

DISTORTIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF DISCIPLINE IN EDUCATION

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A Research Project submitted to the Faculty of Education,
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in part-fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

Johannesburg 1986

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ABSTRACT

This Research Project looks at the way in which discipline is applied in educational institutions, most especially schools. As a consequence of the application of this notion of discipline, unequal relationships are structured between those who instruct and those who receive instruction. Furthermore, the entire educational system is structured upon the formal disciplines, those branches of knowledge that have as their ultimate aim the quest for the truth. As a result of this over-emphasis placed upon the formal disciplines, an important dimension in the educational process is neglected, and it is those activities that do not fall into the category of the formal disciplines. There is a need to include these activities in the educational curriculum as they have the following advantageous functions for their recipients. They allow the development of personal discipline devoid of controlling authority figures; they allow participation through rule-guidance as opposed to rule-following, and they have greater scope for innovation than the formal disciplines. Such activities are practices.

DECLARATION

I declare that this Research Project is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

Louis Solomon Jeevananthan

9th day of July 1986.

(iv)

To Claudia, my wife, who supported me all the way, and to Dale and Layla, who patiently accepted my continued absence from home.

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Following are the dictionary definitions of the word 'discipline':

discipline n. i. Branch of instruction or learning; mental and moral training. adversity as effecting this; system of rules for conduct; behaviour according to established rules. ii. Order maintained among schoolchildren, soldiers, prisoners, etc., control exercised over members of church or other organisation. iii. Chastisement; (Eccl.) mortification by penance.¹

discipline v.t. Bring under control; train to obedience and order, drill, punish, chastise.²

My essay is concerned with both meanings of the word as it is understood and applied in education. The two meanings reflected in the definitions are: a 'discipline' such as mathematics, which is defined as a 'branch of instruction or learning', which has a formal internal structure, and 'discipline' as a form of control, defined as 'to bring under control; train to obedience and order, drill, punish, chastise'.

Discipline is considered, by people involved in activities of a serious nature, to be inextricably interwoven with successful achievement, irrespective of the field of endeavour. It is accepted that in order for a person to achieve success in an

activity, a vital ingredient is discipline. That it is an indispensable ingredient for successful achievement is not denied, but this is not the most common use of the notion.

As a concept, its most frequent use is that of the imposition of discipline by an external agency, usually a person regarded as a superior, upon the agent or actor. A number of issues arise from this position. Firstly, it is assumed that the agent is incapable of attaining discipline independently. Secondly, it is that such a relationship contains elements of coercion. It is accepted that the actor is reluctant and does not voluntarily acquiesce to being disciplined, hence the need for coercion on the part of the outside agency. Thirdly, the question of morality arises. It is whether it is morally acceptable for one person to impose upon another an activity that he believes will be beneficial to the other.

Granted, there are activities the imposition of which is morally acceptable, as they are seen to be in the interest of the individual. An example of such an activity is learning to write correctly. By this I mean that the child should learn, even if by being compelled to do so, the correct formation of letters so that his writing is legible, as legible writing is an important communication medium, one that it is in the interest of the individual to have. But I cannot see the point in getting a child to spend tedious hours, under threat, at perfecting his legible writing so that it attains standards of excellence expected in calligraphy.

Other questions that spring to mind regarding the morality of the situation described above are about the criteria used in ascertaining 'superiority' and 'inferiority', and whether the criteria are acceptable justification for the unequal and unfair relationships that exist in situations where 'discipline' is being imposed.

Relationships of 'superiority' and 'inferiority' are usually based on age-difference, where the senior person automatically assumes the dominant role. In education they are based on the hierarchic structure within the institution or, alternatively, on the assumption that because a person is more experienced or better qualified, therefore that person knows more than those less experienced and less qualified. Such a description is assumed to be appropriate to the relationship that exists between those who do the teaching and those who are taught.

To illustrate what I mean I will cite examples. A child may compile a geography notebook with the utmost care. He draws borders around his notes and colours in his illustrations, paying meticulous attention to detail. He has a beautifully printed introductory page followed by an equally impressive Table of Contents. One teacher may consider this to have been the disciplined performance of an activity, but another may dismiss it as time-consuming window-dressing. Or, similarly, a teacher may regard an obedient child who sits quite passively in the corner of the class from day to day, only allowing the occasional smile to

crease his face, as a disciplined child, but another may consider the child to be abnormal and in need of specialised assistance.

While the above examples have highlighted the difficulty related to the establishment of objective criteria in describing and ascertaining discipline, what they have also highlighted is the fact that an external assessor is unchallenged in determining whether discipline prevails or not.

Another dimension of the commonly-held notion of the concept of discipline is that it is misconstrued as other concepts whose gratification is external to the agent. The agent has to conduct himself in a certain manner; he has to attain certain standards of behaviour; he has to subject himself to certain sets of ostensibly objective criteria before he may be adjudged to have performed or behaved in a disciplined way. He, the agent, is never fully in control of the situation because he is not the adjudicator or evaluator of his actions. He may have subjected his behaviour to personal perusal, to scrutiny and evaluation, but this is insufficient.

The commonly-held notion of the concept of discipline has external agencies for gratification. External agencies will determine whether the procedures have been complied with and they will decide whether the standards have been attained.

Discipline, while it may contain some of the following in its

commonly-held notion, is not synonymous with any single concept from the ensuing list, and it is my claim that discipline is misconstrued to mean some of the following in education: organisation, punctuality, meticulousness, working mechanically, conformity, working systematically, self-deprivation, order, sternness, pride, accuracy, restraint, self-control, responsibility, restriction, prudence, obedience, co-operation, subordination, self-denial, constraint, prohibition, obligation, coercion.

The observer, who has misconstrued discipline to mean one of the above-named concepts is usually a 'superior' of some sort, and the decision about whether the agent's performance of an activity is to be regarded as disciplined or not, is left entirely in the hands of the observer. He may slavishly apply the commonly-held notion of discipline, and in the application of this concept he runs the risk of disregarding, completely, the agent's understanding and interpretation of his action.

I am at pains to make this point forcefully and no reiteration of the position may count as overemphasis. The person who ultimately decides whether an activity was performed in a disciplined manner or not is an outside agency, an external assessor, an observer, who is inevitably accepted to be a 'superior' of some sort.

What then are the possible consequences of this situation? Throughout his educative experience the individual has interacted

with his so-called superiors from a position of subservience. He has been part of an unequal relationship where he has been dominated and has had decisions made about his life regarding the activities he should and should not practice. Assessment of his performance of these activities was the responsibility of an observer who ostensibly was qualified to pass judgment on the nature of the performance. Thus his behaviour was directed at the authority of particular others. Because he found himself in a particular situation, where he was expected to display certain behavioural responses, he reproduced what was expected of him, in a mechanical fashion because his behaviour was oriented to an evaluator. In order to elicit the desired response from the evaluator, he performed in the prescribed manner.

But this is an unhealthy state of affairs. It is undesirable that an individual should orient his actions to the approval of others simply because they hold the balance of power. In actuality what has occurred is that the individual has been deprived of his individuality. He cannot make decisions on his own about how he intends to behave because a consideration will always be the question of how he will be assessed and if he has been subdued to the point where he is desirous of positive reinforcement from his assessor, then he will respond in a manner that will elicit the desired reinforcement.

This smacks of conditioning, and it is immoral that a human being should be denigrated and forced to the level where he is expected

to respond as an animal would. Such a person has been robbed of his autonomy. He is incapable of responding to human relationships in an autonomous way. But it may be asked why autonomy is a desirable character trait to have. I will return to this question immediately after I have briefly sketched what autonomy is, and hopefully the adumbration of this character trait will vindicate the claim for its incorporation in the individual's personality.

According to John White, 'autonomy seems to make the individual the final arbiter of his own good, not a blind follower of the authority of others, whether God or men. It underpins an education which avoids the imposition of value-judgments on the pupil: he is not to be indoctrinated into other's pictures of the good, but freely chooses his own.'³

And according to R.F. Dearden, the autonomous person is one who displays the following features in his person:

- (i) wondering and asking, with a sense of the right to ask, what the justification is for various things which it would be quite natural to take for granted;
- (ii) refusing agreement or compliance with what others put to him when this seems critically unacceptable;
- (iii) defining what he really wants, or what is really in his interests, as distinct from what may be conventionally so regarded;
- (iv) conceiving of goals, policies and plans of his own, and forming purposes and intentions of his own

independently of any pressure to do so from others; (v) choosing amongst alternatives in ways which could exhibit that choice is the deliberate outcome of his own ideas or purposes; (vi) forming his own opinion on a variety of topics that interest him; (vii) governing his actions and attitudes in the light of the previous sorts of activity. In short, the autonomous man has a mind of his own and acts according to it. And this 'mind of his own' will typically be *no natural product*, but the outcome of one sort of education.⁴

In response to the question posed earlier, which asks why autonomy is a desirable character trait to have, my answer would then be that autonomy is desirable because it makes us, as individuals, the determiners of our own fortunes or misfortunes. I, alone, should be credited with the success I achieve as a result of an autonomous decision. I, alone, am culpable for failure for an act gone wrong as a result of an autonomous decision. I am taking the position in this essay that the good society is one which enables its members to be determiners of their own fortunes or misfortunes.

In schools children are faced with two forms of the concept of *discipline*. The first is the discipline that is imposed upon them by outside agencies, in this instance the teacher, or other adult members on the school's staff. This discipline is of the regimental type which facilitates control of children and forces

conformity and uniformity upon them. It is an unequal relationship that exists between child and adult. It is, however, the type of interpersonal relationship which is immoral, given the notion of the good society which underpins my argument.

The second is the discipline that is structured, conceived of and implemented in the form of subjects that are studied at schools. An example of such a discipline is mathematics, which differs from ordinary activities because of its formal internal structure. In order for the child to succeed in the practise of such disciplines, the child is compelled to follow the rules applicable to the specific discipline. If he does not follow the rules of the discipline, he is assured of being unsuccessful. A simple illustration of the point being made is that in the division of common fractions if the child does not invert the second figure after he has changed the division sign to a multiplication sign, he will get his sum wrong. He will therefore be seen to have been unsuccessful in the performance of an activity in the discipline of mathematics. This is a relationship that exists between child and 'object'. It is a relationship between a living child and an inanimate discipline that comes alive as a result of the intervention of the child. This type of discipline facilitates 'control' as well in that it demands conformity and uniformity from the child, as failure to comply with the rules will result in personal failure, although I do appreciate that there are immense benefits to be derived from being exposed to formal disciplines in schools.

The child is subjected to discipline at schools at the hands of teachers, and he is subjected to the rules of the disciplines, e.g. mathematics, because of their formal internal structures. In the first instance the child is subject to the control of an adult; in the second instance the child is subject to the rules of a discipline. Throughout its school life, the child operates from a position of subjection and subordination.

I will argue, in the course of my paper, that a disciplined performance need not necessarily be conceptualised in terms of control or one of its allied concepts, nor is it feasible that a person can only perform in a disciplined way within a formal discipline, e.g. mathematics. I argue that a disciplined performance of an activity is possible where a person is guided by the rules, as opposed to following the rules as in a formal discipline.

In being guided by the rules space is created for individuality, ingenuity, inventiveness and creativity, and the agent is no longer subject but is at least elevated to the status of 'equal' with the activity.

Handwritten notes:
- In this paper, the above is not to be taken as a definition of the concept of discipline. See the next section for a more detailed discussion of the concept of discipline.
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In this section of my essay I have briefly outlined the concept of discipline as it is applied in schools. The remainder of my essay will develop as follows. In order to demarcate more specifically my area of concern, I will differentiate between a discipline, e.g. mathematics, and I will expand on its formal, internal structure;

its internal organisation and logic, to separate it and its ilk from 'non-discipline' activities, such as music or art for example.

Characteristic of an academic discipline is that it is concerned with the search for truth. This is not the case with music or art. This will be discussed in Section 2. In Section 3 I will locate the debate within present views about the concept of discipline by giving an exposition of the views, related to discipline, of P.S. Wilson and Michel Foucault, and I will explore the contributions of another writer who appears to be pertinent to this field of enquiry, Alisdair MacIntyre.

In Section 4 I will make observations regarding the accepted or commonly-held notion of discipline; I will look at the implications that emanate from this view and its consequences, and I will compare and contrast my view with the commonly-held notion.

Finally, in Section 5 I will press claims for the inclusion of 'non-discipline' activities in school syllabi. Activities that are rule-guided should be granted equal status with activities that are rule-following.

SECTION 2 - DISCIPLINES

In this section of my essay I will explore the notion of 'a discipline', e.g. mathematics, and I will expand on its formal, internal structure, its internal organisation and logic and 'non-discipline' activities such as music and art, for example. In order to distinguish more accurately my area of concern, and to facilitate clarity at specific points in my discussion, I will use the word 'discipline', the noun, when I am exploring that which is defined as a 'branch of instruction or learning', and I will use the word 'practice' when I am discussing those activities regarded as 'non-discipline' activities. My choice of the word 'practice' stems from the way in which Alisdair MacIntyre uses it in After Virtue. MacIntyre informs the reader that a practice is not a technical skill only, but for its production it requires the use of a technical skill.⁵

What I have in mind appears to correspond with what MacIntyre conceptualises a practice to be, because the activities that I will later discuss each have a history; they each have a tradition, and they each involve standards of excellence, all requirements of MacIntyre's conceptualisation of the concept of a practice.

At points in my discussion where my use of the word practice may be at variance with MacIntyre's view, my usage will be dictated by a need to maintain consistency in terminology, and it should be accepted and viewed with this need in mind, as opposed to being

seen as a misrepresentation of the said writer's views.

A Discipline

Characteristic of a discipline is its quest for truth. A discipline has a terminal point, and this terminal point is arrived at when the truth is established. The truth is established on condition that certain prescribed procedures are adhered to. The procedures mentioned have rules which govern their application. The relationship that exists between a discipline, the truth and rules, is that in order to establish the truth within a discipline one has to follow the rules.

A child is given a mathematical problem to solve. He is therefore intent on establishing a truth within a discipline. The phrase 'terminal point' is synonymous with truth which, in turn, is synonymous with 'the correct answer'. But in order for the child to arrive at 'the correct answer', she will have to apply certain procedures which are governed by rules; she will have to follow the mathematical rules that are applicable in specific instances.

Failure to follow the rules will lead to the failure to establish the truth. Failure to establish the truth within a discipline in this way is interpreted as personal failure, so in reality the child has to slavishly follow rules to avoid personal failure. She is dictated to by rules. Rules govern her actions.

I will illustrate the above contention about rule-following by demonstrating it with an example. In this way I hope to show that observation (i.e. following) of the rules leads to the realisation of the truth, and deviation from the rules leads to the failure of establishing the truth.

Let us assume that the following problem in matrix algebra is given.

GIVEN:

$$[A] = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -1 & 2 \\ 3 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad [B] = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 2 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$$

ASSIGNMENT:

Obtain $[A] \times [B]$ or $[AB]$

METHOD:

Write the two matrices partly alongside and partly above one another as shown below, and number the rows of $[A]$ and the columns of $[B]$ as indicated.

			COL. 1	COL. 2	COL. 3
			1	2	0
			0	-1	1
			1	2	-1
ROW 1	1	-1	*		
ROW 2	3	0	△		

i) To find the value of element 11 (read one-one) in $[AB]$ (designated by $*$) multiply the first element in row one of $[A]$ by the first element in column 1 of $[B]$, the second by the second and the third by the third (follow the arrows). The sum of these products is the value of element 11 in $[AB]$, i.e. $(1 \times 1) + (-1 \times 0) + (2 \times 1) = 3$.

ii) The value of element 12 (read one-two) in $[AB]$ (designated by $\square$) is found in the same way. In this case row 1 of $[A]$ is multiplied by column 2 of $[B]$. The sum of the different products is $(1 \times 2) + (-1 \times -1) + (2 \times 2) = 7$.

iii) The value of element 21 (read two-one) in $[AB]$ (designated by $\triangle$) is found by multiplying row 2 of $[A]$ by column 1 of $[B]$. The sum of the different products is $(3 \times 1) + (0 \times 0) + (1 \times 1) = 4$.

iv) The value of each of the other elements in $[AB]$ is obtained in exactly the same way. Note that if the two original matrices are written as illustrated, it is always the row (of A) and

the column (of B) in which the specific element occurs which are multiplied. The completed product matrix AB is as follows:

$$AB = \begin{bmatrix} 3 & 7 & -3 \\ 4 & 8 & -1 \end{bmatrix} \quad 6$$

From this rather lengthy example, it will be observed that one is dictated to by rules. One has to follow the rules in order to arrive at the truth. This is acceptable because it is an accepted fact that a discipline seeks to establish the truth.

A cursory perusal of the mathematical problem will reveal that there are at least ten rules that must be followed. Closer analysis will reveal that there are many more. One obvious rule is that governing the arrangement of rows and columns. This is a basic rule that has to be followed if the correct solution, which appears at the end of the example, is to be arrived at. Deviation from the rule will lead to the presentation of an incorrect solution, which is not the truth. Such a deviation could be the assumption that multiplier and multiplicand are interchangeable as in ordinary arithmetic, e.g. $4 \times 3 = 12$ and $3 \times 4 = 12$; such is not the case with multiplication in matrix algebra.

A Practice

Alisdair MacIntyre claims that:

A practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods. To enter into a practice is to accept the authority of those standards and the inadequacy of my own performance as judged by them. It is to subject my own attitudes, choices, preferences and tastes to the standards which currently and partially define the practice. Practices of course, as I have just noted, have a history: games, sciences and arts all have histories. Thus the standards are not themselves immune from criticism, but nonetheless we cannot be initiated into a practice without accepting the authority of the best standards realised so far.⁷

(own emphasis)

My concept, or should I say use, of the word 'practice' should not misrepresent MacIntyre's definition. However, there is a point at which we differ, and it is that he refers to being 'obedient to rules'. I will talk in terms of rule-guidance as opposed to rule-obedience. The difference of views referred to above will be discussed in Section 3.

A practice, MacIntyre tells us, is not only a technical skill, but

it requires a technical skill for its performance. The practices that I will discuss fall under this description. A practice as I will discuss it differs from a discipline in that it is not concerned with establishing the truth; it does not have a terminal point as a discipline has. In fact it would be quite absurd to talk about a practice as having a terminal point, as a practice is anything but static.

In my discussion of practices I will refer to games and then art forms, in turn.

The high jump is an athletic activity that falls into the category of games. There are rules governing the actual technical performance of the activity, the most important of which is that the participant may not take off from the ground with both feet simultaneously so that the bar is crossed head first. This rule was introduced presumably to prevent people from diving over the high jump bar as opposed to jumping over it. The safety of the competitors may also have been a consideration when this law was introduced.

Basically, what the high jump is about is that the participant has to get over the bar in any legal way possible. The legality of his style has been discussed, but other contraventions of the rules may be that he should not use a pole to assist him, as is done in the pole vault, or that he cannot be shot from a cannon or some other such apparatus.

The participant's activity within the practice is circumscribed by rules related to the specific activity, in this case the rules related to high jump. But the most important rule is that related to the cross-bar; that horizontal obstacle suspended between two upright poles. If the participant knocks the bar down in attempting to jump over it, he has broken the most important rule, because he has not taken the practice to its conclusion in an acceptable way. He has contravened the rule related to the bar not being knocked down. If the participant succeeds in getting over the bar, i.e. he does not dislodge it, then he has taken the practice to its conclusion in an acceptable way, because he has satisfied the most important rule of the practice, and it is that the jumper should not dislodge the bar in crossing it.

To deviate slightly for a while, I would like to discuss the historical development of styles or techniques used in the high jump and then I will link this to what has been said above. It is not my intention to present a technical exposition of the various styles. All that I will do is mention them in the sequence, more or less chronologically, in which they appeared. The first was the 'scissors', still seen at schools today, which is the least successful style of all, then we have the 'western roll', the 'eastern cut-off' and the very popular latter-day 'straddle', which were all successors of the 'scissors'. Then, in 1972, at the Olympic Games in Munich, Dick Fosbury introduced a new style to the world which was soon referred to as the 'Fosbury Flop'.

In my historical survey of high jump styles I mentioned five. They are the 'scissors', 'western roll', 'eastern cut-off', 'straddle' and 'Fosbury Flop'. Each of these styles is distinctive. There are certain specialised techniques peculiar to each of these styles. What they do have in common is that they are styles used and accepted legally in the practice of high jump, and they successfully or unsuccessfully allow the competitor to participate in the practice of high jump within the rules of the activity.

So at a particular athletic meeting it is not inconceivable that in the high jump there will be participants who will use the five different styles described. They will be seen to be participating in the practice in different ways, but all within the rules of the practice. None is culpable of having contravened the rules in being individual and possibly non-conformist.

This, then, is clearly an example of rule-guidance. The participants are guided by the rules. They do not follow the rules, and they are not dictated to by them, but one can claim correctly that the participants were disciplined in the performance of the practice, which is considered to be a 'non-discipline'. It would be correct to say then that it is not only within the disciplines that a disciplined performance is possible. One can be seen to have performed in a disciplined way in a practice as well.

Wittgenstein makes the following observation regarding the acquisition of language and its relationship to rules, but I

consider his views to be pertinent in this context as well.

Characteristically he does so, as it were, on its own home grounds: by exploring the way rules actually work even in games and mathematical series, by showing that even here rules cannot account for what needs to be explained. Thus he shows that while some games have formal, explicit rules, there are also informal children's games of which this is not true at all, and games in which one makes up the rules as one goes along. Moreover, while learning a game may entail explicitly learning its rules, it need not; one might learn it simply by observation and practice. And even a game governed by definite rules is not 'everywhere circumscribed by rules'; there are no 'rules for how high one throws the tennis ball in tennis, or how hard; yet tennis is a game for all that and has rules too.' And above all, even the strictest rule or system of rules ultimately requires application.⁸

Wittengenstein's view is useful for my purposes because he makes the observation that there are a number of ways in which rules operate. He observes that there are formal, explicit rules, and in certain instances this is not true at all in some children's games. There are also instances where rules are made up as things develop. Another important observation that is made in this extract is that

it is possible to engage in an activity in the proper way without knowing the rules. Wittgenstein states that 'one might learn it simply by observation and practice'. But I think that what is most important for me is the observation that 'even the strictest rule or system of rules ultimately requires application'. It is acknowledgment of the importance and significance of the role of the agent that for me is crucial. This observation will be dealt with in greater detail in the following section, but in order to ensure that the impact of this crucial point is not lost, I must point out that Wittgenstein's observation emphasises the role of the agent in the activity. Rules, and activities as such, are empty if they are not applied and given life by people. People bring activities alive by participating in them.

A feature of a practice is that, unlike a discipline, it is not terminal. This can be illustrated by reference to the way in which styles have evolved over the years and also the way in which records have improved over the years.

Another quick example of a game to support the points I made earlier about rule-guidance, is that in soccer it is the objective of one team to score more goals than its opposition. On condition that the ball is not handled all other body contact with the ball is legal. And if Team A should score all its goals in the following sequence, head, chest and heel, and Team B should score its solitary goal in the more conventional manner of it having been struck powerfully with the foot, Team A nevertheless is seen to

have achieved the prime objective of the game, and it is that it has scored more goals than Team B.

While it is accepted that playing the ball with the foot is a feature of soccer, the players are not dictated to about which section of the foot has to be used in playing the ball, so in modern-day soccer players are able to use six foot 'surfaces' skillfully. They are the inside, outside, toe, instep, heel and sole. Once more this is clearly an example of a practice that is rule-guided.

I will now move to art forms in an attempt to fortify my argument. A piece of music is composed in a certain key at a specific timing. The key relates to the musical scale in which the music score is written and the timing indicates the rhythm at which it is to be played. The composition in question is for a male tenor.

Let us, for argument's sake, say that the music score is written in B_♭ (B flat) and its timing is 2/4, to be sung by a male tenor. Does this state that this is the only way in which this piece of music can be performed? It certainly does not. While it may be the 'best' way, it certainly is not the only way. The music can be transposed into a variety of keys, higher or lower; its timing can be changed so that it is quicker or slower, and it can be sung by different voices or it can even be played on any number of musical instruments.

Art takes a variety of forms, but I will talk about it in its conventional form, that of putting brush to canvas, though this appears not to take cognisance of the variety that does exist within art. But my approach is suitable for my purposes, so I will continue with it. My understanding of art at my very simple level is that there are a number of 'components' and 'possibilities' that are related to art. By 'components' I mean the artist's choice of colour, material, tone, atmosphere, interpretation. By 'possibilities' I mean the way in which art can be used as culturally enriching, e.g. appreciation at a very simple level as an object of aesthetic value, appreciation related to technicalities, comparative art as between different cultures or between different periods.

Literature can be talked about in the same way as I have discussed art. One cannot formulate general laws in literature as attempts to find general laws have inevitably failed. Wellek and Warren make the point that 'while physics may see its highest triumphs in some general theory reducing to a formula electricity and heat gravitation and light, no general law can be assumed to achieve the purpose of literary study: the more general, the more abstract and hence empty it will seem; the more the concrete object of the work of art will elude our grasp'.⁹

What is also characteristic of practices, besides not being concerned with establishing the truth and not being terminal, is their capacity to allow innovation. This can be seen from what has

occurred in sport, the new art forms that have emerged, and changes of form and style in music. Practices are more dynamic and less elitist than disciplines, and within them we are more aware as practitioners of 'standards of excellence',¹⁰ and we are able to notice 'the inadequacy' of our 'own performance' as judged by those standards of excellence. We are also more acutely aware of the history of practices because practices facilitate reflection and comparison.

In this section I have attempted to illustrate the difference between a discipline, e.g. mathematics, and 'non-discipline' activities such as music and art. The purpose of this exercise was to demonstrate that it is possible to attain a disciplined performance in a 'non-discipline' activity which I called a practice. This view is contrary to that which believes that a disciplined performance is only possible within a formal discipline, e.g. mathematics.

In having argued that one can attain a disciplined performance in a practice, I have demonstrated that one is capable of a disciplined performance within an activity that is rule-guided. Implied in my argument is the claim that there is no such thing as a high-status subject or a low-status subject as is the popular belief held in educational institutions. Subjects or practices are of equal status if they allow the practitioner the possibility of a disciplined performance. As this is so, it is my belief that greater emphasis should be placed on practices than is now the

case, but this should not be done at the expense of the disciplines. Each, i.e. disciplines as well as practices, should be allocated equal status and they should be given equal emphasis in schools, as both are potentially beneficial to the child.

It is not my claim that my explication of practices makes them more appropriate to education than the formal disciplines are. My argument is against the exclusion of practices from schools, and when they are included in the school curriculum they are dealt with in a very low-key fashion.

SECTION 3 - THREE POSITIONS RELATED TO DISCIPLINE

In the previous section I discussed 'a discipline', the noun, i.e. that which is defined as 'a branch of instruction or learning', and I then discussed 'non-discipline' activities, which I referred to as 'practices'. I argued that it is possible to attain a disciplined performance in 'non-discipline' activities, which I called 'practices'.

In this section I will locate my views about 'discipline' within present debates surrounding the concept by giving an exposition of the views of Michel Foucault and P.S. Wilson, and I will explore the contribution of Alisdair MacIntyre in this field.

At the outset, a point of clarification that has to be established is that it is somewhat inaccurate to talk about Michel Foucault's concept of discipline, because in Discipline and Punish, he does not present a definition of the concept as such. He looks at the mechanisms that are utilised in the implementation of discipline, but inherent in his analysis and description of this concept he implicitly subscribes to the view that discipline is a form of control; it is the way in which the body is manipulated by external forces. As Foucault's analysis of the concept of discipline is applicable to schools, I will undertake an exposition and explication of his views first.

What should be noted at the outset is that for Foucault the effects

of and the mechanisms used in the application of discipline assume primacy of position in his analysis, but it should nevertheless be observed that the moral dimension of discipline is not neglected, though it is not overtly stated.

Foucault makes the observation that 'the classical age discovered the body as object and target of power'.¹¹ As a result of this discovery it was possible to manipulate the body and thereby create docility. A docile body is one that can be subjected, used, transformed and improved.

'The body was in the grip of very strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions or obligations.'¹² But the body was not subject to control en masse; control was exerted upon the body by breaking down composite bodily gestures into their components. Holds or controls were exercised upon rapidity, attitudes, gestures and movements, and activity was partitioned as closely as possible in terms of time, space and movement.

These methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-unity, might be called 'disciplines'.¹³

What the disciplines achieved initially was the growth of bodily skills; but of greater importance was the achievement of greater

obedience with concomitant greater usefulness. The forces of the body increased in economic terms, but decreased in power in political terms. 'If economic exploitation separates the force and the product of labour, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination.'¹⁴

Foucault then proceeds to discuss what he calls the art of distributions as a mechanism that imposes discipline. Discipline occurs in this instance when individuals are distributed in space. Each individual has his own place and each place has its individual.

Groups must be broken up to avoid the creation of collective dispositions. Individuation allowed those in control to establish the whereabouts of those under control. 'Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organises an analytical space.'¹⁵

After individuals have been distributed in space their activity is then controlled. The three methods of the control of activity are the establishing of rhythms, the imposition of particular

occupations and the regulation of the cycles of repetition, which were closely related to the manner in which the act was temporally elaborated. Foucault calls this the way in which 'a sort of anotomo-chronological schema of behaviour is defined'.¹⁶

The temporal elaboration of the act necessitated exhaustive use of the time available. It was as if greater fragmentation of time would facilitate greater intensification of the use of even the slightest moment. To ensure the exhaustive use of time, a system of injunctions had to be formulated, characteristic of which was brevity and clarity. Response to injunctions prompted reactions by way of a prearranged agreement regarding signals.

In the section entitled 'The Means of Correct Training', Foucault discusses in turn Hierarchical Observation, Normalizing Judgement, and the Examination. This section is of particular importance in describing, among other things, the imposition of discipline in schools, and because of its pertinence in this context, I will discuss each section in greater detail.

Foucault observes that 'The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induced effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible'.¹⁷

One can see, immediately, how this is applicable to schools.

There is a hierarchic chain that is linked in descending order from the head of the school down to the pupils. Schools are constructed in such a manner that they allow those undertaking surveillance to do so undetected, and it is the knowledge that surveillance is occurring, without being able to detect the agents of its implementation, that enforces discipline upon individuals.

Similarly, the classroom is arranged in rows and columns, and this facilitates observation of the pupils. To allow effective observation to be maintained in schools, an architecture was fashioned, cognisant of this need. Foucault comments that 'Stones can make people docile and knowable'.¹⁸

The hierarchic chain that reaches down to pupils insidiously invades their group as well. This is done by the utilization of prefects, class captains and monitors as an extension of the adult surveillance machinery.

Other ways in which observation manifests itself in schools are the recording of absenteeism, the recording of late-comers, the recording of homework defaulters, and official notes sent to parents whose children fail to be properly attired.

With reference to schools, Foucault makes the following observation.

A relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching,

not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency.¹⁹

In schools discipline is pyramidal in its organisation, it is a mechanism that operates in an upward direction, but equally important is its lateral movement, and this is what allows it to be undetected, yet present, but discreet.

Normalizing judgment refers to the way in which systems of penalties were imposed upon those who departed from the norms of proper conduct as defined within specific institutions.

It is a mechanism whose sole function is the imposition of conformity. Those who strayed from the path of acceptable conduct were disciplined by being punished, which took the form of physical punishment, deprivations or humiliation.

At a school a child may depart from the norm by failing to do her work. Such an instance may be punishable by one of the methods mentioned above, which is supposed to be corrective in nature. Foucault quotes Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, who says,

Of all penances, impositions are the most honest for a teacher, the most advantageous for the parents; they make it possible to derive, from the very offence of the children, means of advancing their progress by correcting their defects;²⁰

But in discipline punishment does not function in isolation. It is part of a dual system, punishment-reward. So, for example, a child may negate a possible punishment as a result of having accumulated reward, and in this way too, power is wielded over the pupil and he is disciplined. Rank also functions on the model described previously. It both punishes and rewards. Discipline rewards by a promotion in rank, and it punishes by the reverse process of demotion. This is achieved by the presentation of colours, or the use of distinctive badges, or even academic grading.

Foucault notes that,

This hierarchizing penalty had, therefore, a double effect: it distributed pupils according to their aptitudes and their conduct, that is, according to the use that could be made of them when they left the school; it exercised over them a constant pressure to conform to the same model, so that they might all be subjected to 'subordination, docility, attention in studies and exercises, and to the correct practice of duties and all the parts of discipline'. So that they might all be like one another.²¹

Foucault makes a number of observations and presents criticisms regarding discipline as a form of control. They are:

- 1) That discipline is different from judicial penalty. Judicial penalty is based on a set of laws that must be remembered, but

discipline is based on observable phenomena. Judicial penalty is a consequence of the contravention of a statute, whereas discipline is a response to whether internally agreed upon rules are being contravened. The contravention is observable because discipline is based on the control of the operations of the body. The body has established for it rhythms, particular occupations, and regulation of cycles of repetition, and all the time it is under observation and surveillance.

- 2) Judicial penalty specifies acts according to a number of categories. Discipline operates by differentiating among individuals.
- 3) Judicial penalty operates by bringing into play the opposition of permitted and forbidden.
- 4) Judicial penalty condemns law breakers; discipline seeks to homogenize.

In the examination, the techniques of hierarchic observation and normalizing judgment are fused. As a result of the examination, children are classified, categorised and punished. Children are differentiated and judgment is cast upon them.

The examination is a form of power that keeps objectified subjects under scrutiny, and it has internal to it a norm towards which the subjects strive. The knowledge that is extracted from the child

during an examination is knowledge that has its origin within the teacher, and it is now transmitted by the child back to its source.

Related to the examination are a number of documentary techniques which transform the child into a case. The child is thus constituted as a branch of knowledge and an object of power simultaneously. He becomes an object of power because the examination slots him into his specific place of individuality. 'The examination is at the centre of the procedures that constitute the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge.'²² Within this process, the concept of individualization underwent a theoretical transmutation, from one who possessed power and privilege, to one who was the object of power and denied privilege.

P.S. Wilson deals with the concept of discipline in ways that are different from those of Foucault. For Wilson, discipline is a moral issue, and, whereas Foucault undertakes an analysis of discipline as a method of control and a mechanism of power, Wilson presents a definition of the concept by discussing its implementation.

For Wilson, discipline and interest are inextricably interwoven. If a child has a particular interest, the child will participate in the interest in a way that justifies his participation in that interest, and his discipline derives from the moral compulsion