault and Power

Each and every one of us has been born into a world that was not of our making. There were already people, objects, narratives, norms and languages that conditioned the world we grow up within. Most importantly for our current inquiry, when we were born, there were already some systems of government in place, and there was a discoverable history that could help explain the particulars of the time and place into which each of us is thrown.¹⁹ Looking to the past in order to understand the current systems of punishment, for example, Foucault notices that calls for prison reform are nearly as old as this form of punishment, and that the issue does not seem to be with particular harms done by the prison environment, rather the issue is "its very materiality as an instrument and vector of power; it is this whole technology of power over the body."²⁰ Foucault maintains that the exhaustively designed environments of many modern institutions (prisons, workshops, army camps, schools, etc.) can "invest" our bodies with certain behaviors, inclinations, concepts and beliefs. These institutions create and support the norms that condition (and therefore both allow for and limit) our experiences and understandings. Foucault further argues that our behavior is, to a large degree, a meticulous investment from the society

¹⁸ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 200-205.

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson, (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 174, 219-224, 264. "Thrownness" is a term Heidegger used to describe the way we find ourselves caught up in the midst of a definite world and some entities within the world. When he introduces the term in *Being and Time* he says that the term "is meant to suggest the *facticity* of [*Dasein*'s] being delivered over. The 'that it is and has to be.'"

²⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 30.

into which we are born. He comes to these conclusions largely as the result of his critical engagement with social theory, particularly around the concept of power.

Throughout his oeuvre, Foucault consistently inverted the traditional question of political philosophy. Rather than asking how philosophy, as “that discourse which *par excellence* is concerned with truth,”²¹ can discover the essence and limits of sovereignty (and thereby determine legitimacy), Foucault asks how power operates at the periphery, where the state becomes capillary and most directly interacts with the people.²² Rather than wondering what a “true” exercise of power looks like, Foucault asks what “truths” are created by the exercise of power in a society. We could restate that question by asking “what mechanisms are used to control the public?”. A central consequence of Foucault’s analysis is that the conduct of the individual is largely the result of “all the political investments of the body” that follow our particular system of power relations.²³

Power, in Foucault’s analysis, is most simply expressed as action upon the field of actions.²⁴ Foucault observes that we all act within particular conditions, and some actions change these conditions. Insofar as an action sustains, restricts, or expands the field in which we act, that action is an expression of power. Power, as a consequence, is not a property that something or someone possesses, power circulates throughout the field. It is always relational, and exists between actions. Insofar as one’s actions can be affected by others, and vice versa, a situation of power is present. This is effectively to say that *whenever* there are multiple people together, there is some situation of power.

²¹ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, edited Colin Gordon, (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 93. Original emphasis.

²² *Ibid.*, 94.

²³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 31.

²⁴ Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (summer, 1982), 789.

Foucault likens power to the broader meaning that “government” had in the sixteenth century. Today, the term “government” is concerned with political institutions and issues of the state, but in the sixteenth century “it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed.”²⁵ By acting upon our environment (the conditions in which our actions are situated), we “govern” our behavior and the actions of others. All social formations change the conditions in which actions occur, and as a result we cannot talk about a society without power, nor will the destruction of all power relationships. A society “beyond” or “without” power can only be imagined by abstracting from the real.

The necessity of power relations for associated life requires that they be analyzed. Whenever there is a social relation, there is also some power relation; but *how* power exists concretely in any particular social situation remains a question for analysis.²⁶ Thus, the omnipresence of power in associated life “makes all the more politically necessary the analysis of power relations in a given society.”²⁷ That power is an ever-present feature of associated life needs to be qualified by the recognition that forms of power vary wildly, depending on the demands of the society and the mechanisms it employs.

²⁵ Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” 790.

²⁶ Jacques Derrida, “The Politics of Friendship,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 85, no. 11 (1988), 634. Derrida makes this point in “The Politics of Friendship,” carrying what we are calling power relations (actions on the field of actions, or governing) to the dyadic form of an originary expression with a particular other. In the very act of addressing another, in the moment we begin to signify something to someone, we find we are already caught up in responsibility. In relating to others, “we are already taken or caught up, each and any one of us, in a kind of asymmetrical and heteronomous curvature of the social space, more precisely, in the relation to the other prior to any organized *socius*, to any determined ‘government’ to any ‘law.’ [...] Please note: prior to any determined law, as either natural law or positive law, but not prior to any law in general, because this heteronomous and asymmetrical curvature of a sort of originary sociality is a law, perhaps the very essence of law” (Derrida, 634). This address will also require some conditions for communicability. There must be norms of recognition, language, signs belonging to “anyone.” These conditions are Foucault’s focus, rather than dyadic connections to particular others. In either case, sociality is “governing.”

²⁷ Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” 791.

Furthermore, from the observation that power relations in general are necessary, it does not follow that the particular, established power relations in a society are necessary. We should distill a few of consequences from the conceptualization of power as a relational property that delimits the field of actions before proceeding to analyze how power operates in the school.

Power relations are always ongoing processes. Power is expressed in a determinable set of actions that affect other ones. There is no inert power nor any “substance” called power. Power is always in action. Indeed, Foucault says that power relations could be considered an ongoing result of relations of confrontation:

A relationship of confrontation reaches its term, its final moment (and the victory of one of the two adversaries) when stable mechanisms replace the free play of antagonistic reactions. Through such mechanisms one can direct in a fairly consistent manner and with reasonable certainty, the conduct of others.²⁸

Any relationship of open confrontation wishes to resolve into a power relationship, and power relationships can fail in one of two ways: when the persons directed by a power dynamic are reduced to complete impotence, or when a relationship of confrontation (re)emerges wherein the “governed” becomes an “adversary” aiming to set up a new way to govern--a new power relation.²⁹

This brings us to the second consequence of Foucault’s definition of power: situations of power only exist between agents. As we just observed, when one ceases to

²⁸ Ibid., 794.

²⁹ Cf. Georg Hegel, “Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage,” in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 111-119. Here Hegel begins with a theoretical construction of a dyadic relation between two structurally similar consciousnesses. A chief realization is that each needs the other in order to maintain and develop a sense of “self.” The relation fails when the confrontation between the two consciousnesses leads one to destroy the other. The relation needs to continue, and for that reason establishes norms that remain open to refinement and reversals.

act, we cannot identify a power relationship. There is an inalienable, and perhaps counterintuitive dependency of power on freedom. In contemplating power, one may be prone to thinking that when a person lives within a power dynamic, that person loses her freedom. Foucault would argue that power has an interest in preserving the ability to act, even encouraging actions from the governed, but only soliciting those actions designated appropriate. If one thinks of freedom as the ability to enact possibilities, to do some things and not do others, one needs to recognize that power simultaneously helps to enact possibilities and limits them. Power is often expressed in the designation of appropriate actions, the punishments for other actions, and the way actions are surveyed.

Foucault thinks that we live out of a relationship toward our power situation. Power not only limits the possibilities available to each of us, it also supports the conditions that are essential for self-actualization. For example, Foucault writes, “[m]astery and awareness of one’s own body can be acquired only through the effect of an investment of power in the body.”³⁰ One would not be able to achieve bodily awareness without public practices--exercises, muscle-building, aesthetic appreciation, sexual norms, discussions with others. All such public practices enter a domain established by power relations. Yet, as Foucault argues, “...once power produces this effect, there inevitably emerge responding claims [...] Power, after investing itself in the body, finds itself exposed to counterattack.”³¹ While this public domain is supported by in a situation of power, and we depend upon it to self-actualize, we also must take a stance regarding the power situation in which we find ourselves *thrown* (to borrow Heidegger’s parlance again).

³⁰ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 56.

³¹ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 56.

In summary, each of us is born into a history and into particular forms of “government.” The temporality of such governing forms does not coincide with the time of our lives; language, norms, and social groups predate our birth and will, in all likelihood, exceed our death. These distinct temporalities sustain each other: such governing forms can only be what they are as we take them up, yet we depend upon them to provide the conditions for meaningful engagement. We are “governed” by the organization of a field of “appropriate” actions that solicits “normal” behavior, and creates a realm of deviancy. We are not merely objects studied by power relations, we also are the vehicles of it, and are capable of amending it. If we follow Foucault in scrutinizing these facts, we will begin to see that the social environment organized in various institutions is not politically neutral territory, but rather a situation of power organized in support of a style of sociality. We will also see that the actual forms of implementation for a power relation could vary dramatically.

Now that we have a richer sense of power, I would like to return to discipline, the form of power that Foucault argues operates in the school and modern society at large. Foucault’s discussion of discipline continues to provide insight into the way that we are governed in the school. Discipline is not something that was invented by any single theorist or institution, but rather the unification and resonance of various techniques of control deployed across the breadth of distinctly modern social institutions: schools, hospitals, workplaces, prisons, military camps, etc.

The ‘invention’ of this new political anatomy must not be seen as a sudden discovery. It is rather a multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered location, which overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, [...] distinguish themselves from one another according to their

domain of application, converge and gradually produce the blueprint of a general method.³²

Though Foucault is clearly reluctant to credit anyone with the invention of discipline, he argues that Bentham articulates the blueprint for disciplinary technology. Bentham provides the articulation in the design of the Panopticon.

The Panopticon

Before turning specifically to the Panopticon and panoptic effects, it is important to establish the historical and political setting in which these first emerged. *Discipline and Punish* provides a chilling, detailed examination of how modern power relations emerged within the broad social and historical movement in Europe toward democratic societies. Foucault argues that, in the historical movement away from monarchical society toward republican governments (and the conjoining discourses establishing new conceptions of legitimacy and political liberty), there was an under-recognized countermovement manifested in novel forms of bodily control. For example Foucault argues that “the Roman model, at the Enlightenment, played a dual role: in its republican aspect, it was the very embodiment of liberty; in its military aspect, it was the ideal schema of discipline.”³³ Foucault traces a change in the methods of punishment that occurs over this period, and recognizes that techniques of coercion become the dominant model rather than the previous practice of spectacles of vengeance against transgressors. Coercion focused on methods for training the body “by the traces it leaves, in the form of habits, in behavior.”³⁴ These techniques of coercion are defended in moral arguments and

³² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 138.

³³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 146.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

codified in the legal systems, but Foucault is interested in understanding how they are put into practice. These developing techniques aim to constitute “the obedient subject, the individual subjected to habits, rules, order, an authority that is exercised continually around him and upon him, and which he must allow to automatically in him.”³⁵ In order to craft these obedient subjects, new, diffuse, and broad-reaching methods for controlling the behavior of members of society were established in the peculiarly modern institutions.

As a form of power, discipline is particularly effective because it begins to simultaneously expand the agency of the governed in terms of skills and possibilities, and to increase their domination by increasing the definition and adaptability of the limits of the field of appropriate action. Foucault recognizes that this double movement is the compelling force of disciplinary power, “[discipline] is ultimately dependent on the principle, which induces a genuinely new economy of power, that one must be able simultaneously both to increase the subjected forces and to improve the force and efficiency of that which subjects them.”³⁶ Whereas previous power relations merely increased the subjection of the governed, or reduced that constraint to allow the capacities of the governed to organically improve, discipline begins with the principle that the capacities of the governed can improve whilst the efficiency of that which directs them improves. Discipline has a distinct character as a form of power by systematically developing the field of actions for the subjected, and the ability to act on this field.

The model Foucault presents to conceptualize disciplinary power is an architectural construction for centralized inspection called “the Panopticon”--a design

³⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 128-129.

³⁶ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 104.

originally crafted by Jeremy Bentham.³⁷ Bentham imagined that the Panopticon would be particularly fitting for “penitentiary-houses,” yet it was described as “a new principle of construction applicable to any sort of establishment in which persons of any description are to be put under inspection,” including prisons, manufactories, asylums, poorhouses, hospitals and schools.³⁸ The basic schematic is succinctly described by Foucault:

Bentham’s Panopticon is the architectural figure of this composition. We know the principle on which it is based: at the periphery, an angular building; at the center, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy.³⁹

There are several aspects of this design that are worth examining in greater detail. Most significant for our purposes is the fact that within the Panopticon, each person’s time, space, and interpersonal relations are highly controlled beginning with the very architectural design. Indeed, Foucault is suggesting that this design alone accounts for a large degree of the governing of the target audience.⁴⁰

In the Panopticon, time is broken into a series of planned durations--from determining the total duration that one is meant to spend within the structure to determining the minute activities of a single day. Regular shifts for the supervisors and a

³⁷ Bentham, Jeremy. *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* Vol. 4, published by his executor John Bowring (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1838-1843). Pages 60-66 discuss the Panopticon’s applicability to the school.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 200.

⁴⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 202. Foucault argues that essentially any person whatsoever could be placed into the supervisor/supervised positions and the disciplinary effect could still take place. “[The Panopticon] automates and disindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up. [...] Consequently, it does not matter who exercises power. Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine” (Foucault, 202).

predetermined period of enclosure for the observed determine the length of each person's total stay within the structure. The duration of the custody of the observed would be determined in the social codes: inmates in prisons would have time proportional to the offense; patients in hospitals require time corresponding to the illness, and students are forced to remain in schools until a socially determined maturity. The supervisor's time spent in the institution is prepared in advance by employment contracts (another type of social code). Any variations throughout the day, week, or months follow prepared timetables. These timetables follow regular patterns, and create repetitive cycles of time. Furthermore, the Panopticon can be used for particular hours of the day or be implemented totally: "applied to [schools], you will find it capable of two very distinguishable degrees of extension:—It may be confined to the hours of study; or it may be made to fill the whole circle of time, including the hours of repose, and refreshment, and recreation."⁴¹ Bentham seems to indicate that all of a person's life activities could take place within a Panopticon. All these durations are fixed in advance, preventing anyone in the system from arbitrarily determining when they will act, and conditioning their very perception of time passing.

The Panopticon methodically prepares spatial arrangements within the central tower, within the cell, between these forms, and in relation to an exterior. Bentham imagines the tower has disguised entrances and exits, internal partitions between supervisors, and large windows (obscured from without by venetian blinds) facing all of the rooms. The cells are backlit by windows facing the outside, and have a massive window on the side of the cell facing the tower, which must remain unobstructed. The

⁴¹ Bentham, *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, 62.

cells are large enough for the necessary amenities (bed, toilet, etc.), but nothing beyond the essentials. Small cells allow the maximum number of rooms surrounding the central tower, which is set a secure distance from the cells and arranged so all of the cells are visible. The entire institution is for the most part closed in on itself, erecting walls around the ring of cells, and specifying the lines of approach and departure.

The interpersonal relations organized within the Panopticon are twofold: those inside the Panopticon are separated from each other, and the supervisors can always see the supervised, but the supervised can never see the supervisors. There are no windows between the cells occupied by each prisoner, nor are there windows in the internal partitions in the tower. Such “lateral invisibility [...] is a guarantee of order.”⁴² Specifically, lateral invisibility prevents disease from spreading between patients, prevents a plot from developing between inmates, or “if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time.”⁴³ From the perspective of a person in the cell, the only constant social relation is being on display for a central tower. Any other periodic social connections (instruction, punishment, chit-chat) are organized from the center and supervised. From the perspective of the tower, instead of a compact mass of bodies, there are a series of neatly ordered “cases” to witness and act upon.

The interpersonal relations between supervisor and subject are organized to undermine the typical dyad between seen/seers and seers/seen. Typically, when one witness another, the observer can themselves be seen; the observed at least has the possibility to reverse the gaze. Additionally, under normal circumstances either person could leaving the situation, and exit from the other’s visibility. Within the Panopticon this

⁴² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 200.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 201.

is impossible; the seers can never be seen and the seen can never hide. This effect is achieved by the design of the Panopticon. The cells are illuminated by light, and the window facing the tower must never be obstructed. In contrast, the windows of the tower are protected by venetian blinds, the entrance to the tower is outside the prisoner's view, and moving into an observational position must not require the opening of doors or changing of lights -nothing to hint at the presence of a supervisor.⁴⁴ The tower must always be visible from the cell, but the actual presence of any observer needs to be unverifiable for the observed. The audience should have no indication whether or not they are presently being watched, and constantly aware of the possibility of being seen. This structural element is responsible for "the major effect of panopticism: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and perpetual visibility."⁴⁵ The perpetual possibility of being seen, Foucault argues, creates an "anxious awareness"⁴⁶ of being observed that leads the observed to constrain his own action.⁴⁷

This last element, the anxiousness experienced by the perpetually observed, leads to the efficiency of the panoptic schema. The Panopticon could simultaneously reduce the number of supervisors, reduce the frequency of deploying physical force and violent intervention, while increasing the size of target audience and better controlling the behaviors of everyone supervised. This is because it enlisted the observed persons into

⁴⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 202

⁴⁷ Bartky, Sandra Lee, "Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," in Sterba, James, *Social and Political Philosophy: Classical Western Texts in Feminist and Multicultural Perspectives*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003), pages 477-491. Bartky criticizes Foucault for insufficiently scrutinizing the particular power relations that produce feminine bodies.

the policing practice. The Panopticon incentivizes the observed to self-police. Foucault insists:

“He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.”

The Panopticon ultimately establishes an internalization of the principles that surround the target audience. It causes the observed to cooperate with the values and norms of the institution, and to adopt the enforcement of these principles towards oneself. The anxiety of knowing one may constantly be judged, leads the condemned to flee into the safety of conformity, and actively remain there. The Panopticon gains in efficiency by penetrating into a person’s behavior: it is internalized. A few supervisors can produce the effect of normalization in a large audience as a result.

The panoptic principles can even be carried to higher orders, by subjecting the supervisors to similar observation from a director, and then having inspectors or the public critique the directors. Within the central tower a director could spy on the supervisors. He could discreetly enter a central position in the tower, so that the supervisors would never know whether they were in fact under his gaze. He could impose and enforce a particular regime of “best practice” on his employees, and from his unverifiable observation he could ensure that it is being implemented.⁴⁸ Furthermore the director himself could be supervised. “An inspector arriving unexpectedly at the centre of the Panopticon will be able to judge at a glance, without anything being concealed from

⁴⁸ Bentham, *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, 65. Bentham imagined the Panopticon would be the ideal site for implementing social experiments. In one school, for example, “two and two could here be less than five, or the moon might be made of green cheese” and if you bring students of various schools of thought together after 20 or 25 years “you will see good sport” (Bentham, 65).

him, how the entire establishment is functioning.”⁴⁹ Such an inspector could deliver reports on the efficiency of the director and return with reforms, rewards or punishments as necessary. Indeed, any panoptic institution could be opened to any member of the society -an openness which ensures that “the disciplinary mechanism will be democratically controlled.”⁵⁰ In this way, the Panopticon is able to apply its own principles to higher levels of supervision. A person in any position in the Panopticon must be aware of the unverifiable possibility of being subjected to the surveilling gaze.

These orders of supervision help to elaborate a central tension that gives the Panopticon its particular character as a form of control: it makes the individuals inside the system vehicles for the application of power, and objects for a body of knowledge. The central positions and peripheral cells are linked by an uninterrupted supervision. This supervision is not only utilized to effectively administer judgments (in the form of punishments or rewards), it also leads to a record, the creation of a body of knowledge: “an uninterrupted work of writing links the center and periphery.”⁵¹ Supervisors take copious records of the collective events and the individual movements of those beneath them in the hierarchy. This allows experiments to be rigorously compared, permits slightly different distributions to be analyzed, and sanctions the “objective” classification of individuals. Foucault stresses the importance of this double movement:

“what was new, in the eighteenth century, was that, by being combined and generalized, they attained a level at which the formation of knowledge and the increase of power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process. At this point the disciplines crossed the ‘technological’ threshold.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 204.

⁵⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 207

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 224.

A perpetually refined classification of individuals and an ongoing analysis of the structures of segmentation are established in the Panopticon to record the fabrication of self-disciplined, useful individuals. These objects of knowledge and vehicles of enforcement could be the perfect cogs in a mechanistic, technologized vision of society.

The hope that Bentham describes regarding the implementation of this design attests of its imagined import:

What would you say, if by the gradual adoption and diversified application of this single principle, you should see a new scene of things spread itself over the face of civilized society?—morals reformed, health preserved, industry invigorated, instruction diffused, public burthens lightened, economy seated as it were upon a rock, the gordian knot of the poor-laws not cut but untied—all by a simple idea in architecture?⁵³

Bentham sees a utopian potential contained within this panoptic design. Instead of dark dungeons and torture chambers we could have bright, well-ordered institutions. If we spread the panoptic principles throughout the social body, the darkness that permits immorality could be replaced by a perpetual visibility, a total publicness, in which social norms would be perpetually enforced--even internally willed!

Perhaps the Panopticon is well understood as a self-enclosed, ideal, utopian construct, but it still must not be considered a mere fantasy. Foucault offers the Panopticon as a generalized model for defining power relations. “[The Panopticon] is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning abstracted from any obstacle [...] it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use.”⁵⁴ The Panopticon is the ideal type of a disciplinary institution, and requires “diversified application” in order to spread across society. Its

⁵³ Bentham, *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, 66.

⁵⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 205.

optic form must be translated as it is actualized, in order to accommodate resistances and match the particular behaviors desired.

Bentham insists that the Panopticon can be applied through a process of translation to any institution. This polyvalence is a key feature: “[i]t can in fact be integrated to any function (education, medical treatment, production, punishment); it can increase the effect of this function by being linked closely with it.”⁵⁵ In any situation where one is dealing with a mass of bodies expected to perform a particular task or behave in a certain way, panoptic principles may be implemented to individualize, instruct, and supervise the crowd.

Among the polyvalent applications imagined for the Panopticon is the instruction of schoolchildren. Foucault remarks, for example, that a “relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed in the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism inherent to it and which increases its efficiency.”⁵⁶ The power relations of the Panopticon are seamlessly able to merge with the practice of formal education.

The Panopticon is the ideal model for disciplinary society. This structure meticulously segments the space, time, and interpersonal relations of the various supervisors and observed persons within it. The Panopticon is chiefly a machine for dissociating the typical reciprocity between seeing and being seen. This leads the target of disciplinary power to simultaneously become a vehicle for discipline, and an object for a centralized body of knowledge. The target is coerced into internalizing the norms and values of the institution. Furthermore, the Panopticon can provide the mechanisms for its

⁵⁵ Ibid., 206.

⁵⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 176.

own enforcement, by subjecting the observers to the panoptic principle--ultimately leading to a publically supervised, yet largely self-enclosed institution. Bentham's architectural design can be translated to increase the effects and efficiency of various social practices. I will now investigate how the panoptic form emerged and continues to operate in direct connection to the school.

Disciplinary Schooling and Docility

Perhaps, at the end of our discussion of the Panopticon, the reader will think that we are very removed from any actual school. No school that I have ever witnessed is designed with teachers in a central tower and students locked into a ring of cells. Students in a public school are not entirely separated from their peers, and teachers are visible before the students. Administrators have their desks in front offices, not the dark center of a tower. Yet, Foucault argues that the Panopticon is a pure optic form, necessarily detached from any particular practice in order to provide an image or a blueprint of power relations devoid of any particular application.⁵⁷ It is useful for demonstrating the constituent aspects of disciplinary power: segmentation/individuation, publicness/supervision, points of application/objects of knowledge, and internalization/self-application. These *do* remain features of the school. In fact, the Panopticon is partially inspired by disciplinary techniques developed in 18th century pedagogy.

Foucault argues that, beginning in the 18th century, schools applied regulations and empirical methods to control and correct the behavior of the body in unprecedented ways. He acknowledges that "in every society, the body was in the grip of very strict

⁵⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 205.

powers,” but the techniques that began to develop in schools in the 18th century had a distinct form and invasiveness not previously realized.⁵⁸ The scale of control had never before been so expansive and exacting as to affect the movements, gestures, and attitudes of the body. It had never before been organized into a constant coercion that supervises the activity, in addition to the results, of bodily practices. Unlike previous methods of control, “[discipline] is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement.”⁵⁹ The organization of time in the school, the design of spaces for students to occupy, and the instructed movements of the body are hereafter subjected to constant supervision and refinement. I will explore each of these elements in turn.

The school segments time in several ways. First, there is a binary division of time that accompanies the school: the time of instruction and the time of mastery. This separates the totality of one’s life into two periods. “It is this disciplinary time that was gradually imposed on pedagogical practice -specializing the time of training and detaching it from the adult time.”⁶⁰ By organizing social life into an explicitly educative period and a period of practice, the school begins to segment the totality of one’s life into two distinct durations.⁶¹ This division creates a standing danger that society may consider the former period to be the unique time of learning, covering-over the educative dimensions of the other vital parts of life (work, romance, hobbies, dying, etc.).

⁵⁸ Ibid, 136.

⁵⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 137.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 159.

⁶¹ Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Marion Boyars, 1970), page 26-28. Ivan Illich briefly analyzes this binary division and argues that the age-specific aspect of mandatory schooling is formative of our modern understanding of “childhood,” yet the justifications for age grouping in the school typically depend on under-examined premises regarding the essence of children. In effect, such arguments defending the school based on a concept of “the child” beg the question.

Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the adult period of time and the time of childhood could lead students to consider their education as an arbitrary obstacle detached from their life experience.

Disciplinary time also creates a plethora of fixed durations inside the practice of schooling. Graduation rituals identify the movement of students from one level to another. For example, I had a graduation ceremony between elementary school and middle school, between middle and high, upon completing high school, and soon upon completion of my B.A. Another duration is centered around grading: there are semesters (or trimesters, or quarters) into which instruction and examination is grouped. There is a detailed curricula that expects the student to learn (and the teacher to teach) the subject matter at a regular rate determined by the institution to produce the efficient development of skills and knowledge. “Draw up series of series; lay down for each individual according to his level, his seniority, his rank, the exercises that are suited to him. [...] At the end of each series, others begin.”⁶² The curricula introduces new material to students in a prepared unfolding. In my high school, for example, students generally studied biology during the freshman year, chemistry during the sophomore year, and physics following upon the completion of chemistry. The school creates periods of time centered around grading and advancing students through a prepared curriculum.

Time reaches its most specialized organization in the form of timesheets or, in the parlance of the school, according to the class schedule. These are old devices with a legacy in the monastic tradition. Timesheets (and other cyclical schedules) serve three important methods: “[to] establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the

⁶² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 158-159.

cycles of repetition.”⁶³ The school day is separated by the ringing of bells to indicate as efficiently as possible to the entire student body a change in activities. The bell could mark the end of a long school day or the beginning of an exciting one. It could usher students out to the playground or into chemistry class. There no mystery in it, however, as regular and detailed timetables will have prepared students, teachers, and administrators for that day’s unfolding. Foucault gives the example of such a timetable in the Ecoles mutuelles in the early nineteenth century: “8.45 entrance of the monitor, 8.52 the monitor’s summons, 8.56 entrance of the children and prayer, 9.00 the children go to their benches, 9.04 first slate, 9.08 end of dictation, 9.12 second slate, etc.”⁶⁴ Such a timeline regarding the entrance of students to school would not be out of place in the public schools that I attended, especially when morning assemblies were held (with the exception of designated prayer).

Space in the school is first organized by the establishment of the campus. The premises are enclosed; visitors need to obtain special permission to enter, and if an unknown person entered the campus without permission it would likely cause a lockdown. The enclosed campus stands in contrast to the rest of the town by enforcing unique rules and regulations. The campus will typically enforce prohibitions on smoking and alcohol, for example. Foucault observes that the enclosed model was gradually imposed in “the *colleges*, or secondary schools, [...] and boarding appeared as the most perfect, if not the most frequent, educational regime.”⁶⁵ With boarding the enclosure of students in the school could be made perpetual. While boarding is not the prevalent

⁶³ Ibid., 149.

⁶⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 150.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 142.

model today, the enclosure of the campus is typically enforced even in the absence of students.

Secondly, school establishes various functional spaces within the campus. These spaces have their own boundaries, means of supervision, norms, and purposes. The playground is bounded at the periphery to prevent the free-range of students, and is designed with smaller functional regions: the blacktop, the basketball hoops, the play-structure, the open field, etc. The classroom erects its own boundaries (walls, windows, doors), and its own smaller regions (the front of the class is nearly sacrosanct space reserved for the instructor). Each person is expected to maintain a behavior appropriate to his or her current functional space. Young students may need to be reminded that they are not on the playground anymore if they return from recess and are unruly. Foucault indicates that these functional sites “were defined to correspond not only to the need to supervise, to break dangerous communications, but also to create a useful space.”⁶⁶ The hallway, cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium, and principal’s office are all different functional spaces; each serves a specific use: directing persons between places, eating, exercising, listening, or confessing. These spaces do not merely limit the activity of students (by preventing aberrant behavior), but entice activity from them (in the “appropriate” use of the space).

The school even shapes the relationships between students and objects. Foucault describes “body-object articulations” that code the behavior of the body to pair with particular instruments. In the school, one is typically “paired” to a desk during instruction. The student is assigned a desk that they cannot leave without permission. He

⁶⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 144.

is expected to sit upright, to keep his feet on the floor, to avoid fidgeting, and to keep his head erect. Through these behaviors, the student's body is brought into correlation with the inanimate desk.

Foucault gives the additional example of writing with a pen. "Good handwriting [...] presupposes a gymnastics--a while routine whose rigorous code invests the body in its entirety, from the points of the feet to tip of the index finger."⁶⁷ Teaching a student handwriting, involves coordinating the entire body. The writer needs to have the proper posture. She should plant her feet, square her shoulders, calm her breathing, fix her gaze to the page, keep her stomach from pressing into the table, surround the base of the pen with two fingers and the thumb, and repeat the necessary motions of the arm to produce letters. Disciplining the body is an essential precondition for these efficient gestures.

Quoting a work of pedagogy written by Jean-Baptiste de La Salle published in 1701, Foucault uncovers an early articulation of similar postural demands for handwriting. La Salle also says that "the teacher will place pupils in the posture that they should maintain when writing, and will correct it either by sign or otherwise, when the change position."⁶⁸ Teachers need to supervise the activity of the body throughout the whole duration of the exercise. The operations of the body become the object of this new power relation, not merely the results. Production and signification are subjected, not just products and signs. This requires an efficient distribution of desks and the necessary instruments (writing utensils in this example), so that a teacher can see at a glance that the exercise is being carried out by all of the students in an orderly fashion.

⁶⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 152.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 152.

Why describe in such detail the spatial, temporal, and instrumental relations in the school? Foucault argues that these produce “docile bodies.” Situating students in such an environment allows for the development of their capacities, while guaranteeing the students organize these skills toward the aims of the institution. “Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience).”⁶⁹ Students obey the functions designated for each space, are habituated to skillful and proper behavior through the repetition and division of time, and pair with the instruments provided by the institution. These practices increase the aptitudes of the students in a controlled, observed setting, and the domination of them likewise increases. They cannot decide the ends of their activity nor meaningfully alter the environment in which they are situated. These useful, docile students are not yet the final product of a disciplinary regime, they are merely prepared for the interpersonal functions that make the Panopticon such an effective instrument of training.

Correct Training of Students

Foucault argues that the spatial, temporal, and instrumental relations in the school begin the process of disciplining students by increasing their capacities, while preventing them from acting upon the environment, or even facing it as a structure worth questioning. These aspects of the school actualize the panoptic form of segmenting space, time, and objects into a controlled field of activity that produces docility. Yet, we have only begun to introduce the interpersonal elements that Foucault argues are co-responsible for the investment of behaviors into individual bodies. In the school, the interpersonal disciplinary techniques are largely executed according to two mutually

⁶⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 138.

informing mechanisms: hierarchical observation and normalizing judgment. Hierarchical observation and normalizing judgment reproduce the panoptic form of surveilling and, as necessary, punishing the observed.⁷⁰ Beginning with a discussion of observation and connecting it to judgment, we will begin to see how these processes normalize student behavior.

In order to efficiently understand and affect the student body, a system of observation needed to be established to penetrate the entire collective and to survey the behavior of each individual body. Ideally, this structural model would allow a single point to witness everything, as the tower at the center of the Panopticon watches the cells, but Foucault observes that in practice observation and recording needed relays.⁷¹ For this reason a pyramidal system of surveillance was established that ran from numerous thoroughly-observed students at the base to a few publicly accountable administrators at the top. In this process, social relations were vertically structured in tiers, with students at the base, teachers above them, and various administrators above the teachers. Each tier had ‘cases’ below them to watch and record, except for the students at the very base of the structure. Extrapolating from Foucault’s observations, we could extend this hierarchical pyramid to the national level today. Information collected about student performance at the base of this structure is destined for the highest government offices. Similarly judgments from these offices can carry back down the hierarchy to alter the practices surrounding individual students. The hierarchy of observation of the school

⁷⁰ It is worth considering that the original French title of *Discipline and Punish* was *Surveiller et Punir*. This could be translated “Supervise and Punish,” and such a translation could be advantageous in that, according to my reading of Foucault, these practices are the constitutive elements of “discipline.” The translators note that ‘surveiller’ has no English equivalent. They suggest surveillance, inspect, observe as other possible translations, but none carry the same range of associations. Foucault himself suggested *Discipline and Punish*.

⁷¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 174.

begins to be ordered into such a hierarchy in order to achieve a centralized understanding of the persons and practices within the institution.

Awareness of the perpetual possibility of being observed by other bodies begins the process of disciplining. Everyone in the school system learns that they are supervised by those “above” them, and that they could be observed to a certain extent laterally and to a limited degree from “below.” The greater the possibility of being subjected to surveilling gazes, the greater is the person’s “anxious awareness of being observed.”⁷² Students, at the bottom of the established hierarchy have this surveilling gaze most strongly positioned toward them. Feeling this anxious awareness in their bodies, those in the visible field do not cease acting altogether, but limit their behavior to what is considered appropriate by the institution.⁷³ This project of centralized observation created a pyramid of distributed bodies and concerted gazes, so that the structure in-total made the school a place of perpetual visibility.⁷⁴

The process of observation alone does not produce the disciplinary effect of these social relations, it is coupled with an incisive interpersonal penal mechanism: normalizing judgment. This judgment is accomplished through a polemic system of gratification and punishment. Rewards or punishments almost exclusively flow down the hierarchy and are limited in the other direction. Consider for a possible counterexample a students’ evaluations of their teacher at the end of a semester. One will observe that these

⁷² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 202.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. Foucault, Michel, et al. “The Eye of Power” in *Power/Knowledge* (Random House: New York, 1980), 157-158. Though there is a highest office in this pyramid social structure, Foucault insists that it is the apparatus, and not any particular office, that establishes its power: “Although it is true that its pyramidal organization gives it a head, it is the apparatus as a whole that produces ‘power’ and distributes individuals in this permanent and continuous field.”

evaluations in themselves cannot affect the teacher; they merely serve as data for administrators to consider when reviewing teachers. Thus, even in student evaluations, data is being collected from those lower in the structure for persons above them. Students at the bottom of this hierarchy are constantly susceptible to judgment, teachers are judged regularly by peers and administrators, administrators are primarily susceptible to judgment from those higher in the constructed order, superintendents and the highest state offices are ultimately judged by the public.

The judgments passed down in the institution are themselves objects to be observed and recorded. By recording the distribution of punishments and rewards, previously discontinuous acts are transformed into a field of behavior that is quantified and recorded, thus the school becomes

...subject to a whole micro-penalty of time (lateness, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behavior (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body ('incorrect attitudes, [...] lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency).⁷⁵

The collection of mass data of the student's behavior transformed the school into an attentive, punitive environment. Many previously insignificant dimensions of student behavior could now be examined and targeted for exercises. Exercise is the preferred means of "punishing" those who are found deviant.⁷⁶ A reduplicated insistence on the correct actions was favored over exacting revenge or demanding repentance. The extensive data of punishments and rewards allowed for the analysis of general trends, collective events, and widespread practices in the school. Thus, the observation and

⁷⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 178.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 180.

judgment that spread through social institutions serves more than a negative function, it constructs standards of behavior.

The rigorous observation and judgment passed down in schools and other disciplinary institutions combine to create what a new “power of the Norm.”⁷⁷ In short, the dual practice of observing and judging the students had the effect of normalizing them. By rigorously tracking and quantifying awards and debits assigned to individuals for their conduct, one can “objectively” differentiate between the individuals themselves. The mass data of this judging observation allows individuals to be compared to a ‘whole’ --the typical conduct of all. Individuals can then be differentiated according to their relationship to an average determined by the projects of the disciplinary institution. “The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*.”⁷⁸ Students are systematically compared and differentiated according to how well they can take up the behaviors expected of them by those above them in the hierarchy. Abnormal, average, and exemplary acts are established “above” students. The students internalize these norms (typically without a conceptual understanding of this arrangement), as they are forced to behave better than a designated minimum threshold, to respect an average of achievement, and to strive for an optimum.⁷⁹ As a result abnormal, average and exemplary *individuals* are constituted. Students develop their values within this normalizing environment.

⁷⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 184.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 183 (emphasis in the original).

⁷⁹ The struggle to reach for an optimum and to respect an average stigmatizes the overachiever and the average student alike.

The normalization effect contributes to Foucault's demand for a reconceptualization of the effects of power in general. Foucault thinks that power should not be conceptualized primarily in negative terms. It should not be said that power primarily excludes, represses, or censors. Although at times it does all of these, the primary effect of power is positive: "power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production."⁸⁰ By systematically treating each individual body in the school as an instrument for the exercise of training, and as objects to measure the success of training, disciplinary power actually fabricates the individual through a coordination of interpersonal, temporal, spatial, and object relations. This network of relations holds together, and counter-intuitively creates bodies that are seen as self-standing, atomistic individuals.

Summary

Following Foucault, I have argued that students necessarily live and develop their identities within a system power relations, and the school is a privileged site where disciplinary power shapes the behavior of the enclosed persons. The model of power relations that dominates in the school and in modern society at large is the Panopticon. This design organizes functional places, segments time into various periods, provides exercises with accompanying instruments, and enforces an interpersonal hierarchy in order to create docile bodies. Furthermore, it acts on these bodies through observation and judgment (especially during exercises and examinations) in order to normalize them. Docility and training create the characteristic effects of panopticism: individuation, total

⁸⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 194.

publicness, internalization, and the intersection of points of application and objects of knowledge.

Through a reading of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, I have demonstrated various ways that the school operates as a disciplinary institution. As any form of power, it creates a field of "normality" that conditions and limits the socialization of students. What distinguishes this form of power from previous power relations, is that it systematically increases the force of the subjected persons, and the forces that subject them. This is accomplished through a technologizing of power relations: transforming human behavior into an exact science to be both implemented and studied. The model for this form of power is the Panopticon--an architectural design that segments time, space, objects and the distribution of persons in order to enclose bodies under the perpetual possibility of judging gazes. The school enacts the form of the Panopticon by implementing spatial, temporal, and instrumental divisions to create "docile bodies." These docile students are then interpersonally positioned at the base of a hierarchical pyramid of observation and judgment in order to train them efficiently into self contained individuals. In total, these practices normalize students -completing the internalization and self-policing characteristic of the Panopticon.

While Foucault masterfully discusses the ways in which our behavior is shaped by technologies of discipline, drawing upon a wealth of historical research, his argument depends upon some experiential presuppositions for which he cannot account. These presuppositions will be the my point of departure for the next chapter of the thesis. Foucault discusses the circulation of power, without discussing the experiences of the agents that become the vehicle for these relations. His analysis remains at the level of

social and historical practices, yet it appeals to certain capacities of the body that cannot be accounted for within the analysis. Foucault argues that power invests itself in an active body, but this activity is not explored from the perspective of the body. Why does the arrangement of space and time in the school produce docility? What is it like to develop habits of behavior? Why does the perpetual possibility of being looked at produce anxiety and alienation? Exploring this direction of questions seems essential for developing a complete picture of panoptic schooling.

CHAPTER 2

STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND THE SCHOOL

“Our view of man will remain superficial so long as we fail to go back to that origin [of silence], [...] and as long as we do not describe the action which breaks this silence. The spoken word is a gesture, and its meaning, a world.”⁸¹

The concept of discipline effectively explains many of the internal relations of the school. It accounts for the school’s close segmentation and seriation of time, space, and movement. Disciplinary schooling cultivates functional places, organizes durations of time, pairs the body with instruments and supervises the activity of the body as it goes through exercises and examinations. The school organizes the activity of its students against a background of hierarchical observation and judgement. Foucault argues that all of these practices are co-responsible for “disciplining” the bodies of the enclosed persons. Such disciplined bodies are anxiously aware of the perpetual possibility of being observed, and exist in total publicness. The disciplined body is tied to its individuality and separated from others like it. This body is simultaneously an object for a field knowledge and a vehicle for the application of norms. The disciplined body internalizes the values of the institution and imposes them on itself. In sum, the disciplined body is docile and well-trained.

Foucault argues for all of these positions through historical analysis on the level of social theory, but his argument depends upon numerous presuppositions of embodied behavior. The pairing of the body with instruments, the sedimentation of habits through

⁸¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald Landes, (New York: Routledge, 2012)

repetition, and the anxious awareness under the panoptic gaze are all bodily mediated practices that are necessary for discipline to function, but the origins of these practices are not yet justified within Foucault's analysis. These unaccounted for forms of behavior are central to Foucault's argument that disciplinary schooling promotes the institutionally sanctioned uses of the body thereby increasing its skills, and reduces the body's autonomy and creativity thereby increasing its docility. Since Foucault's analysis is focused on social practices and historical developments, he does not include a substantial analysis of embodiment which could account for these forms of behavior. I will be arguing that while social practices are surely constitutive of the norms of our time, our corporeality also delimits normality.

Exploring these presupposed forms of behavior requires an approach that is attentive to the lived experience of the students. Phenomenology offers this approach. Phenomenology is both a movement in the history of philosophy and a method of describing phenomena in a lived, first-person manner. By examining some key phenomenological concepts, I will extend our understanding of disciplinary schooling into the lived experience of students. The phenomenologists I will consider in this chapter are Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty; though these thinkers are not in complete agreement with each other, the concepts used in this reflection share a common commitment to describing practical human experiences. This critique enriches the foundations of Foucault's argument, and allows us to identify the irreducible value of the concept of discipline.

Before setting out on this new course, however, I should note that Foucault was highly critical of certain strains of phenomenology. He maintained that the movement

largely argued on the basis of a constituting consciousness or transcendental subject, which Foucault thinks is a fallacious starting point.⁸² In the beginning of *Discipline and Punish* he warns:

[from disciplinary technology] various concepts have been constructed and domains of analysis carved out: psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc.; [from discipline] have been built scientific techniques and discourses, and the moral claims of humanism.”⁸³

Thus, Foucault thinks that the contemporary understanding of “the soul” (consciousness, subjectivity, psyche, and similar non-corporeal duplications of the body) is an effect of disciplinary training and supervision. “The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body.”⁸⁴ It is the history of *this* prison that Foucault wants to write in the first place. Since the concept of subjectivity has a history, the processes that create subjectivity need to be analyzed and arguments that presuppose a transcendental subject should be bracketed.⁸⁵

While there are strains of phenomenology that are guilty of presupposing a subject and transcendental categories, this criticism does not exhaustively apply to

⁸² Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (New York: Vintage House, 1980), page 117.

⁸³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977), page 29.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁵ John Dewey, “The Individual and the World” in *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, (New York: The Free Press, 1944), pages 291-305. Here Dewey argues that the idea of a transcendental mind has created numerous problematic models for education. Dewey argues that equating the individual with ‘mind’ as an entity complete in-itself and separated from nature and other minds creates the false question: “Given egoistic consciousness, how can action which has regard for others take place?” (297). Four typical responses to this question result in educational practice: (i) appeals to authority, emphasis is placed on the authority of book and teacher, individual variation is limited, (ii) appeals to logic and abstract reason, focused on securing agreement among individuals by appeal to ready-made rules and principles, irrespective of the true correlation between the dispositions of individuals, (iii) appeals to the rational self-interest of individual minds in order to secure outward continuity of actions, doling out pleasurable rewards and painful punishments, (iv) individual minds become rational by absorbing historical and natural content, resulting in institutional idealism focused on conforming minds to the objective Reason of the state.

phenomenology. The center of the phenomenological tradition is a commitment to describing the experience of actively belonging to the world. There are phenomenologists in this vein who argue that “[t]he real is to be described, and neither constructed nor constituted.”⁸⁶ Detailed descriptions of the practices through we navigate the world provide a sufficient basis for philosophical reflection--without needing to appeal to a constituting consciousness or subject. For example:

Heidegger describes what goes on in our everyday skillful coping with things and people and how we are socialized into a shared world. [...] [He] finds that the only ground for the intelligibility of thought and action that we have or need is in the everyday practices themselves.⁸⁷

Such descriptive, practice-centered phenomenologies avoid the major criticism Foucault raises against the tradition, and offer an approach that can explore the active engagement of the students. This type of phenomenology allows us to more fully grasp the roots of disciplinary pedagogy.

Foucault’s critical social theory and phenomenology both focus on the behavior of embodied actors, but they organize their observations with different ends in mind. Foucault undertakes a genealogical analysis of particular forms of behavior; he tries to understand their historical roots and political functions. In contrast, phenomenology examines how particular forms of conduct contribute to a personal relationship with meaning. More specifically, phenomenological analysis often focuses on understanding how particular styles of behavior contribute to personal ways of coping with his others and objects, thereby making oneself “at-home” in the world.⁸⁸ Since discipline and

⁸⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, page xxiii.

⁸⁷ Herbert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall, *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 2.

⁸⁸ For a synthesis of various phenomenological investigations of “home,” see Jacobson, Kirsten. “The Experience of Home and the Space of Citizenship,” in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 48, Issue

phenomenology have a similar commitment to studying behavior, they can be brought into a mutually informing analysis.

There are at least three embodied practices presupposed for the functioning of discipline. Discipline relies on “body-instrument pairings.” Such a relationship to instruments is more fully explored through Heidegger’s conceptualization of the “ready-to-hand,” a term for the way in which instruments are most closely encountered. This discussion reveals that, phenomenologically speaking, instruments become transparent to a skilled user deploying them to accomplish a task. Second, discipline presupposes that repetitive and seriated actions create habits in the bodies of the actor. Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of the habit-body provides an account of the sedimentation of habits, and the body’s reliance on formed habits. Discipline also requires the production of an “anxious awareness” under the perpetual possibility of supervision.⁸⁹ Sartre describes such an anxiety producing experience through “the Look” in *Being and Nothingness*. This concept helps to account for vulnerability and interdependence that accompanies embodiment.

Exploring these presupposed behaviors opens another direction that needs to be explored to understand disciplinary schooling more fully--specifically, an examination of schooling should develop a concern for the students’ experience of making a home in the world. This direction of analysis and Foucault’s social theory appear to be mutually

3 (2010), pages 219-230. The phenomenological concept “being-at-home” presents an organizing principle for explaining individual behavior that is as rigorous as discipline is for explaining institutional organization. Unfortunately, it is outside of the scope of my current argument to fully develop the concept in a way that does justice to its complexity.

⁸⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 202.

informing, expanding the concept of discipline and uncovering its irreducible value for an understanding of modern pedagogy.

Body Instrument Articulations

In chapter 1, I argued that disciplinary schooling pairs the body with instruments in the process of instructing them. A student's assigned desk provides an example for how the student should direct his body. The student is expected to fix himself in place with his feet on the floor and head erect, mirroring the inanimate desk in which he sits. Additionally, the pen provides an example of the way that a coordinated movement needs to be drawn out of the entire body of the student in harmony with the utensil, in order to produce good handwriting. Foucault argues that the instruments and body of the student become paired in these forms of behavior, but does not explore the first person experience of such hitch-free deployment of equipment. Heidegger phenomenologically interrogates this very experience in *Being and Time*.

Heidegger observes that when a person uses an object, it is encountered in a way that is qualitatively different from examining it. If a student examines her pen, for example, she can experience it as an object with many qualities. The pen may then be encountered as something colorful, smooth, and capable of a light clicking sound when the top is pressed. When using the pen, however, it is experienced very differently. In fact, when one deploys the pen in writing, it does not make sense to say that one encounters the pen as an independent object at all. Rather than as an independent object, the pen is encountered as something *with which* I write, *in order to* convey my thoughts, *towards* a more complete understanding of the subject matter, and *for the sake of* being a

writer.⁹⁰ This is to say that the pen-in-use is encountered through a series of practical relations.

Heidegger argues that instruments put to use are encountered in a manner that he calls “ready-to-hand.” Consider the example of hammering:

The less that we just stare at the hammer-thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is -as equipment. The hammering itself uncovers the specific ‘manipulability’ of the hammer.⁹¹

While engaged in the skillful manipulation of equipment, it does not “appear” as an object, rather, it structures our involvement in our current task. The hammering, or writing is shaped by the instrument deployed, but that instrument does not appear to the writer or the hammerer while it is in use. While the instrument does not appear as an object, Heidegger argues that this is a “more primordial” way to encounter the instrument, because it reveals a rich practice to us. Only by using the instrument does the nexus of relations that is established by putting the pen into use emerge.

This phenomenological account of equipment confirms that the body can pair with instruments, but it contains some new implications as well. Discipline delimits what type of equipment will be available for students to deploy, thereby controlling an essential factor of how the students will encounter meaning in the world. Yet equipment only takes on its function to the extent that it is deployed by the students. This would put a small, but important new emphasis on the pairing of the body with instruments: pairing with instruments is irreducibly a power of the student’s body. Foucault’s point of

⁹⁰ See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1962), pages 97-102. The italicized words are constituent elements of *readiness-to-hand*; Heidegger argues that any instrument is implicated in a the same series of relations.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

emphasis is on the social relation. In the school, students are not free to select the instruments they will encounter, nor to deploy them in creative ways. They are meant to learn the “normal” way to deploy equipment and they are regularly punished for failing to do so. Yet, since skillfully pairing with equipment is a feature of our embodiment, a power structure cannot unilaterally proscribe the use of equipment or the lessons that will be gleaned by deploying it. We get a more complete picture of the body’s use of instruments by exploring the body’s development of habits, which Merleau-Ponty calls “the power [...] of altering our existence through incorporating new instruments.”⁹²

Sedimentation of the Habit-Body

Discipline is a form of power that seeks to control individuals by the “traces” that it leaves in them, in the form of habits of behavior.⁹³ Foucault argued that repetitive and seriated exercises of the body of the student will form habits. Once these habits are formed are they need to be resistant to changes, and directive of future projects if they are going to continue to discipline individuals. Yet, in order to say that exercises leave traces in the body, one must acknowledge that the body is capable of sedimenting forms of behavior into habit. This rhetorical shift provides new investigative opportunities. Foucault does not explore the significance of forming habits from the student’s perspective. Discipline relies on habitual traces in the body, but we have yet to explore what habits are and how they direct us.

Merleau-Ponty provides significant insights into the sedimentation of habits and their significance in directing a person’s life. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, he locates

⁹² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 145.

⁹³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 131.

the habitual body as a significant part of one's experience of the world. For example, each perceptive act uncovers a habitual body schema "behind" the perception.

My perceptual act [...] benefits from work already completed, from a general synthesis constituted once and for all. This is what I express by saying that I perceive with my body or with my senses, my body and my senses being precisely this habitual knowledge of the world, this implicit or sedimented science.⁹⁴

Each particular perceptual experiences testifies to a synthesis that has already take place in the form of a sedimented system of habit. Habitual knowledge of the world is always already underway when one has a particular perception of the world. Consider, for example, waking up in a strange room. At first, I may attempt to see the familiar objects of my habitual sleeping space. This has me feeling disoriented. The strange room does not accept my habitual expectations of how my bed is oriented or where the exit is. However, once I adopt a more passive schema of expectations, objects emerge. At once the bed and the exit appear in clarity. This brief but common experience testifies to the existence of habitual expectations.

Habits are patterns of bodily movement that demonstrate the general frameworks of meaning with which I engage the world. The example of handwriting above demonstrated that instruments become phenomenologically transparent in our involved activity; they do not appear as objects in my experience. In such habitually involved activity, one will notice that my body does not appear as an object either. When writing with the pen, the ongoing task requires movements of the instrument and movements of my body, yet as I write, I do not need to constantly consider the positioning of my arms or movements of my wrists. Similarly, playing a sport requires a dynamic set of motor

⁹⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 247.

skills that, once developed, can be utilized unreflectively. Such a set of skills even open opportunities for engaging in the sport in ways that were previously inaccessible.⁹⁵ By establishing a habit, I institute “a certain style of motor responses” for engaging with the world.⁹⁶ This style of motor responses accounts for the familiarity of where my limbs are and how instruments should be manipulated as I accomplish habituated tasks.

The temporality of habit presents the complicated relationship between our body and our world. Habits have a structure of expectation that takes the future as its referent, *and* habits are historically developed and reenact a past.⁹⁷ As indicated in the example of waking in an unfamiliar room, I expect a particular orientation of objects around me because of my habits of waking and beginning my day. Such expectations direct me toward my immediate future, but they also take previous experience as their guide. If I am strongly habituated to waking in a particular place and then I rearrange my room, I may experience the same “disappointed” expectation multiple times over the course several days. This habit may even require deliberate effort to be reformed into a harmonious system between my body and my new room.

Merleau-Ponty takes an even more dramatic example to illustrate the temporality of habit in the form of phantom limbs. The phantom limb names a phenomenon where an amputee experiences sensations from a removed limb, and may even act as though the limb were still there. Merleau-Ponty argues that while the “actual body” of the patient has

⁹⁵ In order for a soccer player to execute a bicycle kick, for example, a great many technical movements need to be executed. Once a player is capable of synchronizing such maneuvers, an aerial pass toward the player may take on a new significance as an opportunity for enacting such a move.

⁹⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 145.

⁹⁷ Whitney Howell identifies these and other temporal aspects of habit in “Learning and the Development of Meaning” in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 53, Issue 3 (2015), 311-337.

been altered, the “habitual body” may still need time and practice to adjust.⁹⁸ During this period of transition, some of the motor responses that are contained in the habits of the person are no longer useful for his actual body, yet they can still be solicited from the amputee. If a man has lost his leg, for example, and there is a knock on the door, the man may try to raise and answer it, only to fall. “At the same moment that my usual world gives rise to habitual intentions in me, I can no longer actually unite with it, if I have lost a limb.”⁹⁹ His attempt to stand is disappointed because his physical body cannot unite with his habits. This example of a phantom limb demonstrates that habits not only guide our expectations of the world, but reenact a world that gave rise to the habit.¹⁰⁰

Habits are developed motor responses that create a skillful system between our bodies and our world. They direct our actions by articulating possibilities for the future, and reenact our past by creatively deploying the world that gave rise to the habit. Foucault’s account is supported insofar as habits demonstrate stability over time and direct us towards our future through their embodied expectations. Yet, Foucault’s account needs to be qualified insofar as habits are open-ended. Habits do not unilaterally proscribe how the body will act, or how the world will appear, and habits can always be adjusted. Indeed the body must constantly adjust habits even in the most mundane activities, because the current situation in which they are used never perfectly corresponds to the world in which the habit formed. Additionally, habits are open-ended because they make further dimensions of meaning available which can lead to the creation of new habits. Learning to write, for example, can lead to increasing articulate

⁹⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 84.

⁹⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 84.

¹⁰⁰ Howell, “Learning and the Development of Meaning,” 327

levels of thought and action, even into the articulation of unforeseeable ideas or ways of writing.

Foucault identifies a politics within the formation of habits that seems to be lacking in Merleau-Ponty's account. Students do not develop habits in a politically neutral space. The school imposes exercises and corrective punishment on students to try to ensure the "proper" development of habits, and puts students through examinations to simultaneously test the students and the school's methods. I put the word proper in quotes here because the disciplinary school is able to determine what the "proper" development of habit is, and what is improper. After all, discipline "must have its own functioning, its own rules, its own techniques, its own knowledge; it must fix its own norms, decide its own results."¹⁰¹ Many of the students' habits are acquired through this learning machine: the disciplinary school. Yet, as I have argued, habituation is a power of the student, appropriated for discipline, and since it is open-ended it can lead the students in directions unforeseen by the disciplinary school. Since habits are developed under panoptic observation, we must examine the experience that such surveillance has on the body, through Sartre's "The Look."

The Look of the School

The effectiveness of disciplinary schooling is predicated on the anxiety students feel under the perpetual possibility of a surveilling gaze. This anxiety compels the students to self-police. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre argues that experiencing the look of another person can result in anxiety and modify a person's conduct. As a phenomenologist, Sartre is more concerned with describing the mundane way that actors

¹⁰¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 129.

experience a foundational relation to others, than in constructing a more traditional argument surrounding the problem of other consciousnesses. He finds evidence for our fundamental relation to others in an experience called “the look.” While “looking” is a familiar word, as discipline was earlier, Sartre brings a pregnant, technical meaning to the common word.

Sartre does not explicitly define “looking,” but rather develops a use for the word in the course of his descriptive account. One point that I will distill about the term, at this juncture, is that perceiving and looking are interrelated but heterogenous. Sartre says, “Every look manifest toward me is manifested in connection with the appearance of a sensible form in our perceptive field.”¹⁰² This indicates that a perceptible form is a necessary condition for a look to be manifested toward me. In order for me to experience the look, I must perceive a form that is capable of looking at me; I perceive an Other.¹⁰³ Sartre argues that this form that I perceive looking-at me can manifest in many ways; the “eyes” of the Other need not be the ocular globes in their head, but could be given in the perception of a rustling of branches, a light shining into the dark, or an artifice to be avoided. These forms need not refer to the actual physical eyes of a person, but “in themselves they are already eyes.”¹⁰⁴ The perception of such forms may coincide with the experience of being “looked-at.”

Sartre continues this line of argument by indicating that the appearance of this sensible form is not a sufficient condition for “the look.” In order for me to experience

¹⁰² Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel E Barnes, (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), 345.

¹⁰³ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 345: “the Other is on principle the *one who looks at me*.” His account does not begin assume the existence of the Other, but testifies to the Other through the embodied experience of being looked-at.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 346.

the look, I also need to perceive this sensible form *as* “eyes” looking at me, in contrast to an object to be appreciated by me. The way that a thing appears to me, then, is distinguished into at least two styles: something can appear to me by my looking at it and something can appear to me by my being looked-at by it. My experience of looking presents entities to me as objects and instruments, while my experience of being looked-at recognizes that I can also be seen as an object and an instrument. Sartre argues that these experiences are mutually excluding, or at least doubts the possibility of simultaneously perceiving in the mode of looking and in the mode of being looked at.

I should willingly say here: we can not perceive the world and at the same time apprehend a look fastened upon us; it must be either one or the other. This is because to perceive is to *look at*, and to apprehend a look is not to apprehend a look as an object in the world [...]; it is to be conscious of *being looked at*.¹⁰⁵

The meaning of the look, then, is that I am seen, that I am a thing that can be seen.¹⁰⁶ The look is the first appreciation of the body’s presence in the world as another object, as something observable, vulnerable, finite, and manipulable. The look of another teaches me that there is a irreducible part of my being that I do not constitute or fully know, precisely because it is not experienced as existing for me. It exists for others. And yet, since it is not necessary that someone actually rests behind the “eyes” that I experience looking at me in order for me to experience myself as looked at, Sartre argues that the look is a “pure reference to myself.” It is a reference that I make to my “being-for-others.”

¹⁰⁵ Sartre, *Being and Nothing*, 347.

¹⁰⁶ I am also always *more* than a mere thing to be seen, but this is to acknowledge more dimensions to what I am, and does not to undermine the vulnerable body revealed through the experience of the look. Sartre argues that appealing to this fuller self in order to minimize or deny unpleasant aspects of our being is a common pattern of “bad faith.”

The most involved description of an experience of the look that Sartre gives is the example of a man caught while jealously looking through a keyhole. Imagine that I am alone in a hallway when I hear friends talking in the next room. I position myself in front of the door and gaze into the keyhole in order to spy on the events taking place in the next room. While alone in this example, Sartre stresses, I am functioning on the level of a non-thetic self-consciousness.¹⁰⁷ This means that I am not qualifying and reflectively considering my acts, I *am* nothing other than my actions. I am occupied with the process of utilizing the keyhole (the means) to witness the spectacle occurring across the portal (his end). I feel jealous, and I organize the hallway and the keyhole in order to witness the spectacle; at the same time, my jealousy is purely the recognition that there is something to be seen through the keyhole. This double relation of the seer and the world around him is a “*situation*.” In Sartre’s philosophy, situation is the system of inverted determination (the man’s jealousy organized the world around him, *and* the world around him called forth his jealousy) according to which non-thetic experience is shaped. I am pressed to the keyhole when suddenly I hear footsteps down the hallway!

At hearing the footsteps, I experience myself as a thing seen. The instrumental complexes that I was freely organizing now emerge as being available to another. The act of gazing through the keyhole now immediately has the meaning it previously held (access to the conversation on the other side) *and* a meaning that appears as being for this other (a taboo act of spying on others). My actions have an “outside” to be witnessed, and do not exist as purely my own. With the look, suddenly there is an aspect of my being which I experience as being inescapably outside of me: it exists *for* this other. “[B]ehold

¹⁰⁷ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 347.

now I *am* somebody! [...] I am he *in the midst of the world* in so far as he escapes me.”¹⁰⁸

My ongoing non-thetic involvement now has a way of recognizing that it is a being.

Sartre argues that, without the look, the being that I am (the self) can only be posited as an object by the reflective consciousness; I can mine my past decisions to try to answer the question “what am I?”, or I can look to the future to answer this question by promising to be something.¹⁰⁹ With experience of being looked at, the non-thetic consciousness gains a way of experiencing its being, through the possibility of being appropriated by the other’s projects. The being that is engaged in the interruptive moment of being looked at proposes only a limited answer to the question “what am I?,” because it answers with a being that is only partially mine; I am it, but it is not for me.

Now that I have been seen, I perceive the hallway and my possibilities differently. I begin enacting some of the possibilities that surround me, but now these possibilities emerge “in the presence of the other,” as though I remember the rupture that the look brought to my situation.

These few remarks will become more concrete if we recall an experience familiar to everybody: if we happen to appear “in public” to act in a play or to give a lecture, we never lose sight of the fact that we are looked at, and we execute the ensemble of acts which we have come to perform *in the presence of* the look; better yet we attempt to constitute a being and an ensemble of objects *for* this look.¹¹⁰

When I am caught peeping through the keyhole, I still experience the possibility of looking through it, of running away, or of hiding in a dark corner, yet now all these

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 353.

¹⁰⁹ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 106. “In introspection I try to determine exactly what I am, to make up my mind to be my true self without delay [...] But what does this mean if not that I am constituting myself as a thing” (Sartre, 106). Each of these attempts at self-understanding cannot definitely answer the question of what I am without entering into Bad Faith. I am always more than what I was, and can never definitely say what I will be.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 375.

possibilities immediately contain an aspect that is mediated by the person looking at me. So, while there are still numerous actions available to me, I recognize that these potential acts will be seen and interpreted by this other, and insofar the other transcends my actions. Deciding my personal projects now occurs in the presence of the other's look. Whatever I do, I now do as a thing seen and not merely as a seer.

“The look” vividly describes the experience of being looked at. Much like the panoptic gaze, it can affect the body with anxiety and tension. Neither Foucault's panoptic observation, nor Sartre's look requires the actual presence of an observer; both are ultimately relations that I make to myself. Furthermore, in the presence of the look, the spatial experience of perceived is altered to take into account the values of the supposed watcher. By framing the look as an embodied experience, Sartre's description fills a gap in Foucault's work. It provides a more complete defense for the conformity and self-policing that Foucault argues is central to the efficiency of discipline but never elaborates upon.

Sartre examines the look for its existential functions, whereas Foucault examines the gaze for its historical and political significance. If we follow the existential emphasis, the gaze folds into the issue of making a home in the world. To make this turn, we would need to follow Sartre in examining how the gaze informs a person's mode of being with others. For the purposes of my argument, I would suggest that the look illustrates the fundamental dependency that each of us has to each other, namely that “being-seen constitutes me as a defenseless being for a freedom which is not my freedom.”¹¹¹ In being-seen, I am able to recognize the vulnerability that necessarily accompanies

¹¹¹ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 358.

embodiment in a world with others. How one faces this vulnerability would reveal its existential meaning.

One critical difference for the panoptic gaze is that it tries to maintain the school as a “public” place, so that the student is constantly aware of the possibility of being looked at. These constant interruptions could amplify the feeling of vulnerability Sartre describes. Additionally, since the Panopticon tries to keep the student in the position of the person looked-at, the student cannot reverse the experience of the gaze and evaluate the structure that individualizes him. “He is seen, but does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication.”¹¹² This keeps the student from experiencing the responsibility that accompanies the gaze. In Sartre’s formulation, we are vulnerable to the freedom of the others around us, and they are vulnerable to our freedom. The Panopticon dissociates this reciprocity. We are vulnerable to its gaze, but it is not vulnerable to ours.

Summary

I argued that Foucault’s concept of discipline was insufficient as long as it did not account for the behaviors of the student necessary for it functioning. This critique of discipline from the tradition of phenomenology helps to establish forms of student engagement in the school that could not be the result of an investment of power. These forms of behavior largely supplemented Foucault’s argument, rather than refuting it. Yet, they do provide some important qualifications for discipline. This critique helps to demonstrate the role of individual agency in what could otherwise appear to be the mere

¹¹² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 200.

interplay of forces--of power and resistance dialectically dueling over the history of the society. Phenomenological analysis instructs us that the student's body is not a lifeless object, inscribed with the significances of its culture, nor is it a soul pre-existing the cultural institutions that provide a stock of meanings for the body to deploy.

Yet, the phenomenological tradition is insufficient for political analysis as long as it cannot address the situations of power within which persons develop and maintain their bodies. Judith Butler, recognizing the importance of both of these levels of analysis, argues that

[T]he relation between acts and conditions is neither unilateral nor unmediated. There are social contexts and conventions within which certain acts not only become possible, but become conceivable as acts at all. The transformation of social relations becomes a matter, then, of transforming hegemonic social conditions rather than the individual acts that are spawned by those conditions. Indeed one runs the risk of addressing the merely indirect, if not epiphenomenal, reflection of those conditions if one remains restricted to a politics of acts.¹¹³

The description of embodied activity uncovered by reading Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Steinbock demonstrates the significance of acts by the students necessary for the concept discipline to be coherent. Yet, recognizing the activity of the body presupposed for schooling to take place does not proscribe a liberatory pedagogy. One would need to turn again to social critique, to an analysis of the conditions within (and often against) which students develop a home, in order to determine the liberatory possibilities latent in the current practice. Perhaps this is the irreducible contribution of Foucault's analysis, the understanding of normality in any society is predicated on the actions of those within it, but it is not reducible to those actions.

¹¹³ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Dec., 1988), 525.

So, while in Chapter 1, I argued that discipline continues to function as a unifying power structure in schools and that it constructs the norms within which students learn, in chapter 2, I have argued that the corporeality of students also participates in the establishment, support, and transformation of norms. Indeed, Foucault's analysis of discipline seemed incomplete by failing to investigate the features of embodiment necessary for the disciplining of behavior to occur. Now we have two directions to approach schooling: it is a process by which society invests habits of behavior into bodies *and* it is a process by which bodies deploy modes of behavior to interact with a meaningful world. An interesting consequence of the analysis at this point is that these directions are not mutually exclusive. Rather, each seems to be true, and a nuanced understanding of schooling would recognize that analyzing the school from both of these directions creates a mutually informing understanding of the institution. Yet, these aspects of the school can chafe against each other.

Disciplinary schooling amounts to an appropriation of fundamental ways that students engage with meaning, in order to promote docility. Students develop meaningful body practices as they navigate the school, yet they perform these practices under a situation of duress that severely limits their ability to creatively engage with their world.¹¹⁴ Foucault's assessment of discipline is irreducibly valuable for its elaboration of the political context in which students develop relations to instruments, develop habit for navigating the world, and develop relations to their visibility before others. Our

¹¹⁴ See Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," 519-531. Judith Butler advances a phenomenological understanding of bodily constitution based on mundane performative acts *within* a social frame of deeply sedimented expectations of how bodies should act. This type of analysis is fitting for the intersection I am arguing arises between disciplinary power and phenomenological embodiment.

existential development in the school is best understood as a responsive strategy necessary to safeguard meaning.

CHAPTER 3

DANGERS OF DISCIPLINARY SCHOOLING

“A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something *begins its presencing*.”¹¹⁵

Having examined the disciplinary functions of the school and the phenomenological underpinnings of that disciplinary power, it is now worthwhile to the definition of education proposed by John Dewey. In chapter 1, I argued that many internal relations in the school can be understood through the organizational concept of discipline. This was revealed to be a technology of power that aims at creating docile and useful individuals. Discipline invests habits into the bodies of individuals, accounting for the re-creation of social practices and values. Strictly speaking, this fulfills the social definition of education as the communicating of habits of thinking, doing, and feeling in order to sustain the life of the group. In chapter 2, I argued that students need to enact several presupposed forms of conduct if discipline is to function. These forms of conduct revealed ways that students experience meaning in their lives, and open new areas of meaning to engage. As we saw in the introduction, this accords with Dewey’s definition of education at the individual level as growth: the broadening and deepening of experience.

¹¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” in *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger*, edited David Farrell Krell, (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 1977, 332.

This definition emerges again in our discussion here so that I can make a limited, but important point: education happens in the school. Even when the school is understood as a disciplinary technology that can fix its own standards and decide its own results, there is evidence of an educative dimension that befits Dewey's definition. Yet, Dewey's model for education looks radically different from the form of education uncovered by Foucault. This difference is a result of the different aims of their investigations. Foucault does not provide a normative concept of education or schooling, but this is precisely what Dewey invents. His normative system is incorporated into his understanding of growth: it is its own end. Education, then, should not be understood as a movement toward a fixed goal. When this happens "the adult environment is accepted as a standard for the child. He is brought up *to* it."¹¹⁶ Rather than educating students into a particular environment, Dewey argues that we must educate students to be the shapers of their environment. This allows Dewey to argue that while education surely still happens in the disciplinary school, "the value of school education is the extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies means for making the desire effective in fact."¹¹⁷ In the first regard, disciplinary schooling does not concern itself with cultivating the desire for continued growth in students. In the second, it precludes opportunities to make such desire effective, unless the desired growth conforms to the aims determined by the institution. Dewey's model for education requires that students become co-partners in the shared activities of the group. This requires opportunity to transform social institutions, not merely to be transformed by them.

¹¹⁶ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, (New York: Free Press 1944), 50.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

Since education is this ongoing social process, Dewey argues for a particular ideal for society in order to establish criteria for educating. Dewey argues that a democratic ideal for society best corresponds to the principle of growth as its own end. Democracy is “more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living.”¹¹⁸ This mode of living is identifiable through two factors in the society. In the first, a democratic society promotes numerous and varied points of common interest between its members, allowing them to form greater recognition of their interdependence. In the second, the democratic mode of living promotes the freer interaction between social groups within society. In these organic interconnections between persons and groups, society changes. Dewey argues that “[a] society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms, and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic.” This second criterion is the more significant in light of our discussion of disciplinary schooling. Discipline does not secure flexible readjustment of its institutions, but rather uses institutions to try to efface differences in the society. Discipline is then antithetical to a democratic society.

Personal and social growth is the end of education that Dewey advocates, but disciplinary pedagogy organizes extensive scientific means to regulate growth and make it useful for the panoptic machinery. Through its segmentation of time, space, and movement, discipline attempts to solicit the skillful growth of abilities in students without allowing them to organize their faculty of growing toward their own ends. The Panopticon supplies the means for its own measurement and reform, making it highly

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 87.

resistant to transformation by any particular member of the society. Students are especially discouraged from transforming the disciplinary system: it resists their gaze, it appropriates their habituations, and it delimits their instruments, time, and space. In the exhaustive system that discipline establishes, society is encouraged to tacitly reproduce the contemporary power structures. In disciplinary pedagogy, it seems as though our bodily power to grow in open-ended ways is limited and even appropriated within the ends of the institution. By way of concluding, then, I would like to further explore the danger that is implicit in disciplinary pedagogy by exploring the ends that this technology pursues.

The Danger of Disciplinary Technology

Foucault argues that discipline is a technology for organizing power relations. By phenomenologically questioning technology, we may be able to elucidate the danger of disciplinary schooling. Heidegger can guide us into this kind of reflection on technology through his essay “The Question Concerning Technology.” It is even possible that Foucault’s use of technology has Heidegger’s discussion in mind. In an interview, Foucault once said,

Heidegger has always been for me the essential philosopher... I still have the notes I took while reading Heidegger - I have tons of them! - and they are far more important than the ones I took on Hegel or Marx. My whole philosophical development was determined by my reading of Heidegger.¹¹⁹

If Heidegger did have this profound of an influence on Foucault’s philosophy, then the use of the word technology to describe discipline should not be taken lightly. Examining

¹¹⁹ Herbert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall, *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 2.

the disciplinary school in light of the dangers that Heidegger argues are inherent to the way mankind currently uses technology may help us into the normative criticism of discipline begun by returning to Dewey.

In modern society we are inundated technology, and yet it can be difficult to step back and consider the term “technology” itself. If we begin with the example of a technology, like my computer, we may observe that is a tool on which I can type in order to write an essay (among other possible uses). Generalizing from the experience of particular technologies, like computers, we could say that “technology” is artificial equipment that assists in its user’s pursuits. It is a means of applying particular tools and practices to the ends determined by the user. The school, according to this understanding of technology, is a particular set of tools (teachers, classrooms, books) and practices (lectures, examinations, discussions, rituals) organized toward the society’s goal of educating the students. Two elements of our current definition are that technology is anthropocentric (human-made and organized for human aims) and instrumental (a means for accomplishing projects).

Heidegger’s “Question Concern Technology” brackets the assumed anthropocentric and instrumental definition of technology, in order to question what modern technology does in its own right. Our natural attitude assumes technology is merely a means to human ends, but such things as means and ends properly belong to causality. Understanding technology, then, is tied to our understanding of the relations of cause and effect. Reflecting on Aristotle’s doctrine of the four causes, Heidegger notices that whenever we are concerned with instrumentality--the means of something, our

concern is situated within the broader and more primordial interest in causality. The instrumental aspect of technology corresponds to Aristotle's efficient cause.¹²⁰

All of Aristotle's causes are possible accounts for what created an effect. If we wanted to respond to the question "why is that statue in the temple?" using the four causes Aristotle identifies, we would reply that the marble (material cause) was shaped into Athena's likeness (formal cause) through the art of sculpting and the sculptor's effort (efficient cause) in order for the people to worship (final cause). The means leading to the effect--the efficient cause--is but one of the causes united and co-responsible for any effect. Uniting all causes, according to Heidegger, is the presencing of the nonpresent. Aristotle's four causes taken together provide the broadest description for the way entities appear. Causality, then, denotes the revealing of entities, in Heidegger's terms it brings-forth beings. Reflecting on the greek word for technology, "techne," Heidegger finds evidence for his regrounding of technology within revealing because this ancient Greek word meant: "it reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not lie here before us."¹²¹ The meaning of "techne" was more expansive than the meaning carried in the modern word "technology." It named the activity of the craftsman, but also "the arts of the mind, and the fine arts."¹²² Heidegger goes on examine this reduction of meaning.

Modern technology is a particular style of revealing. It is no longer characterized as techne, which denoted the broadest sense of bringing beings forth. Instead, technology

¹²⁰ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle*, edited S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C.D.C Reeve, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2011), Book V, Chapter 2.

¹²¹ Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger*, edited by David Farrell Krell, (London: Harper Perennial, 1977), 319. Heidegger repeats this observation in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," emphasizing the relationship between the word "technique" and "techne," we still talk about techniques in art, thought, and work, but technology only applies to the latter.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 318.

reveals being in a manner Heidegger calls “challenging-forth.” Whereas humans have always used technology to set things in order, the ability of technology to set the world in order was once much more limited. The technology of the craftsman enabled the discovery of a valuable resource lying dormant in a block of wood, but the technology of the modern era can calculate the value of the resources dormant in whole forests. Nature is now challenged to show its utility and to reveal itself as equipment.¹²³ Technology challenges all entities in the world to appear as something “standing reserved” to be used.

Heidegger is arguing that technology is better understood as a movement, an impulse that brings the earth into an efficient, self-perpetuating system. The guiding principle of this system is efficiency; it aims “toward driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense.”¹²⁴ As the “standing-reserve,” entities are revealed according to their availability and utility, and are increasingly ordered according to this logic of efficiency. Heidegger argues that this ordering of the world is the end of technology. It serves no greater purpose than bringing more entities into the system.

Heidegger takes the directive power of the logic of efficiency a step further, by arguing that the pressure for maximal efficiency also orders the intersections between entities that are “standing-reserve.” He illustrates this through the example of the Rhine in Germany. A hydroelectric dam can be laid across the river in order to make its motion dispense electrical energy. Now the river is revealed as a power supplier, and appears to be something under our command. Surely the river can also be witnessed as standing

¹²³ In *Being and Time*, the first modes of encounter examined are experiencing beings as “ready-to-hand” and as “present-to-hand.” Objects that cannot be skillfully used by a Dasein stand before or opposed to us, they are present-at-hand. A way of interpreting the danger of technology is that it destroys these separate ontological encounters.

¹²⁴ Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” 321.

against us as it has revealed itself to earlier generations, as an object present before us? Provocatively, Heidegger claims that this is possible “in no other way than as an object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry.”¹²⁵ The style with which the Rhine is standing reserve may be different when it is dammed or made into a vista, but the logic is upheld. The river is challenged to reveal its utility (whether as a scenic view or as a power supplier) and the people are guided to be the instrument that orders the actual into the standing reserve. The example of the dam illustrates that “challenging-forth” runs along its own interlocking paths, so that various modes of “standing reserve” may intersect, but such intersections are still ultimately guided by the logic of efficiency.¹²⁶ It may be useful to have a river as a beautiful vista, and it may be useful to have the river as a power supplier, but whether the river is commanded to stand reserved in one form or the other still depends on the logic of maximizing efficiency.

Seeing how technology creates the standing reserve, Heidegger argues that technological activity is not set to human ends, but to its own. The role of humanity in “challenging-forth” is to mistakenly think that technology fits our purposes and is under our control, while we embrace the technological drive to order the actual evermore into the standing reserve. The lack of recognition of technologies autonomous movement

¹²⁵ Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” 321.

¹²⁶ Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). Anne Dufourmantelle makes a strikingly similar point when responding to one of Derrida’s lecture courses in *Of Hospitality*. Of many nuanced problems posed by the concept of hospitality, Derrida opens the seminar warning that the question that the foreigner will address “is nothing less than the question of the statesman, of man as a political being” (13). Dufourmantelle responds, “Yet in our period exhibiting man as a political being strikes a note of sovereign insolence, to the extent that our culture seems to be in the process of making the political vanish completely into theatrical effect- [I am speaking] about the very act constitutive of the political, and which, since the beginning, has been the only act by which one or a number of persons, by virtue of the power conferred on them by others to represent them, can hinder, accomplish, or suspend an economic process by referring it to other values which are not quantifiable ones” (72). Increasingly, it is impossible to appeal outside technological logic (the logic of the quantifiable) to alter or preserve economic processes. Different strands of challenging forth may come into conflict, but appeals outside of it are increasingly impossible.

subsumes our efforts under its chains.¹²⁷ Humanity is the one called into this form of revealing, and this can be the supreme danger of technology:

As soon as what is unconcealed no longer concerns man even as object, but exclusively as standing-reserve, and man in the midst of objectlessness is nothing but the orderer of the standing-reserve, then he comes to the brink of a precipitous fall; that is, he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve. Meanwhile, man precisely as the one so threatened, exalts himself and postures as lord of the earth.¹²⁸

The supreme danger of this form of revealing is that it may dogmatically expel other forms of knowledge and bring all beings, even mankind, appear purely as the standing-reserve: maximally available for use, efficient, and set to no other end than more deeply ordering the world.

Foucault provides an analysis of the form of technology that is most directly concerned with ordering humanity into standing-reserves: discipline. The chief effect of disciplinary power is the production of truth. As Foucault indicated: “it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.”¹²⁹ Producing truth in Heidegger’s language is “revealing that which does not show itself”--it is *techne*. Discipline is a technology set to ordering students into “the standing-reserve” by trying to create maximally skilled, maximally docile bodies. Foucault’s examination of discipline uncovers the power structures that are preeminently concerned with producing the “standing-reserve” out of mankind.

¹²⁷ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, page 358. Sartre says that a person is a slave to the extent that he is an instrument of possibilities which are not his own: “In so far as I am an object of values which come to qualify me without my being able to act on this qualification or even know it, I am enslaved.”

¹²⁸ Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” 333.

¹²⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 194.

Even if technology has an autonomous direction, it is a movement in which we actively participate. How we relate to the movement of technology is an interesting issue for Heidegger. He thinks that technology should not be merely embraced nor blindly rebelled against; rather, by recognizing the essence of technology, one can place technology within the proper bounds--using its form of ordering of the world as a source of meaning, but not as the only source of meaning. Entities appear to us as “standing reserves” through the approach of modern technology, but no single approach ever exhausts the meaningfulness of the entities. Steinbock calls this type of observation a “fundamental phenomenological insight, namely, that the way something gives itself corresponds simultaneously to the manner in which we turn toward it.”¹³⁰ While Heidegger argues that technology accounts for the predominant way in which modern man relates to entities, it need not be the only way. Opening other ways for entities to appear requires a diversity of ways of turning toward them; perhaps it even requires unforeseen ways of engaging the world. Yet as Foucault has demonstrated, disciplinary technology does not encourage such creative relations to the world.

The supreme danger of the disciplinary school is that it can autonomously dictate the standards for education and suppress the capacities of students to direct their own growth. As a technology, the disciplinary school participates in technology’s essence insofar as it creates its own autonomous direction for education. It is a technology that claims to serve the existential need for education, but it is able to determine what our education needs are and how they are best accomplished. These established mechanisms

¹³⁰ Steinbock, Anthony. *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology After Husserl*. (Evanston, Illinois: Northwest University Press, 1995), 263.

are difficult to face as a structure, and harder still to change by appealing to values outside of the institution.

This investigation reveals that, strictly speaking, there is no politically neutral education. Indeed, education may be one of the most critical and sensitive grounds for politics. This is why we need to advocate for politically liberatory forms of education.¹³¹ When a political problem is identified, very often there is a call for educative changes; it is thought that if people had more of the facts or were better trained, then a great many of the world's problems could be overcome. What this investigation reveals is not that we need to adjust *what* we educate, but rather that we need to be careful *how* we educate. These practices are always positioned somewhere between the limit cases of merely ordering the world into the “standing-reserve” and critically interpreting and transforming the structures of our world.

In the last lines of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault gives a hopeful imperative. After describing the body as entirely situated within strategies of incarceration, Foucault says,

[i]n this central and centralized humanity, the effect and instrument of complex power relations, bodies and forces subjected by multiple mechanisms of ‘incarceration,’ objects for discourses that are in themselves elements for this strategy, we must hear the distant roar of battle.¹³²

I take this imperative to be somewhat of a call to arms. Rally the troops, for a battle is underway--a battle that could inaugurate new forms of meaning, or simply perpetuate the ordering of the world into “the standing reserve.” If the non-corporeal duplications of the

¹³¹ For a suggestion of what this may look like, see Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2000).

¹³² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 308.

body (the soul, the subject, consciousness) are a product and means of discipline, then it seems that Foucault has left us with limited means around which a strategy of resistance can be formed. In response to this problem, I have argued that radically attending to the body as the bearer of behavior provides a useful launching point for social critique. Our very corporeality, when understood not as an object but as the means of having a world, can be used to advocate against discipline. Yet, we should remember that critique itself is a tremendous risk: it involves attacking the very structures that have helped to install us into a meaningful world. If these structures have set us into a meaningful world, does this mean that they are inviolable? Such thinking, I can now add, is the supreme danger of our technological age. Instead of thinking these structures are inviolable, the significance of our world is actually extended and preserved, counter-intuitively, through the freedom to creatively and critically reimagine its foundations.

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