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Abstract
Discourse theory is a perspective on social research that is based upon the assumption that reality is socially constructed, with language constructing social realities, relationships and identities rather than merely providing a description of them in any straightforward or direct way. In relation to environmental issues, the value of such an approach is clearly indicated by Hajer’s view, that whether or not environmental problems appear as anomalies to the existing arrangements, depends first of all on the way in which these problems are framed and defined (Hajer 1995, p4).

Critical approaches to discourse analysis inform a growing body of research in social policy, urban studies and housing policy, and provides for different understandings and insights into policy processes. In particular, critical discourse analysis focuses closely on language use to direct attention to how issues are ‘problematised’ or ‘represented’, and hence foregrounds issues such as problem definition, identification of causes, allocation of responsibility, and indicating what can or should be done.

However, there has been relatively little use of critical discourse analysis to investigate environmental issues. Therefore, this paper employs a critical approach to discourse analysis to analyse how governments can define environmental issues and their respective responses. Victorian Government responses to environmental issues are used as a case study, with a particular focus on two environmental strategies (or green plans): Protecting the Environment (released in 1987) and Our Environment Our Future (released in 2005). Green plans provide a useful focus for investigation because they are relatively comprehensive and strategic statements about environmental issues and what needs to be done to address them.

Introduction
The legitimacy of concerns about environmental degradation and the need for more ‘sustainable development’ is largely accepted across Australia and internationally (eg the United Nations Earth Summit Conferences) even though the nature and adequacy of responses adopted varies. In responding, there are many avenues open to Government, including institutional reform, social mobilization and green planning (Buhrs and Aplin 1999). Of these approaches, the development of green plans has most attracted the interest of governments within Australia (Buhrs and Aplin 1999) and has also attracted significant attention internationally (Dalal-Clayton, 1996; Kenny and Meadowcroft, 1999; and Janicke and Jorgen, 1998). At its simplest, green planning involves the development of comprehensive and integrated policies, plans and strategies to address environmental problems, and often has sustainable development as the express goal (Buhrs 2000, Dalal-Clayton 1996). For Kenny and Meadowcroft (1999) green planning is valuable for its capacity to coordinate different conceptions of the future, and for offering a means of embedding sustainability in both an institutionalized and normatively rich set of intellectual contexts.

However, it is also apparent that there are many different approaches to sustainable...
development which can be drawn upon in green planning, and that these are highly contested (Dryzek 1997, Beder 1996, Hollick 1990). It is therefore important to examine how environmental issues are ‘defined’ through public policy processes. This paper therefore, investigates how environmental issues, and their responses, have been defined within public policy processes in Victoria, since the mid 1980s with a particular focus on two environmental strategies or green plans. In doing so it draws upon critical discourse analysis, which is an approach to discourse analysis that pays particular attention to language use. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a brief overview of discursive approaches to policy studies; Section 3 briefly introduces some of the ways in which environmental issues have been defined within public policy literature; while Section 4 provides a preliminary examination of how environmental sustainability has been constructed within ‘official’ policy discourse of Victorian Government’s in two statewide green plans: Protecting the Environment, released in 1987, and Our Environment Our Future, released in 2005. Continuities and discontinuities and their implications are then briefly discussed in the conclusion.

Discourse Analysis and Policy Research

Discourse analysis is an emerging perspective within the social sciences which draws on a number of academic traditions (Mills 1997, Howarth 2000) and which Fairclough considers is difficult, largely because of the many conflicting and overlapping definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints (Fairclough 1992, p3). Potter and Wetherell (1994, p47) for example, identify discourse analysis as:

- Research inspired by speech act theory which is directed at providing systematic accounts of the organisation of conversational exchange in settings such as classrooms;
- Psychologically focused research such as focusing on the effect of discourse structures on recall and understanding;
- Research within the sociology of science which focuses on exploring how scientists construct their talk and texts to display their acts as rational and warrantable in any particular setting; and finally,
- Research, based on the traditions of continental social psychology and cultural analysis, which is concerned with exploring how institutions, practices and individuals can be understood as being produced through the workings of a set of discourses.

Environmental policy research which uses a discursive approach mainly corresponds to the type of studies found in the fourth dot point, and is particularly informed by the work of Michel Foucault (Rutherford 1992; Litfin 1994; Hajer 1995; Luke 1995; Dryzek 1997). In many ways this is not surprising, given that Foucault is arguably the discourse theorist most concerned with analysing the power relations and institutional context of social relations associated with discourses (Gare 1995, p66) and environmental issues are often a source of political conflict. In general terms such an approach is concerned with understanding and interpreting socially produced meanings, rather than search for objective causal explanations. This means that one of the major goals of social inquiry is to delineate the historically specific rules and conventions that structure the production of meaning (Howarth 2000, p128). Foucauldian approaches to discourse analysis also focus on problematisations, which foregrounds questions of how issues are defined and framed.

In parallel to these developments, a body of literature has emerged in policy studies since the late 1980s’, which draws on a social constructionist epistemology which challenges straight forward notions about problem identification (Edelman 1988; Stone 1989; Rochefort and Cobb 1993; Rein and Schon 1994; Fischer and Forester 1993), and which in some cases is informed by a Foucauldian perspective. Bacchi captures the focus of much of this literature in stating “…it makes no sense to consider the ‘objects’ or targets of policy as existing independently of the way they are spoken about or represented, either in political debate or in policy proposals. Any description of an issue or a ‘problem’ is an interpretation, and interpretations involve judgment and choices” (Bacchi 1999, p.1).
However, Fairclough considers that while an approach to discourse analysis inspired by Foucault constitutes a rich set of theoretical claims and hypotheses for TODA [textually oriented discourse analysis], Foucault's neglect of textual analysis and his view of discourse as constitutive [as opposed to dialectical] limits his value for textually oriented discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992, p56). By contrast, Fairclough’s approach draws together language analysis and social theory, which centres upon a combination of a social theoretical sense of discourse with the text- and – interaction sense of discourse from linguistically oriented discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992, p4). Under this perspective “any discursive ‘event’ (i.e. any instance of discourse) is seen as simultaneously being a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice, with:

- The ‘text’ dimension attending to language analysis of texts;
- The discursive practices dimension, like text- and- interaction’ view of discourse specifies the nature of the processes which types of discourse (including the more social-theoretical sense) are drawn upon and how they are combined; while,
- The social practice dimensions attend to issues of concern in social analysis such as institutional and organisational circumstances of the discursive event and how that shapes the nature of the discursive practice, and the constitutive/ constructive effects of the discourse referred to above” (Fairclough 1992, p4).

In broad terms therefore Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be seen to be based on a recognition that changes in language uses are linked to wider social and cultural processes, and a recognition of the importance of using language analysis as a method for studying social change (Fairclough 1992, p1). This critical (or textually oriented) approach to discourse analysis has been applied to a number of areas of social research, including: political discourse; ideology discourse; racism; economic discourse; advertisement and promotional culture; media language; gender; institutional discourse; education; and literacy; with the work in these domains concerned to highlight issues of power asymmetries, exploitation, manipulation, and structural inequalities (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000, p4). However, it appears that environmental issues have yet to attract much attention from critical discourse analysts, with Stamou and Paraskevopolous’s study of ecotourism experiences in the visitors books of a Greek reserve, being a notable exception (2003). By contrast, there are small but vibrant communities of social policy, urban studies and housing policy scholars, who have found CDA highly relevant (eg Hastings 1998; 1999; 2000; Jacobs 1999; Jacobs and Manzi 1996; Marston 2000, 2002, 2004; Atkinson, 2000, 1999).

Building on Hajer’s insight that whether or not environmental problems appear as anomalies to the existing arrangements, depends first of all on the way in which these problems are framed and defined (1995, p4) and the relative lack of analysis of environmental issues using CDA, this paper offers a very modest contribution to address this gap.

**Discourse and the Environment**

Critical approaches to discourse analysis clearly have value for investigating environmental policy issues. This section therefore briefly introduces some of the ways in which environmental issues have been defined in public policy, as a way of highlighting the types of constructions to be looked for in applying a more textually oriented approach to assessing the way in which governments in Victoria responded to environmental issues.

**Social constructionism and the environment**

It is important to note that heated debates have occurred regarding the value of discourse analysis, and social constructionism in general, to the study of environmental issues (Gandy 1996; Dickens 1996; Burningham and Cooper 1999; Jones 2002; Crist 2004; and Demerritt 1998). These debates have been particularly fierce within environmental sociology, with Dickens (1996) claiming “insofar as academia is capable of having a stand-up row, it is over this issue that sociology has become most heated” (p72). In broad terms, realists objections to social constructionism centre around the view that social constructionists do not acknowledge the ‘reality’ and independent existence of nature, the environment or environmental problems.
Burningham and Jones’ response is that:

- Firstly, realists are objecting to one particular form of social constructionism, and that there is a disjuncture between the version of social constructionism constructed by realists in their criticisms, and the approaches to constructionism that are most often actually used in empirical case studies; and,

- Secondly that realists’ characterisation of ‘strict’ constructionism (those who avoid making any assumptions about the ‘reality’ of the conditions and focus entirely on the claims made about them) used by both realist critics and authors of some empirical constructionist studies, misreads the approach in significant ways (that is they consider it denies the existence of an objective reality when all it does is seek to remain agnostic about the existence and extent of the conditions and simply consider the claims made about them (1999 pp304 - 308).

In this context, there is some merit in Dryzek’s view that while real problems exist, our interaction with them can only ever be through culturally constructed lens – meaning that we can never know nature except through the interpretive mechanism of culture, which means that all perspectives are partial and contestable (1997, p10). In addition, social constructionism has also been criticised for ‘political quietism’ and diverting attention away from what people consider are the real issues (eg Crist 2004; Mercer 2000). By contrast however, I consider that discursive approaches draw attention to the ways in practices are justified.

**Environmental discourses**

Within the context of this paper, issues warranting investigation include views about the causes and severity of environmental issues, the sources of environmental concern, and what type of responses are required. This section highlights some of the ways that environmental sustainability can be conceptualised. Identifying these different discourses and constructions will help to make sense of the way in which policy debates have played out in Victoria.

Ideas about the environment in western thought are diverse and varied and have presented challenges to accepted views about the relationship of humans to other living things (Hay 2002). In arguing that environmentalism represents a new political ideology, Eckersley, for example identifies that there are at least 5 distinct sources of concern for the environment as follows:

- **Resource Conservation:** it is wrong to be wasteful in the use of the environment, ‘the gospel of efficiency’, ‘prudent husbanding’, ‘wise use’, ‘elimination of waste’;

- **Preservationism:** parts of the environment are unique, inspire awe, or are highly aesthetic and these should be protected – we should have a reverence for nature and an aesthetic and spiritual appreciation of wilderness – saving nature from development – ‘silo’ (stockpile of genetic diversity), ‘laboratory’ (scientific), ‘cathedral’ (spiritual), ‘art gallery’ (aesthetic beauty);

- **Human Welfare Ecology:** enlightened self interest – the environment provides us with goods and services and therefore it is in our own long term self interest to look after it – eg sustaining the natural resource base for human production, and sustaining biological support systems for human reproduction;

- **Animal Liberation:** if animals can feel pain or suffer then we have no moral right to cause them harm – eg humane treatment; and,

- **Ecocentrism:** There is “no valid basis to the belief that humans are the pinnacle of evolution and the sole locus of value and meaning in the world … Instead all of the various multi-layered parts of the biotic community are valuable for their own sake” (Eckersley 1992).

Following broadly from these philosophical positions, responses to environmental issues can be seen to span the political spectrum. Dryzek, for example has identified different discourses about the environment (1997) and having identified the basic dimensions of environmental discourses he then focused on the elements which are used to construct particular storylines which underpin these discourses. These elements are the:
• basic entities whose existence is recognised or constructed (ontology);
• assumptions about natural relationships (i.e. competitive etc.);
• agents and their motives (individuals or collectives; self interested or public spirited); and
• key metaphors and rhetorical devices (e.g. spaceship earth) (Dryzek; 1997, p18).

Table 1. provides a summary of the different environmental discourses identified by Dryzek (1997) who considered this is a useful approach because these discourses condition the way we construct, discuss and analyse environmental problems and hence, are embodied in institutional arrangements that are put in place for managing the environment (1997, p 19).
### Table 1. Summary of Environmental Discourses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limits and their Denial</th>
<th>Basic entities recognized</th>
<th>Natural relationships</th>
<th>Agents and their motivations</th>
<th>Key metaphors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looming Tragedy: Survivalism</td>
<td>Finite stocks of resources, Carrying capacity, Population and Elites</td>
<td>Hierarchy and control</td>
<td>Elites motivation, is up for grabs</td>
<td>Overshoot and collapse, Commons, Spaceship earth, Lily pond and Cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth Forever: The Promethean Response</td>
<td>Nature as only brute, Markets and prices, Energy and technology</td>
<td>Humans at top of hierarchy, Competition</td>
<td>Everyone, motivated by their material self interest</td>
<td>Mechanistic trends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Problem Solving Approaches

| Administrative Rationalism: Leave it to the experts | Liberal capitalism, Administrative state, Experts and Managers | Nature below human problem solving, People subordinate to the state, Experts and managers control the state | Experts and Managers, Motivated by public interest, defined in unitary terms | Mixture of concern and reassurance, The administrative mind |
| Democratic Pragmatism: Leave it to the People | Liberal capitalism, Liberal democracy, Citizens | Equality among citizens, Interactive political relationships, mixing competition with cooperation | Many different agents, Motivation a mix of material self interest and multiple conception of public interest | Public policy as a resultant of forces, Policy like scientific experimentation, Thermostat |
| Economic Rationalism: Leave it to the market | Homo economicus, Markets, Prices and Property, Government (not citizens) | Competition, Hierarchy based on expertise, Subordination of nature | Homo economicus: self interested, Some government officials must be motivated by public interest | Mechanistic, Negative view of regulation, Connection with freedom |

### The Quest for Sustainability

| Sustainable Development: Environmentally Benign Growth: | Nested social and ecological systems, Capitalism economy, No limits | Subordination of nature, Economic growth, environmental protection, distributive justice, and long term sustainability go together | Many agents at different levels, notably transnational and local rather than the state; motivated by the public good | Organic growth, Connection to progress, Reassurance |
| Ecological Modernisation: Industrial Society and Beyond: | Complex systems, Nature as waste treatment plant, Capitalist economy, The state | Partnerships: govt, business, environmentalists, scientists, Subordination of nature, Environmental protection and economic prosperity go hand in hand | Partners, motivated by public good | Tidy household, Connection to progress, reassurance |

### Green Radicalism

| Green Romanticism: Saving the World through New Consciousness | Global limits, Inner nature, Unnatural practices | Natural relationships between humans and nature have been violated, Equality across people and nature | Human subjects, some more ecologically conscious than others, Agency exists in nature too | Wide range of biological and organic metaphors, Passion, Appeals to emotions, intuitions |
| Green Rationalism: Saving the World through new Politics | Global limits, Rational humans, Nature as complex ecosystems, Social, economic and political structures | Equality among people, Complex interconnections between humans and nature | Many individual and collective actors, and varied motivations, Agency in nature downplayed though not necessarily denied | Organic metaphors, Appeals to reason, and potential rationality of social structures, Link to progress |

Source: Compiled from Dryzek J (1997)
The Environment in Policy Processes

The work of Caldwell (1993) and O’Riordan (1996) provides further insights into highlighting the way in which problem definition influences environmental policy responses. Caldwell (1993) identifies three different ways in which environmental problems can be defined within public policy processes:

- Incidental interpretations which see environmental disruptions as accidents or miscalculations, and thus amenable to admonition, education, indoctrination and a few legal sanctions such as anti-litter laws;
- Operational interpretations which see environmental problems as largely inadvertent, but caused by inadequate or inappropriate organisation and management of economic and public affairs – notably in relation to technology. Under this interpretation, policy responses include improved procedures, independent review, standard setting, enforcement and incentives; and,
- Systemic interpretations of the environmental problem which focus on the need to uncover the roots of environmental degradation and seek to remedy basic causes. Advocates of this approach consider that the present socioeconomic-technological order (socialist and capitalist) are the ultimate cause of deteriorating environmental conditions.

Table 2 outlines stages on the path to sustainable development (O’Riordan 1996). While not intended for such a purpose it is possible to consider the four stages as different ways of defining sustainability, and the types of the response required. That is if environmental issues are defined as isolated individual cases then isolated individual responses will be proposed, whereas if sustainability issues are defined as being inherent feature of our current way of life then the responses required are systematic and far reaching.

Table 2. A Possible Map of the Sustainable Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1 Very Weak Sustainability</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lip service to policy integration</td>
<td>Minor tinkering with economic instruments</td>
<td>Dim awareness and little media coverage</td>
<td>Corporatist discussion groups; consultation exercises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Stage 2 Weak Sustainability | Formal policy integration and deliverable targets | Substantial restructuring of microeconomic incentives | Wider public education for future visions | Round tables; stakeholder groups; parliamentary surveillance |

| Stage 3 Strong Sustainability | Binding Policy integration and strong international agreements | Full valuation of the costs of living: ‘green accounts alongside national accounts | Curriculum integration; local initiatives as part of community growth | Community involvement; twinning of initiatives in the developed and developing world |

| Stage Very Strong Sustainability | Strong international conventions; national duties of care; statutory and cultural support | Formal shift to sustainable economic accounting both nationally and internationally | Comprehensive cultural shift coupled to technological innovation and new community structures | Community-led initiatives become the norm |


Finally, within the policy studies literature competing environmental discourses have been
identified, including for example:

- Sharp, who differentiated between environmental approaches based on technocentric and ecocentric discourses in investigating how British local authorities put notions of sustainability into practice (Sharp and Richardson 2001, p203);

- Hajer, who differentiated between the “traditional pragmatist” (minimizing organisational disturbance and looking for pragmatic, piecemeal solutions) and “ecological modernist” (anticipatory approach to policy control and the idea that pollution prevent pays) discourses in investigating how acid rain should be considered (Hajer; 1995, & 1994, pp 64-65)

- Whatmore and Boucher (1993), who identify competing “conservation”, “commodity” and “ecology” narratives in exploring the role of planning discourse and practice in the social construction of nature in debates about the use of planning gain mechanisms to generate environmental benefits (Boucher and Whatmore 1993);

- Browne and Keil, identify three broad discourses (the “economic efficiency”; “clean air” and “environmental justice” discourse coalitions) operating within the debates regarding air pollution within Los Angeles (Browne and Kiel 2000).

What these studies indicate is that there are many different ways in which environmental issues can be portrayed, and that within public policy processes there are different discourse coalitions (Hajer 1995) competing to define the terms of the debate. Given that policy processes are contested and that truths are historically specific, a discursive approach is therefore useful for investigating how environmental issues have been defined within Victoria, and it is to this I now turn.

**Economising on Sustainability in Victoria?**

Given the diversity of ways in which environmental issues can be defined and the contests over competing definitions, there is a need for empirical investigations to examine how debates are actually played out in particular situations. Within this context recent experience in the Australian State of Victoria will be examined focusing on the development of two government strategies for environmental sustainability (or green plans: *Protecting the Environment: A Conservation Strategy for Victoria* (Victorian Government 1987) and *Our Environment Our Future: Victoria’s Framework for Environmental Sustainability* (Victorian Government 2005).

The influence of economic discourses will be a particular focus. As context, it should be noted that the Labor Party in Victoria held office from 1982 to 1992, when it lost to the Liberal – National Party coalition which governed until 1999. At the 1999 state election the Labor Party was able to form a minority government with support from independent Members of Parliament. The Labor Party was returned in November 2002 winning a resounding victory and establishing a majority in both Houses of Parliament.


In June 1987, after 5 years in office the Labor Government led by John Cain released *Protecting the Environment* which was claimed as “the first attempt in Victoria’s European history to develop in a comprehensive way a coherent philosophy and program of actions designed to protect and enhance our natural and cultural heritage” (Victorian Government 1987, p7). To put this in context, this was the same year the Brundtland report was released, with that report being widely acknowledged for its role in popularizing the idea of sustainable development. Nonetheless, *Protecting the Environment* was a landmark strategy, given its stated commitment to sustainable development, and to my knowledge, it was the first such strategy released by a State or Territory Government in Australia.

The way in which this commitment to sustainable development is articulated is through adopting a long term perspective, as well as offering a 4 year program of actions, with the strategy structured in three parts:

- Part A which provides the context for the strategy;
• Part B which outlines priority programs by describing the challenge, what the government has done, and what the government will do for each of the priority 8 programs; and,
• Part C which deals with implementation.

The release of the strategy was a significant policy making exercise taking five years to realize, and which included the release of a discussion paper, draft strategy (which received 250 submissions) and undertaking of a community workshop involving 180 participants.

Protecting the Environment draws on a number of sources of environmental concerns that broadly match those outlined in Eckersley (1992). Examples of this include:

• Firstly, the Premier’s foreword which indicates “If Victoria is to remain beautiful and prosperous, fertile and diverse, then we must all learn that our future quality of life depends on the wise integration of progress and development with the need to look after and conserve precious resources. It does not mean trading one for the other. It means learning to use resources without using them up” (Victorian Government 1987 foreword [highlighting added] and
• Secondly justifications for the protection of genetic diversity include that “For reasons of self interest and moral obligation to other species, human beings should not knowingly cause the extinction of species” (Victorian Government 1987, p13) [highlighting added].

In terms of the cause of the problems and the challenge that they present Protecting the Environment deflects responsibility through claims such as “Like most developed regions in the world today, Victoria is facing serious environmental problems that must be overcome” (1987, foreword) and portraying these as associated with an historical context where it is possible to lay blame on past generations with “The nineteenth century pioneers belief that natural resources were unlimited gradually given way to growing concern about the effects of uncontrolled development and the need for environmental protection” (Victorian Government 1987, p1). In addition, with only ‘uncontrolled’ development being the problem this points towards the government’s perspective regarding issues associated with environment versus growth debates, and is one of the ways in which ideas about ‘limits to growth’ can be defined away (Dryzek, 1997). This approach is broadly consistent with Caldwell’s operational definition of environmental problems discussed above.

This line of argument is evident elsewhere in the documents with the Premier’s foreword also stating “My government supports development and expansion of our economy and the creation of more jobs … it needs to be sustainable development, where the social and economic benefits can continue indefinitely” (Victorian Government 1987, foreword). The validity of this approach is repeated elsewhere with the conclusion indicating that “The conservation objectives of the strategy are not incompatible with economic development” (Victorian Government 1987, p105). However, it is also clear that part of the Government’s strategy was to marginalise opposition from interests opposed to environmental objectives with “the government reject[ing] the misguided, but oft stated, view that environmental protection is necessarily achieved at the expense of economic growth and employment opportunities. This simplistic equation does not recognise the complex interactions between these different sectors of public policy, nor does it look beyond the immediate time-frame into the medium- and long term where a true perspective can be granted” (Victorian Government 1987, p10) (highlighting added).

In terms of what was to be done and how urgently, Protecting the Environment:

• Establishes its primacy as the first attempt to develop a comprehensive approach to sustainable development within the State;
• Establishes both long term and short term imperatives, with the Strategy taking a long term view as well as offering a four year plan of action; and also;
• Indicates that it “marks the start of a statewide campaign to alert the community about the need to act now” (1987, foreword).

With action required the issue of ‘who’ is the focus for attention to undertake any specified
actions. While “cooperation between government, landholders and developers and the community in general” is highlighted as being necessary (1987 p98), agency within the document is clearly directed towards government, with Part B of the strategy outlining the priority programs by describing the challenge, outlining what the government has done, and stating what the government will do for each of the eight priority programs that cover the suite of issues identified. Further, the word “Government” referring to the Victorian Government features prominently throughout the document, for example through the use of the subheading “What the Government will do” and the repeated use of the phrase “Specifically the Government will …”.

Our Environment Our Future: Victoria’s Framework for Environmental Sustainability 2005

Having provided a brief sketch of Protecting the Environment our attention can be directed forwards 18 years to April 2005 with the release of Our Environment Our Future: Victoria’s Framework for Environmental Sustainability (Victorian Government 2005). Following the 2002 State election, the Government implemented machinery of government changes to establish a Department of Sustainability and Environment, and subsequently initiated the development of Our Environment Our Future, with neither of these initiatives being flagged during the election campaign. Further, unlike Protecting the Environment, there was no public consultation process during the development of OEOF prior to its release in April 2005.

According to the Premier’s foreword “the Framework provides direction for government, business and the community to build environmental considerations into the way we work and live” (Victorian Government 2005). The way in which it sets out to achieve this purpose is through:

- Outlining the challenge ahead;
- Explaining what environmental sustainability is and why it is important;
- Outlining the new approach encompassing three strategic directions:
  - Maintaining and restoring our natural assets;
  - Using Our resources More efficiently;
  - Reducing Our Everyday Impacts; and finally,
- Putting the Framework into Action.

In terms of the discourses informing the source of concern for the environment, these are indicated by the Premier who states “Victoria’s rich and diverse natural and built environment are assets of immeasurable worth. Our magnificent coastlines, lands and waterways, spectacular alpine regions and our unique built environment have intrinsic values that improve our quality of life. They also have direct economic benefits providing safe drinking water, fertile soil, shelter and many other services” (Victorian Government 2005, Premier’s foreword).

While these bear some semblance to those of Protecting the Environment it is worth highlighting the use of the terms “natural assets” and “services” which effectively draw on economic discourses. This economic language is prominent throughout the text with the reasons why we need to become sustainable presented as:

“What is good for the environment is good for Victoria. Clean air and water support our healthy, productive land and ecosystems support our economy, and environmental industries provide new jobs. There are a number of reasons why environmental sustainability must be our goal:

- A healthy environment means healthy communities;
- Environmental sustainability will boost Victoria’s liveability;
- Victoria’s environment is a valuable asset that provides essential goods and services;
- Environmental sustainability delivers economic and social benefits;
• Environmental sustainability creates business opportunities and new jobs;
• Cutting costs – now and in the future;
• Environmental sustainability is a better way of addressing our environmental challenges;
• Environmental sustainability helps Victoria meet is national and international obligations, and;
• Victoria’s environment supports or lives, our lifestyles and our economy”.

The use of economic discourses as a means for constituting why environmental sustainability is important is clearly indicated in the statement that:

“We have a stock of natural assets – air, land, waterways, plants and animals. These assets provide essential services that support our life, communities, industries, economy and jobs. Just as investors seek to protect their financial assets while enjoying the interest earned from them, Victorians must also live off the benefits provided by our stock of natural assets without running down the assets themselves” (Victorian Government 2005, p22).

In addition, in comparison to Protecting the Environment, what is missing is a recognition of the intrinsic value of the environment, and while intrinsic values are mentioned in the Premier’s foreword this is the only place that it is mentioned in the text, and it is used in a way that is contradictory –saying that “they improve our quality of life” is contradictory to the intent of intrinsic value in environmental discourses. However, like the earlier strategy, Our Environment Our Future is based around the discourse that economic growth and environmental sustainability are compatible. For example, it is stated that “For too long we have seen a healthy environment and economic prosperity as being mutually exclusive. This framework has at its heart, a more sophisticated and creative understanding of relations between the economy and the environment” and also that “The State believes you can achieve an A-plus rating for the environment while still retaining an AAA credit rating for the economy” (Victorian government 2005, p16). This statement has a clear resonance within Victorian state politics since the late 1980’s, with the Kennett Government of the 1990’s making the re-attainment of a AAA credit rating its major goal, while the Bracks Government’s use of this a clear reference to avoid being tarred with the brush of the earlier Labor Government led by John Cain.

It is also interesting to note the use of the terms ‘sophisticated’ and ‘creative’ when the Government has recently approved the expansion of the greenhouse gas intensive brown coal burning Hazelwood Power Station. In summary, it is apparent that there is a greater concern to identify the source of environmental concern in economic and human welfare terms relative to the ‘moral’ imperative or recognition of intrinsic value identified by Eckersley (1992).

With the prevalence of economic terms and metaphors for defining environmental concern, it is not surprising that the individual choices of Victorians are also fore grounded as the cause of the environmental challenges facing Victoria, with for example:

• “Our environment faces many significant challenges that have resulted directly from the choices we have made in the past and continue to make” (Premier’s foreword);
• “Taken together, the daily activities of individual Victorians are putting enormous pressure on our environment. It is time to reflect on our simple daily activities” (p10); and,
• “Collectively, the daily actions of all Victorians are having a significant impact on the environment. Inefficient use of resources, poor choices and depletion of our natural environment is a burden on the Victorian economy and business” (p16).

Our Environment Our Future identifies the seriousness of the issues as “It is now time to ensure we develop much more sustainable ways of living our lives” and that “It will take a long term, whole of government approach, and this Framework sets out the challenge that lies
ahead” (Victorian Government 2005, Premier’s foreword). It is also suggested in Our Environment Our Future that “Victoria is proudly playing its part in helping the world meet [the objective of achieving sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people] .... But [that] we have a long way to go before we can claim to be a truly sustainable state” (Victorian Government, 2005, p10). Following on from this it is stated that “Government, business and communities are urged to build environmental considerations into the way we work, and live” (Victorian Government 2005, Premier’s foreword). However, there is less attention on what government will do in future, beyond the exhortation that “we now need to take the next step, which is to incorporate environmental sustainability into all the things we do (Victorian Government 2005, Minister’s foreword). By contrast, individuals are central to future efforts with it being “Time to reflect on our simple daily activities: how much waste we produce, how much water we consume, what products we buy, how we run our businesses and how we choose to travel. Taken separately, each of these decisions seems insignificant, but multiplied by five million people that live in our state their impact on our natural assets is profound” Victorian Government 2005, p10). Such an approach would appear to be consistent with neo-liberal discourses where governing is at a distance (Rose and Miller 1992). Further, throughout the strategy the terms “Our” and “We” are used although who “we” are and what is meant by “our” are left ambiguous.

Finally, the inside cove to Our Environment Our Future includes the following acknowledgment to Victoria’s aboriginal people:

“Since time immemorial, aboriginal people have cared for this land and its natural and cultural resources. This long and unique association continues to through the Aboriginal communities who live and work in Victoria. Accordingly, the Victorian Government is proud to acknowledge Aboriginal people as the original inhabitants of this land” (Victorian Government 2005 inside cover).

Conclusion

Given the above analysis, what tentative lessons or sense can be made from this preliminary examination of these two government strategies, separated by almost 18 years of social, political and environmental change in Victoria? Firstly, to me what stands out most obviously is the increased use of economic terminology to conceptualise environmental issues and why we should be concerned about environmental sustainability. From a point where a broader range of sources of concern were permitted and incorporated throughout Protecting the Environment, the more recent document Our Environment Our Future offers a far more limited view of environmental values, and one which draws more on economic discourses and which focuses on individual actions rather than promoting more cooperative forms of social action. At a time when scientific evidence indicates that the environment in Victoria is seriously degraded, and that new more holistic approaches are required, (Victorian Catchment Management Council 2002) it is hard to reconcile this with the framing of the issues in economic terms. Secondly, the relationship between the environment and the economy has been reframed from the discourse of ‘sustainable development’ to one of ‘ecological modernisation’ where the relationship between the environmental quality and economic growth is reframed as a positive sum game “pollution prevention pays” although whether this claim stands scrutiny remains to be seen. Thirdly, the role of government has changed with there being less of a focus on government as having an influential role in setting ‘the rules of the game’ within which individuals, communities, and businesses operate within Victoria. Further, the focus of attention has shifted from government to the individuals and the choices they make, and disappointing neither strategy provides much discursive space for issues of equity and social and/or environmental justice, despite these discourses being evident within environmental policy literature. There is also limited attention directed towards the role of business, although Our Environment Our Future, does appear to attempt to make environmentally responsible action appear as a business opportunity. Further, the acknowledgment of Victoria’s aboriginal people in Our Environment Our Future is a clear indication of at least lip service to reconciliation, and personally it is disappointing that more wasn’t made of this, for both aboriginal people and as a way of opening up other ways of examining the complexities of the environmental sustainability challenge.

Finally, there is also potential to extend the focus of the analysis in this paper through
examining others aspects of the texts, and the context within which they occur. Such an analysis would look at other avenues of government environmental policy making, and situating these within the broader contexts of Victorian state politics and experience elsewhere. This would allow greater attention to be directed towards issues associated with the almost obsession of recent Victorian governments with financial management and neo-liberal agendas, and the implications of this attention for environmental sustainability.

References


Anti-Oedipus in Education®

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Abstract
This paper will blend theory with practice, and may be bracketed in the genre of conceptual fiction. It uses the theoretical apparatus given to us by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their opus maxima, anti-Oedipus, to explore actual relief teaching experiences in inner city schools undertaken in the UK. Through this blending, the author has produced a way into understanding the behaviours that underpin western educational practice. This is quite far removed from the rhetorical policy making exercises that have arisen from the central offices of the bureaucratic structures that administer the educational systems of the west. It is in fact an informed and conceptual mapping of the actual experiences and power relationships that affect teachers and pupils alike during the school day. It is important to note that the place where these maps come from crucially alter their alignment and in a sense this demonstrates a form of perpsectivism that we may derive from Nietzsche or Deleuze & Guattari as they have formulated writing that combines critical precision with experiential understanding about the real effects of their writing. The ironic aspect of this writing is that it offers no easy solutions or ways out of the clearly problematic educational paradoxes that it presents. On the contrary, these ‘dark places’ that exist in the structure of western education are celebrated and communicated, and their energy is taken seriously in terms of perhaps being fundamental to hierarchies that require a chaotic, messy, undisciplined other clearly in their midst….

A question of style
The introduction of strategies that undermine a singular perspective in theoretical writing, immediately takes us away from a sense of a unified objective opinion about the phenomena at hand. Authors such as Friedrich Nietzsche (1885/1961), Jean-François Lyotard (1974/1993) and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1972/1984) have deployed such a technique to resist the idea that they are writing a unique, authoritative and experience free academic book. Furthermore, we all know that inspirational teaching comes from a different place to the solely book exercise. You could say that this is when the textbooks have been consigned back to the shelves, and the educator starts to live the ideas with their pupils. It also when minor, disruptive and localised signs of life that may be present in the educational context, sit comfortably alongside the big ideas and may begin to exist in the theoretical writing and therefore produce generalised effects, ambience or Stimmung above and beyond their usual normative location. In this analysis, I shall take several of the theoretical elements from perhaps the most vital book that Deleuze and Guattari constructed, anti-Oedipus, and I shall place parts of this structure alongside experiences of relief teaching in the UK. The objective of this approach is to free up the writing in terms of directly attending to experiential elements through theory, and to produce a synthesis that does not fall into the gaps and holes that can often blight well intentioned ethnography and qualitative analysis that sets out to achieve a parallel goal though divides theory and practice into their component parts.

Internal forces
The eminent 19th century German judge Schreber went to school, but what did he learn? Perhaps we could understand the learning process that he was subjected to as institutionalised schizophrenia, or the introduction of madness through the workings of a huge external machine? Or perhaps he merely learnt how to deceive society with his will to power and strong expediency whilst retaining a secret, private self? What we do know is that the cruel front of a
respectable judge, who sat in the correct and esteemed manner to laud over the citizens in his jurisdiction, masked the processes of transformation that were at work within him. He was, in fact, developing the body without organs. This is an absolutely antithetical position to the one socially deemed proper for him to assume. Within the regime of an extraordinary educational system of discipline and learning machines (metal chairs that look more like medieval torture devices!), that had been invented by his father and were upheld by the society at the time as apparently having beneficial educational effects, the judge started to become a woman. We have personal accounts that rays of light began to shine from his arse-hole, and that in the process of radical internal feminisation, every tentacle of his progressively calcified existence began to spread into a cosmic and personal communication system with God.

Schreber went mad. However, locking the body without organs into a straight jacket only intensifies its dysfunction. For example, prison and mental institutions may serve as useful 'meat' on which the body without organs will feed as they demonstrate antithetical behaviours that intensify the movements of the internal body. Also, if one tries to threaten the breakdown of institutional oedipal mechanisms with the rebukes of blame, violence or solitary confinement, this in fact increases the pressure to 'become-other' and to try to escape from familial reproduction in a closed environment such as a school. During the process of becoming-other, the subject enacts events such as the interruptions and the violations in the development of the normative self, as if they were the only meaningful interactions to pass over the body during that period. The western system of education also becomes caught in such cycles, as, for example, the desperate search for discipline dissolves into an attraction and repulsion machine that is continually coercing the irregular into straight lines and constantly rearranging knowledge and learning, as if they were the weapons of crusading knights and as if there was some kind of final truth that education will eventually deliver. Of course, we all really know that knowledge and learning have become fixed to economic parameters, and that they are tied to objectives as laid out by higher forces in government and business; in the west, and progressively around the globe, through education we are enacting a socio-political organisation that is taking us headlong into an unknown future of economic progress and the accumulation of internal forces inside of our institutions.

The replacement programs

The bells ring. Management shuffle paper around the staff-room, the ever mounting number of teachers absent is remarked upon, the dates for the 'o.f.s.t.e.d.' (a.k.a. UK education terror brigade) inspection are clarified and a meeting with parents to decide about the future of the school is arranged. The staff force out jokes, they remain rooted in their sanctuary away from the outside. Stress related disease is a plague akin to the more widespread medieval horrors. The problem is that it doesn’t kill you outright, but it slowly eats away at the subject; stress attacks physiological stability with the pain of continual reaction, monitoring and control, it disables expression and replaces calm words with the need to shout. The teachers clutch their papers and march to their pre-defined locations for their hour of contact with the pupils. The playground is a wasteland, given over to the bright and dull shades of the pupils that will soon be present in the confined space of the classroom. The shades amble inside, they are armoured and protected against the stress disease that will pour forth from their teachers. The duller shades merge into the dishevelled rows of tables and chairs; they already have their books and are ready to watch the spectacle of the replacement programs. The brighter points cannot accept the lack of focus and signature. This isn’t television, or football, or a nightclub. They are expected to slide effortlessly into place, into the classroom and the curriculum, but why should they? Who is this teacher? Why can’t he just chill out or go away and stop this useless talk?

The explicit desires of the children in this situation cannot be interpreted as a rebellious lack of discipline and control. These expressions are not founded in needs that are attempting to replace something that isn’t there, something that is absent in the subjects and requiring replacement. In other words, the anti-Oedipal figure of the unconscious is full; in a sense the pupils have no needs. Their desires constitute complex mixtures of energies and drives that should not be sublimated or siphoned off into various abstracted strata to disable their potentia (the strategies of the replacement programs). That is to say, we should not align reason or the sensible directly against the unconscious as represented by the antipathetic attitudes of the pupils. Previous epochs have taught us that the primal terror of primitive human groups cannot
forms. For example, the horror of Mary Shelley (1818/1994) in *Frankenstein*, or the panopticon of Jeremy Bentham are both supreme reinventions of the fear of the other, and the more recent surveillance devices in LA as described by Mike Davis (1990) in *City of Quartz*, could themselves be figured as movements of the unconscious, in that they simultaneously decry and uphold civil society. The point of using *anti-Oedipus* to understand the desire of rebellious pupils in western educational contexts is that their desire is not a static phenomenon. In other words, desire in these terms is tied to the breaking of bonds, it also related to the reformation of stronger ties in order to feel the rush of release from them. Perhaps one might say that this is characteristic of the movement of desire in western education - as Foucault (1972/1984) has put it; "we desire our own repression" (p.xiii).

Meanwhile, the emptiness of boredom remains. Teachers perilously attempt to assign meaningless tasks to their disruptive classes in order to achieve the passing of the contact hour without serious conflict. For example, the copying out of diagrams, the design of a poster for your favourite film, the answering of irrelevant questions based on sections of words plucked from tired textbooks that are still basking in the fervour of learnt information. It doesn’t take a genius to see through the activity, the leading students soon find more amusing past-times, which might include the baiting of the teacher or localised action such as humiliation, laughter, sharp oral games, fighting, eroticism and the use of projectiles to communicate something more meaningful than the previously designated task. At this point it could be said that the class is crossing-over; it is becoming other, taking on board the movement of desire and turning the allotted space into landscapes of action which are not controlled through the replacement programs. The teacher attempts to enforce the authority assigned to his or her position through the socio-political complex maintaining the school and advocating the replacement of desire. Shouting has no effect, the pupils shout back, or do not hear the stressed out screeching from the front of the class. Threats and rebukes dissolve aimlessly into the livelier and less directed atmosphere of the crowd. The teacher is abstracted and isolated in his or her educational goals. At best the teacher is reduced to a policing role in order to determine whether or not any serious laws are being broken during the lesson.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) have introduced the concept of segmentation that allows us a way into the nature of the replacement programs. At school we are told, “you are not at home anymore”, in the army you are told, “you are not at school anymore” (p.209). The constant shuffling between classrooms in the high school context, the breaks, the sounding of bells that composes the anatomy of a school day and continually interrupts time as duration; all contribute to the cutting up of experience. Marshall McLuhan (1964) famously noted that the modern classroom was akin to a feudal dungeon and that it can no longer function as an isolated space, or without recognising the language of forms in the outside media environment (p.201). Perhaps it could be argued that his envisaged media education is the last throw of the dice for the survival of the educational establishment in the west; however, the relevance and expansion of the replacement programs that enhanced media education would enact cannot dispel the internal forces which are rupturing it from the inside. For example, the forecast PC liberal revolution in educational practice does nothing to dispel the moment of segmentation, which has already mutated desire into a cancerous torpor and an obstreperous debasement of authority despite the new technology as fresh learning tools. In addition, *anti-Oedipus*, which involves the questioning of familial reproduction through machinic assembly, does not give us solutions to the formation of schizophrenics, madmen and avatars through replacement, but in many ways, examines the acceleration in the process of their formation.

Jean Genet (1951/1971) who was locked in his prison cell, created a fantasy world of princes and kings. He saw in the foulness of dreaming and hell, gardens of saintliness, where he could worship the rims of petals, the mossy thorns and insect holes. William Burroughs (1959/1993), who has been similarly affected by the delirium of the modern world, and has created artificial and paranoid environments in which to act out his drives, sought bodily deformation as the only escape from nameless bureaux and demented scientists. In one such episode, *The All American De-anxieted Man*, is presented at the International Conference of Technological Psychiatry where the Lobotomy Kid sells his creation to the awaiting audience of esteemed guests. The man turns into a black centipede through viscid, transparent jelly and emitting a lung wrenching stench; he is a monster of decay and mutation setting the scene into chaos,
producing new and unheard of diseases as he goes. Elsewhere in the *Naked Lunch*, Burroughs restates the body in terms of an all-purpose blob, the organs are replaced by a hole, (it is the man who taught his arse-hole to talk), efficiency is augmented and undifferentiated tissue can grow into any type of flesh. The resulting society is cancerous and its power mechanisms are a vast bureaucracy, which variously set into motion schemes such as Program empty body - the replacement of humans with exact viral copies, the liquefaction program - the merging of everyone into One Man by the process of protoplasmic absorption, and the Divisionist programme - where tiny pieces of flesh are cut off and grown into exact replicas of themselves in embryo jelly, making one person with millions of separate bodies. Burroughs (1971) sees the working of society through the replacement programs as constituting a machine, whatever we feed into it, it will process, so feed in, “dismantle yourself” (p.123).

**Anti production at work**

The teachers are already dismantled. They are cyborgs plugged into stress software from central office. This office is continually redesigning goals and positing achievement and performance standards for classroom use; in addition it records educational objectives, initiates inspection and creates multipurpose educational values. It could be stated that these activities are part of the cybernetic functioning of an ideally co-ordinated meta-body or system in that they attempt to create the illusion of function despite the obvious dysfunction ‘on the ground’. I walk across the playground, a hunched senior teacher with a marked stare and dressed in a rough tweed suit comes up to me and offers some advice: “I’ll tell you something for free, to survive in this place you have to act like Attila the Hun”. He marches grumpily to his next lesson. He is a processional figure, a clown caught in a communal hallucination from a New Orleans Mardi Gras, forced into teaching quadratic equations, integration and the use of cosine. I begin to see the theatre of the situation. Antonin Artaud (1938/1958) used the idea of the *Theatre of Cruelty* to relay the workings of society in the wake of annihilation on the plane of social success. Arthur Rimbaud (1850s/1976) wrote about the mad twisted parade, which jostled noisily down the street as he lived it up in nineteenth century Paris. At a certain level, the dysfunctional daily reality of education could be understood as a sick joke. It is a game of hide-and-seek with the body sinking into ever-weirder formations to avoid the rigorous torture of knowledge and learning; this contest is enacted on a stage set of societal concern and educational funding. Yet the rules of this action serve only to replicate themselves, it is a battle that cannot be won or lost.

We find this absurd process expressed in *anti-Oedipus* in terms of the plane of immanence. Through this analysis, western society is characterised by two movements, one towards schizophrenia and the other capitalism. Both are organised and maintained by the state that is fulfilling its need to become-immanent and cause generalised decoding and the replacement of coding and over-coding with its own axiomatics (the replacement programs). At the base of this complex process is the sterility of anti-production, which is the fixed points in society that includes conventions, institutions and impulses that provide a framework for possible social relations, but are themselves unaffected by whatever happens according to these relations. Anti-production permeates the capitalist complex because of the universal history of debt as described by Nietzsche (1887/1956). It sits within the notion of the schizophrenic because of the oedipal analysis; which takes as given the psycho-analytic concept of repression and does not produce new figures to follow the fluctuations of schizophrenic desire in whatever direction they might be taken. In synthesis, *anti-Oedipus* attempts to conjoin capitalism with schizophrenia. The generalised coding of social activity by capital produces a plane of immanence or smooth space, where dysfunctional action is required to enable the development and exploitation of surplus value. The tedium of the working day with its breaks, interruptions and repetition, is rehearsed and played out through the schools of the west. This is the development of the schizophrenic necessity of capital, the foundation of capitalist political economy on the abstract subjective essence of wealth as theorised by Marx (1844). Through this system, production becomes an end in itself. It is a cosmopolitan, universal energy that overthrows every restriction and bond, yet encounters limits and barriers that are interior and immanent to it. These limits and barriers are reproduced on a larger scale involving police states, the vigilance of the citizens, perhaps even war. Capitalism doesn’t work without expansion, it creates schizophrenic flows of sign-signifiers that are checked and regulated by the despotism of paranoiac over-coding, which is continually attempting to designate some unity and characterises the nature of
the modern, liberal and democratic state.

Education may be examined from this perspective. On the one hand, the obsession with the markets, economic consideration and efficiency creates an environment of production, where the pupils are streamed and encouraged to excel to the limits of their ability, achieving qualifications, skills and the knowledge necessary to get into university. On the other hand the functioning of such a machine of mental production can only focus the ability of society as a whole to develop stringent and impossible criteria for the intellectual judgement of pupils. Deleuze and Guattari in *anti-Oedipus* do not prioritise one movement over the other but conceptualise the connection between the two. The temptation to perceive educational failure in terms of psychoanalytic concepts such as the Oedipus complex with its repressions and catharsis, or stable categories such as schizophrenia, psychosis or neurosis is in their terms the working of anti-production. Instead of looking at the flow of desire, which might possibly exceed, dissolve or reverse the regulatory expectations which have been determined for the pupil at that particular state of development; the irregular behaviour is pinpointed and characterised as being in need of attention by specialists. Resources, expertise and educational research are poured into the characterisation of the irregularity, which, once understood, has specific attention withdrawn from it and the pupils are reintroduced into mainstream education. Education oscillates in this economically determined environment, and suffers from the stagnation of anti-production, which permeates its whole body with resentment, antipathy and repetition.

A different teacher approaches as I saunter into the staff-room. He wears his white lab coat proudly, and speaks in an excruciatingly loud voice. This teacher tells me about the lack of academic success which the school has recently achieved. He says that very few pupils are reaching GCSE standard and describes the routine misbehaviour of fights, swearing and criminal activity. Teaching for him is a holding mechanism until the pupils are forced into taking jobs. They come to school because they are not allowed to just walk around on the streets, and in many ways it is safer for them to be inside the school system. "On the outside their behaviour would not be tolerated, outside they will be up against the law," he says.

Yet the school is not a sanctuary where the law does not intervene. During that day the police are called because a gang has attacked a rival gang that have been using the school premises to sell drugs. It is clear from this instance that there is no narrowly defined ‘educational space’ where the parameters of restricted action according to the liberal dictums of fair play and the value of learning may work effectively. In addition, the threat of violence and incarceration has been internalised by the population to such an extent that the drama of its execution is enacted regularly; it gives a brief adrenaline rush and the liberation from monotony. The teacher was wrong to suggest that unruly behaviour will be treated differently on the outside. The memory of transgression is carried around by the school population at all times, and acts as a double bind in determination of cultural activity in the form of law breaking and the internalisation of the laws which are going to be broken. The only difference between the police and the teachers is that the teachers have not been handed the badge of authority and power that the police have come to wield on behalf of the state.

The school building is a run down piece of pre-fabricated design. The windows are too large, supposedly to enable clear observation of the interior of the classrooms from any angle. Yet the impression created is of rectangular goldfish bowls, irregularly fitting together at odd yet mathematically determined intersections. Small metal staircases wind up between the classes, creating multi-level environments where pupils may easily hide and congregate between lessons. Some of the buildings have already been abandoned, the others wait for dereliction and demolition as the only escape from the enforced torture of rampaging students. The school environment reinforces the resigned perception of the teachers and enhances the division between them and the pupils through its disassembled harmony. It functions to provide a suitable space for graffiti and provides a 3-dimensional, maze-like opportunity to escape and to be found. The school has become a social meeting place for the disaffected amid the ruins of organised society and anti production.

**Schizophrenic analysis**

Johnny Rotten in Marcus (1989) said, "I don’t work, I just speed, that’s all I need" (p.56). His characteristic slouch defied the encroachment of impending forces to neutralise the efficacy of
punk music in the early eighties. It could be argued that the rigorous body politics of education has failed to leave its mark on a transient generation of punk rockers who were tribalised and exhilarated around outlandish hair styles, bondage clothing and amphetamine sulphate. The fusion of musical tribalism latterly translated and transmuted into electronic rave culture, which exploded towards the end of the eighties and through to the present day. Now, a hybrid mix of punk, reggae, hip-hop, techno, space-hop, various strands of rock, trance, drum & bass and jungle animates the youth in accelerated subterranean activity. It is becoming less plausible to isolate and define this cultural production as being the mark of alienation, or any direct suburban rebellion or reaction towards the tedium of capitalist endeavour. Modes of capitalist production and the subsequent musical diversity that caters for the emerging markets of the west are intrinsically interwoven. In an attempt to characterise this relationship, the social scientist, Michel Maffesoli (1988/1996) has spoken about the creation of an ‘electronic palaver’. These are groups of complex networks of association and affiliation that respond to impersonal forces and bubble and effervesce with a Dionysian multiplicity, which is unholy in the eyes of the Apollonian God. Maffesoli points to the study of ambience or *Stimmung* as being the only way to characterise this palaver, and as he terms it, “the twilight of organisational models and their ways of thinking in the world” (p.149).

The point for education that we may derive from Maffesoli is that the attempt to organise our systems from one defined point is futile. In other words, the age of grand design of educational excellence and ‘best practice’ that was supposed to be universally implemented without regard for the nature of the specific relationships that develop between pupil and teacher is in the process of coming to an end. Some teachers do genuinely relish the patriarchal discipline that they have to impose to get these abstract and universal schemes of learning pragmatically into place. Others seek more subtle strategies, making friends of the pupils or encouraging their popularity in the school community, which enhances the chance of getting the lessons across without serious disruption. Yet the clever manipulation of the emotions of the students or the rigid adherence to absolute control, does not address the fundamental malaise that is sweeping through western education. This is that the bulk of the exercises that are set for the pupils are irrelevant or demeaning and the genuinely useful activities are often swamped by reams of gap filling. The pupils in this system consequently become experts in excuses or pretending to be occupied, the teachers pass the time in the hope that there will not be another flare up during their lesson. Inspection by Government hit squads provides the school with the opportunity to congregate the least disruptive pupils in a classroom for rigorously prepared lessons and does nothing to tackle the real problems which are deep rooted, societal and profound.

To help us further to understand these processes, I would like to introduce the notion of schizo-analysis, which Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1984) formulated through the writing of *anti-Oedipus*. It involves the unconscious being invested in the social field. This realisation of desire comes about by the conjunction of flows, which is also the linking of intensities such as those that are produced in the first stages of familial reproduction. Psycho-analysis stops here, taking the infants familial intensities as the origination of the unconscious investment and augmenting the process of familial reproduction as the means to understanding (and controlling) the struggle for domination involving the adult drives in terms of the fight for possession of the ego. Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1984) extend the investment of the unconscious or molecular unconscious as they term it in order to render the unconscious able to represent the deterritorialisation of the full body of the earth; in other words schizo-analysis reinvests the unconscious as the body without organs and the workings of the global system of capital on the individual. It could be stated that schizo-analysis is functioning everywhere in the western educational system in terms of the production of desire. It escapes the familial oedipal mechanisms of repression by producing moments of universal history that are limit thoughts and are impossible to be familiarly reproduced under stable conditions such as in a school (for example many of the expressions that we find in *Twilight of the Idols*). These flows of production are exterior to the systems of capital, so they cannot be reterritorialised or overcoded by despotic state signifiers, and in so doing Deleuze and Guattari have formulated a methodology for educational research that cannot be reduced to governmental inquiries or social reports. The criteria for schizo-analysis are strictly immanent. They do not conform to models of representation or stable categories for examination. This is in recognition of the fundamental instability inherent within unconscious desire that is continually breaking and reforming bonds of filiation.

In the later opus, *A Thousand Plateaus*, schizo-analysis is refigured in terms of rhizomatics. The rhizome characterises elements that ceaselessly vary and alter their relations with respect to
others. They are multiplicities that are indivisible or relatively indivisible, they cannot increase or diminish without their elements changing in nature, and they are aligned with intensive qualities and libidinal motion. They feature the unrecognisable, unconscious, intensive, they are constantly dismantling and constructing, communicating, crossing over; in other words they are continuous non-organisable multiplicities. The social relations produced according to rhizomatics are tactically subterranean, nomadic and difficult to pin down from the perspective of social stratification and the systems of sedentary capital integration that route tax money into western schools.

In corollary, one might ask if it is possible for the serious educationalist to utilise schizo-analysis or rhizomatics for the purposes of learning? This is perhaps not the correct question to ask. The point at stake is, in fact, the activity that we now call education. It is caught in an inflexible, hierarchical structure, which at its root serves to destroy the lives of the teachers and pupils, and produces a massive gulf between the pragmatics of the daily existence of schools and the idealistic and uniform rhetoric that is broadcast from central office. Schizo-analysis and rhizomatics cannot be hermetically sealed into curriculum structures of textbooks containing knowledge to be learnt, yet they might help to give some insight into what is going on by offering escape routes from the replacement programs and the accumulation of internal forces in western education.

**Escape routes**

I wander slowly in thought to my final two lessons of the school day. In the playground, I pass through groups of girls sporting the latest in club fashion, boys leaning against the pre-fabrication, hands in pockets and sharply aware. A frantic looking man with large eyes on stalks below a smooth bald head suddenly catches me up from behind. His eyebrows undulate like the rocking of a boat at sea, he wants to march ahead, though he slows to my pace as he also wishes to talk. He says that he will be giving his lessons in the room next to mine. I notice that he has a deep Irish accent, tinged with paranoia and regret. During the contact hour the pupils arrive intermittently, though with no real fuss. I do not impose the imbecilic task that has been set by the usual teacher, however, some pupils do get on with it, others sit and chat, others still talk to me, and the lesson passes calmly and uneventfully. Suddenly from the cavernous vaults from which screams originate, a bellowing can be heard from next-door. The glass portal opens, and the Irish teacher lurches in, demanding that I come to his room to see to his class. He points exaggeratedly at a small laughing girl and remonstrates that according to the 1988 Education Act, he has the right not to teach any pupil he wants, and that he does not want to teach her. I soon rejoin my class, and the lesson next door passes painfully with an organised banging of desks, the calling of senior teachers, and the expulsion of half the class. The next lesson is not much better, and I try to swiftly avoid anymore contact with this ruffled educationalist. However, he catches me on the stairs and orders me to tell the headmistress that he is keeping his class for half an hour after school for serious misbehaviour. Needless to say I got straight into my car and drove home, listening to techno music, wondering about schizo-analysis.

**Footnote on perspectivism**

As we leave this school located in the UK education system, we might reflect about how perspectival our reading of the situation may be. We may inwardly chuckle at the bad fortune of the teachers caught on a daily basis in this context as it has been described in this paper. Or we might think that we should galvanise our attempts to better this dysfunctional reality in some way. Yet neither of these reactions attends to the focus that *anti-Oedipus* lends our conceptual mapping of educational failure. Perspectivism in this context does not simply mean that there are many possible interpretations of this writing, and they are all somehow equally informative about the western educational system. It means that there is a focused, singular and unified reading of this world - and it is the most extraordinary one – and this should be carried forth and spread out to see what life-forms it will engender.
References

Artaud, A. (1958). *The Theatre and its double* (M.C. Richards, Trans.). New York: Grove Press. (Original work published 1938). ‘Never before, when it is life that is in question, has there been so much talk of civilization and culture. And there is a curious parallel between this generalized collapse of life at the root of our present demoralization and our concern for a culture which has never been coincident with life, which in fact has been devised to tyrannize life. Before speaking further about culture, I must remark that the world is hungry and not concerned with culture, and that the attempt to orient toward culture thoughts turned only toward hunger is a purely artificial expedient. What is more important, it seems to me, is not so much to defend a culture whose existence has never kept a man from going hungry, as to extract, from what is called culture, ideas whose compelling force is identical with that of hunger. We need to live first of all: to believe in what makes us live and that something makes us live – to believe that whatever is produced from the mysterious depths of ourselves need not forever haunt us as an exclusively digestive concern. I mean that if it is important for us to eat first of all, it is even more important for us not to waste in the sole concern for eating our simple power of being hungry. If confusion is the sign of the times, I see at the root of this confusion a rupture between things and words, between things and ideas and signs that are their representation’.


Nietzsche, F. (1956). *The Genealogy of Morals* (F. Golffing, Trans.). New York: Doubleday Anchor Books. (Original work published 1887). ‘Guilt,’ in its present incarnation, is associated with accountability and responsibility: you are guilty because you could have and should have done otherwise. Accountability and responsibility, which are connected with the concept of free will, are in no way connected with ‘guilt’ as it was originally conceived. ‘Guilt,’ according to Nietzsche, originally meant simply that a debt needed to be paid. As Nietzsche remarks in section 13 of the first essay in the genealogy, ‘free will’ is a recent invention that accompanies slave morality.

