THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN SCHOOLS: CONTEXTUALIZING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOURS AND AGGRESSIVE LABELS

by

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The Social Construction of Behaviour Problems in Schools: Contextualizing Aggressive Youth and Aggressive Labels

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Abstract

This dissertation is a call for a reconceptualization with respect to a particular classification of students: behaviour problems. Students with aggressive and noncompliant behaviours are discussed in schools as individual/psychological problems: What characteristics do they have? How can they be identified? How can we control them? I depart from the traditional approach, and ask a different set of questions about the nature of this classification, how it has been constructed, the images it portrays of youth, and the effect it has on classified subjects.

This thesis incorporates multiple layers of analysis: The philosophical analysis points to the relativist nature of social critique, suggesting the need to consider repercussions of discourse to determine appropriate discourses and practices. Theoretical conclusions are drawn from an analysis indicative of the importance of social context. The behaviour problem discourse should in no sense be considered an ontological reality. This concept and classification was socially constructed and negotiated, rather than simply and objectively reflecting the observed world. This label constructs students as either/or dichotomies.

Several alternative discourses are presented: Typifying behaviour problems as cultural problems means asking, what does violence mean to the student? This takes into account culturally situated meanings of behaviour. It is a social constructionist argument of a different kind. As an educational problem, it is a move away from the psychiatric causal discourse, toward understanding the experiences of students in the context of the purpose of education. As a relational problem, it is an inquiry about experience--that of being and becoming--theorized in view of an emergent self. Behaviour problems as a discourse of "differences" is a search for "who" and "how" (rather than "why") differing modes of interaction misconstrue and construct students as problems. This offers a social construction argument in yet a third sense of the word.

Implications for practice: (a) A holistic approach to education which empowers youth, and engages them in self-governance, learning, and school life, currently used in some North-American schools; and (b) removal of the system of classifying behaviour problem youth. This approach is currently used in the Iranian school system.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents :

to my mother, who lives like a queen......with grace, and wisdom. I've tried to learn that from her.

and to my father who taught me never to stop asking questions. My father is a self-educated man, with an amazing sense of curiosity. I wish I could be more like that.

Thank you for pushing me beyond myself, and encouraging me

to step into uncertainty with confidence,

to take risks,

and to succeed with joy.

Thank you for creating the space for me to grow

And for honoring me with your unconditional love

You are as gentle as angels; silently, you have given me my wings

Quotation

If you are one for the journey, amidst the blood you must walk

When you are way-worn and scared, you still, must walk

Lay your first step on this path-------don't ask why

For the path itself shall tell you, where you must walk

(Translated from the Persian language, poet unknown)

گر مرد رهی میان خون باید رفت
از پای فتاده سرنگون باید رفت
تو پای به راه در نه و هیچ مپرس
خود راه بگویدت که چون باید رفت

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Chapter 1

Personal Journey and Statement of Thesis

Personal Journey

I grew up in Iran, and left the country after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, when schools were closed down by the new government for a period of one year. Leaving my family at the age of 16, I moved to California where I completed my high school degree. My experiences over the past 20 years have been quite diverse, with various shifts and transformations. At the heart of these changes, there has always been the desire to make meaningful connections with others.

Following high school, I attended U.C. Berkeley and received a Bachelor's degree in Molecular Biology, in 1986. After working at Invitron, a genetic engineering company, for two years, I moved to Boston and started working at Massachusetts General Hospital's Arthritis Research Department. I engaged in scientific research over the next two years. But I have always been fascinated with psychology, and one pivotal event at the "Boston Marathon Walk For Hunger" crystallized this interest once again.

In the summer of 1990 at the Boston Marathon, having walked for 20 miles alone after my partner had opted out, and after finding at the end of the day that my car had been towed, I stopped by Boston's old market place, Fanieull Hall, to get something to eat. Here, while eating lunch, I observed a playful interaction between a father and his two children:

Father: Do you like Pizza more or Hamburgers?
5-year-old son: Pizza!
Father: Do you like Pizza more or Hot dogs?
5-year-old son: Hot dogs!
Father: Do you like Pizza with Ketchup, or Hot dogs without?
5-year-old son: Pizza with Ketchup.
Father: Hamburgers with Ketchup or Hot dogs without?
5-year-old son: Hamburgers with Ketchup
7-year-old daughter: Do you like my nose with Ketchup, or Hamburgers without?
5-year-old son: YOUR NOSE!

Intrigued by this interaction to the extent that I forgot the events of the day during those 30 minutes, I realized that my interest in psychology had been awakened. The next day I applied and was later accepted into the Child Psychology Master's of Arts Program, at Tufts University in Boston.

I enjoy telling this story, because it reminds me of moments in my life which are very meaningful for me. I believe these moments become a life force for us. They give us a sense of passion, a desire to connect with others, and a motivation to be a part of the world. It is with meaningful connections at the core that we choose to challenge ourselves and move forward in life.

In 1991, while attending Tufts, I started working as a Supervisor at the Boys and Girls Club, where I worked for the next two years. The club had just been established in one of the government housing projects in the Boston area when I joined the team. Working there was an incredible opportunity for me to be a part of the design of a new program. Government housing projects only accepted families who met the required poverty level. This particular housing project was one of the most dangerous, in the Boston area. Drug trafficking had been pervasive until the police had arrested many of the residents and tried to clean up this area. I wondered how the children lived in this neighborhood. There was an uncertainty in their lives that exceeded any I had ever experienced as a child. I figured, if they can do it, so can I.

The Boys and Girls Club was set up in an old, broken down building in the projects. The building had been used for social functions by the residents. It had a large room in the front with a small office attached and a store room. We set up the pool table, foosball table, and an art table at the back of the room, and put extra tables and chairs for children to play board games. Working at the club seemed simple at first, but there were hardly any days at the Club that went by simply. My two colleagues and I worked with 60 children in one small room filled with games and activities. In the first two months, I spent most of my time running from one end of the room to another hoping to stop a fight before someone seriously got injured. Three staff members could hardly answer the needs of 60 children, especially when fights were constantly breaking out.

In 1992, as part of my Master's degree requirement, I was accepted as an intern at the Judge Baker Guidance Clinic. My role at the clinic was to provide individual educational assistance to 8th grade students enrolled in the Judge

Baker Manville School. Students attending this school had been diagnosed with psychiatric clinical disorders, and had been expelled from public schools because of their "behaviour problems". The classroom in which I worked, consisted of eight students, a teacher, and an assistant teacher. At that time, it cost the government $40,000 to enroll each student at this school.

My work with youth at the Boys and Girls Club and the Judge Baker Clinic was not only a shift away from the field of Molecular Biology towards Psychology and Education, it was also an instigator for the first of many transformations in the way I think about the ontology and epistemology of knowledge. In my work with youth I was deeply engaged and connected to the students with whom I worked. These connections were the impetus for changes in my philosophical assumptions.

When I started working at the Boys and Girls Club, my first discovery was the popularity of behavioural theories in after school programmes. I quickly found that rules and regulations were the dominant mode of relating to children. My colleagues used discipline as a way to communicate who they were and what was important to them. My tendency was to keep the rules relatively flexible. Of course, I had the choice of telling them the rules of the Club--for example, no fighting--and to ask them to leave if they did. That would have meant that the Club would be filled with 5 maybe 10 children every day. It wouldn't have served our purpose of keeping these children away from drugs. It also wouldn't have helped the children stay there long enough to get to know themselves or make meaningful connections with other adults.

The Master's programme I was pursuing at the same time helped me focus on ideas dominant in developmental psychology. I learned about children's cognitive and emotional development. I learned that a child's experience changes developmentally, and that children's experiences can be understood within natural and universal frameworks. Piaget's cognitive development theory, Kohlberg's moral development theory, and Erickson's emotional development theory were some of the dominant developmental frameworks I used to understand children's behaviour. I was fortunate to work with youth while completing my master's at Tufts, where I learned the language that would help me reflect on my practice.

Soon, I found limitations in applying some of these theories (Sohbat, 1997). Developmental theories in psychology are meant to be universal, but the application of these theories seemed to conflict with the needs of children who had been raised in the poor neighborhoods of the housing projects. For example, to help children with their social and emotional development, one needs to teach them to share. However, these children had had to share everything they owned with their siblings, all of their lives. Expecting them to share scissors for Arts and Crafts, when we had a large stock of scissors in the back room which they were aware of, increased their frustration and lead to aggressive behaviours. This "lesson" seemed to be more appropriate for the middle-class child who has fewer siblings and fewer opportunities to experience the act of sharing.

One incident at the Friday night Bingo game resonates with me. This narrative is an example of the kind of experience which was a driving force for this dissertation. We had just finished the Friday Bingo game at the recreation centre. Nyan, a 9 year old boy who lived in the Housing Projects with his mother and two brothers, did not win a game this time. When the last game ended and he hadn't won anything, he became upset, threw his bingo cards and all the discs up in the air and ran out of the building. He then started throwing small rocks at the recreation centre. Karen, one of the other staff members, said we should punish him and not let him play Bingo for a month. Meanwhile, I was giving candy out to everyone who had played. Those who had won a game received an extra gift. Nyan was still busy throwing rocks at the building, and had now started swearing.

I'm not sure if I had thought through what was to come next, but I was worried about what Nyan might be feeling in those moments. I picked up the bag of candy and went outside. As soon as he saw me, he threw down the rocks and started walking away. I called him back, "Nyan, would you like some candy?" He stopped and turned around. I approached him a few more steps. "Would you like some candy?" I stopped and reached out with the plastic bag filled with candy in my hand. He started walking towards me, but slowly, as if he was thinking, what the hell are you doing lady? He came closer, dipped his hand into the bag, and took only one candy. Good. We had asked children not to take more than one as a matter of courtesy. He then turned around and left.

My reaction to Nyan had occurred intuitively. It wasn't based on theories of personality, or child development. What prompted me to give candy to him even after he had behaved so aggressively towards us, came out of my concern for him and what he might be experiencing at that moment. In holding out a hand, I was hoping to be present to that experience. In a phenomenological sense, I wanted to create a pedagogical moment and to change the way he was relating to the world. *We always turn away when someone is angry; sometimes, that is* *the best time for us to be listening*. I believe that violence and aggression are communicative about a child's needs and purposes in life.

For the next few weeks, Karen could not stop talking about Nyan, *his* behaviour problem, *his* aggression, and my inappropriate reaction to him. I, on the other hand, was most concerned with how we had constructed Nyan as an aggressive boy through the practice of playing Bingo. Bingo is a game of luck. In an effort to entertain children, we were holding gifts in front of children's faces and not giving it them if they were unlucky. It seemed like a cruel thing to do. Having been born into poverty and a neighborhood full of drugs, these children had been dealt a bad hand since birth. To me, Nyan was not the "aggressive behaviour problem child". Nyan, as well as many others at the recreation centre, may have threatened the safety of others in one moment, but they were also kind and caring in another. These children may have been completely irresponsible some of the times, but took responsibility for themselves, as well as other children and even the staff at other times. They felt like being selfish at times, and stood for their principles at other times. Often they had a very keen sense of justice, whatever justice meant to them in that context. Labeling Nyan and constructing him as "the bad child" did not make sense to me.

When I graduated from Tufts I realized that I need to understand the experiences of children with aggressive behaviours. With the sheer aggression that I had seen in the way children related to each other, I believed that I didn't understand them enough to be able to help them. I knew what aggression meant to me, but not to what it meant to them. I applied to the Ph.D. programme in Education at Simon Fraser University, and decided to pursue a phenomenological study of children's experience of aggression. This work would be based on the assumption that knowledge is not objective, it is subjective. It was a considerable shift from the scientific work I had done in previous years.

In the course of my doctoral programme, as I interviewed students who had been referred by the school as behaviour problem students, I became more and more dismayed with the processes involved in labeling students in schools. After I interviewed a number of students for my phenomenological study, it became clear that the label, "behaviour problem" was used for a heterogeneous group of children with different needs and characteristics. In addition, this label had become a way to identify the source of responsibility and blame. Rather than use the label as a guide to more meaningful connections with children, it was used to make life easier for the staff.

Connecting with students is a goal that educators aspire to, not only for their own sake, but for the sake of their students. Teachers try to connect with children through the formal curriculum. Teaching and educating children is no longer a simple task of learning A-B-C's; cognitive theories inform us that the best way to teach is to make the subject meaningful to the students. Principals, vice principals and counselors try to make use of limited time to have memorable interactions. With the apparent rise of hostile behaviours and feelings among children, teachers and administrators are realizing that they need to make an effort to connect with students. Day-care workers, learning disability specialists, and behaviour problem experts do their part in having significant interactions. Various members of the community who work with youth are beginning to see that helping children feel a part of the community is essential to the well-being of students. As a result, we see an increase in the number of team-teaching and multi-age classrooms, as well as student councils. We also see an increase in violence prevention and intervention programmes, and conflict resolution workshops. I prefer calling these, *connection intervention programmes.* By implementing these programmes, officials ensure the physical safety of students in the school, and help students re-connect with their healthy selves and with the community.

However, ensuring students' safety has proved to be quite challenging. The amount of time and money required never seems enough, and sometimes programmes are implemented which are practical but end up sacrificing the dignity of the child in the process. In the course of my experiences in schools I have found, labels that classify "behaviour problem students" often become a source of blame. The label indicates with whom teachers can be less patient; to some teachers it seems that the student's track record is clear from his or her label. The label signifies more than present actions; every time it is used it brings up a person's history and resumé, based on which judgments are made. The "behaviour problem" label has far more negative ramifications for the child than what it had been conceptually intended to do.

Within students' narratives about their aggression experiences and the processes of labeling students in schools, I found hostility, aggression and behaviour problems to belong as much to the social realm as they do to the individual. Developmental theories had been useful in helping me understand some behaviours to a certain extent, but they always focused on the child and what might be wrong with the child. I was concerned with the way *we* interacted with these children, the *language* we used to describe them, and the *practices* we used to give them a sense of identity. Through these practices we help construct one child as aggressive, and another, a saint.

Thus, this dissertation, a new thesis topic and a new way of thinking about knowledge, has emerged. It has become clear to me that the need to explore the concept of behaviour problems and its use as a classification of students in North American schools has become imminent.

Thesis Statement

I am interested in examining the particular concept and classification, *behaviour problem,* which has become dominant in the North American education system. I propose that this classification is not composed of a unified, homogeneous group of children with an inherently violent nature. What we have instead are students who are bored, scared, different, lonely, and/or disconnected from their communities. The categorization of these students into a unified group is based on the assumption that there is such a thing as a behaviour problem student who is naturally deficient in one way or another, and who experiences specific needs unique to his/her group. The concept, behaviour problem, is based on the individual/psychological model, and is dismissive of the context of students' aggressive and non-compliant behaviours. However, once created, this categorization is assumed to be a natural and inevitable occurrence.

It is worth questioning the necessity of creating this concept and classification, especially considering the sometimes adverse effects of labels on people's identities (Goffman, 1959; Hacking, 2000). Wever-Rabehl argues that experience is crucial in the continuous construction and reconstruction of our environment and our selves. "The social environment, and the experiences it provides us with, have a tremendous effect on our ways of being, perceiving, judging, and responding" (Wever-Rabehl, 2001, p. 18).

Most educational discourse about children with aggressive and noncompliant behaviours have located the problem within the individual. Educators are interested in identifying, labeling, and controlling behaviour problem students. Intervention programmes, such as Second Step and Bully Beware, have been implemented across North American schools to "treat" students' behaviour problems. While it is clear that changes in students' behaviours are necessary, most intervention programmes, such as instructional bully-prevention, conflict resolution, and anti-violence programs are taught in isolation and have been found to be less effective than holistic school programs that empower and engage students in self-governance and learning (LaRocque & Shariff, 2001).

The focus on management and control is related to the scientific discourse of causal theories. Violence intervention programmes are often based on traditional psychological views of aggression which define aggressive behaviour problems as social-cognitive, genetic, attachment, frustration-control, or role-model deficiencies (Bandura, 1973; Berkowitz, 1969; Bowlby, 1979; Dodge, 1980; Freud, 1955; Kopachena, 1996; Loehlin & Nichols, 1970). While psychological theories provide insight into aggression, most of them locate it within the individual. As such, they offer a limited understanding of aggressive behaviours and serve to blame the individual rather than focus on the whole system.

The label *behaviour problem* is intended to differentiate students with deficiencies from the rest of the population in schools. While this classification of students seems to be based on the reality of who they are, one must note that reality is itself shaped by dominant values and interests of the culture or subculture (Mannheim, 1936). The individualist ethos of Western philosophy, for example, shapes the research questions that are asked and psychological theories that are developed. Hence, our inquiries about behaviour problem youth are not the objective reality it seems to be. As Kenneth Gergen (1985, p. 268) asks, "How can the psychologist step outside cultural understandings and continue to 'make sense' of the world?". Knowledge occurs between a community of people who are situated within a cultural, historical, and ideological context.

We must also bring to the fore the role of language, its function (Searle, 1995) and its logic (Hanson, 1958) in constructing our sense of reality. To borrow from Hanson's (1958) compelling cross-cultural example, when we say that the sun is yellow we think we are merely stating a fact. In the Russian and Arabic languages, however, the same sentence would be worded as, "the sun yellows". Hanson points out that thinking of yellow as a passive property of the sun (the sun is yellow) is different from describing what the sun does (the sun yellows) (Hanson, 1958, p. 33). Hanson concludes, "This is not a case of 'say it how you please, it all means the same'. This is not merely to speak differently and to think in the same way. Discursive thought and speech have the same logic" (ibid).

The language we use to label students affects how we think about the reality of their experience and their identity. For example, replacing the label "behaviour problem students" with "reactive students" not only changes the nature of its membership, it also constructs a different reality. The first constructs the idea that *a problem exists within the student* and the second that *the student is reacting to something in the environment*, which must itself be further understood. Similarly, replacing the label "violence intervention programme" with "connection intervention programme" constructs a different experience and a different reality.

I intend to move beyond the psychological discourse of "behaviour problems" and ask a different set of questions about the nature of this classification, how it has been constructed, the images it portrays of youth, and the effect it has on classified subjects. This study is a conceptual analysis of the concept and classification, behaviour problems, situated in a social constructionist framework.

In Chapter 2, I will discuss the tenets of social construction theory using Berger and Luckmann's (1966) three-phase theoretical model of the social construction of reality, and Mannheim's (1936) theory on the sociology of knowledge.

In Chapter 3, the methodology for this research will be outlined. The methodological approach for this thesis is eclectic. I put forward the best evidence for my claim by drawing on evidence from various sources, including conceptual analyses, case examples from other studies, and reasoned arguments.

In Chapter 4, I will analyze and critique the knowledge that is typified by psychologists and educators with regard to youth's aggressive and noncompliant behaviour. Further, I explore the images constructed about classified students in the process of using the label *behaviour problem* and implementing various intervention programs.

In Chapter 5, I explore the historical emergence of the behaviour problem label as an object of knowledge, and demonstrate the impact of social processes on the construction of this concept and classification. I examine the nature of the concept, and argue that it is neither homogeneous nor objectively clear in meaning.

In Chapter 6, I present three alternative typifications of student's aggressive and non-compliant behaviours, moving away from the traditional ontological assumptions of behaviour problems, and opening the space for alternative discourses. These are: behaviour problems as a cultural or educational problem, a relational problem, or not necessarily a problem at all. To show the implications for these discourses, I draw on practices in some North American schools, although these practices are not dominant in schools. As well, I draw on practices in the Iranian school system; this analysis is intended to show that the classification of students as "behaviour problems", which has become real for us in North America, does not exist in all cultures.

In Chapter Seven, I conclude the thesis, presenting the implications at the levels of philosophy, theory, and practice. In this thesis I argue for the social construction of behaviour problems in three distinct definitions of the terms: (a) The classification of behaviour problems and its discourse is socially constructed and negotiated, rather than simply and objectively reflecting the observed world; (b) the meaning of the behaviour problem act is socially constructed, situating this meaning in the culture, rather than, or in addition to, the individual; and (c) students who exhibit aggressive and noncompliant behaviours are misconstrued and constructed as a problem, because of their differences.

This thesis will make an original contribution to our thinking and theorizing about noncompliant behaviours of students. It will help us understand how knowledge about students' aggressive behaviours is socially and historically constructed, and how this knowledge becomes objectified and internalized as truth. Further, as long as we locate the etiology of aggression within the individual, responsibility for change will also fall only on those who are specifically identified. Deconstructing the rigid notion of behaviour problems will suggest new practices in our education system.

Chapter 2

Social Constructionism as a Theory of Knowledge

Introduction

Psychological theories locate the aggressive characteristics of behaviour problems in the social-cognitive, genetic, healthy-attachment, frustration-control, or role-model, deficiencies, resulting in inappropriate behaviour (Bandura, 1973; Berkowitz, 1993; Bowlby, 1979; Dodge, 1980). It is preferable, in understanding students' "behaviour problems" to look at the category of "behaviour problems" from above, rather than within. Rather than accept the assumptions inherent in theories that have led to the construction of this category, and to advance knowledge of psychological factors associated with it, I explore the social and cultural processes that have given rise to this category in the first place.

It has become necessary to revisit and question our existing ontological assumptions about the nature of this phenomena and examine the social processes by which its meanings and realities have become a part of our consciousness. Historically, we have relied on scientific studies in psychology to achieve knowledge about the world. Psychology is a by-product of two major traditions, empiricism and rationalism (Gergen, 1985). The former is expressed in behaviourism, and the latter in the cognitive movement. Both behaviourism and cognitive theories are built on the assumption that the individual is the locus for the process of understanding the world. However, these theories vary on the extent that the individual is assumed to be external to the world. This variability influences the process of doing research. Behaviourism demands objective methods whereas cognitive theories validate the subjectivity inherent in these processes.

Social constructionism is based on a specific type of psychological critique, with a general goal of increasing the quality of life for those who are adversely affected by current psychological theories. It is important to point out in what way social constructionists consider themselves located in a new paradigm. This can best be explained by first situating social constructionism in its historical context, and then describing its goals and interests. Gergen (1985) discusses the emergence of social constructionism as a new framework for thinking and situates it in its historical context, against the backdrop of behaviourism and cognitive theories.

Behaviourism

Behaviourism is the by-product of the empiricist tradition of western thought. In the empiricist tradition, knowledge is built up from experiences with environmental stimuli. The individual comes to know through observation and experiential contact with the world. Without it, there is very little that the individual can know. The underlying philosophical assumption of the behaviourist view is the fundamental independence between the natural world and the scientific observer. John Watson, known as the "father of behaviourism" (Dworetzky, 1988, p. 13), was trained in psychology and became interested in the purpose and functions of animal behaviour. Watson believed that psychologists should observe environmental stimuli and behaviours, and muscular responses that occurred in the presence of such stimuli. The conscious mind, however, could not be objectively observed. Any interpretations of the conscious mind would be subjective and non-scientific, and must therefore be eliminated from the domain of study in psychology (ibid).

Despite later modifications to this theory of cognitive processes by Bandura (Bruning, Schraw, & Ronning, 1990), behaviourism is rooted in objectivist methodologies, and a positivist ontology and epistemology (Guba, 1990) of knowledge. It is this objectification in the process of understanding the world that signifies the role of behaviourism, and empiricism, in the evolution of social constructionism. Gergen calls this method of forming tentative hypotheses based on observational combined with inductive methods, the "exogenic perspective" (Gergen, 1985, p. 269). "Proper knowledge maps and mirrors actualities of the real world. . . . It is the task of the scientist to develop theory that maps with fidelity the contours of the world as given" (ibid).

Cognitive Theories

The cognitive revolution, which follows a rationalist tradition, developed as a critique of behavioural concepts and frameworks (Gergen, 1985). In the rationalist tradition, knowledge is developed from the inherent character of the human mind. Without the capacity for rationality or for organizing the world in certain ways, we couldn't be credited with possessing knowledge. Cognitive psychologists explore the complexities of human thinking, memory, problem solving, decision making, and creativity, beyond existing stimulus-response explanations. The work of numerous theorists were pivotal in the cognitive era. Bruning cites two examples: Ulrich Neisser's Cognitive Psychology in 1967, which provided an early definition to the new era of cognitive psychology, and the work of Jerome Bruner and David Ausubel which emphasized mental structures and organizational frameworks (Bruning, Schraw, & Ronning, 1990, p. 5).

Cognitive psychologists view the process of understanding to be subjective, rather than objective as proposed by behaviourists. Gergen calls this process of understanding, the "endogenic perspective" (Gergen, 1985, p. 269), referring to the assumption that humans have inherent tendencies to process and categorize knowledge, tendencies which are critical to the process of understanding the world. For example, Piaget (Ginsburg & Opper, 1988) theorizes that mental activity has to unfold in universal, qualitatively different, stages. The underlying theoretical assumption here is that by nature, human beings cannot understand the world objectively. Our knowledge of the world is that which we subjectively understand it to be, using our natural cognitive tendencies and schemas. The world is 'cognized', not objectively understood. In other words, cognitive psychology is a constructivist theory. Knowledge about the world is constructed as individual mental structures interact with the environment.

Social Constructionism

Until the emergence of social constructionism, scholarly debates focused on objectivity versus subjectivity in discovering or constructing knowledge about the world. However, Gergen explains, with the emergence of social constructionism a new framework for thinking about the ontology and epistemology of knowledge developed. Debates about this new framework reject both behaviourism and cognitive theories.

> History has been one of continuous and unresolved disputation between the exogenic and endogenic thinkers .... It is against this

> backdrop that one can appreciate the emergence of social constructionism. Rather than recapitulating yet again the movement of the pendulum, the challenge has been to transcend the traditional subject-object dualism and all its attendant problems and to develop a new framework of analysis based on an alternative (non empiricist) theory of the functioning and potentials of science. (Gergen, 1985, p. 270)

Behaviourism and cognitive theories both conceptualize the development of the individual to be independent of the group culture. Mannheim analyzes the emergence of these theories as frameworks that have developed during "radical individualism", and "in the liberal beginnings of the bourgeois-capitalistic era" (Mannheim, 1936, p. 31). During these periods, "the interconnectedness of the social order was of necessity invisible to people, especially since competition of individuals was so important" (ibid). According to Mannheim (1936), social constructionism has emerged in an attempt to counteract an "individualist, undirected" and almost anarchic society, with a more "organic type of social order" (ibid).

"It is the goal of social constructionists to challenge the idea that knowledge is individualistic, objective, and a-historic" (Gergen, 1985, p. 272). First, whether the process of understanding is considered to be subjective or objective, both behavioural and cognitive theories emphasize the individual as the locus for understanding. The individual makes sense of reality, gains knowledge, and creates and makes use of practices in line with that knowledge. Social constructionism has come about in reaction to individualism. "How can the psychologist step outside cultural understandings and continue to 'make sense' of the world?" Gergen writes (1985, p. 268). "Knowledge is a by product of *communal* relationships" (Gergen, 1994a, p. 25, [italics in original]). "The construction of knowledge occurs between a community of people rather than in the minds of individuals" (deShazer & Berg, 1992). Knowledge and knowledge forms are culturally and historically situated. Social constructionists reference knowledge neither in the observed, as behaviourists do, nor in the observer, as cognitive theorists do. They locate knowledge in the space between the two, in the "social arena among interpreting subjects", and to do this they turn to the intersubjective influence of language and culture (Pare, 1995, p. 5). *It is in this sense that social constructionists talk about the social construction of reality.* Knowledge is social, cultural, historical, and interpreted.

Second, both behaviourism and cognitive theorists assume a certain amount of objectivity when discovering or, otherwise, constructing, knowledge. The behavioural theorist wants to objectively understand the *observed system* and the cognitive theorist wants to objectively understand the *observing system*. As Gergen (1985) points out, even the cognitive theorist assumes a certain amount of objectivity when providing knowledge about how the mind interacts with the world. However, as Searle (1995) argues, the only objective world that exists is that which consists merely of physical properties; when a function is assigned to the physical property even that is no longer an objective reality independent of the scientist. He points out that even something as simple as the organs in the body do not have an independent existence when we consider the language we use to describe them. Our language and the functions assigned through language remove objectivity. Yes, the "heart" is an organ in the body that exists physically independent of the scientist. However, in defining what the heart is, we are linguistically forced to re-define it in terms of its function. The heart is an organ in the body that pumps blood to the other organs in order to sustain life. The function, sustaining life, is a value-relative function. If human beings valued death more than life, the heart would be defined as an organ that pumps blood in order to inhibit death (ibid). It might even be considered a pathologically resistant organ that the body has developed during evolution. *It is in this sense that social constructionists talk about the social construction of reality.* We construct the truth through the language we use to describe "facts" and based on underlying values, rather than a positivist ontology.

Searle argues that reality is constructed through language, and the cultural necessity to describe objects and events by their *functions* (Searle, 1995), but Hanson points out that reality is also constructed through the *structure* of language and the way we use it to describe the world (Hanson, 1958). The logic of our language impacts how our facts are constructed (Hanson, 1958). He illustrates this through a cross-culture comparison of color descriptions. When we look at the sun and say that "the sun is yellow" or "the grass is green", we think we are merely stating a fact. In the Russian and Arabic languages however, the same sentence would be worded as, "the sun yellows" or "the grass greens". Hanson points out that thinking of green as a passive thing about the grass (the grass is green) is different from describing what the grass does (the grass greens).

> The grass would green; it would send forth, radiate greenness-like X-ray fluorescence. Crossing a lawn would be wading through a pool of green light. Colleges would no longer be cold, lifeless stone. (Hanson, 1958, p. 33)

Hanson points out, "This is not a case of 'say it how you please, it all means the same'. This is not merely to speak differently and to think in the same way. Discursive thought and speech have the same logic" (ibid). He concludes, "Perhaps facts are somehow moulded by the logical forms of the fact-stating language. Perhaps these provide a 'mould' in terms of which the world coagulates for us in definite ways" (Hanson, 1958, p. 36).

Berger and Luckmann conceive of reality as a construction which occurs in a complex web of social interactions. Among the first to propose a *theory* on the social construction of reality and influenced by the symbolic-interactionist theory, Berger and Luckmann (1966) propose a three-phase model: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. They refer to the construction of "facts" as externalization. Externalization takes place not only through language, as illustrated by Searle (1995) and Hanson (1958), but also in the different forms of social policies and practices. It may seem that institutions are set up to study an *existing* phenomenon, but often these institutions engage in producing knowledge that influences and re-conceptualizes the phenomenon itself. The social constructionist's concern is with the possible adverse effects of such constructions.

We define the world through language in social intercourse with others, and produce artifacts. Once these cultural products have been created, they become external to those who have produced them. They take on a reality of their own and become meaningful by themselves. People seem to forget that they themselves and their predecessors developed their social and cultural environment. The tendency is to perceive cultural products as if they have an *objective* necessity, becoming another part of reality to be taken for granted. This is referred to as phase 2, "objectivation". As "facts" are constructed, social institutions and cultural artifacts are created to support and reinforce them.

In phase 3, people learn the assumed objective facts, and the facts become a part of their reality. People in similar cultures who share the same perceptions of reality rarely question the origins of their assumptions. Beliefs about reality are just taken for granted as being natural. Goodman articulates this quite well when he writes, "Worldmaking as we know it always starts from world, already on hand; the making and remaking" (Goodman, 1978). This is referred to as "internalization", phase 3 of the social construction of reality. As Mannheim points out, the knowledge we hold not only defines our sense of reality, but also shapes the possibilities of future experiences (Mannheim, 1936, p. 22).

Today, the social constructionist's main intention is to bring into consciousness the idea that certain "facts" have been socially constructed and are not as naturally occurring as it seems to us. Numerous social constructionist theses focus on the social construction of various facts. However, most contemporary social constructionists fail to account for the role of the individual in challenging and changing dominant cultural assumptions. Social constructionism has often been critiqued on this basis.

Jack Martin and Jeff Sugarman (1999), two contemporary scholars, address individual agency as a reality which cannot be reduced to its sociocultural origin. They put forward a position which they call, "dynamic interactionism" (p. 5). This position acknowledges not only the social origins of experience but also their agentic, individual psychology. Martin and Sugarman emphasize the need to acknowledge individual agency and not dismiss it, or reduce it to its sociocultural origins. They explain that culture provides the conditions for enabling and constraining the individual, and the individual provides possibilities and constraints for how meaning is interpreted and reinterpreted.

Martin and Sugarman (1999), however, do not align themselves with a social constructionist position. Rather, they critique social constructionists for not addressing notions of agency. Yet, Karl Mannheim (1936), one of the first social constructionist philosophers, addressed the interaction between the individual and the group, arguing that knowledge develops in the context of a historical-social situation, out of which individually differentiated knowledge gradually emerges. The individual does not initially think independently of others. Rather, the individual finds himself in an inherited pattern of thought developed by certain groups. However, the individual participates in thinking further what others have already thought before him/her, and either elaborates the inherited modes or substitutes them in order to deal with new challenges (p. 3). "Everyone unfolds his [sic] knowledge within the framework of a common fate, a common activity, and the overcoming of common difficulties" (p. 29). However, no one is exposed to all possible aspects of the world. Therefore, the knowledge that each individual produces varies. In addition, even the common world not shared by an outside group appears differently to subgroups because they each have a different experiential approach. Since all subgroups, for the most part, think and act collectively with and against each other diverse meanings arise even in an inclusive society. The individual members of each group work in accordance with the position of their groups to either maintain or change their world. It is this will to maintain or change the world that leads to the development of concepts, questions, and forms of thought.

Although the central goal in a social constructionist thesis is to show that what seems to have an objective and factual existence is a product of social and cultural processes, the phenomenon that is worth exploring in this way is only that phenomenon or that part of reality which the society is strongly regarding as a brute fact (Hacking, 2000). For example, Hacking argues that the *social construction of the "woman refugee"* is not a dissertation worth writing about, if we are referring to the social and political events which force women to flee their country. It is obvious that a woman leaves her country and becomes a refugee as a result of certain *social* events and processes, and that as a result, the act of becoming a refugee was *socially* constructed. However, what is worth exploring, for a social constructionist, is whether the category, "woman refugee", is a necessary label. While it is true that some refugees are women and are therefore "woman refugees", in creating this label we assume that there is such a thing as woman refugee who experiences specific needs, unique to her group. Having been created, this categorization is then assumed to be a natural and inevitable occurrence. Considering the implications that the *categorization* "woman refugees" would have on the way group members would regard themselves, it is worth questioning the necessity to create a category which refers to a group of refugees who happen to be women (Hacking, 2000).

One is left with the inevitable question, why is knowledge constructed if it is not the result of objective inquiries of natural social phenomena? Some constructionists argue that our sense of "the inevitable" and our knowledge of a "natural occurrence of a particular category", is a product of our ideologies. The knowledge we hold starts from the experiences, values, and culture of the group. The world, its people and their classifications are products of economic and political power, and social and cultural forces and ideologies. They argue that reality doesn't simply emerge out of social interaction but is based on the interests and visions of powerful people, groups, organizations, and institutions. People with more power, prestige, status, wealth, and access to a high level policy makers can make their perceptions of the world the entire culture's perception. In other words, "He who has the bigger stick, has the better chance of imposing his definitions of reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 109)

Mannheim (1936) indicates that even scientific theories and hypotheses are colored by the values and interests of a particular group of people. The individualism of Western philosophy, for example, shapes the research questions that are asked and psychological theories that are developed. However, Mannheim does not mean that scientists are aware of the values built into their hypotheses, or aware that they are constructing knowledge of reality rather than producing it.

Mannheim introduces the idea that there is a group of people in every society responsible for producing knowledge about the world. The more power this group has the more united the society's view of the world would be. These groups are motivated by values and an "unconscious collective volitional impulse". He writes,

> It is, of course, true that in the social sciences, as elsewhere, the ultimate criterion of truth or falsity is to be found in the investigation of the object, and the sociology of knowledge is no substitute for this. But this examination of the object is not an isolated act; it takes place in a context which is coloured by values and collective-unconscious, volitional impulses. In the social sciences it is this intellectual interest, oriented in a matrix of collective activity, which provides not only the general questions, but the concrete hypotheses for research and the thought-models for the ordering of experience. (Mannheim, 1936, p. 5)

Newman (2002) talks about perceptions of reality and ideologies that shape them. Definitions of reality are shaped by groups of people with moral, economic, and/or political concerns. Ideas that become socially "popular" might reinforce the interests of wealthy individuals and organizations, allowing them to control the activities of others. Newman implies, however, that some of those who are constructing knowledge about the world may well be aware of what and how they are doing this. For example, with billions of dollars at stake, broadcasters prefer to redefine what an educational programme is (they call the Yogi Bear Show educational) in order to protect their financial interests.

Other social constructionists, such as Kenneth Gergen (1994b) and Berger and Luckmann (1966), argue that social process rather than self interest and ideology shapes our conceptions of truth. Discourses are constructed in the context of dialogical relationships where knowledge is collaboratively discussed, constructed, defined and redefined.

Social constructionists have been critiqued for their relativist position. Gergen specifies, "critique of the social genesis of any account is itself socially derived" (Gergen, 1994b, p. 48). Each social critique is itself situated in social processes. Each ideological critique is itself ideological. Gergen argues that looking at the implications of discourse is a way to escape this "prison". "With each reflexive reprise, one moves into an alternative discursive space which is to say, into yet another domain of relatedness" (Gergen, 1994b, p. 48). Constructionist scholars can question their own theses and invite other voices into the conversation (ibid).

In this dissertation, rather than expose the interests of "stake-holders" that have constructed our knowledge of "behaviour problems", as is common in "critical theory" (Guba, 1990) work, I would like to explore the social and professional processes that have impacted our current knowledge of behaviour problems, and helped construct behaviour problems as a concept, and a *type* of person.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Methods of Inquiry

The specific methodological decisions and tools of a research project help to address the question, "how should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?" (Guba, 1990). A host of methods are used in educational research and in social sciences generally. One way to address a research question is by empirical evidence, either situated in a positivist or a subjectivist paradigm and epistemologies. Another form of evidence to support a research question is generated by philosophical analysis, either as an argument or conceptual analysis.

In this dissertation, I assume a social constructionist position. To my knowledge, there have not been any texts that specify the particular research method or approach appropriate for a social constructionist inquiry. In response to the question, "is there something that could be called a constructionist method", Potter (1996) answers, "No"....For many of these approaches, indeed, it is not clear that there is anything that would correspond to what psychologists traditionally think of as a 'method'" (p. 128-129). Potter offers discourse analysis as an approach that most approximates a psychological research "method".

Nevertheless, he explains, even the term "method" is understood differently in discourse analysis than it is in conventional psychology.

> One point of contrast is in the justification of results. In much traditional psychological work, this justification is provided by carrying out the procedures of analysis in a correct and complete manner. A sample is collected, some 'variables' are operationalized, conventional statistical tests are carried out and so on. In contrast to this, in discourse analysis the analytical procedure is largely separate from how claims are justified. (Potter, 1996, p. 129)

In The Uses of Argument, Toulmin (Toulmin, 1958) describes two models to support a claim. One is based on deductive reasoning from premise to conclusion; the other is what Toulmin calls "jurisprudence", which brings in evidence from various sources and is used in the court of law. Toulmin argues that the jurisprudence model can be used in social science inquiries, since multiple sources are needed to take into account the complexity of human life. The method I use in this dissertation is to put forward the best evidence to address my inquiry by drawing upon various sources. To make this inquiry, I draw on reasoned arguments, conceptual analyses, case examples from other studies and interpretations of the examples, autobiographies, and examples from my personal experience. In addition, I draw upon the analyses of others in order to build support for my claims.

This method is eclectic in that it employs various strategies. One strategy I use is to assume a social constructionist approach and attempt to articulate how the concept of behaviour problem has historically emerged and used as a way of classifying students. A social constructionist approach focuses on the discourse surrounding classifications as an *institutional* discourse. It is based on the idea that social, cultural, and professional values are inherent in the construction and consequences of truth claims.

A second strategy I use to draw my conclusions is that of a broad conceptual analysis. Green (1991) concludes that in a conceptual analysis, we "unwrap" the ordinary language. The ordinary, she points out, is most of what we have in common, which is therefore most likely to be overlooked. Everyday conversations about behaviour problem students has become part of the ordinary, shared, language in schools, and tends to be overlooked. Green concludes that "in the ordinary, common, shared experience, we shall find a kind of preexistent ethic that we know, understand, and submit to, but may have overlooked" (p. 86). In a conceptual analysis, she notes, "the ordinary may appear as a fresh discovery even though there is nothing in it we did not already know" (Green, 1991, p. 86-87). This dissertation is a broad conceptual analysis of the term, behaviour problem, inspecting how the term brings educators and students closer, or farther apart, and revealing its concealed ethic. It will possibly change the initial meaning of these words for the reader and reveal hidden assumptions associated with the classification.

This dissertation is intended to raise consciousness regarding the negative effects of behaviour problem labels on classified students. This is accomplished in several ways: (a) By using personal experiences as an educator, other scholars' claims on the ethics of the various behaviour problem practices in schools, and by engaging in conceptual analyses, I explore the effects of using the behaviour problem label in schools, (b) by relying on different sources such as the Mental Health institutional literature, other education scholars' analyses, historians' reflections on cultural developments in America, and by engaging in conceptual analyses, I explore how the institutional world produced a particular *type* of a student and left little room for an alternative discourse; (c) by using various sources and examples of students' experiences of aggression and non-compliance, and by introducing philosophical discussions of the concept of "self", I suggest alternative theories to the individual/psychological model. In doing this, I hope to open the space for discussion, and to invite the reader to question and reflect upon the use of the behaviour problem classification in schools. In addition, I engage in conceptual analyses of the social constructionist approach. Clarifying what social constructionism means, and what is the purpose of a social construction inquiry, is in itself a difficult task. Situating my claim in the framework of a social constructionist theory is a very different task than a dissertation situated in, for example, Piaget's developmental theory. Social constructionism is a philosophical approach towards knowledge, rather than a well-developed and often-replicated theory. As a philosophical approach, it has taken many directions in the academic literature. To clarify this philosophical approach, by itself, is to raise consciousness towards a new way of thinking, that "knowledge is embedded in language and arising from culture" (Pare, 1995, p. 10).

Appropriateness of Inquiry to Theory

The methodology of a research question is more than just the method of acquiring knowledge. One also needs to address how the inquiry fits in with the theoretical context. To this end, I offer two new ways of thinking about a social constructionist inquiry. These are (a) three categories of inquiry which help the reader think about *what* is being socially constructed; and (b) a guide, which I have designed, that helps the reader think about research questions appropriate to Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory.

Three categories on *what* is being constructed

Ian Hacking's (2000) significant contribution to social constructionism provides a methodological map to social scientists embarking on a social constructionist inquiry. He reviews numerous inquiries, illustrating how scholars have explored the social construction of a particular phenomenon, event, or category. He states that these studies generally fall into one of three categories:

1. "Construction-as-process" refers to the exploration of historical, cultural, and political contexts and processes that gave rise to a specific *category, concept,* or *idea.* For example, one can explore how the idea, learning disability (LD) has emerged as a category, such that LD children are now a different category than other children.

2. "Construction-as-product" refers to the construction of a specific *type of a person* or *phenomenon* itself, and not the idea. For example, McDermott (1993) examined how the day-to-day social interactions and structures and requirements of the curriculum constructed the LD student. These interactions and practices reminded the student that he is LD and reinforced it to the rest of the classroom.

3. "Construction-as-construal" refers to the linguistic references that construct a person or phenomenon as positive or negative, even though the term is assumed to have a neutral value. For example, Lutz (1988) examined how the linguistic term, "emotional", construes individuals as anti-rational, insane, or out of control although "emotion" is assumed to be a neutral concept.

Hacking contends that construction as product, process, and construal are intertwined; one cannot make an inquiry about one, without touching upon the other two. Even so, one of the three is usually the focus of analysis. In this dissertation, I engage with the first type of inquiry: to explore how the classification, behaviour problem, has emerged.

A Guide for Social Constructionist Inquiries

In addition to the three categories of social constructionist inquiry offered by Hacking, I have synthesized a guide for social scientists interested in conducting constructionist inquiries. To design this guide, I have used Berger and Luckmann's (1966) three-phase theoretical model. Table 1 contains a summary of this guide.

Table 1
Guide for Social Constructionist Inquiries

1. Externalization: (Berger and Luckmann, 1966)	**An idea or a phenomenon was initially constructed as a fact through social processes, and not because they represent an ontological reality.**
Purpose-TYPE 1:	*To explore social, historical, political, and/or cultural processes from which the idea, label, or discourse externalized as a "fact":*
Research questions:	¿ What idea or label has been constructed? What discourse has been construed about it?
Purpose-TYPE 2:	*To explore the interactions and structures that maintain the phenomenon:*
Research questions:	¿ What face-to-face interactions and institutional structures construct the idea
*********************	**
Also address:	¿ What institutions or groups of people were/are involved in the construction ¿ What were the underlying ideologies? OR, what are the consequences of the discourse? (Some researchers address both. (see Gergen, 1994b, p. 31-63). ¿ Should this idea, label, or phenomenon be eliminated or modified?
2. Objectivation: (Berger and Luckmann, 1966)	**Phenomena appear as an objective ordered reality. Cultural products gain a life of their own, and are multiplied as a result.**
Purpose:	*To analyze the underlying ideologies and/or repercussions of cultural products and show how this objectivation is problematic*
Research questions:	¿ What are the underlying ideologies and self-interests which resulted in the establishment of various structures, practices, and "truths"? ¿ What are repercussions of languages and practices used? Analyze how discourse functions in ongoing relationships and how this opens the space for alternative discourses? ¿ Should the institution, language or discourse be eliminated or modified?
3. Internalization: (Berger and Luckmann, 1966)	**Acceptance of the phenomenon as part of reality-- a taken-for-granted world. People in similar cultures make the same assumptions.**
Purpose:	*To show that the phenomenon which has been internalized as a natural and universal reality is not so.*
Research questions:	¿ What alternative meanings does the phenomenon have either historically or in other cultures? ¿ Should the phenomenon be eliminated or modified?

Research questions that focus on phase 1 "Externalization", would analyze processes behind the construction of a particular idea or category as a "fact". Instead of assuming that an idea reflects reality, one would analyze how the idea came into being and came to be taken for granted by many people. For researchers addressing "externalization", the investigation can take place by studying a set of materials, such as texts, policies, or interview transcripts, analyzing its language, or assessing face-to-face interactions. Materials can reveal the processes that have externalized a "knowledge" to become a part of reality. Language and face-to-face interactions are part of the overall reality of everyday life and they can construct "knowledge"--that which people take to be reality. "Knowledge is embedded in language and culture" (Pare, 1995, p. 10) and can be revealed in the materials that are analyzed.

Carlson (1998), for example, investigates how the classification, mental retardation was born, and argues that the classification has been permanent because of the nature of the discourse it produces. Ferguson (2001), examines how historically various policies and institutional activities have construed a particular discourse about the blind, and critiques the discourse on the basis that it produces a negative, stereotypical, and misleading image of the blind. Hacking (2000) points out that doing only a historical analysis of the label is to miss the point, and that the point is to further discuss whether this construction should exist. Both authors argue for ways that the discourse needs to change or be modified.

The second type of inquiry directed at "Externalization" would involve analyzing face-to-face interactions as well as the structures and elements that maintain the assumptions of naturalness and universality of a particular *phenomenon*. For example, McDermott (1993) looked at how the LD child is constructed through everyday interactions in the classroom, including the impact of curricula and the requirement of working independently. Through these approaches, one child is constructed as LD and another as normal. The interaction of other students with the LD child, on a daily basis, communicates to the child that he is LD. Similarly, observing the classroom practices of Grade 1 and Grade 2 English as Second Language teaching, Toohey (1998) found elements in the classroom that maintain the assumption that students are "independent learners". The classroom structure, types of furniture, and lack of freedom to move around as much as the teacher, all communicated this notion to students, and reinforced the universality of this view of learning. Toohey argues that learning is a communal process, rather than an individual one.

"Objectivation" occurs at phase 2. Once cultural products have been created, they become external to those who have produced them. They appear as an ordered reality. "Its phenomena are prearranged in patterns that seem to be independent of [their] apprehension of them and that impose themselves upon the latter" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 21). People start using labels, assuming attitudes, and participating in practices that seem to be in par with the "truth" about a particular phenomenon. "Reality is constituted by an order of objects that have been designated *as* objects before [their] appearance on the scene" (ibid, [italics in original]). More practices are constructed, more funding is provided by governments, and policies are established every day, based on their objectified "truth". Feminist studies and post-modern arguments usually address "objectivation". In such studies, the author would argue against the use and establishment of various institutions, practices and discourses, that seem to have taken on an unquestioned existence. The purpose of such analyses is mainly to unmask ideologies underlying truth claims, which as researchers point out, often have negative outcomes. The view is that "emancipation occurs when one understands the *true* nature of things" (Gergen, 1994b, p. 45, [italics in original]). The focus is less on the processes that brought the discourse into existence, and more on unmasking inherent ideologies.

For inquiries addressing "Objectivation", the investigation can take place empirically or philosophically. One can empirically analyze a particular practice to show the power dynamics and discourses created as a result of the practice. An example of this kind of a study would be May-Stewart's (1998) analysis of, the work environment for 11 working single mothers in British Columbia, power relations in this context, and how these conditions intertwine to produce individual and collective stressors. One finding, for example, was that the workplace discourse constructed single mothers in dichotomized frames of reference. The assumption that the working single mother can leave her "mother self" at home and wear only her "employee hat" at work, created stress for the single mother and impacted her life outside of work. This study indicated that the dominant stress discourse does not fully capture the multiple realities of working single mothers' lives and that a new conceptualization that considers power imbalances must be considered. In contrast to May-Stewart's study which made an empirical argument, one can also make a philosophical or theoretical argument for the repercussions of a practice, as has been done by Cannella (1998).

In phase 3 of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) theory, "Internalization", people learn cultural practices and discourses, and internalize them as a part of their reality, as "facts". "Reality . . . does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence. It is simply *there*, as self-evident and compelling facticity" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 21, [italics in original]). People in similar cultures who share the same perceptions of reality rarely question the origins of these assumptions. Research questions that address Internalization can raise the possibility of alternative ways of thinking about the *phenomenon*. We are born into a world that we often take for granted. The boundaries between reality and truth get merged. Inquiry into other possible ways of thinking raises consciousness and promotes reflection with respect to one's own assumptions about reality. Anthropological studies generally show how differently those relations exist in another culture.

For inquiries addressing "internalization", one needs to rely on the empirical understanding of a phenomenon. How else can we know that a phenomenon is not universal to all cultures, unless we rely on empirical data. Similarly, the researcher can rely on historical archives that show that the phenomenon had a different meaning at some other time in history. For example, Lutz's (1988) anthropological study on emotions shows that emotions have a different meaning in the Ifaluk culture. In that culture, emotions are not construed as involuntary and irrational, or as secondary to reason/logic as they are in western cultures.

Each of the above analyses illustrate that the particular idea or phenomenon under question is not as inevitable as it seems. It underscores how that which has presumably existed independent of society cannot really be comprehended without the language, culture, and meaning systems that define it. The point is not so much to *explain* phenomenon within set parameters of measurement and conceptualization, but rather to question the assumed naturalness of the phenomenon and associated discourses. Social constructionists search neither for patterns in the observer's subjectivity, nor patterns in the observed world, focusing instead on knowledge as a communal construction.

Each of the above analyses is a move against traditional social science positions and their realist assumptions. Social Constructionists have been critiqued for taking a relativist position with regard to truth. Some constructionists believe that because all truths are socially constructed, no one can claim that they have accessed "the truth". Therefore, all truths are equally valid.

My position for this inquiry and my ontological and epistemological stand stems from critical theory. The purpose of my social constructionist inquiry, similar to that of a critical theorist, is to raise awareness for the reader and to effect social change. Guba explains that the critical theorist's purpose of raising people to a level of "true consciousness" implies a critical realist ontology, similar to post-positivism, coupled with a subjectivist epistemology (Guba, 1990, p. 24).

To expand on the notion of critical realism, I attempt to clarify some underlying assumptions of social constructionist theory.

> Every phenomenon exists both in the physical world and it exists as an idea or concept. Epistemologically, all ideas are socially constructed, even when they have a physical existence. In other words, the idea exists in the social realm by means of the context in which the idea is discussed, the way in which it is inter-related with other ideas, and the social groups which identify with, make use of, and benefit from the idea. These various means create a matrix for the idea. The epistemological assumption here is that an idea always exists within this matrix and cannot be free from the social context in which it is conceptualized. (Hacking, 2000, p. 11)

This dissertation is thus based on a critical realist ontology, in the sense that it requires knowledge of the actual context in which an idea was conceptualized. However, analysis of the ideological context in which an idea was conceptualized, like any other historical analysis can never have a "correct" answer. In the Chapter Two I emphasized the use of language as a way of constructing truths. In other words, the language we use does not simply reflect reality, it reflects the assumptions we have made about reality. At most one can put forward a "reasonable" analysis of the values and perspectives assumed by a group of people in a particular time in history.

The idea of making a reasonable argument leaves us with a conundrum. Every analysis is itself situated in a matrix of assumptions. The act of analysis is itself value-laden. This is a reality one cannot escape, nor should it be escaped. Living and acting in the context of values is a part of being human. It is in this sense that an inquiry is subjectivist, because it is intimately connected to the values of the inquirer.

One might ask why a matrix would be examined if the inquiry is itself value-laden. This examination is still necessary because often the matrix is reinforced in ways that make it look like an inevitable truth. The significance of such an exploration would be to highlight other ways of constructing and typifying an idea. This is all part of scholarship and practice based on fresh ideas and techniques rather than a pre-set paradigm that limits human understanding. In this dissertation, the purpose of such an inquiry would be to open the space for an alternative that is more respectful to the dignity of youth.

Chapter 4

Claims-Makers: Psychologists And Educators

Introduction

Social constructionists "must concern themselves with what people 'know' as 'reality'....It is precisely this 'knowledge' that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 14). "Knowledge" about students' behaviour problem exists in two professional arenas: psychology, and education. Psychologists have the authority to diagnose behaviour problems, provide treatment, and promote theoretical definitions of behaviour problems. Education is the second arena. Schools not only identify and label children as behaviour problem youth, they also promote their preferred treatment programmes and emerge as experts.

Psychologists and educators not only *know* what behaviour problems are, they also construct this knowledge for the public. The credentials achieved by psychologists, and the role of educational institutions in society, legitimates their authority as experts. In the act of construction, they often typify the problem in a particular way, but exclusive of other claims. Best (1989) describes the act of typifying a problem as a claims-making activity which typically presents only one perspective.

In this Chapter I explore and critique how students' aggressive and non-compliant behaviour is typified by psychologists and educators. Further, I explore the images constructed about "behaviour problem youth" by this "knowledge". This exploration is an inquiry into the professional knowledge, which manages and defines aggressive and noncompliant youth, a critique of this knowledge in the way it constructs youth that are labeled, and an analysis of the "concept" behaviour problem--how it is defined--by psychologists.

Professional Knowledge in Psychology

Non-compliant behaviour of students has been a problem which has concerned society. This behaviour could be typified as a moral, medical, political, educational, psychological, cultural, or criminal problem, or not presented as a problem at all. For the most part, students' non-compliant behaviour is currently being constructed as a psychological problem. In the twentieth century, psychologists have presented an authoritative voice on human behaviour. Psychologists are used as expert witnesses in courts to verify the cause of criminal behaviour and they participate in data collection teams on a national level to determine problems, for which various policies will be enacted. Psychologists also write self-help books and regularly engage in talk shows on the radio and television where their ideas are discussed, and where psychological words become assimilated into everyday language. They also play an important role in schools where they discuss the "problems" of students with the school staff, and recommend various practices. The authority given to school psychologists, and the significance attributed to psychologically-based violence intervention programmes, make it important for us to understand what psychologists know as reality about non-compliant behaviours, and how this knowledge portrays students who are labeled as a "behaviour problem".

Conceptual Definitions

In an extensive review of recent research on behaviour problems, Campbell (1995, p. 114) reviewed studies that had defined behaviour problems as "symptoms of oppositional disorder and attention deficit disorder" excluding those behaviours that are age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate. She concluded that many of these studies used Achenbach's (1987) Child Behaviour Checklist, which identifies behaviour problems by their "externalizing behaviours such as *aggression, non-compliance, poor impulse-control, tantrum, and overactivity* [italics added]" and "internalizing behaviours such as anxiety, sadness, social withdrawal, and fearfulness" (p. 115-116).

Several studies have statistically found that aggression, non-compliance, and problems with self-regulation co-occur, and do not load on separate factors, making them statistically indistinguishable from each other (Achenbach, Edelbrock, & Howell, 1987; Luk, Leung, Bacon-Shone, & Lieh-Mak, 1991; McGuire & Richman, 1986). In other words, behaviour problems are characterized by a number of behaviours, all of which are very similar to aggression.

Conceptually as well, there is an overlap between several of the behaviour problem characteristics and aggression. Non-compliance, poor impulse control, and tantrums are themselves characterized by a series of behaviours, one of which is aggression. In other words, behaviours such as tantrums, non-compliance, and poor impulse control often involve displaying aggressive acts. For example, in the Cambridge International Dictionary, a tantrum is an "uncontrolled childish anger" (Procter et al., 1995) which usually involves hurtful language and behaviour, intending to gain personal desires. As such, a tantrum is an instrumental form of aggression. Feshbach (1970, p. 161) defines instrumental aggression as an action directed towards the achievement of non-aggressive goals that results in hurting others (Feshbach, 1970, p. 161). Similar to tantrums, non-compliance involves defying rules or expectations, which could lead to hurtful acts when demands increase, and interpreted as a form of instrumental aggression. Finally, poor impulse control engages the child in actions that are socially inappropriate and often result in hurting others.

In sum, checklists used by psychologists to identify behaviour problem children for their research, incorporate a wide number of aggressive behaviours that could be occurring in the context of various behavioural symptoms (such as tantrums, non-compliance, or poor impulse control).

While psychologists distinguish between "aggression" and "violence", educators more readily interchange these terms. However, there is considerable variation even among psychological definitions. Some psychologists define aggression as "an action which results in harming or injuring another person", whether it is pro-social or not, and with the exception of accidental injury (Buss, 1961; Olweus, 1980). For example, injuring someone who is hurting a child is an aggressive, pro-social action. Other psychologists include intent regardless of the consequence (Berkowitz, 1969; Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939). Shooting a gun aimed at another person is aggressive, even if it does not hit the intended target. While most aggression theorists have not discussed violence, Neufeld suggests a distinction between the two. Aggression is the "act of attacking", which results from the "inability to handle frustration". Violence is "an attack that violates social norms and expectations" (Neufeld, 1994). Educators generally interchange these two terms, with the general understanding that violence is associated with intense physical injury, and aggression includes intended harmful consequences. In this dissertation, my use of these terms is in line with the general meaning used by educators.

Theoretical Frameworks

Behaviour problems exhibited by students in school are usually disruptive to other students' learning or to the teacher's educational goals, or behaviour that is perceived to pose a physical danger to others. Students who are shy or withdrawn are not considered to have behaviour problems even though their emotional state might disrupt their own learning or undermine group-based learning.

Some psychologists rely on various mono-causal theories that compete for "the truth" regarding the etiology and treatment of behaviour problems. Behaviour problems are thus associated with the child's individual characteristics such as temperament and personality characteristics, genetic traits, social cognitive abilities, or attachment patterns, or they are associated with parental discipline and reinforcement strategies. Other psychologists rely on multi-causal theories such as the social learning theory.

Associated individual characteristics are temperament (Fagan, 1990) and personality traits (Hinde, 1993; Lachar & Gdowski, 1979). Temperament and personality traits are conceptualized as stable characteristics of the self. In comparison to normal youth, behaviour problem youth are more assertive, resentful, suspicious, narcissistic, ambivalent towards authority, impulsive, and extroverted, (Glueck & Glueck, 1950); less submissive, anxious, cooperative, dependent, conventional or compulsive (Glueck & Glueck, 1950); more egocentric, interpersonally disruptive, and unfriendly (Conger & Miller, 1966); less shy, worried, or timid (Taylor & Watt, 1977); more detached from social norms, alienated, and unproductively hyperactive (Megargee & Bohn, 1979); and more sensation-seeking and externally controlled (Quay, 1965).

Psychologists maintain that behaviour problems are persistent and stable characteristics of the individual (Eron & Huesmann, 1990; Farrington, 1985; Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1984). Children who manifest behaviour problems in elementary school continue having behaviour problems in high school and often become criminals later in life (Farrington, 1985; Huesmann et al., 1984)

Other mono-causal theories focus on studies of identical twins to show that aggressive behaviour can be characterized as a genetic trait; however, there has been some disagreement on the percentage of heritability (Ghodsian-Carpey & Baker, 1987; Loehlin & Nichols, 1970; Rushton, Fulker, Neale, Nias, & Eyesenk, 1986). Several neurological views have been put forward for violent behaviour, suggesting that the nervous system or the brain of the violent person performs differently from that of the normal person (Ellis, 1987). Ellis notes that the first view, arousal theory, implies that a violent person is more likely to seek high levels of sensation and endure pain, but when highly aroused, it takes longer to calm down. The second view, seizuring theory, is based on the evidence that a high number of criminals have epileptic seizures compared to the general population. This theory suggests that criminal behaviour is caused by brain seizures. The third view, hemispheric functioning theory, is based on theory that the way the two cortical hemispheres of the brain relate may predispose a person to criminal behaviour.

Social cognitive theorists claim that aggressive children have social cognitive abilities different from normal children. Presented with videotaped stimuli, aggressive children, relative to non-aggressive children, have more difficulty shifting attention away from aggressive stimuli, are more easily distracted by aggressive behaviour while competing another task, and remember a larger extent of hostile behaviour than neutral ones (Huesmann, 1986). Aggressive children tend to perceive others' behaviours as hostile rather than clearly accidental when the situation is ambiguous (Dodge, 1980), and are more likely to come up with aggressive solutions than prosocial solutions (Dodge & Frame, 1982; Slaby & Guerra, 1988).

Attachment theorists are concerned about the attachment or love/connection between the parent and child. As part of the parent-child relationship in the first three years of life, the child instinctively develops a stable attachment pattern. The result of unhealthy attachments is a pathological view of the world and a pathological activation of aggressive behaviour which can be instinctively instigated later in life (Bowlby, 1979). Although attachment patterns depend on parental attitudes towards the child, once developed, these patterns are considered to be stable characteristics inherent to the child. The child builds a representational model of the world based on these early experiences (Bowlby, 1979). The psychological literature contains a range of studies on the relation between behaviour problem children and their attachment patterns. "Insecure attachment" predicts teacher ratings of behaviour problem in schools (Erickson, Sroufe, & Egeland, 1985; Moss, Rousseau, Parent, St-Laurent, & Saintonge, 1998;

Sroufe, 1983). Girls with "insecure attachments" have more aggressive behaviours towards peers and are perceived as such by their teachers, more so than girls with "secure attachment" (Fagot & Kavanagh, 1990; Lewis, Feiring, McGuffog, & Jaskir, 1984). Children with "insecure-avoidant attachment" are at greater risk for increased aggressiveness (Belsky, 1988). A recent review of attachment studies concludes that as the child moves along the continuum of being at risk for developing aggressive behaviours and other behaviour problems, the likelihood of a "secure attachment" decreases (Goldberg, 1997).

The aforementioned theories are only part of the overall professional discourses practiced by psychologists. A critical view of this knowledge reveals that these theories are not as neutral and value-free as is commonly assumed by traditional psychologists. This knowledge constructs behaviour problem, aggressive, and violent youth as a deviance from the norm, locating the etiology of the problem within the individual. It typifies the child's non-compliance and aggression as a psychological deficiency.

Some psychologists argue that the *interaction* between child and parent characteristics are associated with behaviour problems (Bates, Pettit, & Dodge, 1998; Stoolmiller, 2001; Werner & Smith, 1982). In her review of the literature, Campbell (1995) concluded that overall, behaviour problems result from the interaction between children's individual characteristics and their environment. This new framework can be considered as a shift away from deficiency models and an attempt to understand the child in the wider context of the parent-child dynamic. Unfortunately, the knowledge produced by these studies is limited in that the "context" is simplified down to a small number of previously determined factors. This knowledge fails to provide a true understanding of the interactional space between individual and environment.

Other person-environment interaction models have been used to study the impact of educational contexts on adolescents' motivations (Eccles, Lord, & Midgley, 1991; Eccles et al., 1993); a decrease in motivation could potentially lead to behaviour problems. These studies use statistical analyses to show that the decline in motivation assumed to be characteristic of the early adolescent period is a consequence of the mismatch between the students' needs and middle-grade school settings rather than the students' developmental stage. This conclusion that low motivation is not a natural feature inherent in adolescents, rather, it is the result of the social context, displays the social constructionist researcher in-the-making, even though the researchers did not directly situate themselves in the social construction theory. However, their focus is more on the *social* aspect of knowledge, rather than its *constructed* nature. In other words, theoretical models that look at the person-environment fit are situated in a static model of the self, which is a typical model in a positivist paradigm. Psychological constructs such as motivation, self-esteem, or behaviour problems are seen as stable structures. A micro-level analysis of day to day interactions and structures is necessary in order to demonstrate how the experience, for example, of low motivation or behaviour problem, is *constructed* in the social context. Understanding the constructed nature of such phenomena provides the space to abandon the construct if necessary.

Behavioural theorists locate behaviour problems in the environment (Kilgore, Snyder, & Lentz, 2000; Patterson, 1990; Stormont, 2001). Taking a behavioural approach, Patterson (1990) suggests that lack of clear and consistent limits could result in behaviour problems. The problem with such a reductionistic approach is that it limits our understanding of children as humans who participate as part of a larger community, and reduces their involvement in the community to the fear of punishment.

Other psychologists rely on multi-component theories for aggression and behaviour problems. The most widely used is Bandura's (1973) social learning theory. Bandura suggests that a substantial contribution to aggressive behaviour is genetics and hormonal factors. In addition, children learn aggressive behaviour either when they are reinforced for behaving aggressively, or when they observe others being reinforced for it.

Once the individual has learned aggressive behaviour, it can be instigated in four ways: (a) experiencing frustration; (b) witnessing another's aggressive behaviour, which leads to emotional arousal and then aggressive behaviour; (c) expecting rewards; and (d) being ordered to get aggressive by authority or friends. Although this theory is based on a behavioural model, Bandura conceptualizes aggression as a stable part of the individual, once it has been learned. For example, he argues that maintenance of aggressive behaviour depends on its reinforcement; but reinforcement does not have to be external. Once children have learned aggressive behaviour, their own effort to cognitively justify its occurrence can also serve as reinforcement. In other words, even Bandura's theory is based on the idea that once aggression is learned, it becomes part of the person's stable self.

When traditional psychological models are used to explain students' behaviour problems, psychologists and educators shift the locus of explanation away from schools--the immediate context in which behaviours are occurring. Instead of acknowledging the need to understand the behaviour in the context of the education process, these theories look at the child to find the root cause of the "problem". Moreover, the underlying assumption is that problem behaviours are irrational, and that the disruptions, aggression, and violence can't be justified.

There is evidence in the psychology literature, however, that there is more sensitivity towards social constructionist frameworks and critiques of modernist assumptions. For example, Shimp (2001) is interested in *behaviour analysis*, arguing that the philosophy of behavior analysis is more in line with a social constructionist framework, whereas its practice has become solidified in the positivist paradigm. Shimp encourages scholars to further examine and clarify the relation between behaviour analysis and constructionism, and even more broadly, the relation between a science of behaviour and the arts. Similarly, Dodge and Pettit (2003) argue for a biopsychosocial model of the development of adolescent conduct problems. Using heart disease as a metaphor, the researchers discuss the numerous pathways that could potentially lead to behaviour problems. The reciprocal relationship between biological dispositions, sociocultural contexts, and life experiences exacerbate or diminish antisocial development. Enright, Levy, Harris and Lapsley (1987) examine the influence of socio/political/economic times on the portrayal of adolescents. At times of war, they are socially constructed as adults, while at times of depression they are constructed as innocent and child-like. In Debunking the myths of adolescence: Findings from recent research, Offer & Schonert-Reichl (1992) also argue for the socially constructed view of adolescence. Seeing this shift towards social constructionist frameworks is encouraging in that it could open space to alternative discourses; however, it is not dominant in the study of behaviour problems. In addition, these philosophies have not yet shifted what is happening in schools, as will be reviewed in the following section.

In sum, the current conceptualization of "behaviour problem" is deeply embedded in a reductionist model. The child gets identified with problems resulting from inherent deficiencies, such as genetic, neurological, cognitive, and temperament-related traits, or failing to develop appropriately, as noted by attachment and social learning theorists, which by itself is assumed to lead to an inability of some sort. Psychologists maintain that behaviour problems are persistent and stable characteristics of the individual. As such, this discourse negatively constructs the child who is labeled as a "behaviour problem". When psychological models are applied to students with behaviour problems, the disruptive behaviour is assumed to be unjustified. As a result, the social context is not considered as part of the "problem".

Margaret Jackson (1995) argues that a focus on the individual is just as dominant in the field of criminology. Whether the cause is located in biological, psychological, or sociological factors, the primary focus has been on the individual criminal as the person responsible for the act. Individual theories of criminality are translated into programs directed at changing the individual. This analysis shows the extent that psychological models are dominant in society, reaching across different disciplines.

Professional "Knowledge" in Schools

One common practice in North American schools is the act of classifying students who exhibit non-compliant, aggressive, and violent behaviour. Classification takes place both formally as mandated by federal and state policies, or informally as determined by each school independently. The act of classification is an important practice for schools because it allows them to receive funding for behaviour problem classrooms, hire behaviour problem teachers, and identify students, who would either be enrolled in violence intervention programmes or be placed in residential homes and day classrooms outside of the school. In addition to the formal classification, discussion of violence and behaviour problems among staff takes place with the use of informal labels. Labels are used to identify children who are perceived by teachers and administrators to be "behaviour problem youth". Considering the role that educators play in the way "behaviour problem students" are managed and perceived, and the behaviour problem concept is constructed, it is important to understand what educators know as "reality", and how this knowledge portrays students who are labeled as a "behaviour problem".

To perform this analysis, I explore assumptions underlying labels used to identify students with non-compliant and aggressive behaviour and weigh the implications of the images they portray of youth. Similarly, I explore the assumptions underlying intervention programmes, which are used as a treatment for these problems, and the images they portray of youth. These two artifacts reveal the "knowledge" possessed by educators with regard to a "behaviour problem". Wartofsky (1999) notes that artifacts are how human beings transmit to each other what they have "learned, discovered, or invented". Artifacts of the human culture are "language, tools, skills, and social structures, all of them embodiment of purposive human activity, by means of which we are able to preserve, transform, and transmit acquired-that is, learned, or discovered, or invented-characteristics" (p. 195).

Blaming the Child Through Labels

Several practices in schools, with regard to non-compliant behaviour, require the act of identifying individual students with a formal or informal label. As Hanson points out, we need to pay attention to the language we use to describe "facts" (Hanson, 1958). The words we use to describe a situation is not as objective and fact-based as it seems. It is based on a particular construction of reality. By labeling individual students as, "problem" behaviour, "disordered", "disturbed", "aggressive", or "violent", school authorities attach the problem to the child rather than the situation. Labels become a part of the child's everyday reality, and give the child the message that the problem originates in the child; it belongs to the child. Further, the act of labeling and classifying students in this way reinforces the deficit discourse.

Bendtro and Brokenleg (1993) point out that a variety of labels have been used in schools to identify students who exhibit a "behaviour problem". Labeling students as, "disturbed, disordered, deprived, deviant, disadvantaged, disruptive, disrespectful, dysocial, disobedient..." (p. 5), schools have created a demeaning image of youth.

Similarly, Polakow (1993) provides descriptions of labels used at schools. Staff used labels in their informal conversations, such as "free lunchers", "those trailer park kids", "LD kids" (learning disabled), "EI kids" (emotionally impaired). Polakow argues that the labels "lumped" students together, dismissed them, and dismissed their learning potentials.

Patricia Hill Collins (1991) elucidates how classification marginalizes people. In general, classification creates an either/or dichotomy. You are perceived to be either one way or another. Your differences are highlighted in direct opposition to each other and your similarities are ignored. In the context of educational settings, classifications portray students as good or bad, kind and caring or mean and violent, respectful and civilized or disrespectful and obnoxious. These processes are dehumanizing. Hutchinson makes a convincing argument that the educational process needs to respect the *dignity* of the child (Hutchinson, 1999).

Behaviour Problems: Heterogeneous but Unified Classification. The definitions ascribed to behaviour problems by school personnel help to reveal in what ways many educators think about non-compliant behaviours of students. In the United States, school policies draw on both the formal definition, "Seriously Emotionally Disturbed" (SED) and an informal definition of behaviour problem and maladjustment. In Canada, a formal definition has not been mandated but an informal one is used to determine how to place students in classes and what programmes to enroll them in. A review of terms used in American and Canadian schools shows that students are generally grouped together based on the generic description that these students disrupt learning or pose a threat to the safety of other members in school.

In the United States, the Education of the Handicapped Act, (EHA) passed in 1961, requires that all youth diagnosed with behavioural and/or emotional problems be eligible for special education. This Law was meant to stop schools from expelling students deemed impossible to educate. The Council for Children with Behavioural Disorders was founded in 1964, and special classes for students who were labeled "Seriously Emotionally Disturbed" (SED) were first established (Nelson, 1997). The term is defined as a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance:

> (a) An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; (b) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (c) inappropriate types of behaviour or feelings under normal circumstances; (d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or (e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with perphrenic or autistic. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they are seriously emotionally disturbed. (U.S. Office of Education, Federal; Register, Section 121a. 5, 1977b). (Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1976, p. 45)

This term includes schizophrenic children, but does not include children who are behaviour problems or socially maladjusted, unless they are seriously emotionally disturbed. (Knitzer, Steinberg, & Fleisch, 1990). Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1976) note that this definition is similar to that used in the 1961 EHA Act.

The number of students who are diagnosed with SED are not very high. According to an Annual Report to Congress, during the 1986-1987 school year, less than 1% of students between 6 and 17 were identified as SED in the United States (Knitzer et al., 1990). In addition to those identified as SED and enrolled in special education classes, a large number of students are identified with behaviour problems not serious enough to fit into the SED category

A review of 19 districts in the U. S., revealed that most school personnel do not use a formal definition of SED, are rarely aware that one exists, and for the most part believe that definitions "do not help in making placement decisions. At best, individuals operate with a range of personal definitions" (Knitzer et al., 1990). Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1976) note that the SED definition is very similar to descriptions of children who have behaviour problems, which are less severe than SED, and that school personnel who use the SED definition decide whether the definition matches the serious disorder, or a behaviour problem. It is not clear if Ysseldyke and Algozzine have made this conclusion on the basis of personal experience or systematic data collection.

In my experience in the process of data collection and observations in American and Canadian schools, I have similarly found that students who are disruptive to the classroom and school or who pose a threat to the safety of others are informally discussed as behaviour problem students. Decisions about disciplining these students and enrolling them in behaviour problem classrooms and intervention programmes are based on the subjective assessment of the teacher or administrator who is challenged in how to teach these students. In my one-year observation of 30 students in a fifth grade suburban classroom in British Columbia, I found that 60% of the students were identified as behaviour problems and were sent out of class for punishment during their science class, while the number of students who exhibited a behaviour problem decreased to 5% when the students were in an English Class with a different teacher. What intrigued me most was that the students were still discussed as "behaviour problem students" by the school. In interviews with the two teachers, the English teacher suggested that she doesn't have a problem with "the behaviour problem students" because she was able to redirect their attention and manage their behaviour.

In Canada, there has been an evolution in terms used to discuss behaviour problems (MacDonald, 1999). MacDonald points out that "behaviour problem" was changed to "school violence" in the 1990's, and is now termed "disruptive". "School violence" included behaviours that were not a criminal offense, and were based on the zero-tolerance policy of the Canadian Young Offenders Act in 1982. The zero-tolerance policy "delegates incidents of misbehaviour and delinquency (e.g., throwing snowballs, mischief, playground fights) to police and the judicial system. In other words, due to "zero-tolerance", even incidents that were once dealt with within the confines of the school are referred to the police. MacDonald suggests that the terms changed from school violence to disruptive because the word violence overstated problems in schools, frustrating educators and increasing public anxiety.

Although there has been a change in terms, it seems as if the definition for these terms is still based on the description of the child's behaviour. The Canadian Education Association's report defines "disruptive" students as students who are continually disruptive, persistently defiant, demanding of attention, or unmotivated" (MacDonald, 1999, p. 3). The report uses examples such as "breaking rules, lack of self-discipline, and disturbing classroom learning" to illustrate disruptive behaviours. In a review of the psychological literature, Campbell (1995) found that teachers defined behaviour problems as non-compliance, aggression, and impulsivity.

Overall, in both Canadian and American schools, behaviour problem and disruptive students are usually grouped together as a particular *kind* of a person, regardless of the underlying reasons for each person's disruption, or the student's subjective experiences in school. The heterogeneity of the underlying reason for behaviour problem is often ignored in schools, and students are grouped together as a unified, problematic group. As Hacking (2000) points out, classifications imply one type of a person, grouped together by the label, with unique needs characteristic to that group. Even when the student does not have disruptive behaviours, educators do not easily give up the label, and prefer to think that they were able to treat or deal with that type of a person. It is interesting that a similar critique was made in the early twentieth century by psychiatrist, Esther Richards (1921).

Richards (1921) examined 100 children referred by schools in Baltimore and suburbs to the Henry Phipps Psychiatric Clinic of the John Hopkins Hospital. Eighty had been referred for "backwardness" and the inability to move up to the next grade level. However, only 50% of these showed actual retardation, according to Binet-Simon tests.

The eighty students had been characterized by two groups of descriptive behaviours. Half were reported as shy, lazy, inattentive, sensitive to criticism, and daydreamers. The other 50% were referred for temper tantrums, sullenness, crying spells, twitching, indifference, excitability, poor coordination with hands, and being quarrelsome (p. 709). Of these 80 students, the 18 first graders were selected for further study.

The students were given the Binet Simon Intelligence Test, and background history was taken. Although all the students had been referred for backwardness and had already been kept back in first grade once, test scores showed that only ten of the first-graders had Binet-Simon score below their actual age level. Following testing, all students were put under the supervision of a teacher who had "the time, patience, and skill . . . for reconstructive therapy". At the end of the year, 10 were ready to skip second grade and advance to the third grade.

Seven were ready for the second grade. Only one had failed to respond to the special study.

Richards concludes that by the time the 100 children had been referred to the clinic, they had been "consigned to that heterogeneous gathering of misfits known as the ungraded class". She suggests, "from a pedagogical standpoint, the remedy would seem to lie, not in ultra-standardization of curriculum and the infusion of more interests and activities in the programme, but in creating opportunities for teacher and child to understand each other" (Richards, 1921, p. 718).

Intervention Programs: A Curriculum of Control

Negative images of youth have been constructed not only through labels, but also by treatment under this model. Bendtro and Brokenleg (1993) point out, "schools' responses to this deficit model has been a curriculum of control". They found that their concerns were corroborated by observations made by an international group of professionals who conducted a year-long study in North American schools: The word "control" was the word most often found to be used about children (p. 5).

LaRocque and Shariff (2001) make the same argument about the discourse of "control". They conducted a thorough analysis of 22 anti-violence programmes commonly used in British Columbia schools. They compiled anti-violence school policies, a description of programmes implemented in British Columbia schools in line with anti-violence policies, a profile of anti-violence policies and programmes for each district based on completed surveys, and interviews with school principals from three districts to determine their conceptualization of violence and their legal knowledge. LaRocque and Shariff conclude, "from the dearth of unique approaches and the prevalence of typical programmes in British Columbia schools that school administrators, teachers and programmers continue to conceptualize violence as something to be 'unlearned' or 'controlled'" (LaRocque & Shariff, 2001, p. 53). For example, the Ontario Crime Control Commission in 1998 requires, "For initial discipline problems . . . Board of Education shall establish short-term placement centers where students can be sent for a period of one day to three weeks. These should have small cubicles or small rooms that will isolate students" (MacDonald, 1999).

One programme they analyzed, the Effective Behaviour Support Programme (EBS), is among the most commonly used programmes in British Columbia. This programme had been implemented in 117 schools in British Columbia as of February 2001 (LaRocque & Shariff, 2001). LaRocque and Shariff argue that the programme would not have permanent results because of its behavioural reinforcement framework; it also constructs children as dangerous beings. In this programme, children who display frequent problems with violence are called "the Wolfpack" (LaRocque & Shariff, 2001, p. 30). The researchers point out that this label constructs children as vicious and dangerous, and immediately conjures up the image that they need to be controlled and contained (ibid).

Images of children who are "out-of-control", have also become a part of the every day language. When children react aggressively, it might be said that they "went wild", "broke loose"; the behaviour is conceptualized to have an involuntary occurrence; aggression is "triggered". The aggressive child is wild, therefore "irrational". However, the aggressive person is also expected to be able to have control. Statements such as "get a grip", "get over it" communicates this expectation.

These institutionalized images mesh with various psychological theories of aggression. "Breaking loose" is in line with the psychodynamic approach to aggression. Freud (1989) talks about the child's control system as a "dam". The child has an aggressive drive which builds up if it does not have a positive outlet. Eventually, if enough aggressive drive builds up, the dam will "break", leading to aggressive behaviour.

The concept of aggression being "triggered" is also in line with Bowlby's attachment theory. Children develop attachment patterns early in life, in response to their relationship with a significant other. Sometimes the particular type of unhealthy attachment they develop leads to aggressive behaviour. This behaviour is assumed to become a part of their attachment pattern. Thereafter, aggressive behaviour will be "triggered" every time the child engages in similar relationships.

Treatment of individual students for "their" behaviour problems through school intervention programmes reinforces the discourse that the problem belongs to that individual and it is his/her responsibility to change. This kind of discourse alienates students. LaRocque and Shariff (2001) suggested that control-policies alienate students because the contradictions resulting from efforts by schools to control violence, provides a double message to youth: respect versus control. The researchers concluded that,

> School administrators are conceptualizing school violence from a narrow set of lenses. It is time to reconceptualize violence as a

> problem that does not stem from the children but stems from society itself. Therefore, we need to take the emphasis off the behaviour of the children (the "Fix the Kids" approach) and look at how we can "Fix the System" to make it more conducive to learning, caring and respect. (LaRocque & Shariff, 2001, p. 53-58)

As referenced above, LaRocque and Shariff (2001) reviewed 22 violence intervention programmes used in British Columbia Schools. Other than the Effective Behaviour Support programme, the most commonly used programmes were, 2nd Step, Peer helping or counseling, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), conflict resolution, anger management, and anti-bullying programmes, such as Rock Solid and Bully Beware. Each of these programmes were used by 13-25% of schools. The researchers concluded that,

> The majority of the violence intervention programmes in schools are not grounded in sound educational theories or in moral and ethical approaches which promote good citizenship and empower students. Programmes were often introduced in isolation to individual students, and they were instructed rather than integrated holistically into the system. Individual kids were taught how to control and manage their behaviours. Often, evaluation of the programmes showed that it was gender-biased. In other words, it increased violence in girls, and decreased it in boys, or vice versa. (LaRocque & Shariff, 2001, p. 51)

LaRocque and Shariff found that only 12% of schools had implemented "unique" programmes which adopt a "holistic approach that empower students, engage them in their learning, build confidence, enhance self-esteem, raise the students' level of consciousness and their knowledge regarding the standards expected of them as contributing citizens in a free and democratic society" (LaRocque & Shariff, 2001, p. 51). For example, one school official described the approach as follows: "The only intervention models we use is providing care for inappropriate behaviour. The main thrust of this model is to surround children with caring adults" (LaRocque & Shariff, 2001, p. 52).

Examination of programmes and policies for students with behavioural and emotional problems in the United States shows similar results. In a national study, Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch (1990) focused specifically on SED students identified as having "invisible handicaps"--learning, behavioural, or emotional problems--under the mandate of the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA). Knitzer et al (1990) based their findings on surveys completed by the state directors of special education at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), and child mental health officials at the State Mental Health Representatives for Children and Youth (SMHRCY). They also visited 26 special education programmes in 13 states, reviewed written programme materials and phone conversations with staff of over 130 programmes across United States, and surveyed responses by 200 parents of children with behavioural and emotional disorders with respect to their experiences. They found that less than 1% of students had been identified by schools as behaviourally or emotionally disordered, during the 1986-1987 school year, and 82% of these were educated in regular public schools. Of the eighty two percent, 35% spent some part of the day in a resource room, 37% in a "self-contained" classroom, and 10% are served in their regular classrooms. Of those removed from the school, 12% were put in day schools or day treatment programmes, 4% were placed in residential settings, and only 2% in correctional facilities, in-patient hospitals, or received tutoring only at home.

Knitzer et al. (1990) concluded that most classes for emotionally and behaviourally handicapped students emphasized control. The researchers observed that the token reward system was often used. Self-contained classrooms were primarily focused on managing the student's behaviour.

"Learning was the second priority, if it was a priority at all". One can conclude that beyond the "out-of-control" image produced by such practices, there is also an underlying discourse that behaviour problem students are not able to learn as much, in comparison with normal students.

Social Class Perceptions

In my experience as an educator, I have heard school members misuse the term, violent, in a demeaning manner, to portray students as "uncivilized", especially when discussing minority blacks, or students of a lower socio-economic background. The attitude I have seen in schools is that certain groups of youth "choose" to manifest behaviour problems or act violently and are not worthy of the same respect as others.

In his two-year study at Hannibal High School, Chambliss (1984) found that the school staff, community members, and police, marginalized and labeled some of the lower-class students as delinquent, but ignored the upper-class students who were also engaged in delinquent behaviour. Chambliss found that the eight delinquents who were white, upper-middle class, known as the Saints, were more often involved in behaviour problems and criminal activity, compared to the six lower-class white boys known as the Roughnecks. The Saints constantly skipped school, cheated on their exams, "accidentally" vandalized the new restaurant next door on a regular basis, sometimes stole gasoline, drank heavily at night clubs, drove recklessly, and engaged in pranks that put the lives of the people in the community at risk. At school, teachers didn't think there was anything wrong with these boys and anticipated that "they would make something of themselves" (p. 362). The police rarely caught them and when they did, the Saints managed to get out of it with an apology.

The Roughnecks rarely hung together at school. They engaged in heavy drinking on the street rather than in the bars, were more prepared to fight compared to the Saints, and engaged in petty thefts. If they were "bugged" by a teacher, it could lead to a threat or a fight. The community's reaction was that the Roughnecks were heading for trouble. "You can see the gang members at the drugstore, leaning against the storefront, buying coke, and probably stealing" (p. 365). The police sporadically harassed the group and was certain they were engaged in criminal activity. The Saints were not officially arrested even once during the two years of observation, while the Roughnecks were constantly in trouble with the police. The teachers had the same reaction to the Roughnecks as the community. Based on his two-year observations, Chambliss concluded that the reaction of the school, community, and the police can be explained by three factors. The Roughnecks were more visible, their mannerisms were not apologetic when caught, and they were expected to be "delinquent" rather than "just playing pranks" because they were from a lower socio economic group.

Culture-dependent perceptions

Miller (1993) points out, that the idea of violence and what constitutes it is socially constructed. When we start thinking about what is violent and what is not; from whose perspective, victim, observer, or victimizer; when is it more violent when is it less, we realize that its meaning changes historically and culturally. When we try to decide if an act is more or less violent, we rely on many clues constructed by society as to what is violent, such as gun-type, the noise, the blood, and the gestures. Technological violence that is far away is seen as less violent than bloody wars on foot, even if more people die.

In schools, certain behaviours are viewed as more violent and inappropriate than others. In the Columbine shooting for example, violence against another person's life and physical body which occurred one day out of the year made news headlines, whereas violence against the dignity of the killers, (Klebold and Harris), which occurred on a daily basis by the Jocks went unpunished and unpublished.

Schissel and Mahood (1996) argue that "deviance" is defined based on socially acceptable norms. Codes of conduct get constructed by those in positions of power and are generally used to marginalize "others". The label, "deviant", imputes those who are different from the norm, and provides a means for social control. "The term deviance implies something negative" (p. 1). Schissel and Mahood point out that "the norm" is difficult to define and it changes over time and across groups.

In sum, educators perceive behaviour problem youth as wild, out of control students in need of being controlled either externally by school staff, or by strategies that are taught to youth themselves. Behaviour problems and characterizing features such as aggression and violence are deemed to belong to the child. Sometimes perceptions of non-compliance are imbued with middle-class values, and culturally appropriate codes of conduct. Assuming that violence has a clear and fixed meaning, when it is actually defined by personal, cultural and institutional values, is dangerous. The danger lies in the space it provides for dominant cultures and agencies to label who is violent, who is civilized, and who is worthy of respect. Furthermore, labels and intervention programmes implemented in schools for non-compliant behaviour ignore the dignity of the individual and are in conflict with other values inherent in educational processes such as respect for students.

Professional "Knowledge" in Journalism

Although journalists are not directly involved in managing "behaviour problem" students and defining the behaviour problem concept, over the past decade, the media has played a role in describing "behaviour problem youth", especially in cases involving violence. Journalists and reporters interview the public to "get at the truth". The role that journalists play in *reporting* the truth, which is differentiated in newspapers from opinion columns, legitimates their authority as people who are describing "what really happened".

There is a growing literature on the role of the media in depicting crime and deviance, and both in reflecting public perceptions and in turn shaping those attitudes (Leyton, O'Grady, & Overton, 1992; Schissel, 1997; Sparks, 1992; Surette, 1992). In his book, Blaming Children, sociologist Bernard Schissel (1997) notes that media discourse around school violence and youth crime has focused mostly on individual attributes and family characteristics. The media constructs youth crime as endemic and unpredictable and a common characteristic of today's youth. Based on a comprehensive review of the Canadian print news media from 1988 to 1996, Schissel finds that most news articles are selective and slanted. He performs a line-by-line analysis of some of the political magazine articles whose focus is crime and law, and outlines the results: newspaper articles portray individual examples as the norm and decontextualize the crime. When roots of crime are discussed, medical experts and politicians are quoted to say that these problems are family-based, class-based, and require punitive solutions. Youth are depicted as a generation of evil, immoral, out-of-control children.

The first category of newspaper stories in his review includes unusual and horrific crimes which are depicted as a sign of the amoral world which allows this to happen. Schissel specifically analyzes coverage of the James Bulger story in 1993, in which a 2-year-old was beaten to death by two 13-year-olds, near Liverpool, England. He reports that in the weeks following, a single event was reconstructed as the moral breakdown of an entire society and linked to a class-based rhetoric by politicians.

In a second category of stories he finds that the use of crime images and a business-like description of events decontextualizes youth crime. Any explanation of context highlights the family's pathology, such as in the case of the 11-year-old killed by gangs in Chicago. Robert, found in a pool of blood in August, 1994, was suspected of having gang ties. The Saskatoon Police believed he had opened fire on two different groups, killing a 14 year old girl. The Saskatoon Star Phoenix talked about his grandmother who "was not supervising the boy" leading to his placement in a juvenile facility. Schissel (1997) adds that the explanations omit any discussion on the realities of an industrialized society that discards people to make a profit. Individuals, and their immediate families, are seen as blameworthy, without taking into account wider structural forces.

An example from a third category of stories is an article on three Canadian cases of youths who committed murder. Medical expert opinion is referenced to confirm the psychotic nature of the youth and the ordinariness of the community, suggesting that youth crime is unpredictable and threatening to everyone. Schissel argues that medical discourse portrays youth violence as commonplace and natural to today's youth. Furthermore, the article speculates on the family types and social class of these youth.

Overall, Schissel finds that headlines and photo images, which occupy 30-50% of the print space and constitute relevant artifacts for the analysis, frame the discussion in an ideological context. For example, "Killer Girls" and "You've come a long way baby: Prodded by feminism, today's teenaged girls embrace antisocial male behaviour" are typical headlines of hate which the viewer sees when casually thumbing through the magazine. Further, subjective comments such as, "Teenagers like intimidating people", are written in bold, as if they are the essential truth. Another example of such a comment, "Locking up the wild generation", which was stated by a police officer, was written in bold thereby portraying youth as inherently evil. In addition to that, these articles construct a narrative that murder is an ordinary activity for teens. For example, in the newspaper article, "Kids who kill", three cases were described in detail about "the kid across the street" who kills for trivial reasons.

Schissel concludes that media authorities hold a hateful, stereotypical, class-based view of youth misconduct. Further, by omitting other images of the youth they make it appear as if there aren't any alternative images, but a bored, out-of-control, and immoral generation. He adds that the unfortunate outcome of these constructions is that they logically lead to tougher laws for youth crime.

Schissel's deconstruction of crime myths resonates with my own interests and horror every time I hear a television news coverage of school violence. The Columbine shooting was a typical example. Neighbors who were interviewed commented that they were shocked because the boys looked so nice (The

Associated Press, 1999, April), as if they assumed anyone who commits such a murder should *look* as evil as *he/she actually is.* While an entire life-story was reconstructed for Harris and Klebold using their individual characteristics, no one wanted to know the culture of the school. While several students had explained that the two teenagers were taunted and harassed by the "cool" athletes on a daily basis (ABC News, 1999, April), the reporters were not interested in understanding how various student sub-cultures had gained dominance over others.

To peel away even more layers, one needs to ask how gun shooting has become a cultural response to the inequalities and power differentials in schools. As Merleau Ponty (1962) points out, understanding a physical act requires a deep understanding of how the body comes to experience the world. Langer (1989) who provides a summary of Merleau Ponty's thoughts, integrated with those of Husserl writes,

> We must therefore ask ourselves whether ... we can recapture that fundamental dialectic whereby something begins to exist for us, begins to have meaning for us to the extent that our body is a power of transcendence towards it. At this primitive level there is a primordial flow of existence in which something becomes significant to the extent that it attracts our body in a movement towards it, and our body comes into existence as a body in this very movement, so that the significance of the thing and that of the body come into existence together and imply one another. (Langer, 1989, p. 50)

We need to question how certain physical expressions of anger have emerged in the North American culture. For example, in line with Merleau Ponty's notion of embodiment, we can say that when Nyan (from my account in chapter 1) throws a rock at the Boys and Girls Club, the rock does not have any significance for the child until that moment he realizes that can throw it. At that moment, his body comes into existence as a body that can move in this way. An important issue in relation to youth crime is how the movement of pulling a trigger, which doesn't seem to involve much movement to begin with, has come to have a meaning in the bodies of our youth.

Overall, it seems that media authorities are keen on pathologizing youth crime and portraying it in terms of the individual attributes of the youth. Further, they construct today's generation of youth as unempathic and amoral. On the one hand, we need to acknowledge the various forms in which youth are marginalized, which might lead to crime, as Schissel (1997) has pointed out. In addition, a deeper issue that remains is how various forms of aggression, such as gun shooting, has become youth's cultural responses to injustice and frustration.

Summary

In this chapter I have explored how students' non-compliance, aggression, and violence are typified by psychologists and educators. Psychologists have spent much of their attention on developing notions of naturalness and individuality with regard to violence, aggression, and behaviour problems. Aggression and behaviour problems have been sought in the supposedly more permanent structures of human existence-- in genes, human nature, and individual psychology, rather than in history, culture, and ideology. Within the professional discourse of psychology, behaviour problems are conceptualized as an individualized problem, located in the child's psychology and personality, which are aspects of the self considered to be stable and difficult to change.

North American schools also conceptualize non-compliance as a problem that belongs to the individual student, rather than the context. Further, children are taught that they need to be "controlled", a notion that conflicts with that of "respect". Individual students are labeled and enrolled in various intervention programmes and classrooms. This act isolates students from normal educational practices, and ignores the dignity of the child.

Media coverage is also contributing to the discourse that children are wild and out-of-control. Violent behaviours are conceptualized as psychological problems located in the child or the family. The media portrays the image that today's youth are unpredictable and that they need to be controlled.

Overall, students' non-compliance is currently being typified as an individual/psychological problem. The deviant student is the abnormal student. The non-compliant student is wild and out-of-control. Cannella points out that the focus on the individual may be part of the general psychological construction that an individual is a "self-contained, isolated whole", even though others do influence the child. The problem however, is that this construction fosters the idea that "some children are socially competent, ready for school, or intelligent wholes- and other children are not" (Cannella, 1998, p. 161). In Chapter 5, I explore how this "knowledge" has historically emerged.

Chapter 5
Institutional Construction of "Behaviour Problems"

Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored the "knowledge" being claimed by psychologists and educators as the reality of non-compliant behaviour in schools. This conceptualization has become so dominant that other perspectives and solutions have received little attention in schools. School staff deal with "behaviour problem students" almost everyday. Teachers remove them from the classroom, school administrators punish them, and school psychologists test them and provide treatment. Nevertheless, the ability to observe and objectively define and test behaviour problem students does not necessarily mean that the notion of behaviour problem as an inherent deficiency was not a social construct to begin with, and that alternative constructions could not have been produced. "Knowledge" exists both in the physical world and as an idea, in the social world. "The idea exists in the social realm by means of the context in which the idea is discussed, the way in which it is inter-related with other ideas, and the social groups which identify with...the idea" (Hacking, 2000, p. 11). Hacking points out, that "the idea can't be free from the social context in which it is conceptualized" (ibid). Social constructionists must analyze the social context from which "the idea" emerged. Students' non-compliant behaviour is, by context, an educational problem. How did it become a psychological problem?

To respond to this question, we need to analyze the social context from which this psychological problem emerged. Specifically, I am interested in exploring how *the idea* of the "behaviour problem child" was historically constructed, and what influences impacted the current construction of non-compliant behaviour as an individual/psychological problem. In the first section of this chapter, I explore the concept of "delinquency" between the seventeenth to the twentieth century, leading up to the emergence of "the behaviour problem child". The second section is focused on the influence of psychiatry on the classification, behaviour problem, in the twentieth century.

In this Chapter, I argue that although delinquency had concerned society since the seventeenth century, psychiatric involvement with delinquency marks a unique time in history that "behaviour problem" was systematically constructed. The influence of psychiatry and psychology resulted in the classification of "behaviour problem" as a particular *type* of a person. The knowledge produced by participating institutions influenced how non-compliant students are defined, described, managed, and treated.

Historical Emergence of Delinquency: 17th to 20th Century

Historically, "delinquent" is the word typically used to describe students who showed inappropriate social behaviours. The purpose of this analysis is as follows:

1. To show historical shifts in thinking about delinquency during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Foucault critiques the traditional approach to history, which is to assume that more advanced

knowledge replaces the less advanced. He argues that this kind of thinking privileges certain types of knowledge over other types. Rejecting this approach, he holds that changes in the development of Western thought is due to "arbitrary paradigmatic shifts" (Ferguson, 2001). The effect of this new approach is to discard the notion that what is being widely practiced is necessarily "the truth" and opens up space for "others" instead.

2. Conduct a conceptual analysis of delinquency in each of the time periods. This writing is a conceptual analysis of delinquency as it was historically conceptualized. A conceptual analysis explicates a concept by indicating what it is and what it's not. It reveals how delinquency was historically described and portrayed in America, and illuminates points of departure as well as similarities between historical and current discourses.

3. Provide a historical background for the emergence of the behaviour problem classification in the twentieth century. To elucidate the view of "delinquency" in each historical period, I have situated it in the cultural and political context of educational practices within that period, as interpreted by various historians.

The practice of educating youth goes back to 500 B.C. (Ryan, 1965). Ryan (1965) provides the history of the development of public education. The curriculum of ancient "schools" was not conducted in formal classrooms or buildings, and was not necessarily in written form. Pupils in Persia were taught under a tree or the open sky, and *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* were orally narrated.

By 500 B.C., only a small group of upper class boys received a formal education, and education was a private responsibility.

The concept of "juvenile delinquency" did not appear until the notion of childhood had been constructed. Wartofsky (1999) explains that "childhood" is truly a social construct; different images are produced by the various discourses at different times in history. However, his full philosophical analysis of the social construction of childhood and the child's agency in this process is beyond the limits of this dissertation. Wartofsky highlights the child's culture, its practices, and life-space, as an analytical tool which provides insight into the society's constructions of childhood. "Children are what school architecture, playgrounds, child labor laws, and living spaces in the current ecology and economy of families constitute the life-world of childhood *as*" (Wartofsky, 1999, p. 198, [italics in original]). During the sixteenth century, children were treated as little adults (Aries, 1962). Aries (1962) notes that paintings and personal diaries did not portray a clear distinction between children and adults in the ways they dressed, played and worked. There is also indication that children were viewed as objects; children could be sold, abandoned, or killed, and were viewed as temporary family members (Newman & Newman, 1980).

The "Sinners": The Work of the Devil

Historians have argued that by the seventeenth century, the concept of childhood had been constructed in some detail. Religious doctrines constructed the child as "innocent", but capable of sin (Newman & Newman, 1980). Religious authorities required the education of all children in America (Atkinson & Maleska, 1965; Boyd & King, 1995; Cubberley, 1920; Newman & Newman, 1980; Ryan, 1965) and authorized severe discipline for students who did not accept

God's authority (Atkinson & Maleska, 1965; Conrad & Schneider, 1980; Newman & Newman, 1980; Rubel, 1980).

With the emergence of notions of childhood in the seventeenth century, the delinquent child was born. Views about "juvenile delinquents" and "delinquent students" were intimately tied to religious views. Cubberley (1920) argues that in America, the first law establishing public support of education had a religious reason. The dominant motive was the religious doctrine that salvation occurs through one's own faith, rather than the authority of the Church. Protestants wanted children to be able to read the Bible for their own salvation (Atkinson & Maleska, 1965). With the large number of Puritans in New England, the Law of 1642, established in Massachusetts, was the first law requiring all children to receive an elementary education (Cubberley, 1920). In 1647, a second law was passed in Massachusetts that required every town with population of more than 50, to provide an elementary school, and allowed the State to levy taxes for public education (Newman & Newman, 1980). When publicly-funded schools were established in America, they were all in the hands of Societies devoted to the Christian Church (Boyd & King, 1995, p. 255).

The Church constructed children as holy innocents who become filled with the devil simply because they lived (Newman & Newman, 1980). Delinquency was constructed as "the work of the devil" (Conrad & Schneider, 1980). Constructed as a sin, delinquency portrays the "wicked" (Schissel & Mahood, 1996) the *evil,* or the *immoral* child, who has failed to follow God. In Latin, "delinquency" means to fail. During the seventeenth century, delinquent behaviour in schools was defined as a range of religiously unacceptable behaviours, including not showing up in class, indifference to learning, "dull intelligence" (Atkinson & Maleska, 1965), drinking a lot of alcohol, sexual indiscretion, and long hair (for boys) (Newman & Newman, 1980).

Immorality and punishment go hand in hand. Parents used severe discipline to punish delinquents and laws were enacted that required children to obey their parents (Newman & Newman, 1980). In some colonies, the penalty for disobeying a parent was capital punishment (Newman & Newman, 1980). As the second parent *(in loco parentis)* (Rubel & Goldsmith, 1980), schools taught the importance of unquestioned compliance to God-given authority (Newman & Newman, 1980; Rubel & Goldsmith, 1980). Until then, whipping had only been used for serious violent acts; however, schools began to whip students for their delinquency (Aries, 1962).

The image that the delinquent is immoral assumes a qualitative difference between the delinquent and non-delinquent child. Schlossman (1977) explains that the delinquent child was in some cases, thought to be the product of immoral parents who had had a lustful, earthy relationship rather than a loving, spiritual one. This construction suggests that the delinquent has a different quality of being; an immoral child is born to and corrupted by immoral parents. Yet, the depiction that delinquents are qualitatively different and immoral existed simultaneous to the contradicting notion that children are all innocent and capable of committing sin. Newman notes that children were assumed to be capable of committing sin, simply by the fact that they lived (Newman & Newman, 1980). In this sense, delinquency was a natural fact of existence, and did not constitute a particular group of individuals.

Hacking (2000) argues that the act of classification separates those who are labeled from the rest of the community. Classifying individuals identifies them as a particular type of people with characteristics and needs unique to their group. Religious doctrines did not result in such classifications in schools. Delinquents had been fooled by the devil; they had to be disciplined so they wouldn't be deceived again.

The "Poor" and the "ignorant"

With the political shift and separation of church and state in eighteenth century America, views about the need for education started to change. The nation realized the importance of education, especially for the poor, and the immigrant. "The nation should not be ignorant if it wants to be free", stated Thomas Jefferson who believed education of masses was necessary for the nation (Ryan, 1965, p. 202). Juvenile delinquents were not *immoral;* they were *ignorant* and didn't know any better. As a result of the separation of church and state, education of children as well as delinquents was left up to each state, by the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (Ryan, 1965, p. 203). Some of the content of the two main textbooks used in elementary school was changed. Poems that reminded the student to learn the A-B-C's replaced references to learning the Bible. Students learned about "good" and "bad" boys who were punished or rewarded with cake and fruits, instead of learning about religious sanctions and salvations (ibid).

By the nineteenth century, delinquency had taken on a new meaning. Popkewitz (1987) discovered that societal values had shifted away from religion to a concern with having a society based on values of individualism, democracy and nationalism. Judd (1940) provides a political background for nineteenth century America. The embargoes during the war of 1812 encouraged economic self-sufficiency. Americans were concerned with having the perfect society, a heaven on earth (Conrad & Schneider, 1980; Popkewitz, 1987; Ryan, 1965). Utopian communities, such as the transcendental Brook Farm and the Oneida Community were founded as models of a perfect community (Conrad & Schneider, 1980). Popkewitiz (1987) argues that the rich saw poverty as an embarrassing contradiction to the national identity. The purpose of schooling developed in response to the "environmentalist" view that "the poor, the immigrants, and the non-Protestants can and should be civilized to participate into the American society". It was believed that the education of poor children was necessary otherwise the society would be dragged down into chaos and social disorder (Conrad & Schneider, 1980; Popkewitz, 1987) "Our schools are the very foundation, upon which rest the peace, good order, and prosperity of society" was the statement addressed to the public by the New York Public School Society (cited in Schlossman, 1977). School attendance became compulsory. The first compulsory school attendance legislation was enacted in Massachusetts in 1852 (Cubberley, 1920; Doughton, 1935).

Knowledge about the effects of environment replaced that of religion. Juvenile delinquents were viewed to be ignorant and the object of pity, and the offsprings of parents that were too poor, ignorant, or too malicious to educate their children (Nasaw, 1979; Schlossman, 1977). Reform houses were built to remove delinquents from their ill-structured environments.

The first House of Refuge opened in New York in 1825 (Conrad & Schneider, 1980). "But how are the peculiar objects of your bounty to be educated, unless they are withdrawn from the purlieus of wickedness?" stated the manager of the

House of Reform in New York (cited in Schlossman, 1977, p. 28). The House of Refuge was meant to be a "super-parent", and to replace inferior parental authority. Contact with the outside world was minimized. The superintendents often insisted that the parents transfer the legal rights for the child to the institution (Rothman, 1971; Schlossman, 1977).

Delinquency became intimately related with social class differences. Juveniles were committed to institutions without any differentiation between the delinquent, and the poor. Reform Houses, Reform Schools, and family-units contained "the homeless child, the poor child, the disobedient child, and the foreign-born child" (Conrad & Schneider, 1980; Schlossman, 1977). Characterization of delinquent behaviour was based on middle-class values (Popkewitz, 1987; Schlossman, 1977). Anthony Platt states,

> It was not by accident that the behaviour selected for penalizing by the child-savers--drinking, begging, roaming the streets, frequenting dance-halls and movies, fighting, sexuality, staying out late at night, and incorrigibility--was primarily attributable to the children of lower class migrant and immigrant families. (Platt, 1969, p. 139)

Jane Addams, who played a vital role in caring for poor and delinquent children, and was also authoring magazine articles, wrote,

> Those born into prosperous families were not the problem. It could be assumed that their parent would provide them with moral guidelines, recreational facilities, and the educational supervision they required. But what of the less fortunate, the children of the immigrants and newcomers from rural America to urban gettos. Who would watch over them? Who would protect them from the temptations offered on every street corner? (Nasaw, 1979, p. 94)

With the establishment of the School Reform Act in 1851, (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 109) any child under sixteen convicted in court for being "incorrigible, predelinquent, or a truant" was sentenced to a State Reform School (Verville, 1967). In other words, truants--students who dropped out of school--and predelinquents, who engaged in behaviour such as "he was eyeing my shop", were all deemed to be *potentially* unfit (Verville, 1967). The idea of pre-delinquents as delinquent in the making gave the courts wide discretion over determining who is ignorant, and who should or should not remain a part of the society or be removed and placed in an institution.

Classification of delinquency. Delinquency remained generally undifferentiated as a classification, and delinquents as well as dependents and the neglected were managed and treated similarly by courts. In 22 states and the District of Columbia, there was a statute that any citizen can bring a complaint against any child and his or her parents. The complaint was heard at the Juvenile Court. Juveniles did not have to be accused of a specific crime. If found to be "incorrigible, predelinquent, neglected, or dependent, the accused was declared wards of the state", and sent either back home, or to a Reform House (Nasaw, 1979, p. 95). There are not any references in the literature to formal systems of classifications for delinquency that occurred at school, other than punishment of those who engaged in such behaviours by school authorities. This does not necessarily mean that it did not exist. However, historians of education in America have made no indication that delinquencies in schools were differentiated by the type of activity students engaged in, or by any other characteristics.

Discussions of delinquency in the historical literature for this period reflects an equivocation in the use of the word. In historical writings, the word *delinquency* is used to mean different things. It refers both to criminals who have broken the law, and people who haven't; this is much like the idea of sinning in your heart, if not in deeds. Psychiatrist William Healy explained in his book, published in 1915, that in the European terminology, "delinquency" and "crime" are interchangeable. In America, "delinquent" is applied to young criminals because it has a less harsh connotation (Healy, 1969, p. 22). However, historians also make a reference to students as delinquent, even when the students had not been convicted by law. Considering the different ways in which the word has been used, it seems more likely that delinquency was conceptualized as "deviant from the accepted societal rules". Nevertheless, it is clear that "the poor" did not establish the rules, as being poor was found to be the cause of delinquency.

The concept of delinquency was made more ambiguous by work done in psychiatry to understand madness. This was a period when the terms, feeblemindedness, madness, and mental illness were being redefined by psychiatrists (Carlson, 1998). In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the concept of madness was broadened by psychiatrists, and it overlapped with the concept of delinquency (Szasz, 1970). "Lying, drunkenness, crime, and opposing the Revolution" came to be considered an illness of the mind by Benjamin Rush, known as "the Father of American Psychiatry" (p. 141).

Discussions of delinquency as a madness are not visible in the historical literature. This discussion is more specific to the psychiatric and medical literature (Szasz, 1970, p. 141). However, the quantification of delinquency as less or more mad had not yet taken place in the nineteenth century. Further, the etiology of mental illness was still considered to be the breakdown of social order. As a solution, asylums had been set up to provide a well-ordered environment, and cure all "social ills" and "deviant behaviour"; many adult delinquents were reformed in asylums (Conrad & Schneider, 1980).

In sum, once notions of childhood were constructed, the "problem child" became an inevitable reality. The delinquent has been depicted differently at different times in history, depending on the religious, cultural, and political ideologies of its time. When delinquency was a sin, the problem child was amoral and wicked; when delinquency was tied to social class, the problem child was ignorant. One can conclude that historically, there was quite a continuity in the subject of delinquency causation. Christian and religious views were dominant in schools and their disciplining practices for several centuries. These views shifted to an environmentalist view, as practiced in Reform Houses and Asylums throughout the nation, and lasted throughout the nineteenth century.

Some of the historical images about youth persist as part of the problem child discourse today. Views of "the immoral" youth and social class associations with delinquency have their counterpart in current discourses, as reviewed in Chapter 4. However, statistical questions regarding the extent and locations where these images are dominant is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Between 1600-1900 A.D., the concept of delinquency remained undifferentiated. Criminals as well as the poor and immigrant youth were treated in the same way. The concept of delinquency was similar to Schissel and Mahood's notion of "deviance"-- deviation from the norm, established by a small group of people. The notion of delinquency changes as the cultural and societal rules and norms change. For example, we would not consider excessive trips to the movies as a problem, while this was seen as delinquent behaviour in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, even in the twenty-first century, we consider stealing to be a problem.

As a concept, "delinquency" was very ambiguous. The definition of delinquency remained widely open to the court's discretion. Historians equivocate in the way they use the term, referring both to criminals and non-criminals as delinquent, which further indicates ambiguity in this concept. Further, changes that took place in the field of psychiatry, defining delinquency as a form of madness, adds to this ambiguity. Psychiatric constructions of delinquency had not differentiated yet, neither in terms of psychiatric tests and quantification, nor in terms of classifications and sub-types. However, this started to change in the beginning of the twentieth century, as shall be explored in the following section.

Historical Influence of Psychiatry in the 20th Century

"Knowledge is socially distributed and the mechanism of this distribution can be made the subject matter of a sociological discipline". These words were quoted by Alfred Schutz, whose ideas have prominence among phenomenologists as well as social constructionists (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 15). In this section, I explore the social matrix from which "behaviour problem" has emerged as a *classification* and the ways in which this knowledge was maintained in society; I perform a conceptual analysis, and critique the nature of this classification. I argue that the discipline of psychiatry has generated knowledge and discourse about "the behaviour problem child", shaping the possibilities of how non-compliant behaviour is typified today. This classification quantifies children and their "behaviour problems" and moves away from an understanding of the child as a dialogical being, which both constructs and is constructed by the environment.

At the end of the nineteenth century, an environmentalist view of delinquency was still dominant. With notions of childhood advanced, and the concept of adolescence developed by psychologist Stanley Hall, juvenile delinquency courts were established at the end of the nineteenth century. Massachusetts had passed the law in 1874, and the first official juvenile court had originated in Illinois in 1899 (Platt, 1969). By 1920, all states except three had a Juvenile Court system (Horn, 1989). Courts were meant to protect the child under sixteen, from being treated as an adult criminal. They determined if a juvenile delinquent should continue living at home or be sentenced to a reform house or family-unit house. Social workers and founders of the courts still emphasized environmental problems as the salient cause of delinquency. Social workers, Breckenridge and Abbot wrote, "pressing poverty, unfamiliarity with the needs of childhood in a great city, the cupidity of parents who preferred the purchase of a home to the education of their children...the possible shortcomings of the school system" were typical causes of delinquency (Breckenridge & Abott, 1912, p. 15).

In the first half of the twentieth century, a process of differentiation took place in which delinquency was recognized as a distinct condition. As shall be discussed in this section, the differentiation in the concept of delinquency took place as a result of several changes: (a) The psychoanalytical theory was developed, and psychiatric definitions of mental illness changed, both of which impacted the definition of delinquency; and (b) various government organizations and private institutions started to enlist the expertise of psychiatrists, even before they had much expertise in the field of delinquency. As a result, psychiatrists changed the environmentalist view of delinquency to a psychological one. This in turn led to a new "knowledge" regarding delinquency. These changes will be discussed in the following section.

Sigmund Freud's work heavily influenced new directions in the field of Psychiatry in the beginning of the twentieth century. Freud's work is subject to much criticism today. However, his ideas were very influential in changing the way we think about health and pathology. Throughout history, there have always been men and women whose agency has shown itself in the way they have advanced ideas and assumptions. While ideas are socially distributed and they do not have a *true* origin, throughout history, there have always been individuals who have been able to get heard, whose ideas have been discussed, studied, and implemented more than others. This may be due to the extent and the depth that that individual has developed the idea, or due to social and cultural ideologies which have ripened the audience; it may be because the idea can be practiced more easily, or because it can be scientifically tested. Regardless of why Freud's ideas became more prominently known, for mere practicality, I am forced to discuss the emergence of psychoanalytic thought in the context of Freud's ideas.

Before Freud's time, psychiatry was not based on psychology, it was based on molecular changes in the brain. However, Freud found that molecular changes could not account for consciousness. In Project for Scientific Psychology, in 1895, he wrote, "Consciousness gives us what are called *qualities* .... whereas science recognizes only *quantities* .... It may be asked *how* qualities originate .... excitory processes in the neurones bring consciousness along with them (Strachey, 1966, p. 311, [italics in original]).

Freud later developed his psychoanalytic theories of the id, ego, and the unconscious. Although these ideas took time to mature fully, James Strachey traces its origins to 1901 (Strachey, 1955) with the publication of The Phobia of Little Hans. With the development of the psychoanalytic theory, a different view of mental illness emerged. Ferenczi (1926) argues that before Freud's time, mental disease was thought to be caused by anatomical changes in the brain. "Freud taught us that there is an inner psychic struggle. A normal person might also see neurotic symptoms upon introspection. All of us have the possibility of performing insane acts" (p. 673). Ferenczi finds Freud's theory to be responsible for the changes that took place in asylums. "This is how the insane were freed from isolation" (ibid). Horn (1989) points out that based on psychoanalytical thinking, mental illness came to be defined as a failure of the ego rather than irreversible biological defects. The notion of mental illness was now more in the realm of maladjustment than physiological defect.

The psychoanalytical framework engaged the interest of psychiatrists in the development of all human beings, and not only those who were sick. The first Journal of Mental Hygiene was published in January 1917, with the introduction by the editors that noted, "Today, however, a general realization is coming into existence that mental factors underlie not only inability to make a living and the gross disorders of conduct but all the social activities of man " (Salmon, 1917, p. 1).

Buckle and Lebovici (1960) note that, when Freud published his book on Hans' phobia in 1901, and explained how he had treated a little boy of his phobia of horses through the medium of the child's father, he was stressing the possibility of spontaneous cure of emotional disorders in childhood. Buckle and Lebovici (1960) suggest this opened the way for psychoanalysis of children.

Psychoanalysis naturally required psychotherapy as a curative treatment. From this outlook psychiatrists were indispensable in understanding human behaviour. It also lay the groundwork for locating maladjustment within the individual. If mental factors underlie all social activities, the root cause of delinquency could be found in mental conflicts.

In 1909, juvenile courts in the U.S. set a precedent and hired a psychiatrist to examine and study delinquents (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 131). Delinquency was now considered a unique forensic condition worthy of study. Julia Lathrop, a founder of the court, observed that the child's motives and mental conflicts were not assessed in the court procedures. In addition, she noted that the social history of the delinquents was not being put to any systematic, scientific use (Horn, 1989). The first child guidance clinic, Chicago Juvenile Psychopathic Institute, was set up as the court's psychiatric research centre, where William Healy, then, director of the Clinic, examined and studied juvenile delinquents who appeared at the Illinois Juvenile Court (Horn, 1984/85).

Healy was the first psychiatrist to develop both a causal theory and a classification system for delinquency based on empirical data, (published first in 1915) (Healy, 1969). In 1914, After five years at the Child Guidance Clinic, Healy analyzed the results of his case studies. This study was based on 1000 repeat offenders, mostly 15-16 years old, selected from the number of cases seen at the clinic on the basis of repetition of offense and sufficiency of data. The following year, he published his results in a textbook, documenting 27 causal types of delinquency, each of these consisting of several sub-types, providing a comprehensive psychiatric interview method for clinicians, and explaining his views on delinquency (Healy, 1969). Healy organized the etiology of each case around one central cause, and other factors that are less central. Further, he suggested that "all those in the field of protecting society and helping the criminal", such as judges and parole officers, should become familiar with the different causal types of delinquency (p. 138).

Healy's typology of delinquency represented a dramatic change away from the environmentalist view of delinquency and towards a psychological view of delinquency. He reframed the study of delinquency as the study of "characterology" and mental life: He writes, "As students of character, we are dealing with the motives and driving forces of human conduct and, since conduct is directly a product of mental life, we immediately become involved by individual and differential psychology" (Healy, 1969, p. 21-22). He located the problem of delinquency in the individual. "The dynamic centre of the whole problem of delinquency will ever be the individual offender" (Healy, 1969, p. 21-22). He explains that finding "causative factors in the individual is fundamental...for the framing of any classifications which can be safely utilized" (p. 15).

Although Healy specifically stated, "the main cause of delinquency may not be found in the individual's make-up" and that both the individual and the environment must be considered, his writing on delinquency suggests that he finds psychological factors as the *direct* cause of delinquency:

> All conduct is an expression of mental life. Immediately back of the action is the idea, or the wish, or the impulse, existing as mental content. Of course many actions have no representation in consciousness, either before or after performance, but nevertheless they are just as truly controlled by mental processes.
>
> Hence it is clear that *whatever* influences the individual towards offense must influence first the mind of the individual. It is only because the bad companion puts dynamically significant pictures into the mind...or the environmental conditions produce low mental perceptions of one's duty towards others, that there is any inclination at all towards delinquency. (Healy, 1969, p. 26-28, [italics in original])

Although delinquency was being seen, in line with psychoanalytical thinking, as a mental conflict which occurs in relationship to one's environment, emphasis was also placed by various psychiatrists and researchers on personality structures resulting from mental conflict. These included Anderson (1919), Blanchard and Paynter (1924), Blumgart (1921), Glueck (1918), McCord (1924), Singer (1921), and Yerkes (1917). For example, Anderson explained,

> Undoubtedly many criminal careers are due less to inherent biological defects in make-up than to the repeated exposure throughout life to unfavorable environmental and developmental conditions, forming in this way many of the character traits and personality difficulties so commonly responsible for delinquent behaviour. The most important phase, therefore, of the examination at the clinics would be the study of the personality and life history of the individual .... Inasmuch as the very nature and purpose of this clearing house would be essentially medical, all its clinical activities should be under essentially medical direction. (Anderson, 1919, p. 185)

There remained vast disagreement on the particular aspect of the individual that was responsible for delinquency. Personality (Doll, 1923), ego development (Freud, 1962), low intelligence (McCord, 1924), and the impulsive need to satisfy one's own desires and instinctive drives (Burnham, 1918), are some examples of different theories that were proposed. William Healy suggested delinquency is caused by a mental conflict which could be hereditary, or it could be caused by the environment. However, delinquency was viewed as a stable part of the individual, and treatable only with psychiatric therapy. The Freudian (1972) view was that aggression is an instinctive drive which can be released in a positive instead of a negative way. In line with this view, Burnham believed that "children should be trained to control their activities and impulses. . . . Control means the utilization of the nervous energy in developing a new and healthful form of activity that may take the place of the unwholesome activity" (Burnham, 1918, p. 19). Melanie Klein used psychoanalytic techniques to examine the child. Both Klein and Anna Freud viewed behaviour problems to be a weakness of the ego (Cravens, 1978).

With the development of these new ways of thinking about delinquency, as opposed to religious or environmental, psychiatric institutions addressing delinquency multiplied in the twentieth century, just as more and more psychiatrists created knowledge about the management and treatment of delinquency. For example, the Judge Baker Guidance Clinic was established in Boston in 1917 as a court psychiatric clinic. This agency examined difficult cases of delinquent children, referred by other agencies. At the Judge Baker Guidance Clinic, the child was interviewed, background family information collected, and the child was given a comprehensive psychiatric and psychological examination and treatment (Thomas & Thomas, 1928).

The National Committee for Mental Hygiene was another major organization. This was established in 1909 by Clifford Beers who persuaded psychologists William James and Adolph Meyer to direct it (Barker, 1917). The Mental Hygiene Committee was interested in reforming asylum conditions, preventing mental illness, and treating mental deficiencies (Horn, 1989). Thomas Salmon was hired as director in 1912 (Barker, 1917). The Committee shifted its focus to the study of deviance when Salmon joined (Horn, 1989). In a memorandum submitted to the Commonwealth Fund, Solomon noted, "the sciences upon which the next steps in the study of crime seem most to depend are psychiatry and psychology" (Horn, 1984/85). In 1917, the first journal of the Mental Hygiene movement was published, to further studies within the professional field of psychiatry.

The Commonwealth Fund was one of the largest private foundations which became interested in the psychiatric understanding of delinquency. This foundation announced its interest in the prevention of juvenile delinquency in 1921 (Horn, 1989). Horn (1989) suggests that the Commonwealth Fund decided to pursue the prevention of delinquency after making sure that no other organization was interested in this "problem"; in this way, the Commonwealth Fund established itself as the sole organization interested in and in charge of the prevention of delinquency.

Other agencies included the child guidance clinics, first established in 1909. Locally supported child guidance clinics were set up in St. Louis, Dallas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Cleveland, and Philadelphia (Thomas & Thomas, 1928) By 1933, 42 clinics had been established. Each clinic consisted of a team of a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and a social worker. In 1956, the World Health Organization organized a seminar in Lausanne to study the functions of child guidance centres, and to consider ways of establishing closer relationships between them and other social services. The goal was to have every participant apply information gathered at the seminar to specific conditions in their own country (Buckle & Lebovici, 1960). Psychiatric definitions of delinquency were thus communicated to other countries and cultures and the study of delinquency became an international quest.

When the child guidance clinics started in 1909, psychiatrists were not in agreement with regard to the prevention or treatment of delinquency. Seven years later, at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene in New York (1916), Lewellys Barker, president of the national committee for mental hygiene, remarked,

> Let us hope that the work of the new psychiatric clinics already begun and of those soon to be established may, before long, so clarify the minds of the members of the medical profession that medical opinion in every city, town and hamlet in this country may, regarding these fundamental matters, become sufficiently uniform. (Barker, 1917, p. 4)

With the differentiation in the concept of delinquency, "family-units" and "villages" started to specialize in delinquency, as well. Rooted in the 19th century, reform houses had taken care of delinquents, as well as the poor, immigrants, the neglected, and dependent children; later, reform houses were eclipsed by smaller family unit houses called "villages" or "cottages". In the early 20th century, various villages started to specialize in only the treatment of delinquency. For example, the Children's Village in New York, which used to accept all children sent by the court, started to accept only children with what were seen as serious problems. "Negroes", "the feebleminded" (mentally retarded), and children who were thought to be able to adjust outside of an institution were not accepted. Similarly, the George Junior Republic in New

York, and Berkshire in Massachusetts, asked that "the worst children" be transferred there (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 117).

William Thomas and Dorothy Thomas attacked the individualistic perspective of delinquency arguing that social phenomena have social causes. William Thomas was a Professor of Sociology at University of Chicago where the first graduate department of sociology in America had been established. In their book, The Child in America (1928), Thomas and Thomas discuss the cultural and sub-cultural basis of behaviour. They provide examples of village officials who experimented with unique treatment programmes. Significantly, reform house and "village" programmes were not run by psychiatrists. They were implemented by individual superintendents who managed the village.

Thomas and Thomas (1928) provide examples of the treatment programmes undertaken by these experimental villages, some of which had elements that seem ideal from a child development perspective. At the Children's Village, for example, special talents in each of the boys were discovered. They were each distinguished with an aptitude in acting or carpenter work, for example. The children used their skills to collect materials and furnish their barren home. They spent every possible minute outdoors building tables and having picnics. Boys who had never focused on any activity for long, were seen writing letters and reading quietly. At another institution, the Republic, a self-government system was set up where the boys passed judgment on each other when they misbehaved. This programme was replicated in other states as well. Both the Republic and the Children's Village were semi-private institutions that received delinquents from the courts or from their parents and were funded in part by the government. However, the aforementioned programmes implemented at these institutions was largely dependent on the individuals who directed them; when the directors left the unique implemented programmes became inactive, even though the institution might remain open to receive delinquents (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p .124).

Cravens (1978) points out that William Thomas's work was more in line with anthropological views of Boas rather than the views of the sociology community. Thomas not only recognized the necessity to separate biological and social theories of human behaviour, he also argued that social facts had to be interpreted differently from facts in the natural sciences. Cravens analyzes the emergence of the discipline of Sociology and concludes that until the 1920's, most sociologists agreed that "social forces were psychological and mental in character" and that society was defined as the "mental interactions of individuals" (p. 141). The focus of sociological theory was the individual. After the 1920's, many sociologists started to view cultural and social phenomena as determinants of human behaviour. However, they regarded social theory as an additional causative theory to be taken into account by the natural scientist and did not abandon biological or psychological determinants of behaviour (p. 272).

Emergence of the "Behaviour Problem" Concept

In 1926, leaders of the Commonwealth Fund and the Child Guidance Clinics met and it was decided that the Clinics would switch their attention from the study and examination of delinquents to the prevention of delinquency (Horn, 1989). The purpose of the Programme for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency is recorded in the Progress Report from the Commonwealth Fund:

> At first the work ... was mainly with the study and treatment of children already under supervision of the juvenile courts. By

> properly directed methods of treatment it was believed that the social rehabilitation of such children ... could be definitely advanced .... In the light of experience, then, the objectives of this part of the Programme have been broadened to cover a more general type of clinical service to the children of the community .... the best preventive technique is a broad and positive effort to redirect the energies of maladjusted children before they become problems in the community. (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 145)

As well, after the establishment of the Juvenile Delinquency Preventive Programme, the directors decided to focus on a psychiatric approach to prevention rather than an environmental one. Leaders of the Commonwealth Fund, the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, and the Child Guidance Clinic convened to discuss the direction of the Clinic's work. The "Director's Report" from the first meeting of the Commonwealth Fund indicated that two causes of delinquency were discussed at the meeting: The problem and its treatment could either be located in the inherent characteristics of the child or in the environment. Horn concludes, delegates quickly decided on a psychiatric approach rather than an environmental one (Horn, 1989). This is not surprising considering that the Mental Hygiene Committee and the Child Guidance Clinics were directed by psychiatrists.

The notion of prevention suggested in the report did not assume the need to eliminate all social causes of delinquency, such as poverty, or to understand and accept diversity. Rather, a psychiatric focus on prevention assumed that children developed delinquency at various degrees of severity and that psychiatry could intervene and treat the child when the "problem" is still less serious. The psychoanalytic movement initiated by Freud, had already laid the groundwork for this direction of thought. Psychiatrist Otto Rank explains how psychoanalysis is helpful as a preventive measure:

> From the study of neuroses ... we have learned what should be avoided in order to save the child, where possible, from a neurosis. Before everything, then, the child, from the first day of birth must be considered as a living being capable of taking in impressions but certainly not yet able to work off these impressions. On that account one must save the child from certain experiences that might have a traumatic effect on it. (Rank, 1926, p. 260)

Although it was agreed by most psychiatrists that sometimes delinquency is caused by the individual's social environment, the theory that any cause of delinquency would result in the conflict of the mind or a personality problem necessitated a psychiatric or psychological treatment, even for mild "problems". Had the clinics taken an environmental approach, removal of individuals with mild problems from the initial negative environment would have sufficed as prevention and treatment.

With the focus on prevention rather than treatment of delinquency, the concept of 'behaviour problem' was born, and the Commonwealth Fund started to make references to this concept. The Progress Report from the Commonwealth Fund noted, "it soon became evident that work with children who present *behaviour problems* would be more effective if the problem were recognized and dealt with before the behaviour had become so serious as to necessitate some form of court action" (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 145, [italics in original]).

Critique of the prevention approach. The shift towards preventing rather than treating delinquency was a move towards typifying the problem as a psychological one in two key ways. First, as noted above, it was based on psychoanalytical thinking which located delinquency within the individual. Second, the notion that behaviour problems lead to delinquency suggests that different social maladjustments have a quantitative nature of being less or more of a problem. This second point shall be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The psychiatric notion of prevention implied a continuum of delinquency located within the individual. This notion is so deeply engrained in the way we often think about children's behaviour problems, that it is difficult to imagine another way of thinking. The idea that a child is "heading in the wrong direction", and "needs to be stopped while it's early" seems inevitable.

An alternative view of the delinquent child can be drawn from a social construction perspective. Humans are born into a world that is both "made and found" (Goodman, 1978). Nelson Goodman (1978) believed that "comprehension and creation go together". The world is both comprehended by humans and created in their social activities. In this sense, a child is also part of this world: Children are both "made and found", "discovered" and "invented". As such, the child is in a dialogical relationship with the world. The world both constructs the child and is constructed by the child. In this dynamic state of balance between child and environment, agency and structure, a behaviour problem represents a different state of being in this balance. Prevention of delinquency, on the other hand, which assumes behaviour problem can be stopped from developing into delinquency, suggests a variation in the degree of delinquency. This would imply a variation of degree between the normal child, the behaviour problem child, and the delinquent child.

Programmes which focused on the prevention of delinquency, then, marked the beginning of a conceptualization which lends itself to the quantification of delinquency, as less or more delinquent. This notion is parallel to the utilitarian legal view of criminality, where ideally criminal behaviour is punished to different degrees. It is also similar to the medical view of disease, where, as Canguilhem (1989) notes, "a vulgar hierarchy of diseases exists today. Parkinson's disease is more of a disease than thoracic shingles, which is, in turn, more so than boils" (p. 39). In quantifying delinquency, the socially constructed nature of delinquency becomes visible, as it is left up to other individuals in the society to determine how much weight to ascribe to a delinquent act.

Once delinquency is conceptualized as a variation of degrees it leaves us with no other choice but to locate the source of the problem within the individual. Canguilhem (1989) explains that observing quantitative differences means "obeying the spirit of the physical sciences which, in buttressing phenomena with laws, can explain them only in terms of their reduction to a common measure" (p. 110). Only the individual can provide a stable domain of study and a common measure, for the environment has too many complexities and factors that cannot be controlled and would not be able to provide a common measure for study. In the context of such a conceptualization, the concept of a "behaviour problem" would seem to demand an individual model.

The *label* "behaviour problem" emerged from discussions and studies that took place at the Child Guidance Clinics., where new classifications of disorders were established. At the Child Psychiatry Section of the First World Congress on Psychiatry, held in Paris in 1950, a Committee for Nomenclature was formed to standardize the nomenclature that had been developed over the past 30 years. The Committee proposed, to keep the following terms:

1. Behaviour disorders [troubles du comportement][1],

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[1]. The words behavior problems and behavior disorders have been used interchangeably in writings about the child guidance clinic.

2. Disorders symptomatic of organic lesions,
3. Severe behaviour disorders of a precocious psychopathic nature,
4. Disorders of a neurotic kind,
5. Simple reactive states.

Further, the Committee emphasized that the social aspect of behaviour disorders should be considered but noted that "It did not seem possible to establish a classification parallel to that given above [the above terms]". Nevertheless, they thought it was useful to distinguish between maladjustment to the family, to school, and to society in general. (Buckle & Lebovici, 1960, p. 61)

Buckle and Lebovici (1960) explain that from the work of the committee, the term *behaviour disorders* was generally accepted instead of character disorder or conduct disorder. "Behaviour disorders" involve "difficulties which lead parents, either spontaneously or upon advice, to consult with a child guidance centre" (Buckle & Lebovici, 1960, p. 61).

Buckle and Lebovici (1960), then working for the World Health Organization, respectively as the Regional Officer for Mental Health, and Consultant for Child psychiatry, suggested that these disorders be classified on a two-fold basis, descriptive, and structural. The descriptive classification lists problem behaviours that might occur at different ages parallel to Piaget's stages of development. For example, behaviour disorders for the 5-8 year period include lying, theft, anxiety, speech difficulties, refusal to go to school, disobedience, isolation, and aggressiveness. This classification can be used by parents to note children's behaviour problems, and by psychiatrists to collect history information about the child.

The structural classification is to be used by all members of the child guidance team for diagnosis and history-taking. "Behaviour disorders" can be divided into four broad structural categories:

1. Related to an organic lesion, such as epilepsy
2. Express an instinctual or congenital pathology, such as impulsive personality
3. Reactive, such as reactions to family or school tensions or economic causes
4. Due to pathology, such as neuroses and psychoses

(Buckle & Lebovici, 1960)

The descriptive classification is similar to a medical model of diagnosing disease. Canguilhem (1989) explains that there are two models for understanding disease. Greek medicine in Hippocratic writings offers a conception of disease which is no longer ontological. One cannot *find* the disease within the individual. Nature is within people as well as around them, in balance and harmony. Disease is not somewhere in the person, it is everywhere within them; it is the whole person (p. 40). On the other hand, in western medicine, the disease can be found somewhere within the person, such as when one finds the germ in different tissues of the body. Using the western conception of disease, one can see that the new label, behaviour disorder, is based on the medical model. The psychiatrist starts by identifying the problem, using a list of descriptive symptoms, such as theft, lying, disobedience, and then proceeds to locate the problem within the child's psyche.

This model contrasts with other ways of thinking about behaviour problems, such as description of the child's experience, and how she relates to the world. How does the medical model compare with a phenomenological one, when applied to an example? Thomas and Thomas (1928) provide a case study of a delinquent girl referred to the Clinic in Philadelphia. She was specifically characterized as being a thief. The girl was ten. For a while, she had lived with her father who had allowed her to take money out of his pocket when she wanted. The mother was now taking care of her and had brought her to the clinic because of repeated thefts of money. The girl would take money out of her mother's purse and buy food for other children. The mother explained that the girl cared so much for other children that she was like a mother to them, and would take the blame if they got into trouble. Nonetheless, the girl was labeled as a thief; her behaviour problem was stealing. Clearly, the description of this child's experience provides a much more positive image of who she was, compared to her label. I am not suggesting that all children would similarly portray a positive image of the self, however, I would like to bring into awareness the ease with which we define behaviour problem children in terms of their descriptive symptoms, without thinking that alternative descriptions could be just as widely used, if they were to become a part of the "knowledge" on which we rely.

Establishing new "knowledge" in schools

Most psychiatrists and psychologists were not merely interested in the basic issues of the origin and development of the mind, but also, as Lewellys Barker, President of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, stated at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, they were interested in the "application of modern psychiatric knowledge to social problems" (Barker, 1917, p. 5). Barker suggested that psychiatrists get involved with the treatment of several groups of people that constitute social problems. Some examples are (a) children who have difficulties getting educated, (b) adult criminals, and (c) juvenile offenders. Barker encouraged psychiatrists to work with "the best legal talent" to help revise laws (ibid).

Bernard Glueck (1918), a prominent psychiatrist, pointed out that psychiatrists have to respond to the problem of delinquency because reform houses failed to provide an adequate treatment. This included support for the scientific discipline of Criminology. "The time is opportune for psychiatrists to respond to the call" he wrote, "now that social scientists themselves have perceived and pointed out to the psychiatrists the contribution that the latter can make to the solution of essentially social problems" (Glueck, 1918, p. 547-548).

> The progressive economist, sociologist, criminologist or social worker, is no longer content to attribute the social unrest and distress that he [or she] meets on every hand either to supernatural causes or to innate perversity, but seeks the explanation in antecedent organic and environmental phenomena, and in the course of his search, he [or she] frequently comes upon phenomena lying well within the sphere of mental medicine .... It should be, therefore, the aim of psychiatry in this field to undertake to furnish the fundamentals for a dependable science of criminology. (Glueck, 1918, p. 547-548)

Glueck (1918) argues that delinquency should not be a criminal problem, but a psychiatric one. "But if the psychiatrist is to keep in mind the readjustment of the individual and not solely the abstract satisfaction of the law, he must make experiences of this nature a matter of his interest" (p. 554).

The psychiatric conception of behaviour problem, largely accepted and used by courts, was distributed as "knowledge" through various community organizations. Directors of child guidance clinics established direct contacts with authorities in public schools, social agencies, and hospitals, with physicians, and with parents at the children's homes (Thomas & Thomas, 1928). Yerkes, a Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, had given mental tests to the army. He was contacted by Charles Eliot, President Emeritus at Harvard, encouraging him to apply these tests in public schools (Cravens, 1978, p. 56).

In an article, published in the Mental Hygiene Journal, Yerkes (1917) proposed to other professionals that students even be *classified* when they first enter school.

> As a practical approach to the great task of better suiting educational treatment to the needs of the individual, I wish to suggest the classification of children according to their major characteristics of body and mind ... The following five classes or groups of individuals are suggested as probably of greatest practical significance in the present state of our psychological and educational knowledge .... The classes are:
> 1. The intellectually superior or supernormal,
> 2. The intellectually inferior or subnormal,
> 3. The intellectually dependent,
> 4. The affectively or instinctively defective,
> 5. The mentally normal, typical, or average. (Yerkes, 1917, p. 255)

Delinquents were to be classified as "affectively or instinctively defective".

Clinton McCord (1924, p. 450), Health Director of the Board of Education, believed in a causal relationship between intelligence and crime. McCord published an article suggesting that students entering school should be studied using a psychological analysis, family history, home conditions, delinquency record, physical and neurological exam. A psychological study assessed: "general intelligence, motor coordination, auditory and visual memory, language level, power of abstraction, and demonstration of any general abilities or disabilities". However, McCord also added, "We realize that this method cannot now be applied to all admissions, perhaps; but we feel that its application to selected groups will demonstrate certain vital needs" (p. 450).

By engaging the participation of other community agencies and institutions, the American public started to perceive these disciplines in being able to resolve the delinquency problem. Even as late as the 1950's one can see signs of the viewed importance of Child Guidance Clinics in schools. The U. S. subcommittee of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary to investigate juvenile delinquency met in May 1955. The Chairman reported that he was "particularly impressed by the Report of the Deputy Mayor Henry Epstein concerning all phases of juvenile delinquency" (The U.S. Congress, 1955, p. 2). One of the recommendations specifically stated in the report was that more Child Guidance clinics be used in schools:

> *The Bureau of Child Guidance*: This essential service in our schools is being enlarged during the coming year, as additional psychiatrist-psychologist-social worker teams are activated. Dr. Jenson is presently working on plans for certain improvements in the operation, in the light of an extensive study only recently completed. This ambitious survey (made possible by the joint effort of our board of education, the Field Foundation, the New York Fund for Children, and the New York Foundation) offers a real point of departure for enlightened planning. (The U.S. Congress, 1955, p. 32, [italics in original])

Members of the Mental Hygiene movement were interested in promoting new psychiatric conceptions about delinquency not only to schools, but to the whole public. Lewellys Barker (1917), President of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, stated at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene in 1917, "One important task will be to bring conviction, first to medical men[2], and later to the general public, that ... abnormalities of behaviour are as much subject to natural laws as are disorders and defects of the intellectual processes" (p. 6).

In 1927, the original five-year programme of the Commonwealth Fund on methods of preventing delinquency was terminated. The Child Guidance Clinics were re-established as the Institute for Child Guidance, in New York, as a teaching/advisory organization, to study behaviour problems, provide clinical facilities to train psychiatrists and psychologists, and offer clinical facilities for the treatment of behaviour problem children (Lowrey, 1926). The Director of the Institute, Dr. Lawson Lowrey, described his vision of the clinics as a central independent institution whose services are available to social agencies, schools, courts, physicians and hospitals, and parents. He outlined strategies for a successful cooperative relationship with other agencies, starting with lectures through which mental hygiene principles involved in work with children would be presented to the entire staff of the agencies.

Gradually, clinics were established on-site at various hospitals, reform schools, universities, penitentiaries, and high schools. These local sites were always directed by a team comprising a psychiatrist, psychologist, and social worker. The team's purpose was both treatment and research. Scientific studies during the twentieth century thus established the necessity for a psychological model of delinquency. Local clinics were staffed with researchers as well as the regular diagnostic team. "In addition to the service staff, there will be attached to headquarters a body of research workers of various grades, from graduate students to recognized authorities in the lines of work undertaken" (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 157).

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[2] The address also indicated that women were not authorities in the Psychiatric field.

Yerkes (1917) suggested that a classification of students be devised based on a systematic study of the school population. He suggested that since "intensive individual study of every child for the purpose of educational diagnosis is impractical because of expense", a method should be devised to study the school population in a more economical way. He proposed that a staff consisting of a physician, a psychologist, an educator and a social worker be organized. These experts should study the entire school population. The purpose of the group exam should be the discovery of physical and mental peculiarities, defects or degrees of development which are actual or possible handicaps in school. Then the examiner selects those few individuals and conducts a physical, medical, and psychological exam. The goal would be to derive a classification of students. "These individual exams might be expected to yield data for a definite decision as to the classification of the individual" (p. 256).

Other psychologists conducted studies of school children to show the usefulness of the child guidance centres for students (Blanchard & Paynter, 1924) Blanchard and Paynter (1924) completed a study of 500 school children who had visited the clinics over three years, as part of the prevention programme. A second group of 337 children were used as a control study. Ages of the children ranged from four to 16 years. Of the problem group, 70% had Caucasian-American parents, 21% had foreign parents, and 9% were African-Americans. They were given medical, psychiatric, and psychological exams. They searched for the causative factors and found that 70% of the problem group came from bad home conditions. Also, 93% had "personality defects", which they characterize as a "well-defined trait", and includes the "neurotic and psychopathic child and also the seclusive, hyperkinetic [impulsive], hypokinetic, emotional, egocentric, and inadequate personality types" (p. 36). Blanchard and Paynter suggested that the behaviour problem student could benefit if schools would refer them to a child guidance clinic.

The role of the discipline of psychology

Cravens (1978) points out psychologists such as William James expanded the discipline of psychology in America, by building institutions and promoting the science of psychology. Between 1884 and 1898 American universities granted 54 doctorates in psychology. Between 1909 and 1918 this number had increased to 234, more than half of the total number of doctorates awarded in all departments. The American Psychological Association was founded. Numerous journals were printed and experimental laboratories were developed where psychology was studied as an objective, natural science, rather than a personal and philosophical framework.

Stanley Hall, who had received the first American doctorate in psychology, established a psychology department at Clark University in 1887, where he expanded psychology's scope from experimental psychology, to include educational, child, abnormal, and animal psychology. In 1909, he hosted a conference at Clark, where he introduced Freud to American scientists (Cravens, 1978).

Psychologists were interested in differentiating themselves from psychiatrists in the public's eye. In 1923, at LaSalle, Illinois, the Bureau of Educational Counsel was instituted at a high school, to study behaviour, development of personality, and adjustment of emotional conflicts in the lives of adolescents. The Bureau wanted to avoid connotations of abnormalty or pathology commonly associated with psychiatry. The Director was called a counselor, and the Bureau's purpose was listed as, "the concern with disease or abnormalty only as it is discovered in supposedly normal groups". In order to avoid the possibility that contact with the Bureau would be associated with a stigma, students of superior intelligence were initially studied (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 161).

Buckle and Lebovici (1960) discuss several factors which made it necessary for psychologists, rather than psychiatrists to continue their work in schools. Psychologists were specialized in testing for mental intelligence, using the Binet-Simon I. Q. Test, which was used to determine a student's class level and differential abilities. Educational psychologists had knowledge of educational processes and could help students in their school work. As a result of the development of personality theories, psychologists became interested in observations of free-play to examine the child, and determine if there are any maladjustments or personality problems. Finally, psychologists established laboratories for the study of cognition and personality, which were used in studying psychiatric problems.

Today, in the U.S. school system, a formal classification system is used to identify students who are "Seriously Emotionally Disordered" (SED), which is a psychiatric classification and is listed in the Diagnostic Scientific Manual (DSM) (Knitzer et al., 1990; Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1976). In addition, school staff classify students as a behaviour problem, without a guideline for classification. In other words, there is an informal classification in schools that is dependent on the beliefs and perceptions of the individuals working with students. Behaviour problem students are generally described by teachers as non-compliant, aggressive, or impulsive (Campbell, 1997) In Canada, there is similarly an informal classification used for students with a behaviour problem. Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1976) point out that the SED definition is very similar to common descriptions of behaviour problem students.

The Social Context of Knowledge

Critical theorists and sociologists of knowledge have attempted to show the underlying economic, political, cultural, or professional interests that determine social knowledge (Butlar, 1990; Conrad & Schneider, 1980; Kuhn, 1962; Mannheim, 1936; Martin, 1987; Platt, 1969). For Mannheim, the underlying motives are largely unconscious (Mannheim, 1936). However, as Gergen points out, for the ideological critic, truth claims originate in ideological commitments, but for the social critic, it is social process rather than self interest and ideology that shapes our conceptions of truth (Gergen, 1994b, p. 45). Gergen contends that focusing on the implications of a discourse, instead of its underlying motive, allows us to determine how discourse functions in ongoing relationships. With this context revealed, we can move into alternative spaces of "relatedness".

Underlying Ideologies

Various scholars and historians have examined the ideological forces that constructed delinquency and behaviour problems. Conrad and Schneider (1980) argue that when delinquency, as other forms of deviant behaviour, became defined as a quasi-medical problem in the 20th century, psychiatrists gained authority over the concept of delinquency, and were able to establish and legitimate their position. They were able to enforce their classifications on less powerful groups. In this sense, psychiatrists and psychiatric institutions had social control over those individuals they labeled as delinquents. Conrad and Schneider (p. 20) claim that the definition of any behaviour as deviant is essentially a political matter where different interest groups attempt to legislate the laws that benefit them.

Popkewitz (1987) contends that 20th century school leaders in America invented the concept of 'backwardness' to explain the problems in educating the poor and the immigrant children. This drew attention to two causes of school failure, mental deficiency and psychological problems. Elements of social control were visible in the interests of Northern business leaders, who accepted the burden of paying taxes to support public education. They were interested in socializing immigrant children into middle-class conceptions of civility and notions of democracy, and eliminating Marxist and socialist ideas brought from Europe. Socialization through schooling was also to prepare the emerging middle class for a leadership role in society and help them develop competence worthy of the elite.

Anthony Platt (1969) similarly reasoned that delinquents in correctional programmes were socialized into middle-class values but streamed into lower-class skills. In addition, the assumption that adolescents are "naturally" dependent created a special court which imposed sanctions on "premature independence and behaviour unbecoming to youth" (p. 176). Platt argued against the idea that members of the various institutions and organizations that managed and defined delinquency were "libertarians or humanists".

Horn (1989), on the other hand, claims that the label, "behaviour problem", emerged from the activities of a humanitarian movement that was interested in the rights of children. The Federal Children's Bureau was created in 1912 which focused on child labour legislations and child health (Horn, 1989); a juvenile court was established in 1899 in order to stop juveniles from being treated as harshly as adults (Conrad & Schneider, 1980), and the child guidance movement was established in 1909 (Horn, 1984/85). Horn focuses on one particular organization in this movement: The Commonwealth Fund. This private foundation, with the mission "to do something for the welfare of mankind" (Horn, 1989, p. ix), was part of a child-saving movement which organized the establishment of Child Guidance Clinics for the prevention of delinquency. Horn argues (1984/85) that even though the kind of a relationship established in the Child Guidance Clinics, by its nature, involves control of one group over another, psychiatrists who treated the psychological problems of children were interested in the welfare of the child.

Becker, in contrast, (1963) believes that this humanitarian crusade to save deviants is based on an underlying self-interest. Not only does he critique humanitarians, because, they think they know what is good for them as well as for other people, but also he claims that there is a "hidden agenda" that is not immediately obvious. "The most obvious consequence of a successful crusade is the creation of a new set of rules. With the creation of a new set of rules we often find that a new set of enforcement agencies and officials is established (p. 155). Becker concludes that humanitarian crusaders themselves establish new rules. A deviant may then be labeled not because he has broken the rules of the norm but because he has shown disrespect to the new enforcer of rules.

The view that there is a political ideology underlying knowledge is not shared by all social constructionists. For example, Berger and Luckmann (1966) characterize "externalization" as the process by which people construct a cultural product. Berger and Luckmann do not however define the social aspect of construction in terms of underlying ideologies and personal intentions. Instead, they situate the social-ness of construction in the dialogical processes between interacting individuals and their social world.

The sociology of knowledge can stand to benefit by moving beyond attempts to understand the ideologies underlying the construction of "knowledge". How can one know the *actual* intention of claim-makers? Considering the complexities of the human mind, is it possible for intentions to be identified by a single factor? Furthermore, thinking about intentions as a stable and fixed experience is not consistent with the social constructionist framework; often intentions include affective elements which are in a state of flux, and become defined as one thing or another only in the context of the immediate environment. Gergen (1994b) adds another shortcoming to the ideological critique. He writes, "Is the critic to claim a more penetrating understanding of the actor than the actor himself possesses, or is the critic simply the victim of an alienating distrust?" (p. 46).

Focusing on the implications of a discourse rather than the underlying intentions gives social constructionists a way to move past the relativism for which they have been so often critiqued. If, according to a general social constructionist framework, multiple narratives can be constructed about the underlying ideology, and they are all true (hence relative), what is the point of making such an inquiry? Analysis of underlying ideologies can seem pointless. Gergen (1994b) argues that focusing on the implications of a discourse, instead of its underlying motive, "is a means of recognizing alternative realities". Focusing on how discourse functions in ongoing relationships allows us to move into alternative spaces of "relatedness".

Not only does this sort of social critique give voice to an alternative discourse, it allows us to search for that discourse which has a goal, common to all participants. For example, when discussing behaviour problems, rather than arguing over whose "fault" it really is that students are disruptive, educators can collaborate on the purpose of education, and whether the various processes used to treat behaviour problem youth are consistent with the defined goals.

Implications of Labeling

How does the classification of students as a behaviour problem place them at a disadvantage? Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1976) indicate that labels can impact "the perceptions and behaviour of the child", as well as "the perceptions and behaviour of others who interact with the child" (p. 110). These two processes may not be as independent as it seems. Assuming the perspective that the world is socially constructed, and that we are born into a reality that we take for granted, classification of students as "behaviour problems" determines how these students would be perceived by themselves and others. The label validates a reality that is taken for granted and reinforced, depending on how deeply it is integrated into the structures of everyday life.

One negative effect of classification on the perception of others is that it creates an either/or dichotomy (Collins, 1991). The negative effects of the behaviour problem label on others' perception is that a student is viewed as either good or bad, truthful or liar, bully or victim. In addition, as apparent in the following example, if others hold any preconceived biases towards a student, labels can help justify the belief. Nyan, whom I have discussed in Chapter One, often expressed his frustrations physically at the Boys and Girls Club by slamming doors and throwing board games into the air when he lost. Karen, one of the staff member, often called Nyan "the behavioural kid" and referred to him as such, at the Club meetings. On one occasion, Nyan had been playing in the back-room, which was off-limits to the children. The building was very old and contained old gym lockers in the back-room. Nyan and some of the children had entered the backroom from the club's backdoor. In the process of playing with the locker door, Nyan had entered the locker, and closed the door. At this point, the locker door had gotten jammed and Nyan was stuck inside a locker hardly big enough to hold him. The other children ran over to tell me that Nyan was stuck. My reaction, of course, was a hidden sense of panic with regard to his safety, and an external calmness as I headed down there to make sure he knows help is on the way. I asked one of the children to find the superintendent and I started to play with the lock, while I talked to Nyan. Even though I was in the backroom, I could hear Karen's voice faintly. "You should let him stay there for a while". "He's always getting into trouble anyways, maybe now he'll learn not to go poking around where he ain't got any business going". A few minutes later, Karen came to the back room. While she was there, she made sure that her feelings were heard by Nyan. "We should leave you in there, Nyan ....". Karen, a certified child-care worker, could not for a moment forget that this is "the behavioural kid" and focus instead on his safety.

I have seen similar events in schools. During my 1-year observation of the fifth grade classroom in a suburban school in British Columbia, I also interviewed six students in Grades 5-8, who had been identified as behaviour problems by their teachers. Gee, an Indian seventh grader, who dressed in his ethnic clothes, said he had a lot of fights because he was called names and made fun of, by other students. I asked him if he had communicated this to his teacher. He responded, "I try to tell Mr. Abner every time that, whenever I tell him, he doesn't believe me, he's like, 'you're just joking, you're just trying to get him in trouble' .... Sometimes I get into trouble and he just thinks that cause I'm just fooling around, joking around, and he thinks I'm doing that too, I'm trying to get other people in trouble, but they're actually trying to get me in trouble. . . . Cause sometimes I'm like joking around in class with my best friend and the teacher is talking and I'm like, 'he took my ruler'. But that's cause he's my best friend. But these guys came up to me the other day and they're like 'quack quack quack, this is what you are' and everybody starts laughing and I got so pissed off".

The teacher had explained what he thought about Gee's behaviour. "Actually that time, he actually talked to me privately after school .... He said 'when people say something you react to them. You get in trouble cause you react differently. You react bad like you, if they say something to you, you push them, that's more than saying something'. He thinks I react like different. I just react worst. Like I make it worst. that I'm not upset that when they're saying this to me, I'm just trying to get them in trouble and make it a big deal". I asked Gee if it's true that he reacted to name calling by fighting with students. He responded, "Well yeah sometimes, cause I'm already pissed off, there's this person here saying something to me".

Gee's experiences had been quite negative. He explained how his problems with other students and the teacher had affected his experience. "Well, first of all when I started Grade 7 people kept on saying that time, first it was good, but then it started getting worst by a month or so, then I feel like everyday it upsets me cause I think somebody's gonna come up to me and say something bad to me .... They know I'm gonna react bad and I'm the one that's gonna get in trouble. I'm the one that's going to be in trouble, not them. I don't feel like good like going back to school everyday cause I know people are gonna come up, somebody is actually gonna come to me and say some bad stuff to me, and the problem is if I tell the teacher he thinks it happens to me everyday and he doesn't want to deal with it. I keep thinking high school's better cause we go to all these different teachers and I don't have to deal with this one teacher like Mr. Abner. He's so mean to me." Gee had also thought about how his problems at school impacted others' perceptions of him. "people say that, come up to me and say like, 'why are you always mad?' I'm like, 'oh yeah good question'. I don't like, I say 'I'm not mad'. But I really am".

The *socially* constructed nature of labeling is obvious in this narrative. The student who gets into fights, rather than the name-caller, was socially perceived and constructed as the behaviour problem child. Racism, ostracism, bullying, and ineffective supervision were not points of discussion or concern by authorities. Gee told me quite a few stories of name calling incidents by other students and his physical reaction to them. He had always gotten into trouble because his teacher felt that it was worst to fight than it was to make fun of people. Gee's views differed. His description of his experience shows that he was very unhappy about comments from other students, which he felt were insulting. In this case, the child who got into fights was the one who had been enrolled in a treatment programme. He was the one perceived to have a deficit and needed to correct this problem. He was considered to have the characteristics that had placed him in the unique group of behaviour problem students. What role did the label play in constructing the behaviour problem student? It seems that the label maintained the view that he has a problem, among school authorities; as a result, he was the one that always got into trouble.

Linda Rossler (1997) points out that labeling can have certain advantages. "Classification can make the affliction more acceptable .... Classification can make others more tolerant of a disability" (p. 122). In the case of labels such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or Learning Disability, labeling can help to avoid blaming the child because the problem has been completely defined as a medical problem (Leffers, 1997). In the case of behaviour problems, the label does not encourage more tolerance from others. The practice of labeling has evolved from a psycho/medical model, as discussed earlier in this chapter. However, it is only a quasi-medical model (Conrad & Schneider, 1980), Medication is not recommended as it is in ADHD, and differences in brain physiology are not viewed as the sole etiology of behaviour problems as they are with Learning Disability. As a result, behaviour problem children are considered to be in need of "treatment"; yet, they are also expected to be able to control their behaviour. Punishment of students who engage in behaviour problems, by school authorities, suggests that authorities think that children "should have" control over their behaviour and that the diagnosis does not justify the behaviour. Students get punished when they do not fulfill this expectation. However, schools often implement multiple treatment programmes (LaRocque & Shariff, 2001) and the same student may also be placed in anger management and conflict resolution programmes because the behaviour problem is viewed to be within the child, for example, as a temperament, social cognitive ability, or frustration tolerance level problem. This conflict in the way behaviour problems are viewed, as both a problem within the child, but also a problem that the child "should have" control over, has made the behaviour problem student less tolerable, than might be seen for medical classifications such as ADHD and Learning Disability students

Rossler (1997) suggests that another advantage of labels is that it enables students to find others to associate with, who are like them, and not feel isolated because of their differences. This advantage also does not exist for behaviour problem children. First, the heterogeneity of this classification (described in Chapter 4) produces a group of students who may not be in the "behaviour problem classroom" for the same reasons. One student may be aggressive, another impulsive. Students in the class may have had on-going conflicts amongst themselves, creating a situation where students who don't like each other are in the same class. Further, they don't have an element in common, which can serve as a unifying experience. Their individual tendencies, the context of their behaviour problems, and their intentions and goals when engaged in non-compliant behaviours may be very different from each other. This heterogeneity can be distinguished from the characteristics of a dyslexic student, for example, who can feel less isolated when a common teaching strategy is used, or when others are taught at the same pace.

The instability of the classification may also add to its heterogeneous nature. A concept is considered to be unstable if its meaning changes over time and in different contexts. As seen in the historical analysis of delinquency, non-compliance has been given different meanings throughout history. However, meanings are never completely abolished. One might still find groups of people who consider behaviour problems a sin, or due to the breakdown of the social order of society. Since behaviour problems are defined based on informal definitions of school authorities, these lingering definitions could add to the heterogeneous definition of behaviour problems.

Rossler (1997) also suggests that labeling is beneficial because it allows schools to "determine the exact needs of the student and make sure those specific needs are met within the most enabling environment. The child's behaviour can be viewed as a symptom of a serious medical problem rather than a willful misdemeanor" (p. 123). While this may be true and some school officials may focus on understanding the relationship between the child's agency and the child-in-context, most schools in North America are taking a management and control perspective (Knitzer et al., 1990; LaRocque & Shariff, 2001). This perspective was discussed in Chapter 4. Rather than focus on students' individual tendencies, intentions and goals, and students' dialogical relationship with their environment as they both construct and are constructed by their context, schools are trying to teach students how to better manage their emotions and behaviours. Token-reward systems, various punishments such as increased amounts of homework and "detention", as well as a variety of intervention programmes mostly isolated from the rest of the school community are used for this purpose. Consequently, behaviour problem labels have not resulted in the construction of programmes that meet "the exact needs of the student".

Summary

As a result of the social processes taking place in America in the twentieth century, a new concept of individual pathology was born. Various institutions, and public and private foundations and agencies, in their attempt to resolve the social problem of delinquency, constructed the notion of the behaviour problem child. The individual/psychological model became typified and integrated into the every day life of youth, in schools, at home, in hospitals, and in courts.

Several elements were involved in this typification. The disciplines of psychiatry and psychology marked the emergence of a new way of classifying youth. The Child Guidance Movement for the first time defined, discussed, described, explained, classified, and treated delinquency problems in a systematic and organized manner. Scientific studies established the necessity for using psychological models of delinquency. Schools cooperated with psychiatric institutions hoping that the problem of delinquency, which had not been resolved with an environmentalist view of isolation, or a criminological view of discipline and punishment, would be resolved with a psychological model. In time, school psychologists were provided, as a means of "educating" the school system with regard to psychiatric models of behaviour problems. New knowledge about students' non-compliance was produced and new ways of treating students became dominant, as a result of these professional activities.

In this chapter I have tried to show that the changes that took place in the concept of mental illness laid the groundwork for the emergence of the new concept of delinquency. This change in the history of psychiatry, (that mental illness is a problem of the mind rather than a physiological illness) marks an important moment, which made it possible for psychiatrists to describe, study, conceptualize, and classify delinquency as a problem located in the individual. The interest in "prevention" of delinquency also marked an important moment, when the "normal" child became the behaviour problem on his/her way to delinquency. The concept of delinquency as less or more brought behaviour problems into the general population, where normal children can potentially become a behaviour problem.

Psychiatrists defined behaviour problems using a quasi-medical model. A medical model involves, diagnosis based on descriptive symptoms, classification, and a treatment that involves physiological changes in the body. Generally, behaviour problem students were, and still are, diagnosed on a medical model, but the treatment is not medicalized. The punishment system that takes place in schools today suggests that behaviour problem children are not viewed to be "ill". If behaviour problems had been conceptually defined as an illness, children would not be held responsible for their actions. Further, because a medical model is used to diagnose students on the basis of their broad descriptive "symptoms", the concept lends itself to a wide variety of contexts in which children could be potentially diagnosed as behaviour problems. As a result of this quasi-medical model, behaviour problem children do not benefit from the outcome of a medical diagnosis; In fact the medical nature of the classification is to their disadvantage.

The institutional discourse about behaviour problem youth and its resulting classification of students in schools has a negative impact on how students are perceived by others as well as themselves. In this chapter and in Chapter 4, I have explored the consequences of labeling students. Considering the negative impact of the behaviour problem label on the lives of students, the images it portrays of youth, and the message which the label itself conveys to the behaviour problem youth, it has become necessary to search for an alternative discourse.

Chapter 6

Towards Alternative Discourses of Non-Compliance and Aggression

Introduction

We have become so engrained in our thinking about behaviour problem youth that it is difficult to disentangle ourselves, practically or conceptually, to think about non-compliance in schools as other than a psychological problem. The core language used in schools incorporates the individual/psychological model in the way labels are designed, and we expect changes to take place based on the psychological model. Wartofsky states that we come to know ourselves in the artifacts we have created. In Berger and Luckmann's words (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), we "internalize" societal artifacts and practices as the reality.

> Humans, unlike other animals, are the agents of their own transformation. Their cultural revolution is an evolution of the cognitive praxis that produces and uses artifacts and that comes to know itself *in* the very artifacts in which this cognitive activity is embodied or objectified: that is, in its language, its tools, in the products and processes of social labor, in the forms of ritual art, and in the social institutions of a culture, which are themselves complex artifacts that embody the norms, rules, and morals of a given community. (Wartofsky, 1999, p. 195, [italics in original])

In this chapter, I suggest several alternative behaviour problem discourses, that are not dominant in schools. From the framework of these discourses:

1. Behaviour problems are *cultural*, or *educational*, problems. Youth's aggressive behaviour has culturally symbolic meanings and should not be reduced to individual deficits. The behaviour problem act should be interpreted in the context of international cultures, school sub-cultures, or educational activities.

2. Behaviour problems are *not necessarily problems at all.* Students' diverse modes of interaction and their individual differences are sometimes misconstrued only as problems.

3. Behaviour problems are *relational* problems. Students' behaviour problems can be understood in a holistic approach, where the "self" is located in the dynamic and dialogical interaction of child and his or her multiple contexts.

I provide an extensive review of the literature for the first discourse. The second discourse is beyond the scope of this dissertation and only a short summary will be introduced. The third discourse is a fairly new academic discussion. For the most part, this topic has been the subject of philosophical debates. It is important to initiate a dialogue on the implications of this discourse for practice.

Behaviour Problems as Cultural or Educational Problems

Teaching academic subjects is one goal of schooling. Nevertheless, more and more it seems that elementary and secondary school students behave in ways that make it difficult for teachers to teach, and for students to achieve learning goals (Pietrzak & Petersen, 1998). At times, it is argued, student behaviours threaten the physical safety of other students, while other times, behaviours seem ambiguous and border on being socially inappropriate. Behaviour problem students generally exhibit aggression, non-compliance, and/or impulsivity. In recent years, there has been an urgency and immediacy to this problem, which has baffled teachers and educators. Why does there seem to be such a rise in the number of behaviour problem students and why do they engage in such violent or distasteful acts? Behaviour problems seem to be irrational, senseless, and meaningless.

Much of the scholarly literature on behaviour problems focuses on the instrumental meaning of the behaviour. The focus is on the purpose of the behaviour, what the student is trying to achieve, either consciously or sub-consciously. Studies on the psychology of behaviour problem children is meant to unravel the sub-conscious or psychological needs which push the student towards such behaviours. The cultural and historical symbolism and meaning of violence and behaviour problems, in the context of schools, is rarely addressed. We have not yet unraveled what behaviour problems mean as a cultural phenomenon.

The Cultural Meaning of Violence and Behaviour problems.

A number of writers have focused on the experiences of adolescent boys (Barker & Loewenstein, 1997; Hall, 1999; Pollack, 2000). In Real Boys' Voices, Pollack (2000), cracks, as he calls it, the "boys' code", although this study was not specific to youth who exhibit behaviour problems. It is difficult to get adolescent boys to talk about themselves; Pollack points out that "boys seem to have a myriad of monosyllabic responses to questions about what appear to be their deepest experiences: 'OK'; 'I'm fine'; 'No problem'" (pg. xxv). He also finds that this grudging response is a result of a code of conduct in the adolescent male culture: Boys are not supposed to show their emotions. There is an expectation that boys will be "tough, composed, daring, unflappable, laughing off their pain"(p. 33). The way that these expectations play out in the North American society is that boys "may wax strong and silent or lash out with fists and fighting words. They may strike to injure others or, more often, simply take things out on themselves .... [by] punching inanimate objects" (ibid). They act like they are having sex all the time, intensely engage in competitive tasks without complaining about the pressures, and bully those who seem different in order to pass the masculinity test of the boy code. While this is a culture they participate in, they also feel internal conflicts about it.

Elijah Anderson (1999) provides a deeper understanding of what "the code" means. In his ethnographic study on the code of the street in Philadelphia he writes,

> The code of the street amounts to a set of informal rules of behaviour organized around a desperate search for respect, that governs public social relations, especially violence. At the heart of the code is the issue of respect--loosely defined as being treated "right" .... Respect is viewed as almost an external entity, one that is hard won but easily lost....Many feel that it is worth dying over issues of respect.... There is a general sense that very little respect is to be had, and therefore everyone competes to get what affirmation he can from what is available. (Anderson, 1999, p. 33)

In his autobiography, Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun, Geoffrey Canada (1995), a psychologist raised in the ghetto, provides a rich personal narrative about learning the code of the street and how he learned to fight. If you didn't learn how to fight, others on the street could really beat you and you might not survive. He writes,

> As an adult I have heard many times the debate about whether violence is part of the human makeup or a learned behaviour. There is no way that I can buy the theory that humans have some genetic predisposition to violence. I know better. I remember clearly the time in my life that I knew nothing of violence and how hard I worked later to learn to become capable of it. (Canada, 1995, p. 23)

He recalls,

> Mike was calling me [for a fight] .... Mike and I were friends. What had I done? The kids my age looked at me and dropped their eyes when I looked back. A few of them smiled as if to say, you gonna get your ass kicked and better you than me. I knew I couldn't "cop a plea" and ask Mike to let me be, it didn't work like that. It would just enrage him and I would get an even worse beating. So I put up my hands and set my face to try to mask my fear. It was a pretty brutal affair. The tears came down my cheeks with the first slap. I fought back gamely even if to no avail. After it was over Mike told me I "couldn't box worth shit". Those words stung me more than all the slaps to the face.
>
> Mike went about correcting what he saw as a major impediment to my survival in the South Bronx. I couldn't fight. I could do it all right against amateurs, but sooner or later I would get hurt by one of the many truly talented fighters in the Bronx. He knew that to be a successful street fighter in the South Bronx one had to have more than heart. He knew I would never learn how to fight unless I conquered the fear that makes you panic when you get hit hard. He knew that many fighters "lost it" under pressure and began to resort to blind punching ... Therefore it was necessary for me to fear him during our training sessions. The fear made the training more realistic. I would be expected to defend myself knowing that I might get hurt at any moment. (Canada, 1995, p. 30)

For this child, learning the culture of the streets had become a necessity; these were the same streets he had to walk through from home to school every day. He further explains that these expectations were not limited to the streets.

> I was dismayed to learn that you had to get a "reputation" at school the same way you did on the block. Everyone on the block or in the school who had earned the right to have one of the tougher

> boys say about him, "Naw man, don't mess with him, he's all right" had had to fight for it. (Canada, 1995, p. 31)

Canada explains that in school as well, if you lose a fight once, you have to fight over and over again to gain back your respect.

> You had so much more to lose when you fought in school. On the block, losing a fight might drop you down one or two people in the pecking order; in school losing a fight could drop you down twenty or thirty. People who had never bothered you before would begin to harass you and you'd have to fight over and over again to re-establish your reputation. (Canada, 1995, p. 31)

Clearly, a child who fights repeatedly would be a prime candidate for the label, behaviour problem, at school. Standing up to their fears, trying to maintain their reputations, learning how to fight even though it's painful, these have become unwritten codes of conduct in some schools. School fights protect students' sense of honor and maintain their peer image and self-image (Berglund, 1995; Canada, 1995), and fighting on the school playground has become an acceptable and encouraged form of entertainment by observing students (Berglund, 1995).

Berglund (1995) conducted unstructured interviews in a British Columbia high school with students who engaged in school fights, emphasizing context and the student's frame of reference. Six females in Grades 8-10 and six males in Grades 9-10 participated in the study. She talked both to students who fight all the time and those who rarely fight, and found that there were rules which defined the norm for fighting behaviour. For example, it is cool to fight, to hit in the face and stomach, and to fight even if you lose. Fighting properly requires seriously hurting the opponent with visible damage- "fighting like guys". But it's not cool for the opponent to cry and if they do, they will get hurt more. It is not fair for a big guy to hit a girl, so he asks other girls to do it. It isn't fair to double up on a girl, but fair to have many individuals hit her one at a time. Students explained that fighting is a way of gaining a higher status among your peers and allows you to be a member of the high status groups. It is also a way of maintaining self-image, when an injustice has been done to you. For example one student said, "It wasn't that my eyes get sore when I look at her, it was that she had called me names and spread rumors about me." In other words, the student would fight to get her image restored, and not simply because "she felt like it".

The idea that there is a social structure among teenagers in schools was researched by LeBlanc, a New York Times Magazine writer (LeBlanc, 1999). In her conversations with teens, she was told that "below the popular kids, in a shifting order of relative unimportance, are the druggies, trend preppies, skateboarders, nerds and techies, wiggers, rednecks and Goths, better known as freaks. Real losers are invisible" (p. 39).

While most studies focus on boys' culture, Margaret Jackson's (in press) discussion is quite revealing of the sociocultural context, specifically "the process of racialization and gendering" that impacts the lives of adolescent girls (p. 3 of the unpublished printed copy). As Director of the FREDA Centre studies in Canada, Jackson discusses three interrelated research studies in the area of violence against women and children. Focusing on the voices of the girls themselves, the attempt is to make meaning of these experiences, using a feminist framework. This discussion is a much needed analysis of *processes* rather than static factors that construct the identities of immigrant girls through continuous interactions in society.

The first study focused primarily on the racialization and gendering processes that intersect to increase adolescent girls' marginalization and aggression. Fifty nine immigrant and refugee girls, in the range of 14-19 years old, from 18 countries, were interviewed. Many pointed to racism and intercultural tensions as an aspect of school life. For example, recent immigrants are sometimes called FOB's by other students. "FOB is like fresh off the boat. It means that you're really geeky and you don't know how to speak and stuff. You dress stupidly or whatever, right? (Jackson, in press, p. 5 of the unpublished printed copy). The process of identity development was problematic for these girls. "Sometimes I feel like I have to lose my 'true' identity to fit in" (ibid). The girls were taunted for their accents and clothes, but, fearing exclusion from peers, they could not confide in school authorities. As a result, they expressed their frustrations with these experiences in ways that would be considered "behaviour problems".

The second study, that focused on interviews from eight girls on probation, highlighted the contexts that rendered immigrant girls to become vulnerable to violence. This study demonstrated that the risk assessment process in the justice system contributes to the immigrant girls' vulnerability. Based on the girls' probation files, there seemed to be an assumption that their behaviour problems stem from their inability to adjust to the dominant white society.

The third FREDA study examined the perceptions of 38 service-providers who worked with street-involved girls, homosexuals, bisexuals, transgendered girls, Aboriginal girls, girls with disabilities, and immigrant and refugee girls. The service providers identified sources of vulnerability for these girls. These were existing government services, conflicting cultural values across generations, denial of intercultural tensions between students by school administrators, the hierarchical social structure among students, language problems, and power relations between girls and boys. Jackson concludes that "the girls' rights to well-being and safety are jeopardized, and should be available to legal remedies-although broad stroke legal solutions are probably not the most effective" (p. 17 of the unpublished printed copy). The girls themselves proposed that students from different groups be isolated together in a context where they would have no other choices but to work out their differences.

The aforementioned writers (Anderson, 1999; Barker & Loewenstein, 1997; Berglund, 1995; Canada, 1995; Hall, 1999; MacDonald & da Costa, 1996; Pollack, 2000) have not discussed the experiences of adolescent students as a "culture" per se, but it seems that violence and behaviour problems have become part of the student culture in North American schools. Stolp (1994) defines culture as "the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, and myths understood by members of the community". These patterns of meaning are expressed both explicitly through symbols and implicitly in taken-for-granted beliefs (Geertz, 1973). Fighting seems to have taken on a symbolic and explicit pattern of meaning in schools.

Berglund (1995) found that other students who don't directly engage in the fight also participate in this culture. In her interviews she was told by fighters that the audience played a role in starting and continuing the fight. Fighters explained that cheers from the audience raised their adrenaline. Fight watchers also encouraged the fight by pushing and crowding around, and sometimes the fighter mistakenly thought it is the opponent who is pushing and fought harder. In an observational study on bullies and victims in two elementary schools, Craig and Pepler (2000) found that "a large number of children are in close proximity and participate in bullying episodes" (p. 127). In 30% of the bullying episodes observed, peers actively engaged in bullying as an aggressor. Most of these cases consisted of one peer. Only 2% of these cases consisted of six peers. In 23% of the bullying episodes, peers witnessed the bullying interaction without reporting it or intervening. In 61% of the bullying episodes, peers were involved in a joint game with the bully or victim. The number of peers participating in a joint game with the bully ranged from one to eighteen. Peers intervened in only 12% of the bullying episodes. Overall, peers were involved as an active or passive participant during 73% of the bullying episodes observed on the school playground.

In the previous narratives, it is clear that fighting has both an individual and a collective meaning. It is a meaningful way of collectively participating in the group culture, and a means of individual survival. It is an action filled with ethical dilemmas and contradictory emotions for the individual fighter. Eliminating these meanings in order to come up with objective criteria to define aggression, violence, and non-compliance, is to ignore its cultural meaning.

Arguments have been made that school violence has become a form of entertainment for students (Berglund, 1995; Kline, 2000; Knickerbocker, 2001). For example, video games, like other forms of media with violent content, teach children to associate violence and killing with entertainment and pleasure. Video games also take children beyond the passive role of viewer and make them an interactive participant. In a recent conference on violence, Lieutenant-Colonel David Grossman, who spent 25 years teaching soldiers how to kill, talked about the process by which video games train youth to aim, and desensitize youth to killing, similar to the training that takes place in the military. The British

Columbia Teacher's Federation (BCTF) believes that the entertainment industry has taught children that shooting is just a game and that violence is an appropriate form of entertainment (Knickerbocker, 2001). In the year 2000, the BCTF joined with other concerned organizations to form the new Coalition Opposed to Violent Entertainment (COVE). As a result of their work, in April 2001, the B.C. government passed North America's first legislation[3] to implement a mandatory classification and regulatory system for video games (Knickerbocker, 2001).

The view on the role of the entertainment industry in promoting violence is in line with the cultural studies perspective on media (Hall, Hobson, Lowe, & Willis, 1992). Television, for example, disseminates an ideology to the viewer. Taylor and Dozier (1983) argue that television violence serves as a socializing agent that presents a concept of legitimate violence to a mass number of viewers.

Other studies on television violence have focused more on the extent that television shapes the viewer's sense of reality, rather than construct their ideologies. Viewers who watch more television not only have a more fearful attitude towards the world (Cantor, 1994; Bryant, Carveth & Brown, 1981), they also develop the "mean world syndrome", overestimating their risk of victimization (Murray, 1998; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1994; Gerbner, 1969). Research indicates that children have a more differentiated conception of crime as a result of being exposed to violence on television. Murray (1980) compared the conceptions of residents of three towns. The first town had a 7-year exposure to action adventure and crime dramas, with those from a town with 4-year exposure to public television, and a third group with a 2-year exposure to public television. The study showed that the group with extensive exposure to crime dramas had a more fearful view of the world. In comparison, this group believed that a higher frequency of various types of crimes, portrayed on television, occur in real life.

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[3] The British Columbia Ministry of Attorney General contains contact information with regard to this legislation, at the following website: http://www.fradical.com/BC_To_Take_Enforcement_Action_Against_Violent.htm

Overall, the screen exposes viewers to types and forms of violence they might not otherwise encounter. It crosses boundaries between real and imaginary, making violence seem both near and distant. In offering virtual experiences of violence, the whole point is to erase the boundary between what is and is not experienced as real.

In sum, the literature reviewed in this section underscores the importance of studying the cultural and historical meanings of aggression, violence, and behaviour problems in the context of school sub-cultures. Most studies on violence and behaviour problems locate them within the individual and oversimplify the behaviour through individual/deficiency models. Blok (2000) argues that the reason violence is not often viewed in its socio-historical context, even in the field of anthropology, is that the consequence of this behaviour can be quite bloody or vulgar. Viewing it as a meaningful act seems as if one is justifying its occurrence.

A few theorists have engaged with this discourse in the context of comparative studies of international cultures. Aijmer (2000), for example, critiques the notion that aggression is a simple outburst caused by other forces and suggests that aggressive behaviours often have meanings in and of themselves. Aggression and violence are often rule-bound, contextual and contingent, and not a universal, straightforward urge needing to be released. Aijmer urges us to focus on the cultural meaning of aggressive behaviours. Similarly, Aijmer and Abbink (2000) critique the assumed predisposition of violence in human nature. They do not deny some disturbing elements in the psycho-biological nature of humans which gives them pleasure from inflicting pain on others, while feeling temporarily superior and detached; however they feel we need to extend the discussion on the ontological status of violence from its traditional form. They write, "humans are historical and culture-bearing social beings engaged in relations of meaning-creation and symbolism". They suggest that we need to explore "the degree in which historical and cultural contingencies of human social groups or societies shape violent behaviour and bring out these (alleged) predispositions". When they talk about the meaning of violence, they are not referring simply to the positive meaning of violent acts for the perpetrator, but to the situationality and communicative purpose of violence. Aijmer and Abbink explain,

> In many historical instances violence has the effect of a 'creative' or 'constituent' force in social relations: deconstructing, redefining, or reshaping a social order, whether intended or not. . . . It is to call attention to the vital role of socially rooted and historically formed relations of power, force and dominance. (Aijmer & Abbink, 2000, p. xii)

Bouroncle (2000) agrees with the notion of violence as a rooted form of power relations. Specifically focusing on ritual violence, he reviews the history of development of bullfighting in Spain. Bouroncle argues that bullfighting has historically been an articulation of political authority and dominant aristocracy. In other words, "Social violence has a ritual counterpart in which the participants not only negotiate and confirm their legitimacy and status, but express their ideology and reflect the balance of power" (p. 58). Bouroncle adds that with the changes in the celebration of the fiesta over the years, this national feast (which follows bullfighting) serves to unite a heterogeneous nation and reinforces the social order. The fiesta, which requires the presence of death, is simultaneously both destructive and constructive.

Ritual violence has also been discussed as a symbol of masculinity, honour and prestige. Dunning (1986) studied the phenomenon of Football hooliganism in England. He argues that hooliganism is rooted in working-class sub-culture where fighting and aggression are appropriate and desirable in certain contexts as a means to acquire prestige. Blok (2000, p. 33) argues that "violence is interwoven with masculinity and the human body often serves as a cultural medium, as a source of metaphorical material to symbolize power relations"

Violence as Educational Problems

Are there similarities between the cultural and symbolic meaning of violent acts in schools and those that occur in various cultures around the world? To what extent have the boundaries of school and society merged? Some argue that the school is a sub-system of societal macrosystems. Changes in school need to follow changes in society. Others theorize that schools have a culture of their own and that the school, as an institution, has contributed to the violence that occurs there.

In a review of the literature, Lesser notes that architectural design, school size, evaluation grades, teachers' authority, and lack of student input to school governance have contributed to dehumanization of schools (Lesser, 1978). In a national study conducted in 1996-1998 by Dr. Linda LaRocque and myself at Simon Fraser University, and a team of researchers from universities across five

Canadian provinces, we found that students' "engagement" in education depended highly on their involvement in school governance, curriculum choices, and the goals of education. Lack of student participation in these elements of school design affected how students experienced the educational process (LaRocque, Shields, Pierce, with Sohbat, & MacLeod, 1998; Shields, LaRocque, Hoar, Nicol, with Sohbat, 1998).

Historically, other elements contributed to the dehumanization of schools. Horace Mann, Secretary of the first Board of Education in America, established in 1837, notes that in the 19th century, "schools were at an extremely low level of efficiency; the equipment was poor, the teachers were untrained, the terms were short, and, in general, education was meagerly provided for the common people" (Judd, 1940, p. 31). Ellwood Cubberley, Dean of Education at Stanford University writes that by 1920, although the number of students had increased, school buildings were still inadequate, with little heating or ventilation, and few textbooks and blackboards (Cubberley, 1920). One school administrator described his Massachusetts elementary school as consisting of four 14 X 10 feet recitation rooms, without proper ventilation, and containing more than 30 students (Newman & Newman, 1980).

Horace Mann found that schools were disordered unless fear was instilled in children (Judd, 1940). Four hundred schools in Massachusetts had disciplinary problems in 1837 (Newman & Newman, 1980). A variety of punishment methods were used in schools, including, hitting with a cane, a rod, a ruler, or a hand; kneeling on peas or wood, imprisonment in dungeon-like rooms, tying children to chairs, and ear twisting (Cubberley, 1920; Newman & Newman, 1980). These punishments were legal, in part because schools were seen as acting *in loco parentis* (Newman & Newman, 1980; Rubel & Goldsmith, 1980).

By the early twentieth century, enrollment in high schools had increased eight-fold. Twenty percent of students were black and an increasing number were immigrants. Students repeatedly revolted against corporal punishment in schools and numerous riots against the teaching methods and curriculum took place at universities (Newman & Newman, 1980). Nevertheless, Cubberley (1920) suggests that delinquencies in schools were due to the individual deficits of the students, who were forced to stay in school because of compulsory attendance.

> The compulsory attendance legislation brought into schools, the truant and the incorrigible as well as the crippled, tubercular, deaf, epileptic, blind and the sick, needy, physically unfit, and children who have no aptitude for book learning and those with inferior mental quality .... Schools had to contain many children who having no aptitude for study, would at once, unless especially handled, become a nuisance in the school and tend to demoralize schoolroom procedure. (Cubberley, 1920, p. 817-818)

With the emergence of the Child Guidance Clinics in 1921, the individual model of delinquency soon became typified in schools.

Today, schools are a second home to students. Students sometimes spend more time within the confines of the school than the home. At the same time, the structure of schooling is different than that of the society or the home due to such things as compulsory attendance, compulsory curriculum choices, bells and structured time frames, silence-only policies, single-age groupings, low adult/child ratios, and standardized and imposed approaches to learning. Are behaviour problems a cultural response to educational problems? The relation between students' behaviour problems, educational practices, and student cultures, needs to be further explored in future research.

Behaviour Problems as "Non-Problems"

The diversity of student populations in North American schools has posed a challenge for many educators. Multiculturalism, a variety of religions and belief systems, and individual differences all contribute to this challenge. However, the problem is long-standing. Not understanding students or failing to accept their differences as "normal" goes back to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when immigrants' values and beliefs were viewed as a threat to the social order in America (Popkewitz, 1987). Educators' lack of understanding or failure to accept differences results in negative constructions and classifications of students. How society or school authorities conceive of appropriate behaviour and practices plays a role in the social construction of "behaviour problem students".

Cynthia Ballenger (1992), a teacher and researcher, narrates her journey as a teacher at a preschool in a Haitian community, in Massachusetts. In her journal article entitled, Teaching and practice: Because you like us: The language of control, Ballenger reflects on how she came to understand the cultural assumptions necessary for effectively managing her class of four-year-old Haitian children. She explains that many Haitian children were referred to her class because of her experience as a special education teacher. Educational professionals who referred the children explained that "they were 'wild'" (p. 199). Ballenger also had difficulty managing the Haitian students, until she started to speak with Haitian teachers who had orderly classrooms. She concludes, "The problem, evidently, did not reside in the children, since the Haitian teachers managed them well enough" (p. 201).

Conducting action research for a period of one year, Ballenger documents conversations between Haitian children and Haitian teachers and reviews the text with both North American and Haitian teachers. She finds that North American teachers' reaction to inappropriate behaviour is to try to connect with the individual child. For example, teachers often react to students with reference to their internal states, such as, "you must be angry". They make reference to factors in the child's life that might have influenced the behaviour, such as, "I know you miss your mother but you still need to share your toys". They also encourage the child to be honest about his or her wishes. For example, if he or she doesn't like to sit next to a particular child, they are encouraged to say so, instead of hitting that person. Haitian teachers, in contrast, emphasize the group and articulate values and responsibilities of group membership. Often the teacher reminds the child to be "good". "You know why I'm telling you this? Because I love you. Do it for me" says the teacher (p. 203). Haitian teachers emphasize what the families have in common, which is, that children behave properly and not shame the family. Ballenger found that the Haitian children understand their role without difficulty, and often repeat the expected answers. As a result of her study, Ballenger developed new strategies to manage the classroom. The following anecdote illustrates this change:

> B: Did I tell you to go [cross the street]?
> Children: No.
> B: Can you cross the parking lot by yourselves?
> Children: No.
> B: That's right. There are cars here. They're dangerous. I don't want you to go alone. Why do I want you to wait for me, do you know?
> "Yes", says Claudette, "because you like us." (Ballenger, 1992, p. 205)

Ballenger explains that she was initially expecting a North American response, such as, "Because the cars are dangerous". She believes that although Claudette understands the dangers of cars, the child does not expect to use this information in this kind of interaction. Ballenger concludes, "from the point of view of the child, there is intimacy in this kind of talk" (p. 205).

In the process of promoting a sense of connection to the group, the Haitian teacher relies on external motivation. "Do it for me" rather than, "do it because you know it's wrong". Professional training programs for teachers and psychologists in North America, however, would clearly discourage providing this form of external motivation. Ballenger did not label the children as behaviour problems; instead, she changed her strategies. However, having learned North American theories of development as universally beneficial, many teachers may refuse to change their teaching strategy even after they understand the nuances of a culture. Such a decision would no doubt result in labeling students and constructing them as problems.

Cultural differences are only one source for the social construction of students as behaviour problems. Individual differences between students may also contribute to such constructions. During my Master's internship at the Judge Baker Foundation's Manville school in Boston, I met Kal, one of eight students in my Grade 8 classroom, where I provided one-on-one assistance for the students. I was one of three adults in the classroom. In my second week at the Judge Baker I wore a Mohair sweater to class. Upon entry into the classroom, Kal, who had the most amazing sense of humour, looked at me and said, "Baaa". Within two minutes, an entire classroom was saying "Baaa", "baa", Bababaa". I responded to them by opening the dictionary and explaining the concept of mohair. The class calmed down, and some students became interested in the topic. The teacher, however, felt this was inappropriate behaviour and asked Kal to leave the room to talk to the counselor about his behaviour. One cannot deny that this is considered by educational standards to be inappropriate behaviour in a classroom, and I didn't laugh at the time; however, I thought it was hilarious! While Kal was being constructed as "rude" by the teacher, he could also be constructed as spirited and funny. Both would have been correct. Kal had a great sense of humour and very few friends with whom he could experience the joys of comedy. He could have been told by the teacher in an informal interaction that what he did could be perceived as an insult by adults, even though it was funny. His immediate removal from the classroom instead, constructed him as a problem.

In my experiences I have found that students' unique and idiosyncratic interactions are often socially construed as a problem. A student can be characterized by others as "hyper", and labeled as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), yet the same student and the same behaviour can be characterized as relational, energetic, and spirited. A student can be characterized as dependent and intense; the same student can be defined as interdependent. A student who is irrational may also be pure-hearted and emotional. One can be described and constructed by others as aggressive, or viewed as very sensitive with a keen sense of justice. I do not mean to imply that all behaviour problems can be redefined as a positive characteristic of the child. However, considering the subjective ways in which students are labeled as behaviour problems in schools, there is a possibility that many of these labels would be eliminated if educators were to distinguish between "diversity" and "normalcy".

In this section of the thesis, I have only initiated the discourse on the social construction of students as "problems". Feminist researchers and critical theorists who aim to disclose ideological purposes of seemingly objective accounts have written extensively on gender, sexuality, social class, and ethnicity biases, based on which truth claims about "violent individuals" have been constructed. However, there is a paucity of research on the group of students who don't obviously fall into these categories, students who are seemingly more normal, but whose idiosyncratic ways of interacting have been misunderstood. Qualitative inquiries into students' experiences and social interactions would constitute an approach to this alternative discourse.

Behaviour Problems as Relational Problems

Discussions on the cultural context of behaviour problems arise from two different ontological assumptions about the "self". From a positivist perspective, the self is a separate entity from its context and viewed as a fixed and stable entity, which can be defined and studied, even though it is generally agreed, to various extents, that the self is influenced and shaped by the environment. In the first section of this chapter, I reviewed literature on the collective and symbolic meanings of violence, and suggested that perhaps, similar conclusions can be drawn about students' behaviour problems on the basis of further research. These studies are based on a positivist perspective, that the self and the culture influence each other but can be conceptualized as separate entities. As such, one can find the locus of the problem in either the self or the culture, or both.

In this section, I propose a discourse on behaviour problems rooted in a social constructionist view of the "self". This approach is based on the assumption that the self and culture are fundamentally and inextricably intertwined. In summarizing social constructionist views on the "self", Cushman (1991) explains that the self is a "fluid, interpenetrating unity" (p. 388). Considering the social nature of self, he points out that it is impossible to develop universal laws because humans are not separable from their culture and history. Human nature is local, not universal. However, Cushman recognizes both the social and the agentic nature of self. "Humans (i.e., the person or 'nature') and their local habitat (i.e., the situation or 'nurture'), once conceptualized by positivistically influenced psychologists as discrete forces, can be thought of in constructionism as a fluid, interpenetrating unity" (p. 388).

Similarly, Jack Martin and Jeff Sugarman (1999) argue that the nature of both society and self is emergent. Neither can be reduced to the other, because the two are not separable from each other. Humans enter into a world with a preexisting culture. Their experiences are initially phenomenological--prereflective, and embodied. They have intentionality and an active stance towards their own existence; hence, they have agency. Individual agents accumulate and use sociocultural tools to make meaning of the world. They develop theories about themselves--who they are, and what characterizes them--by appropriating socially supported conceptions of selfhood. In attempting to construct meaning they look for familiarity and relevance between the present, past and the future. Societal and cultural tools and artifacts both limit and enable individuals to develop values and beliefs and make meaning of their experiences.

> The self is an ongoing dynamic process of construction, a constantly emerging achievement made possible by appropriating the means to reflectively self-refer, including a socioculturally enabled, yet underdetermined theory of self. As such, the self is not a fixed entity, but a process whose nature is fluid and changeable depending on the sorts of self-referring practices available for appropriation. (Martin & Sugarman, 1999, p. 30)

Martin and Sugarman (1999) argue that the theories we develop, originating from experiences in social practices and social interactions, evolve in unpredictable ways and are not entirely determined by those experiences, because the self has the ability to change. "The various forms and content we extract from our experiences are combined, edited, and revised in a never-ending, dynamic manner as ... recent experiences [interact] with that of more long-standing appropriation" (p. 35). Martin and Sugarman conceptualize the self as a gradual and eventual emergence of the individual agent from its social origins. "Psychological ontology changes dynamically in the course of development .... typified by the transformation from prereflective to reflective forms of human agency and intentionality" (p. 116). They argue that prereflective embodied agency is thrown into a preexisting cultural context. Eventually, the individual entertains possibilities not available in the sociocultural context. Such a shift carries possibilities and implications for new sociocultural practices.

George Herbert Mead describes the self as fluid, emergent, and multiple. The self is composed of an active "I" that is independent of particular situations, and a receptive "me" that is situated. While there is only one "I" there can be many "me" parts of the self: "Me" as a student, friend, brother, delinquent, and learning disabled. The shape of "me" is constructed by others. "Me" is the relational, dialogical part of self, fluid and ever changing. "Me" is what postmodernists call, the self-in-relation. "I" is used to make self-references and may be viewed by the individual as his/her fixed and stable personality. Mead's account of the "I" and "me" suggests that the individual is not entirely reduced to the social and cultural and that there is an individual agency.

Examination of the aforementioned theories of an emergent self reveals certain commonalities as well as differences. What is common to these approaches to the self is the view that self cannot be reduced to individual physiological, biological, cognitive, or sociological and cultural origins. The self emerges from the relation between the two. The difference between these theories is the extent to which "me" is emphasized, and explanations of whether and how "me" becomes solidified as an "I". For example, from the perspective of extreme postmodern views, self is always changing and is never solidified, even though individuals make self-references based on positivist theories of a fixed self.

Theorizing and resolving the relation between "me" and "I" is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, I offer the conception of a social constructionist emergent self, because it has implications for an alternative discourse on behaviour problems: (a) Understanding that there are multiple "me's" can lead to a holistic approach to students' noncompliant and aggressive behaviours, where the entire milieu of family, community, peers, and school is considered as part of the child's context; and (b) viewing self as fluid, dynamic, and constantly emerging, necessitates removal of the behaviour problem label, which constructs students as fixed and problematic.

Alternative Discourses in Practice: A Holistic Approach

The Youth Justice Education Partnership (YJEP) is a multidisciplinary, multiagency organization in Canada that links youth with different communities and institutions. Its objectives are to advocate progressive youth justice, serve as a catalyst for multidisciplinary discussions and partner-building, and offer an information bank on youth justice issues. YJEP, with the support of a multidisciplinary project team, including Dr. Wanda Cassidy as the resident Education faculty Advisory Committee member, advocates a holistic approach to address violence and behaviour problems in schools. In a YJEP research report on successful school and community programs for youth, a holistic programme was defined as one which emphasizes "overall learning through engagement and participation, and through empowerment of students" (Youth Justice Education Partnership, 2000, May, Paragraph 13). In this report, Shariff differentiates between didactic and holistic programs. In contrast to didactic programs such as anti-bullying, conflict resolution, and anger management programs, holistic programme educators do not specifically attempt to teach students how to behave or how to control and manage their behaviour and emotions. The administrators of such programs instead emphasize overall learning, through engagement, participation, and empowerment of students. As discussed earlier in this chapter, a programme that emphasizes student engagement in schools to address behaviour problems is based on the assumption that behaviour problems are *educational* problems.

A holistic programme is focused on learning through engagement in family and community in addition to engagement in school life. In this respect, it is in line with a view of the child as relational, emerging from dynamic interactions in multiple contexts. Such a programme is situated in the discourse that behaviour problems are *relational* problems. Addressing student engagement in the family and community as well as schools assures consistency in children's relations across different situations and contexts. A holistic programme is beneficial in that it does not cast stage-lights directly onto students who engage in behaviour problems. Instead it addresses the needs of every child in multiple contexts. In a sense, it focuses on the behaviour-in-context rather than the child. As such, it offers a way of avoiding the act of locating the problem within the child.

In 2001, Dr. LaRocque and I studied the effects of leadership changes on the school practices of an elementary school in the Yukon. This school offers a good example of a holistic approach to education (Sohbat & LaRocque, 2001). The school assumed a team approach to emphasize learning and engagement. For example, school staff, teachers, social workers, a speech and language therapist, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, school psychologists, learning assistance teachers, the local RCMP, and parents, all participated and interacted with students at school, which in turn gave students a sense of being part of the community.

For every child who entered the school, the principal made sure there was due process in place and that programming is framed around the child's needs. In this spirit, the needs of all children were met, without the necessity to draw attention to one child, for example as a behaviour problem, more than another. By the same token, the counselor visited each class once a week to discover if there are existing conflicts between students. This practice made transparent the naturalness of the occurrence of conflicts between individuals, instead of framing individual students as a behaviour problem.

Decisions on how to implement school programs and address the needs of the students occurred with a team approach as well. For example, decisions about class assignments occurred as a group. First teachers met by grade level and talked about individual students and their characteristics and learning needs, and proposed an initial class list. Then they met with receiving teachers to explain their decisions. The counselors and learning assistance teachers then met with both the sending and receiving teachers and tried to come up with the final class list. Group decisions were similarly made about designing new programs such as the 5-level Resource Rooms, and referring students to various special needs teachers. These team-approach practices maintained consistency in the school, regarding the value of being connected with one's community and respecting the opinions of others. In other words, students were not just lectured on the values of respecting others, they were able to see adults do the same.

Students were empowered to make choices and voice their opinions through self-governance. Two students from each class sat on the Student Council. The Student Council involved the whole school, as students took back issues to the classroom and received feedback from other students and the teachers. Examples of the kinds of projects the students initiated, during our one-year visit to the school, were school color and motto, opening a school store, and having microwaves available to students. Students in the Council decided it is important for students, teachers, and parents to know how each of these perceived their roles, and the Council took on the project to have these roles defined. The principal taught students on the Council about leadership, the democratic process, and the infrastructure of governance. She guided the Student Council meetings and provided challenging questions for them to discuss, but created an environment safe enough for the students to express their opinions freely including any sense of injustice they may feel. From the open and honest discussions that students had in her presence, it was obvious that she empowered the students to speak freely. The fact that she partially attributed the change in the School Behaviour Code to the Student Council was indicative of her desire to see students empowered.

There was a lot of emphasis in the school on learning disability students, who were talked about in terms of their strengths rather than their weaknesses.

Nevertheless, the children's learning disability[4] needs were met by specialists. As a result, the school developed a reputation of being a learning disability school. We spoke with parents who said they moved their child to that school because of this reputation.

The course evaluation system was changed to skill assessment. For example, instead of giving students a grade for Math, report cards contained a list of math skills and a three-level descriptive system of assessment on whether the student had acquired each skill. This system had been developed for every course and every grade. The Yukon Board of Education had taken interest in this system and planned on adapting it for all elementary schools in the Yukon. This new practice of evaluation shifts the conversation away from evaluating the child and focuses it on acquiring skills.

Overall, the holistic relational approach of the programme was evident in the use of multiple agencies in the community to support the students in their families, community, and school, the emphasis on strengths rather than weaknesses, the empowerment of students through self-governance, the focus on the needs of all students rather than the few who are creating problems for the school, the emphasis on commonalities among students rather than differences while trying to respond to their individual needs, and the attempt to move away from evaluating children in ways that promote competitiveness. Implementing these strategies as well as establishing new curriculum programs that interested the students and teachers, such as the NASA Mars programme and the lunch time music exposure programme, involving all the students in the school mural in cooperation with local artists, and maintaining a general openness to the interests of students and teachers who wanted to initiate new programs, engaged students in learning in school life as well as family and community life. Most parents, teachers, and students that were interviewed said that they were really happy with the school and its holistic community approach. The only complaint centered on the lack of programs for gifted students and the belief that the focus on learning disability came at the cost of addressing the needs of the gifted.

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[4] "Learning disability" is itself considered as a socially constructed concept.

The Restorative Justice Movement is another initiative towards holistic programs. It is focused in part on the behaviour of youth in context, rather than the youth themselves (Rudin, 1999). Although this programme starts with a classification of youth, nevertheless, directors of the programme try to make meaning of youths' experiences and attempt to reconstruct the individual's social harmony.

Recent critiques of social constructionist inquiries have focused on commonalities between a social constructionist view of practice and that of a behaviourist or cognitive psychologist. It is important to note that social constructionists do not have a unified response of an alternative way of thinking about a particular phenomenon. What is common to social constructionists is criticism of the assumed naturalness and inevitability of a particular discourse as well as this paradigm's ontological and epistemological assumptions about knowledge. The implications of this type of commonality and difference is that some practices may seem on the surface to be in par with the kinds of alternative discourses suggested by social constructionists. However, the interactions that take place between the members may still be dominated by modernist views about universality of psychological theories, objective assumptions about psychological constructs, or rigid frameworks of self. A prevention program evaluated by Peters, Petrunka, and Arnold (2003) is one such example. In this study, a "community-based, universal project", The Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project was evaluated. This project was designed in Ontario as a 25-year longitudinal program to prevent emotional and behavioural problems. It was implemented at three sites which differed substantially in language and culture. Each site separately developed both in-school and out-of-school programs intended to meet local needs. Examples of activities are before- and after-school programs such as games, craft activities, and nutritious snacks; community development projects such as community gardens and community kitchens; in-school activities such as homework help, summer tutoring, a toy library, and breakfast plans; and family programs such as parent-child drop in, and parent-relief.

The holistic approach in this program is apparent in that it addressed the child's potential needs in several contexts: community, family, health and nutrition, and schooling. While these macro processes are in place, it is not clear how kids are being constructed in the day to day interactions between adults and staff. Furthermore, while Peters, Petrunka, and Arnold (Peters et al., 2003) suggest that the program has been successful, these measurements are based on teacher and parent ratings of children's behaviour problems. In line with positivist frameworks, "behaviour problems" are defined and assessed by others and students' own voices are absent. Overall, based on the information given, it is not clear whether children are relating to each other in a deeper, more connected, and more caring way, or if they are simply managing their behaviours much more because of the increase in the number of adults in their lives. The measures used by the researchers does not address this deeper issue.

Other Implications for Practice: Eliminating Labels

The second implication of a social constructionist view of an emergent self not currently used in North American school systems is the removal of behaviour problem labels. In current North American school practices some children are classified as behaviour problems. Sometimes this gets officially documented, and at other times it is used in the daily conversation between staff and communicated to members who may not have already made such an assessment and classification. This practice presumes that the behaviour is a stable and fixed characteristic of the child. In other words, the practice of labeling students conveys that the child has a problematic "I". In an anecdote mentioned earlier, when teacher A. referred to students as "the behaviour problem kids" even though those students did not engage in behaviour problems in her class, one can surmise that the teacher assumed the child has a problematic "I". Locating the problem within a stable and fixed self, the teacher identified a particular *type* of a student regardless of the student's actual behaviour in her class.

Assuming a social constructionist self--a self that emerges from social interactions--necessitates a removal of the behaviour problem label. Although a child's interactions continuously change, leading to multiple "me's", humans often use socially constructed notions of "a core self" to reflect on "who they are". As Martin and Sugarman (1999) theorized, it is part of the human experience, that individuals develop a sense of self as they relate their present to the past and the future. As such, social practices, such as classifying students as the behaviour problem type, can have long-term negative effects on students' sense of self.

An example of a programme that functions without classifying students as behaviour problems is the school system in Iran. In this system, students are not classified as a particular type of a student based on their interactions and behaviours. There aren't any official classification systems, nor is there a term in the language that makes reference to such student as a "behaviour problem". Students' behaviours are discussed descriptively, with reference to the context in which it has occurred. For example, the school principal discusses with the vice principals that "Roya has been cursing in class when Mr. Farsi asks her an Algebra question".

When behaviour problems are detected, the administrators in the school attempt to befriend the students and determine the source of the problem. During the snack time and lunch-time breaks, the three vice principals assigned to each high school rotate among the students in the courtyard, interacting with them on a personal basis. The matter is also discussed with the teacher, and sometimes with parents. In other examples of behaviour problems, such as absenteeism, schools immediately contact parents if a student does not attend the first class. Other family members or members in the community who see high school students (who are wearing school uniforms) outside of school, usually report this information back to the family or school. Similar to the Haitian example discussed earlier, there are a lot of commonalities with regard to cultural values and expectations, and these are emphasized by various members in the community.

The point of this discussion is not to suggest that this system always makes the correct assessment with regard to problems that students experience at school, or that all school administrators are equally capable of addressing student needs. This is intended to provide an example of a system where the effort is made to address the needs of students, without classifying the student or documenting and carrying that classification forward into the future of the student's life. The purpose is to show that the concept of behaviour problems has a different "reality" in other cultures.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to alter the reader's consciousness with respect to the assumed "natural-ness" of individual models of behaviour problems. To this end, I emphasized three alternative discourses for students' non-compliance: behaviour problem as a cultural or educational problem, a relational problem, or a misconstrual of differences as a problem. These discourses emphasize a situated understanding of behaviour problems, searching for meanings of aggressive and non-compliant acts in the contexts of culture, school and adolescent sub-culture, educational processes, and youths' dialogical and relational modes of being and interacting. This literature suggests that we cannot simply assume that behaviour problems identify characteristics inherent to the student, independent of the social, cultural, and institutional context.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

Introduction

This dissertation has made a "social constructionist" inquiry in different senses of the terms, leading to three different types of discussions. In his book, The Social Construction of What, Hacking (2000) insightfully points out that in discussing the social construction of X, one must clarify what X is referring to; is it the actual phenomenon itself, or rather, the classification, label, and idea of the phenomenon? This question helps clarify the different ways that I have engaged in a social constructionist inquiry:

1. In Chapter 5, I have explored the social construction of the *idea and the classification*, behaviour problems, and demonstrated that this idea was constructed in the context of institutional processes and ideologies of early 20th century America. From a social constructionist perspective, it is understood that the idea changes over time because "it must continually adapt to shifting cultural horizons" (Cushman, 1991). This discussion contextualizes the behaviour problem label. In Chapter 2, I have framed this work in social constructionism and argued that instead of assuming that the idea, behaviour problem, inevitably reflects the natural features of the child, we need to understand that this idea is a "discourse". The

idea, later used to classify students, has been defined, shaped, and redefined in the context of social and historical processes and practices, and the cultural values inherent in these practices. Institutional practices have made this discourse dominant over others and made it seem as an inevitable reality. In Chapter 4, I illustrated the ways in which this discourse is dominant in schools.

2. In Chapter 6, I illustrated the social construction of *the behaviour problem act* itself, as a behaviour that is situated in a social and cultural context. Using the empirical and theoretical literature, I argued that willful and intentional, aggressive, violent, and non-compliant behaviours are situated in a culture of symbolic meanings. This chapter has highlighted the need to move beyond the traditional discussion on the ontological status of behaviour problems and focus on the behaviour problem act (and not the idea and classification of the act) as a behaviour that takes place within a socio-cultural context. Violent and aggressive behaviours should not be reduced to physiological or psychological deficits. The culturally and contextually situated meaning of the behaviour needs to be acknowledged. This discussion contextualizes the aggressive and non-compliant behaviours of youth.

3. Finally, in Chapter 6, I initiated a dialogue on the ways in which students are construed and constructed as a behaviour problem because of their differences. Social construction here means social construal. *Students* who have individual or culturally different characteristics are socially constructed as a behaviour problem student, by those who don't understand or accept these differences. I have argued that such students

> are not problem students at all. Rather, cultural differences between students, and their diversified modes of interaction, are sometimes misconstrued as problems because the behaviours don't fit in with the accepted norms. Social practices and interactions that are unfamiliar or unexpected are sometimes valued negatively. This discussion has been very limited. Further exploration into this discourse is beyond the limits of this thesis.

In Chapter 2, I explained that the terms "social construction" in one sense refer to the *social* construction of reality, and in another sense refer to the social *construction* of reality. In this vein, in the first discussion, the emphasis was on how the classification of behaviour problems and its discourse is socially *constructed* and negotiated, rather than simply and objectively reflecting the observed world. The second and third discussions centered on the meaning of the behaviour problem act as a *socially* constructed meaning, situating this meaning in the culture, and social practices, rather than, or in addition to, the individual.

The above three discussions address the "social construction of behaviour problems". The first discussion is the central focus in this dissertation. This thesis is an analysis of the concept *behaviour problem* situated in a social constructionist perspective and its underlying philosophical assumptions. A "concept" usually refers to a stable and fixed ontological reality. My use of this term, by no means implies such an ontology. However, I use the word "concept" because at each time point in history, the concept of behaviour problem has had a fixed meaning for the people who used it at that time. What conclusions can we draw from this conceptual analysis? This inquiry has included multiple layers of analysis, and therefore the conclusions need to reflect this eclectic approach, at the levels of philosophy, theory, and application. In discussing each of these levels there will no doubt be an overlap, as it is difficult to talk about one level without a reference to the other two.

Philosophical Analysis and Conclusions

At the philosophical level, I have assumed the position that reality is that which is constructed through language and social artifacts. The way that we describe the world through language shapes our experiences. A poetic view of the radiance of colors constructs a different experience and depicts a different world than the scientific framework of the wavelength of colors, which objectifies colors by what they are, rather than describe how they connect with their environment--a definition which does not lend itself to objective scientific inquiries. Social artifacts are also part of the taken-for-granted world into which we are born. Although people have the agency to examine and analyze their world, they do not question all of their assumptions and many areas of life remain unquestioned.

In Chapter 4, I looked into how we describe the world, specifically with respect to students' behaviour problems, and how these assumptions have remained unquestioned in schools. In response to, "why is there so much non-compliance in schools today?", many school authorities find fault with the students. Behaviour problems are characteristics that belong to the students. Students are out-of-control; they are wild; they have no morals. The teacher, for example, believes that she wasn't able to teach science today because of the five behaviour problem students in her class. She is correct. The teacher *wasn't* able to teach science today because she kept getting distracted by one problem child or another. "They're always in a pack together". "They feed off of each other".

While the teacher's response is correct, her question is a point of contention. The question of "why", situated in an institutional discourse of science, and a culture of individualism, shapes our experience and sense of reality in one way, but not another. Gergen (1994b) explains that, in line with Foucault's thoughts, different professions develop a language to articulate the social world and also justify their own existence. As these languages are put into practice, a discourse is developed and individuals come under the influence of the profession and discourse. How we think about non-compliance in schools has a lot to do with the institutional discourse that shapes the questions we ask. Psychiatry, based on science, changed the ground on which to think about students' non-compliance and aggression. With the emergence of scientific thought, the question of "why" and the cause of behaviours had become the object of knowledge. In Chapter 5, we saw that psychiatrists, most of whom assumed a scientific position, located the cause within the individual. Hence, behaviour problem students became certain kinds of people about whom scientific knowledge is possible through assessment or classification exercises.

Many social constructionists argue that reality is situated in discourses, and that other kinds of discourses, discourse-related questions, and institutional languages construct a *different* experience and reality. In Chapter 5, I traced the construction of the idea and the label, behaviour problem, to the institutional practices of psychiatry, and to the organizations that worked in collaboration with psychiatrists. The psychiatric and psychological discourse constructed a scientific and individualistic way of looking at students' behaviours, and ruled out other discourses from consideration at schools. What philosophical conclusions can we draw about behaviour problems? Based on social constructionist assumptions we can conclude that multiple discourses about students' noncompliant behaviours can be constructed, each situated in their own institutional practices, ideologies, language, and inquiries, and each projecting a different experience and reality. Currently students' aggressive and noncompliant behaviours are understood in the context of psychological models of thought. Chapter 6 offers alternative conceptualizations of the problem of students' non-compliance.

In Chapter 6, I reviewed several other discourses. Typifying behaviour problems as cultural problems instead of psychological problems, means seeking other questions to understand behaviours. Rather than ask, why is the student behaving violently, some cultural theorists question: What is the meaning of violence, and, what does violence mean to the student? Typifying behaviour problems as educational problems, similarly, is a move away from a scientific and psychiatric causal discourse, and towards understanding the purpose of education and the experiences of students at school: How can educators engage and empower students, and help them make meaningful connections with the world?

Behaviour problems as a discourse of "differences" is a search for "who" and "how" rather than "why". Of importance are questions such as: Who is constructing students as behaviour problems? What are the power dynamics in these relationships? In what way and through what kinds of practices and interactions are students being constructed as behaviour problems? Finally, behaviour problems as a relational discourse, is an inquiry about experience--that of being and becoming.

These alternative discourses, with various foci, search for an understanding of experience. To truly understand today's youth, we need to understand their experience, how they see the world, and how they relate to the world. This might require understanding their culture, in what country they grew up, what customs they have. It might require understanding their sub-culture, how they experience their every day life in schools, the educational process, the teachers, the school architecture, the youth culture, the curriculum, and the work-world they will soon join. It might also mean understanding personal tendencies, personalities, and their idiosyncratic ways of being: Are they outspoken, forceful, silent, or relational; do they have sensitivities that we have never experienced? At a conference on gifted students, held at Simon Fraser University, in 1997, I heard one of the gifted high school students who had participated in research with Dr. Lannie Kanevsky describe the intensity of his relation to the world around him: "One day I might wake up and I can see and feel and experience blue! I want to wrap myself in blue. Everything that is blue, is much blue-er than it has ever been before!". An exploration of experience means asking, for example: How to teach this child and avoid his boredom with a lot of grey in the curriculum?

If every discourse has its own reality, what discourses should be used and which ones should be abandoned? How should students' non-compliant behaviour be conceptualized? As I have pointed out in Chapter 6, several scholars have posed humanitarian self interests as well as social control theories as the underlying motivations for the construction of the behaviour problem discourse. I also argued that determining underlying ideologies of a discourse seems pointless, as one cannot simplify people's intentions, reducing them to fixed affective and transparent experiences. As Gergen points out, rather than reveal "the biasing interests lurking beneath the language" (Gergen, 1994b, p. 48) we can elucidate the implications of the discourse itself.

What ought to be done and how behaviour problem should be reconceptualized depends on the resulting repercussions of the discourse. In educational settings such as schools, one needs to go back to educational thought and purpose, in order to determine whether the constructed way of thinking about behaviour problems is conducive and respectful of this purpose. I offer Hutchinson's (1999) words here, that the educational process needs to be respectful of the student's "dignity".

With respect to educational thought and purpose, Hutchinson (1999) finds that educators sometimes ask the wrong questions. She notes, for example, if we ask how can we prepare the child for the business world, or how best can we teach them English, we end up with programmes that are auxiliary to education. If we are concerned about inquiry we should ask: What is the value of reading a novel? Are there important educative goods that cannot be measured by standardized tests? Education damages students' dignity and marginalizes them when it is not connected to the meaning they have created in their life.

As seen in the analyses in this thesis, behaviour problem labels are based on a quasi-medical model which offers a dichotomous view of students and reduces them to their "symptoms". As such, these labels do not inform us on what is meaningful to students, or how they relate to the world. I appropriate

Hutchinson's educational philosophy in concluding that the use of labels conflicts with the educational goals of making meaningful connections with students. A discourse that inquires into the experiences of students and the meanings they construct is much more conducive to this process than one which searches for the locus of blame.

Theoretical Analysis and Conclusions

At the theoretical level, I have critiqued the traditional ontological status of behaviour problems, calling into account the "naturalness" of the psychological model underlying this concept and classification, and argue instead that behaviour problems are "socially" constructed. I offer two critiques of the scientific, psychological position: a social, and a cultural critique. Assuming a social constructionist perspective, this thesis has made transparent the social processes from which the current concept and classification of "behaviour problem students" has evolved and become typified in schools, suggesting that the current behaviour problem concept is not an inevitable, objective, and ahistoric reality. As well, I have reviewed the scholarly literature, which considers the cultural meanings assigned to violence and aggression by participating members, suggesting that behaviour problems are socially situated and culturally contextualized rather than objective characteristics of the individual. The former critique has been the primary focus of analysis in this thesis.

Exploration of social and historical processes revealed that psychiatrists played a major role in the construction of the concept and the classification, behaviour problems. Before psychiatrists became interested in maladjustments as a social problem, two different discourses were dominant in society, at different times.

During the 17th century, delinquency was viewed as a sin. In the 18th century, the American society started to move away from religious views and delinquency was regarded as an impediment to social order. When delinquency was a sin, the problem child was amoral and wicked; when delinquency was tied to social class, the problem child was ignorant. While the religious discourse was an inquiry about the soul, the environmental discourse was situated in scientific, causal questions regarding who is to blame for delinquency. As Foucault suggests, different discourses in history emerge from the various social and paradigmatic commitments.

At the end of the 19th century, psychiatrists such as Freud theorized a new conception of mental illness as maladjustment of the mind rather than inherited physiological defects. The implication was that mental illness was relevant to the lives of the whole public at varying degrees rather than just a few defective individuals. The new conception of mental illness and maladjustment constructed delinquency as a subject of interest to psychiatrists. For the first time in early twentieth century, the government hired a psychiatrist to study and treat delinquents who came before the court. Locating the cause of delinquency in the mind rather than the environment, even if the problem originated from environmental problems, meant that psychological treatment of the mind would be necessary for the delinquent. Leaders of the Mental Hygiene Movement recognized that different psychological theories of delinquency were practiced, such as, maladaptation of the ego, personality theories, or intelligence theories. Yet, the government gave psychiatrists authority to treat delinquents.

In the twentieth century, development of the conception that all children could potentially develop a psychological pathology which would get worst if not prevented led to the establishment of special clinics to catch delinquency before it occurred. As part of a movement that recognized the rights of children, the Commonwealth Fund and the Child Guidance Clinic set up programs for the prevention of delinquency. As a result, a wide variety of behaviours were "tagged" as a precursor to serious delinquent acts. The notion of prevention resulted in the construction of the terms, *behaviour problems,* as a problem that is less severe than delinquency. Most psychiatrists, in what was called the Mental Hygiene Movement, became interested in delinquency, not as a scholarly interest in the development of the mind, but as a social problem. The Child Guidance reforms created a new system of classifying children based on "symptomatic" descriptive behaviours, and communicated this information to parents and teachers as a new, informal, assessment tool. With the incorporation of this classification in various agencies such as school, courts, and hospitals, the public came to perceive delinquency as a psychological problem which could be resolved by psychiatrists. At the Psychiatry World Congress in Europe in 1950, this concept was used to set up a standard classification system. In America, The Educational Handicap Act was legislated in 1961, recognizing this classification, and funding schools for identified students. Informal use of the classification became popular in American and Canadian schools.

Sociological views of delinquency were publicly theorized and in-part practiced in some of the reform houses. However, these views did not become typified in most schools or at other social institutions. Psychiatrists continued to conduct research and provide treatment for delinquents accessed through courts as well as schools. In time, the Child Guidance Clinics shifted their focus from prevention to treatment and behaviour problems remained a central focus of research and treatment.

Psychologists were also part of the clinical team at the Child Guidance Clinics. Similar to psychiatrists, they developed a professional discourse based on scientific thought, and tried to separate their role from that of psychiatrists in the public eye. Psychologists played a major role in assessment and therapy in schools. In time, the two professions parted interests, and the treatment of behaviour problems, which was relevant to the individual's every day life, was relegated to psychologists.

In the context of these processes, new knowledge was produced, and *behaviour problem* became a type of a subject to be studied. The explicit concept and classification emerged at a definite time and place in the discussion and interests of some authoritative people. The idea became embedded in new legislation, incorporated in practices, and changed a wide range of professional activities involving social workers, schoolteachers, parents, and psychologists. The inherent "natural-ness" of delinquency was reinforced and validated through scientific research, resulting in the typification of the individual/psychological model in various professional and government organizations and institutions.

In conclusion, this social critique suggests that the individual/psychological and quasi-medical model of the behaviour problem discourse should in no sense be considered an ontological reality. As humans, we have individual agency which is not reducible to its social origins. Our agency can play a role in reflection and critique of discourses. What alternative discourses can we suggest? It is important that we do not fall back into the ongoing nature/nurture debate, which is to look for an alternative locus for blame. We need to move towards a new discourse instead, recognize that discourses are situated and social, find new questions to ask, and be conscious of the repercussions of the discourse on participating members. I have suggested several alternative discourses in Chapter 6.

Today, the psychological model of students' aggressive and noncompliant behaviours remains typified in schools. This typification is not neutral, as generally assumed by scientific discourse. The label negatively affects the lives of those that are classified. In the late twentieth century, there have been various social movements which take a critical look at institutional discourse such as that of psychiatry. The patients' rights movement, alternative medicine, and restorative justice are movements concerned with the justice of decision making powers of various institutions. For example, Brian Burtch (1994) traces the difficulties faced by midwives, who are dismissed or opposed by dominant health professionals, in Canada. He makes an interesting point that midwives wish to restore a sense of intimacy throughout the birth process, yet birth care has been dominated by physicians and nurses.

Various holistic and relational discourses have also been embraced by some school officials and other agencies. These discourses have not been incorporated in legislations or school board practices. For the most part, psychological models are still typified in the society. We need to open the space for alternative ways of thinking, and let communities be part of the decision making process for events that effect their lives. This would mean that as communities change, discourses may also change.

Although I suggest that we shift away from scientific thought towards a new discourse of behaviour problem, as long as humans make self-references in terms of notions of a core self, psychological and scientific constructs, in general, cannot be abandoned. However, considering the implications of the behaviour problem discourse, we need to be conscious of how and in what context we *use* these constructs.

With respect to the particular *concept* of behaviour problem, this thesis reveals several theoretical problems. Before the emergence of the behaviour problem concept, the concept of delinquency was not used to classify youth, with the exception of the classification of delinquents who broke the law by the justice system. Religious discourse on delinquency was conceptually contradictory. It constructed delinquents as wicked and immoral and therefore qualitatively different from others; it was also based on the assumption that all individuals are capable of committing sin, which conflicts with the notion of delinquency as qualitatively different. Historically, the concept of delinquency was undifferentiated and ambiguous. During the 17th and 18th centuries, delinquency referred to both criminals and noncriminals who misbehaved. Defining which behaviours characterize delinquency, and which don't, was open to the discretion of judges and the police. As well, anyone in the society who believed an individual had engaged in delinquent acts, could bring the delinquent to court. In a sense, delinquency was defined as "deviance".

After the psychiatric reconceptualization and emergence of the *behaviour problem* concept, psychiatrists constructed individual delinquents as quantitatively different (rather than qualitatively different). Individuals could be less, or more delinquent. If they were less delinquent, they were only behaviour problems. Child Guidance psychiatric teams promoted a medical model for the diagnosis, but a non-medical model for the treatment of behaviour problem students, both in the clinics and in schools. This quasi-medical model did not help remove the blame from the individual, but it did promote an individual deficiency view of behaviour problems. Furthermore, since diagnosis was based on the child's "symptoms", behaviour problem youth consisted of a heterogeneous group with varying experiences and intentions. This concept was later used in schools to classify students. A heterogeneous group of noncompliant students are now characterized as a particular type of a person, without any regard for their differing experiences.

Considering the heterogeneity of the behaviour problem concept, and disadvantages associated with its underlying quasi-medical basis, I suggest abandonment of this concept. Concepts lead to measurement, which give rise to policy that will affect the lives of people. Pfohl explains the dangers of maintaining a theory: It could eventually makes its way into policy.

> Theoretical perspectives provide us with an image of what something is and how we might best act towards it. They name something this type of thing and not that. They provide us with the sense of being in a world of relatively fixed forms and content. Theoretical perspectives transform a mass of raw sensory data into understanding, explanations, and recipes for appropriate action. (Pfohl, 1985, p. 9-10)

Analysis of Practice and Conclusions

School administrators have been so busy reacting to the violence in schools, that their immediate focus has been on maintenance and control. While, in the short-term one cannot escape such a reaction, the problem is that this kind of knee-jerk response has become the long-term solution in many schools.

What repercussions does the behaviour problem discourse have for students today? Due to its underlying psychological model, the label is focused on the child and not the context. The behaviour problem label, used in schools to identify students who engage in aggressive and noncompliant behaviours, constructs students with an either/or dichotomy. Students are either good or bad, aggressive or gentle, wild or well-mannered, and worthy or not worthy of educational resources. The label communicates the idea that the behaviour is unjustified, and reduces children to their behavioural symptoms and psychological deficiencies. The label is vague in definition, subjecting students to the values of individual school authorities; consequently, the process of labeling can raise issues of fairness.

Due to its underlying quasi-medical model, behaviour problem students do not benefit from the advantages of medical labels. Students are described as characteristically wild and out of control, but they are also expected to be capable to stay in control and are not treated with the same kind of sympathy as one with a medical illness. The heterogeneity of the classified group does not permit the therapeutic joys of having a common experience. Neither does it allow them to have their exact needs met, as their needs and intentions are often quite different.

The question that remains is, how the act of labeling students can change in a way that is in line with the ethics of the education process. In light of the analyses in this thesis, I suggest that the behaviour problem label be completely removed in schools. While students' needs, concerns, and their aggressive and noncompliant behaviours must be adduced, these should be understood in the context of their relational experiences. Students in some North American schools have benefited from a holistic approach towards education. The benefits of this approach were discussed in Chapter 6. Students in the Iranian school system have benefited from an approach to the cultural understanding of contextualized behaviours and the lack of necessity for labels. Although I hesitate to suggest that we generally mix and match programs in a piecemeal format, these two particular practices are theoretically in par with each other.

I conclude this thesis, therefore, by suggesting that we consider holistic approaches to educate youth, and remove the use of behaviour problem labels, as well as congruous labels such as conduct disorder, behaviour disorder, affective problems, and violent youth, in schools. In this holistic model, the educator would engage pedagogy and a "community of learners", with the understanding that learning is a collaborative process of knowledge building and that fostering competitiveness and rewarding the few students who *seem* to have independently achieved the best, is a meaningless task. This would require an evaluation system that moves away from evaluating the child, and towards assessing the achievement of learned skills in each subject. Suggestions by developmental psychologists, to have child-centered curriculum and to give students *meaningful* choices, would also be necessary.

A holistic approach focuses on the whole child, with the understanding that all children have a variety of strengths, which can be acknowledged, and weaknesses, as part of the human experience; all children have the tendency to behave aggressively in one context or another. This approach would require teaching *all* children interpersonal skills, such as conflict resolution, rather than focusing only on those who seem to have behaved aggressively. Focusing on the whole child means that educators would remove inconsistencies in their attitudes. Managing behaviour problems while a student is at school, and ignoring such behaviours if they occur outside of school property, is an example of such an inconsistency; focusing on the whole child means caring for the *whole* child.

A holistic model does not separate children's emotional development from their cognitive development. This requires building a caring community in schools. This takes time, and it needs the support and involvement of the whole community. The school culture needs to change from "the teacher must know it all" to "everyone is responsible". Different agencies and social services need to be enlisted and *integrated* into the school community. A curriculum of multi-cultural awareness and prejudice reduction is needed, building a *culture of curiosity*, rather than tolerance, of differences, and encouraging perception rather than judgment of others. Student empowerment can take place through self-governance.

Building a caring community also requires a consistency between what is taught and what is practiced among teachers, and between teachers and students. This would require good leadership, which encourages the visions and ideals that teachers bring into schools. School administrators need to foster a collaborative rather than competitive atmosphere between teachers, and a whole-school team-approach to decision-making across various contexts. This also requires that higher levels of decision-makers such as the Ministry of Education engage in a collaborative effort with schools. Policy-makers need to spend time in schools and experience current learning environments before changing the rules on administrators, teachers, and students. Just as school administrators and teachers need to confer with parents and students, department heads and policy-makers need to confer with school administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

While behaviour problems would need to be dealt with to ensure the emotional and physical safety of children, educators would need to give voice to students and understand their behaviors in context, rather than label students and attempt to "control" their behaviors with the goal of "getting through the day". In a holistic model, the educator would look to multiple influences on behaviour, including classroom practices, influences from other children, family dynamics, and the student's individual differences and tendencies. The suggestion to remove labels may seem radical. However, the future of our students depends, not only on a contextualized understanding of youth's experiences and a holistic approach to their learning, but also on consistency in a dignifying process which necessitates abandoning the behaviour problem label.

This kind of a radical change requires transformative action, first by initiating dialogue about this type of a change, in school communities, and next by incorporating it into policy. Initiating dialogue is an important step. Just as we shouldn't force rules on students, we shouldn't force them on teachers. Changing what they know as the "reality" of behaviour problems will take time and much discussion. Following such a dialogue and "readiness" in schools, the change should get incorporated into policy. For this purpose, we need to have policy-makers that are in touch with the realities of today's schools.

Cannella (1998) points out that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, children were constructed as innocent and ignorant. The "whole child" narrative began with the perspective that childhood and adulthood are dichotomous. She argues that living within these psychological constructions, children are deprived of their own ways of making meaning (p. 161). Future research can have much to say about students' experiences and what meanings they give to the educational processes in which they participate. Through such inquiries, students' noncompliance in schools can be transported from the psychological, back to the educational domain.

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