Schools, Identity, and Homosexuality

by

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Abstract

This work is a life-history analysis of thirteen homosexuals aged 17-22, ten of whom are male. The thesis concentrates on six themes: concepts of sexuality and their portrayal in the curriculum; school episodes or experiences; teachers' and administrators' role(s) in these experiences; concepts of identity; and the institutional intent of schools to influence students. To this end, the interviews probe how influential schools are, how participants interpret the "lesson(s)" of the curriculum on sexual matters, and whether they associate school experience with the development of their own sexual identities.

All the subjects detect circumstances and attitudes whose effect is to disparage homosexuality and to discourage serious discussion of it. The subjects are less unified in concluding whether schools intend to influence them and their circumstances, and whether what they remember counts as evidence of influence.

Although they criticize schools for making them invisible, most of the subjects tacitly accept the ideology of the education system. They believe that the system fosters, encourages, enlightens, and enables its students. They believe in the system as an ideal, and they believe in the accuracy of their appraisal of it. They do not consider that a schooling ideology based on a binary understanding of gender that relentlessly counterpoises masculinity and femininity, male and female, and hetero/homosexual, requires the very invisibility and silence they detest.

As they contend with compulsory heterosexuality, they blur the importance of identities in their lives. Thus do they constitute their own exclusion so as not to be trapped by it.
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be finished.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Research can be deceptively exhilarating. Carrying it out can have the initial effect of suppressing all uncertainties. Each step in acquiring data becomes a favourable augury. Sometimes, however, the nuts and bolts of research unexpectedly reveal the politics at the very roots of one's thesis. This has been my experience.

1.1 Research and Sexual Politics

My sexual identity has always been clear in the College that employs me. It was known when I was hired, and subsequently no one has interfered with my work on the grounds of anything I have said or done in the community respecting that identity or the politics on which I have worked. My politics are not dominated by the fact of my being gay, but they are imbued with its consequences, with the knowledge of what "gay" signifies for me as symbol and practice.

The region of Alberta in which I live was served by the Peace Gay and Lesbian Association for eleven years. I was the second leader of the group and volunteered on its contact phone line during the first six years of its operation. This present research arose from conversations with male callers who were having recurring homosexual fantasies.

What had seemed to them a neat knot of psychological comfort, sexual symbolism, and of heterosexuality as normalcy, was now fraying under the pressure of 'alien' thoughts. They questioned the very basis of what they could assume to be generally or personally true or known. They concluded that if they knew themselves so poorly as not previously to have
detected these newly asserting tendencies, they could not confidently say they understood anything about themselves.

They assumed knowing means unity of, and consistency in, thought and understanding. They dismissed the power of dissonant perceptions and feelings to instill values and meanings in sexuality and identity. What drew me into my present research was the intersection of identity, sexuality, values, and formal education.

At the outset of my interviewing, I thought school policies and organization might evoke from lesbian and gay students self-denunciations and disavowal. Schools are not renowned for candid sexual curricula and class discussions. (Perhaps one day an ethnography of gay/lesbian, or supportive heterosexual, students or teachers will be possible, but neither was possible at the time of this research.) I thought those participating in this study might (1) succumb to disinforming teachings about homosexuality, and therefore (2) distrust their interpretations and understandings of their own and other homosexuals' lives, or (3) challenge the content of what they were taught and the curricular premises of what is worth knowing. The research indicates a different range of outcomes.

This thesis does not address all the issues that had earlier occurred to me. It explores associations of school experiences and identity development among a group of homosexual youth. They discuss what they think identity is, ruminate about their own identity development, and whether they associate this development with their school experiences. Identity is not generated by school, say the participants, but their understanding of it is filtered through a schooling that almost always ignores or devalues homosexuality. They do not doubt who they are, but they sometimes doubt the self-knowledge that affirms and solidifies their sexuality.

Readers will note that I have already used "gay," "lesbian," and "homosexual" interchangeably. This should not be interpreted as disregard for the politics underlying the use of terms, and the desirability of language as precise as possible to describe consummately, human experience. However, we should not solidify the use of language so as to prevent us
from using it imaginatively and "re-inventively." The participants themselves use all three terms synonymously.

1.2 The Prosaics of Methodology

No particular theory or set of theories animates research in Gay and Lesbian Studies. Some write from feminist perspectives on gender formation (Rich 1983; Durocher 1990; Hart 1990). Others write from social/psychological adjustment and role theory perspectives (Cass 1979, 1984; De Cecco & Shively 1984; Harry 1984; Troiden 1989; Weinberg 1978). Although methodology is not necessarily driven by theory, there is some correspondence between them. If my research is untied to a specific theory, it does fall within current Gay and Lesbian Studies methodology.

My work is a life-history analysis of thirteen homosexuals aged 17-22, the analysis emphasizing associations between the development of identity and school experiences. I refer to this as life history reservedly because the interviews were not strictly biographical. The research was more narrowly conceived than to permit freewheeling description of the subjects' lives. On the other hand, the interviewees offered details about interpersonal relations, family relationships, friendships, and personal values. The interviews also show the youths' introspective views of themselves and their experiences. This aspect of the interview evidence enhances the data by further contextualizing it.

All but one of the interviewees were older than 17, and most were already out of school for two or more years by the time they were interviewed. All but one were high school graduates. Two of them lived in the Grande Prairie, Alberta, region. Ten of the thirteen are male. I selected the age group 17-22 because school generations can be measured in segments as brief as two years. School structure and power endure through many generations, but prevalent student attitudes and behaviours can change very quickly, sometimes within a year. I wanted people who were out of school or imminently so, because their scan would encompass a full
high school experience. Yet these participants' high school accounts would be sufficiently recent to ensure their views would not be wholly obsolete.

Contact with most individuals came through an advertisement in Angles, a Vancouver newspaper operated by and for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals.¹ The Albertans responded to an advertisement in the Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune. In both papers, the advertisement announced research into the high school experiences of homosexual youths, to be conducted by a University of British Columbia graduate student. I also met twice with a youth group at the Gay and Lesbian Centre in Vancouver's west end. Through responses to the newspaper entry and subsequent contacts, people volunteered as participants.

Interview Questions

Interviews were audiotaped and lasted on average two hours. They were conducted in locations participants felt most comfortable in, which meant either their own homes or Vancouver's Gay and Lesbian Centre. All interviews began with a simple question asking the subjects to describe the schools they attended. All interviewees answered with descriptions of their schools' social environments. I began the interviews modestly since the larger issues of the thesis might be too difficult to raise immediately. I preferred to ease discussion toward the major questions of the study. Exchanges consisted of structured and unstructured questions. By "structured" I mean a list of previously prepared questions to elicit ideas pertinent to specific themes. By "unstructured" I mean questions asked during the interviews as a result of

¹ Angles is a monthly publication put out by a collective that operates as the Lavender Publishing Society. The paper is distributed free in the lower mainland, and is also available by subscription. The Angles main office is located in Vancouver.

The paper's mission statement states "Angles publishes articles which describe or assess events of the larger community which are of significance or interest to Vancouver bisexuals, lesbians, and gays." No circulation figures are provided.
thoughts and themes expressed by the participants. Questions formulated prior to interviewing pertained to the following themes:

1. Concepts of sexuality
2. Episodes or experiences in school pertinent to sexuality or gender
3. The role(s) of students, teachers, and administrators in these episodes, or in otherwise educational situations having to do with gender and/or sexuality
4. The degree of tolerance of the high schools attended
5. The ethnic, economic, and racial composition of the high schools
6. Sexuality in the curriculum, especially the representation of homosexuality
7. Concepts of identity and self-knowledge held by participants
8. The purposefulness of schools in shaping (influencing) students, and the role of teachers in achieving this purposefulness
9. Alliances with friends or other students
10. The possible association of personal qualities with a gay/lesbian identity
11. The life experience of participants compared to that of their peers
12. The participants' awareness of their own sexual identity

This thesis, however, concentrates on six of the 12 themes: concepts of sexuality and their portrayal in the curriculum, school episodes or experiences, teachers' and administrators' role(s) in these experiences, concepts of identity, and the purposefulness of schools to shape or influence students. To this end, the interviews probe how influential schools are, how participants interpret the "lesson(s)" of the curriculum on sexual matters, and whether they associate school experience with the development of their own sexual identities. In seeking to understand how young homosexuals comprehend and respond to school discourses, these six themes address the institutional functioning of schools, thus undergirding the remaining six.

Structured questioning on experience and the formation/realization of sexual identity (discussed later in the chapter on identity), and what social scripts the subjects had learned to follow, was combined with open queries about more personal interpretations and insight.
In reporting on the data I have tried to retain as much of the regular forms of expression of the subjects as was reasonably possible. Few of us speak grammatically all the time, and this is evident in the data. However, there were frequent audible pauses and meanderings between to-the-point responses, and I have in a few instances repaired these gaps or pauses.

To indicate how the data are reported requires more than a statement about how interviews are quoted. As the researcher I should place myself in proper and accurate context. I am gay, and stipulated this to all participants. My sexual identity was an important incentive to the thirteen people referred to in this study. They assumed a gay person would interview them, and consider their ideas, respectfully. The lesbians in the group wanted more assurances than the men, that what they said would be analyzed sensitively and with appropriate political regard. They explicitly stated they were uninterested in being mere tokens in a male-dominated study. Along with a personal promise that they would never be tokens, I sent full transcripts of the interviews to the most recent addresses I had for all participants, giving them the opportunity to clarify their comments or to elaborate on themes already mentioned, and then to return the documents to me with or without changes. All were satisfied with this arrangement and no changes were suggested by anyone.

Whereas all subjects agreed on this matter, it would be a mistake to assume that all lesbians and gays are alike simply because they have an affinity for members of their own sex. Gays and lesbians come from varied economic and cultural backgrounds. However compelling and unifying a common sexual orientation may be, it does not mitigate the myriad additional influences of their lives. Research cannot account for every subtle variable, but qualitative inquiries can explore personal strategies developed in response to the different cultures the participants have experienced. Open interrogatives thus reveal more of the social, emotional, and logical intricacies of individual reasoning, and the deft manoeuvres needed to establish personal security and space to explore their understandings and desire for intimacy.

Open interviews in qualitative research encompass
descriptions of experiences, behaviors, actions, [and] activities ....[they] elicit what the
person thinks about their [sic] experiences ... intentions, goals, and values .... [they
ask] do you feel anxious, happy, afraid, intimidated, ... confident. (McMillan &
Schumacher 1989: 407)

The use of open interviews appealed to me because my data usually connoted processes more
than they did final conclusions. Among those who fight to clarify their identities this
distinction is valuable. Final conclusions are rare in any event; we live fluid, not fixed, lives.
Furthermore, identity may be conceived and experienced, varyingy, as a threshold to new self-
understandings, as established (and therefore unquestioned) self-awareness, or as a concept or
social category that limits rather than liberates us. Knowledge of the distinction between
processes and conclusions helps participants and interviewer to contextualize the interview
responses.

To combine open and structured interviewing is to accept "process" data as partially rather
than definitively explanatory. As Robert Connell says (although referring to gender) (Connell
1987: 116), "[t]he product of the process is not a logical unity but an empirical unification. It
happens on particular terms in particular circumstances." Maturity, insight, developing ideas
of gender, sexuality, and society, are not gained systematically, sequentially, and
uninterruptedly. They are more often acquired through swirls of random and sudden
awareness that are subsequently modulated by doubts and competing ideological
interpretations.

I am not searching in this thesis for causality or the root explanation of sexual identity,
desire, and understanding. Were I hoping for this, I would be thwarted by interview data
almost always characterized by the self-representations of participants (Boxer & Cohler 1989).
Root explanations draw us away from the "merely" personal, and self-representation may not
bring a researcher to such a level of analysis.

The kind of analysis done here meshes well with strictures of open interviewing.
Furthermore, the approach is prevalent in gay and lesbian studies, particularly in the collection
of life histories. This form of qualitative research unlocks a long-suppressed heritage of sexual
and gender perceptions.

**Validity**

A study involving thirteen people is not sufficient (or necessary) to propose "laws" of power relations in social institutions, and attitudes about gender and sexual behaviour in schools. Although I do not in any case seek to establish such laws, I am not thereby released from a consideration of validity.

This study is an adjunct of other studies of school experiences of homosexuals (Sears 1991a, 1988; Rofes 1989; Trenchard & Warren 1985; Uribe & Harbeck 1991). These studies explore the roles and behaviour of counselors, teachers, and other school personnel when faced with issues relevant to sexual choice, identity, and discrimination. Whether homosexual teachers "come out" to students who think they are themselves homosexual, how counselors react to disclosures of sexual identity by lesbian and gay students, and principals' opinions about whether homosexual teachers should retain their jobs, are the nub of these investigations.

"Representativeness" in these studies is further clarified in a growing body of writings bearing strong resemblance to my study. Whereas validity is neither confirmed nor denied solely by whether the data analysis resembles that of other investigations, the fact of the resemblance suggests cognate or cross-referenced validity.

Some commentators on validity (Wolcott 1990c; LeCompte & Goetz 1982) argue that no definitive understanding is possible, and for them cognate validity would surely suffice. Others are less sanguine, emphasizing reliability and credibility of evidence and of subjects (Denzin 1989; McMillan & Schumacher 1989).

Concepts of internal and external validity or reliability suggest questions about interpretation of data. For example, would accounts of school life match in argumentative form or conceptual content, those discussed in analyses of school policies or practices? Would other gay and lesbian youth understand what I asked my interviewees? Would others respond to instances of experience as did the participants in my study? Would other researchers find
similarities of purpose, response, and understanding in similarly self-identified youth? I believe so, on grounds of general interest in these matters, and also of agreement on them in generalizable research already published.

Despite the similarities it must not be forgotten that people "rewrite" their personal histories for personal reasons: among them a more honest self-appraisal of one's life, or a desire to represent oneself more appealingly to the "crowd." Understanding and insight, however, are perpetual possibilities, not realizations suddenly revealed at special, pre-ordained moments in our lives. Although the "rewriting" of lives challenges assertions of validity, it negates neither the possibilities of additional insight nor the value of current perception. Analysis of the data is not hampered by a possible change of mind in the future.

Moreover, the subjects in this research may have in common their sexual orientation, but this does not suggest they equivalently experience sexuality or draw from it similar conclusions. The group is not indicative of all similarly-educated homosexuals of the same age, in all cultures. The importance of the representativeness of a sample in a qualitative analysis differs from that needed when testing a specific hypothesis using positivist methods.

Representativeness may be further complicated by the fact that people (my interviewees included) are politically, socioeconomically, and intellectually varied. If a number of persons display a common sexual identity, that commonality neither disguises nor denies these variations, nor will it account for the subjects' evolving views on the self-same variations.

Having mentioned the subjects and their interviews, it is appropriate to introduce them specifically. Who are they? What are their biographical details? The generalities are straightforward: all were between 17 and 22. All but three are male, and all but one had graduated from high school prior to the interview. Most are white. With one exception, all graduated from high school. General observations, however, do not convey the more important personal delineations that enrich interpretations of data. Their reasonings, attitudes, and conceptual frames, are the matter of later chapters. What follows is a precis of information about the participants, that may explain more vividly that may contextualize their reasonings.
1.3 Participant Profiles

Two observations about this study must be kept in mind. Although the thesis refers frequently to gays and lesbians, several stated they do not close themselves off from bisexual involvement even if they accept themselves, and live, as lesbians or gays. Second, the research subjects were not equally forthright about personal information. What follows then are brief autobiographical capsules. Each participant decided whether to use his/her own name. I will not indicate, however, which of the names are truly given and which are selected. To so specify might make it easier to identify those who preferred anonymity.

Ann (18)
Ann has lived in various large and small centres in British Columbia. She remembers, as a young girl and long afterward, feeling out of place, particularly in school. Others perceived her as different and treated her accordingly. She was fat, wore thick glasses and had eczema. (Most participants do not describe their physical appearances in earlier years. What Ann describes is, in our society, a basis of differentiation and exclusion. Physical appearance and sexuality serve as a double-bind premise of disqualification. In a commonly constructed "explanation" of homosexuality, the homely person with low self-esteem looks to homosexuality because s/he lacks confidence with the opposite sex.)

Trish (21)
Throughout her interview, Trish conceptually linked lesbianism with feminism. She had experienced a couple of relationships prior to our meeting, and spoke confidently of her identity. Her analysis of her schooling was more political than most other participants', in that she conceived formal education as a political act. She said most students reject the school system and are alienated from it.
Louise (18)

Louise emphasized her general bisexuality but current lesbianism. She stressed the general fluidity of human sexual identification. Louise communicated her desire for flexibility and not to be trapped by assumptions of identity and appropriate behaviour. She reiterated this point constantly. Louise was one of the participants who viewed education politically. Having read previously a little of Michel Foucault’s work, she contemplated his thoughts on power as they might apply to schools. Louise was unique among all participants; though she identified herself in the interview as, momentarily, lesbian, Louise quickly indicated her opposition to how lesbians she knew set criteria that "defined" lesbianism: a look, for example, or a state of mind, or a set of political attitudes. Louise said she keenly understood why she chose to be anything, and would not be shackled by shallow notions of group-think or "group-do."

Michael (21)

Michael grew up in a small, homogeneous town in the American Midwest. His family is artistic—a quality unappreciated in his hometown—and Michael showed similar interests at an early age. His family also flouted religious convention by going to a church in a nearby community. From a very early age Michael was targeted by other students because they assumed he was gay, and he was harassed throughout his school years until he decided to finish high school in a nearby city. Until he switched schools he was subjected to unrelenting verbal and physical intimidation.

Sean (22)

Sean grew up in Newfoundland and moved west after graduating from high school. Though he chose to be quiet about his sexuality while still in high school, Sean indicated he was sexually aware in his early teens and never felt guilty about it. Most family members know of his homosexuality, as do his co-workers and friends. Sean is direct and public about his sexuality, a point he repeated frequently during the interview.
**Andre (21)**

Andre was raised in the maritimes. He describes his hometown, and some family members, as homophobic. The family is wealthy and prominent (which may have protected Andre from anti-gay conduct). Andre was sexually active throughout high school, is self-respecting, and finds aspects of the west coast gay lifestyle confining. He distinguishes between his sexual identity and his life. Sexual identity is a facet of his existence, not its core.

**Brent (19)**

Brent is East Indian and a west coast resident. As he spoke of his sexuality and school memories, he also mentioned racist incidents he witnessed in elementary school. Brent suspected his parents knew of his homosexuality because they regularly reassured him he could speak with them about anything without undermining their love of him. Some time before the interview one of Brent’s uncles died of AIDS. Although the uncle had been estranged from his family for years, Brent’s father supported him and mentioned him periodically to Brent and Brent and his siblings.

**Jack (19)**

Jack is Chinese and the youngest member of his family. A gap of 6 years separates him from his closest sibling. His parents are more traditionally Chinese, whereas Jack is fully integrated into west coast Canadian society. His parents oppose homosexuality. As of the interview Jack had not told them of his sexual orientation.

**Barry (21)**

Barry grew up in a small, rural Alberta town. The youngest in his family, Barry was eager to escape to a larger centre. He explicitly stated his loathing of institutions such as schools, which he perceived as obstacles to serious inquiry about personal growth. When interviewed, Barry was just starting to explore his homosexuality.
Colin (18)

Most participants did not try to reduce homophobia in their high schools. Colin, however, did try to increase the visibility of gay and lesbian social organizations, specifically a youth group. Colin described his school years as substantially free of harassment, which he attributed to his size and sometimes-angry appearance. Commenting on his personality, Colin acknowledged a tendency to behave prejudicially toward others. While certain of his sexuality, Colin may have revealed some internalized homophobia when he said he would be more afraid of himself were he not gay, because he might be one who harasses homosexuals.

Zachary (20)

Zachary completed high school in Ontario. He "came out" in his senior year, and is the only one among the subjects who had a positive experience in school with students, teachers, and administrators. Zachary helped found a city youth group, and was invited by counselors and teachers from other high schools to speak to their students about being gay. After he identified himself as gay Zachary learned other members of his immediate and extended family are lesbian or gay. His family was therefore supportive; this was not universally the case for the others in this study.

James (18)

James, a west coast resident all his life, is a Native who fluctuated between negative and positive feelings about his people and his heritage. He expressed anger at how Natives were portrayed in school texts, but most often pride and contempt were simultaneously vocalized. James has been sexually active since he was 6 years old, when he began having sex with a classmate.

Todd (17)

Todd did not say much about his family, but expressed thoughts and feelings about school,
especially his final year. Early in that year Todd approached another student he thought was gay and suggested an intimate relationship. The student informed everyone about the overture, and Todd spent the entire school year as a persecuted object. His locker was defaced, he was bumped in the halls and his books hit, he was verbally taunted, and food was thrown at him when he sat in the cafeteria. Many times he considered quitting but decided he would not be driven from school. He recounted the year without contempt for those who hounded him, but he felt strong pride in the personal strength he displayed.

A few thoughts about these profiles should be kept in mind. Not all participants are discussed equally. I emphasize some interviews more than others because some are more relevant to identity than to the discussion of influence, whereas others offer more insight into school influence than identity. Todd and James are mentioned very briefly. Analysis of their interviews proved more intractable than the others, but they still provided some observations worth citing. Finally, although most interviews were conducted in Vancouver, two of these capsules are of people I interviewed in Grande Prairie, Alberta. While continuing my research in Grande Prairie, I experienced several incidents that broadened its implications. These implications contextualize the broader relevance of this work.

1.4 Ritual and Politics in Local Data-Gathering

In the fall of 1992 I returned to northern Alberta from Vancouver, after two years' residency in the PhD program. I decided to seek additional volunteers to be interviewed. I expected at most a handful of research volunteers but still thought it worthwhile to interview people away from a large urban centre such as Vancouver, should several come forward.

Certain features of this data-gathering transcended the technicalities of researching and incidentally revealed local antagonism to my work in gay/lesbian studies. There were three salient features: resistance to my advertising the research, a negative response to my comments
on gay/lesbian teens in a meeting with a regional school board, and the difficulty of finding a local person to transcribe the interview data.

Grande Prairie is a curious city. There is little overt violence against homosexuals; people ordinarily opposed to homosexuality do not feel immediately assailed by "otherness," and therefore feel they control the social situation. Some residents are entirely comfortable with homosexuality. Generally, however, when people in a social environment do not feel besieged, they may treat those of whom they disapprove with condescending temperance. This is the case for lesbians and gays in Grande Prairie.

Forbearance and tolerance plot a subtle variance, a distinction that is often the fine line between social abuse and social restraint. Notwithstanding increasing tolerance and acceptance in northern Alberta, homosexuals know the distinction must always be understood and negotiated. The three features of research referred to above inadvertently revealed the politics underlying the social arrangements of lesbians and gays, and not only in Grande Prairie. Understanding how people establish place in society as "deviants," how they may succumb to, ignore, or contest such a designation, is as important to this research as a whole as it is to a local analysis of Grande Prairie society.

Establishing "place" can be a form of activism. Berlant and Freeman (1993) write about the political activism and political importance of Queer Nation, a militant gay and lesbian group formed in New York City in 1990 to protest inaction on AIDS funding, and to subvert prevalent practices that constitute, and confine, sexuality and gender. Berlant and Freeman comment on Queer Nation's "I Hate Straights" declaration:

The treatise goes on to suggest that the national failure to secure justice for all citizens is experienced locally, in public places where gay-bashing takes place, and even in more intimate sites like the body: "Go tell [straights to] go away until they have spent a month walking hand in hand in public with someone of the same sex. After they survive that, then you'll hear what they have to say about queer anger." .... This emphasis on safe places, secured for bodies by capital and everyday practices, also, finally, constitutes a refusal of the terms national discourse uses to frame sexuality: being queer is not about a right to privacy; it is about the freedom to be public. (p. 201)
Conducting research in both Grande Prairie and Vancouver revealed contrasts in the extent of this freedom. Or at the very least, it showed how an illusion of such freedom is more likely in a centre of some gender dissent--such as Vancouver--compared to a small place like Grande Prairie. Interviews also disclosed similarities among the subjects, who indicated a range of social accommodations, some emphasizing the acquisition of justice and personal safety, others contesting sexual definitions and intruding into public zones to proclaim their sexuality. Some acquiesced to a narrow normalcy, others protested sterile gender and sexual definitions.

The first aspect of research to expose antagonism to my work was resistance to an advertisement I attempted to place in a regional paper. I was rebuffed by the publisher and owner on moral and press-freedom grounds, as he cited his right to freedom of expression as a publisher. He viewed his paper as a moral fiefdom and had a long history of denying homosexually-oriented classified advertisements.

What I usually consider a vital lifeline in the defense of ideas and analysis when allowed to operate substantively--freedom of expression--was exposed in this case as an inhibitory and discriminatory rubric. As a disinforming mask, the rubric is quite effective. It permits a society to claim it supports free exploration of ideas while using the rubric for opposite purposes.

The surface meaning of the rubric is dissembling in that we believe its rhetoric is its real meaning. Concealed within it however, is the real discursive intent and instrument, exercised in this situation by an editor who justified his actions by saying he was merely reflecting the predominant views of his rural community.

On one hand this man is exemplary of the larger culture, given that we constantly censor, censure, and suppress "unconventional" values and interpretations. On the other hand, there are people everywhere who impugn the status quo, who recast assumptions, and who penetratingly see behind the veil of "freedom of expression" the discrediting of critical, potentially liberatory, thought.

A local school board reacted similarly to how the editor responded, when I presented a
proposal for an inclusive curriculum—to bring to the foreground ethnic, racial, and sexual issues—in sex education and other subject areas. Among the reasons I offered for modifying the curriculum was the despondency of many lesbian and gay students who never see themselves in what they read, hear, and see in schools, a despondency that can lead to self-destruction.

All curriculum is informally controlled by the provincial Ministry of Education, but is implemented with considerable local variation. I did not suggest modifications that would conflict with the provincial legislative prerogative. My purpose instead was to urge expansion of the curriculum by making more people visible to each other. My recommendation that teachers be informed of their impact on students through anti-homosexual jokes, innuendo, and explicit discrimination, and that the school board rebuke and change such unprofessional, prejudicial behaviour when it occurs, requires no provincial input. The Board had the jurisdiction to implement such a policy.

Though received politely by Board members (notwithstanding allusions to homosexuality as a problem), I later learned the superintendent had declared in a radio news interview that nothing would be done because (1) the data I presented were based on American studies (the material was drawn from international sources); (2) it was not pertinent to Canadian schools or Canadian students (thereby asserting new concepts of psychology and sexuality tied to nationality); and (3) there were no people with homosexual problems in their schools, since nobody had come forward to disclose his/her homosexuality.

Two observations emerge from my experience. First, despite the dubious statistical distinction of northern Alberta consistently having, for many years, the highest per capita suicide rate of any part of the province, the editor of the regional newspaper, and the school board, chose to overlook one possible cause of suicide among teens in their communities. In effect, they decided that only students with "legitimate" reasons for terminating their lives should have access to resources that might alleviate or disperse suicidal inclinations. Second, while insisting there are no gays or lesbians in their domains, the editor and school board
members used the alleged absence and invisibility of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals to create precisely those conditions that cage them in invisible states.

Simultaneously with the appearance before the school board and the "skirmish" with the newspaper editor, I tried to find a local individual who would transcribe my interviews. The first person who came to mind was friendly and receptive to the idea. Between our first phone contact and the actual meeting she noticed my ad in the local paper asking for more research subjects. When we met she was distraught. She asked whether my work would stress a positive interpretation of homosexuals. She had repeatedly consulted her bible since learning of my study, she said, and could not transcribe the material. She could not sanction my work by collaborating in it.

At the time I thought my response to her was humane, judicious, and empathetic. I told her I respected her views and that I appreciated her seeing me in person to communicate her decision. She began to cry, telling me I was being very nice about everything. I reassured her and hugged her as she was leaving.

My interpretation of this incident has changed. My response bypassed a critical and possibly transformative moment. I had not challenged her understanding of sexuality or homosexuality. The result was a feel-good moment devoid of political impact. Instead of participating in what would probably have been an awkward yet informative interaction, I colluded with prevailing attitudes and permitted the experience to become just another "research moment," an anecdotal memory.

For all that cultural attitudes toward homosexuality have changed, gays and lesbians are yet excluded and subordinated. They confront an unenviable choice: whether to participate in behaviour that demeans them, but that confirms they are "cool" and can accept "criticism," or to express their opposition to such behaviour, and perhaps incur societal disapproval or hostility.

Researching in rural Alberta crystallized unenviable choices. It constantly contrasted simply negative interactions and increasingly sharp insight into community cohesion and
political accommodation, and their implications for social change. With insight comes appreciation of paradox, in this case the paradox of how politically liberating activity can make daily gay and lesbian existence more complicated and hazardous.

Merely to mention paradox, however, insufficiently discusses the meanings of these three "tales." The practical reasonings and conceptual vocabularies of the editor, the school board members, and the transcriber, are from the same ambience as the research subjects. Research in northern Alberta therefore indirectly assists my claims of significance, validity, and reliability.

1.4 From Here to Eternity: The Paradox of Social Change

All interactions with others require some clarification of boundaries between acceptable social criticism and unacceptable transgression of social practices. These boundaries involve both verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Those who seek reconsideration of attitudes and assumptions must know the perils of negotiating beyond these limits. Negotiating entails not just discussion, but the raising of issues that may alienate advocates of change from their communities, thus potentially harming the very credibility that allows them to have positive effect.

This study examines young homosexuals' ideas about influence and identity, and whether schools intend to influence students' understanding of identity and sexual identity. Negotiating boundaries and interpreting limits of social practices cannot be separated from these youths' associations of school experiences and school intentions.

Despite differences among and between gays and lesbians regarding political goals, most would agree they need to establish or expand institutions that are vital to the relaxed expression of identity and necessary for ongoing change of social policies.

Most participants in this study did not have political intentions while in high school. There is a subtle connection between having such intent--devising political programs, educational or
more demonstrative--and being able to detect political intentions in others. Participants could pinpoint the educational, social, and administrative practices that alienated them. But they did not recognize schools as political institutions, as counterpoints to the gay/lesbian institutions (for example, youth groups within and outside of schools) which the participants supported. They were not forthright radicals demanding that schools immediately and fully acknowledge their presence. Most were not in the vanguard of lobbying, protesting, or simply imploring change. Nevertheless, they understood the struggle for recognition, respect, and acceptance would be long and arduous, and the resolution of their efforts perhaps an eternity away.

1.5 Ritual and Identity

Religious and mental health doctrines helped politicize homosexual identities through condemnation and suppression. Lesbian and gay activists have responded with 25 years of earnest politicking against social stereotypes and supposedly-scientific proof of mental infirmity. Considerable progress, though not sufficient success, is the result. Most major cities of Canada have gay/lesbian groups and clubs, our courts have registered some victories on our behalf, and overt same-sex behaviour has compelled the attention of public and elected officials.

Despite these signs of greater acceptance, large numbers of lesbians and gay men remain only circumspectly visible. They carefully gauge the risks of public demonstrativeness in a society still prone to violent outbursts against them. This leaves people grasping to establish havens for themselves, contexts in which they can live without fear of reprisal or disapproval.

Goffman (1959: 238), writing on the defining of situations, speaks of roles constituting identity. These roles for many evolve in a social establishment, he says, which in his view is any physical or symbolic "place surrounded by fixed barriers to perception[,] in which a particular kind of activity regularly takes place." Gays and lesbians always consider these barriers--as does any researcher among them trying to implement a methodology--because the
quality of their lives depends on how virulent and ubiquitous these barriers are.

The vigilance necessary in daily life may be relaxed in certain environments, for example in a disco club, where delicately crafted survival strategies can be momentarily suspended. Clubs, however, may also be venues of resistance.

Although resistance theory puts cultural reproduction in a capitalist context by linking what is learned in school with the attitudes and habits necessary to make reliable workers in a capitalist economy, its concepts are also applicable to cultures of sexuality. Reproduction and resistance theory is discussed in another chapter where it is more relevant to the argument of the thesis. However, a brief reference here to its main ideas—hegemony and counter-hegemony (Apple 1985; Giroux 1983), and resistance (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977)—is in order.

Society tries to assure its political and social norms will survive through future generations by teaching the appropriateness of these norms and the values on which they rest, and then enforces these against "claims" by other ideas, on which basis different norms or practices may be established. "Official" social values often align with practices and attitudes within prominent social classes or elites.

If society successfully achieves this sought-after predominance, it may said to have created a hegemony of particular values. But not everyone fits easily into social patterns, and when the fit is especially uncomfortable resistance may develop. If sufficiently coherent and organized to challenge prevailing sociocultural practices, resistance constitutes a rudimentary form of counter-hegemony.

Ideas of reproduction and resistance, then, enclose personal and social meanings. Such meanings are forged, for example, in gay and lesbian clubs. In such environments, undercurrents of heterosexist attitudes and appropriate club socializing vie with attitudes and behaviours proclaiming "gayness." However limited this alleviating environment, in which homosexuals' survival strategies are tested and adapted, it can placate cultural negotiators' suspiciousness. The clubs become, however strong the temporary illusion, locations where the
larger culture is apparently negated and another premise of social relations is established.

Because of legal restrictions, most participants in this study could not have expected regular admittance to lesbian or gay clubs when they were still in high school. This hampered communication of survival strategies and other points of "wisdom" through interaction with older homosexuals.

My focus at this stage of the thesis is the development of social institutions for homosexuals and the everyday price they pay for instigating social change in their local communities. For gays and lesbians, as for other stigmatized peoples, reification of queer culture presents problems beyond the creation of institutions to sustain and nurture their identities. Stigmatized individuals often endorse the premises of their own oppression (Goffman 1963). Therefore, social insistence that they demur in their demands for recognition and change in social policy, in return for harmony in daily relationships, can be tormenting.

What is constantly played out then, is the struggle between a need for environments that allow exploration of identity, and the countervailing force that encourages, if it does not compel, restraint. Schools do not emerge in this research as environments that facilitate exploration. Precisely the opposite is the case.

Jeffrey Weeks says "[s]exuality is as much about words, images, ritual and fantasy as it is about the body." (Weeks 1985: 3) Every compromise that discounts expression in words and images and rituals may ironically intensify the need to put thought, fantasy, deed, and identity at the source of action. As Weeks goes on to suggest in Sexuality and its discontents, we live within and between realms of habits and ideas, ideals and expectations. Without strategies that build our institutions, we move in these realms as isolates. Such was the experience of many of the participants in this research.

A researcher may anticipate a thesis topic will be controversial but not necessarily the methodology. However, when methodology is caught up in the politics of the topic the two become less readily distinguishable. As homosexuals seek to establish cultures in worlds suffused with heterosexual values, studies of their lives, and therefore any methodology
affiliated with them, are politicized. The tension between creating our social institutions and accommodating ourselves to small, often adverse local cultures, filters into the very act of researching. As a gay researcher I was caught in this web of contradictory regimes.

Throughout the thesis I periodically mention Foucault's ideas on power and discourse because they impress me by their explanation of the interrelationship of authority, ideology, socialization, and the intricacies of individuals' responses. Foucault describes discourse as the broad, intricate grid through which human activity and its contingencies are played out (Foucault 1972; 1980). In any given historical moment the prevailing set of discourses seems everlasting, a cultural "thing" immutably fixed in mind and practise. But as Roland Barthes suggests, the impression of endless life is a deception achieved through myth. As quoted by Weeks, Barthes' view is that "myth has the task of giving an historical invention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal." (Weeks 1985: 59)

I don't quote Barthes because I want to plumb the role of mythology as a social cohesive, but because he asserts the value of concealing invention in a mythological disguise. Social contrivance appears as a natural and inevitable development. Vested interests support this deception, and faith in its truth inspires it.

Maligned groups especially have need of mythologies, or to invoke Barthes' idea, of their institutional inventions. Or, to refer back to Weeks, they especially need to make their (self-) images, rituals, and fantasies appear natural and reasonable. But translating rituals and fantasies into daily and common practice requires a critical mass of like-minded people. Participants' experiences indicate schools isolate homosexuals from each other. Only a couple of them were aware of other lesbian or gay students. No critical mass existed for them.

Most subjects said schools deceive students by limiting curricular exposure and public expression. Discounted groups often concentrate on survival and the simultaneous need to conceal identity. In such a state the grasp of compromise is instantly evident, even in Vancouver where so many support groups exist. The participants devised various survival strategies, most commonly presenting distorted portrayals of themselves to peers and pursuing
When contingencies operate as if they constitute the natural order, rarely noticeable and rarely named, the underlying coercion, of which they are signs and systems, remains undisclosed. When contingencies are revealed, there is little to buffer the bitter truth of a subordinate social position. For all the changes that have transpired in society the bitterness endures for many homosexuals.

These contingencies operate along several axes apart from gender, for example race, religion, and social class. This study does not analyze these categories of social phenomena, but I recognize the necessity to deal with them correlative in another study. In this analysis I thought it most pertinent to get at the subjects' logic of the correlation first, rather than the material forces that compel that logic. Studying race, religion, and class would address the material circumstances shaping the participants' logics.

As I will show, participants detect some contingencies but not usually those subtly embedded in school practices. Overwhelmingly they remember schools as alienating environments, despite the variety of schools they attended. The schools' cultures, their community milieux, and their locations (urban and rural), all worked to intensify that feeling.

This thesis probes associations of identity formation and recollections of schooling in the lives of thirteen young lesbians and gays. Two broad issues serve as a framework to analyze the associations that, defensibly, may be said to link school and personal identity: the subjects' ideas about what influence is--and whether schools indeed influence (deliberately or inadvertently)--and their concepts of identity and their manifestation in school curricula.
2.1 Introductory Notions

I begin this chapter with a general observation: the value of educative experience derives partly from the difference between assumed outcomes and observed outcomes. To be educated in the broadest sense is to witness our lives changing. Such educating brings us to the frontier of what we think we know and understand, and slaps us in the face with a glimpse of our ignorance. The disclosure of fissures in what we think are seamless, coherent, and closed understandings may be unnerving but also exhilarating.

In what context are we more likely to realize fissures exist? We are not as generous in our appreciation of the educative experience of schools as we are of the educative value of life experience, and we do not often speak wistfully of life experience acquired in schools. Schools are institutions of compulsion, evaluation, and control. Ironically, it may be that because they are so characterized, we expect them to be successful in their narrow curricular aims, but identify them less often as being more broadly educative.

Whether or not schools influence students may be ascertained differently if we compare schools' broader goals and their more immediate curricular objectives. (The participants' consideration of school influence gave these immediate objectives greater importance than long term educational goals.) In any analysis of influence, we may ascribe to schools' intent to be influential, the inevitable accomplishment of the intent. There are good reasons to challenge this ascription.

To look at the surface operations of schools--at the regularity of a day divided into fixed
periods of time, at the scenes of teachers in classrooms engaging in pedagogical motions, at students occasionally occupied by curricular assignments, and at the interconnectedness of all schools—is to be impressed by the pervasiveness of the system. This very pervasiveness may persuade us of its influence. Robert Dreeben explores how school curricula, official and hidden, draw children away from expectations that emotional ties will assure their success, to an understanding of schooling as a series of judgments based on performance within an administrative hierarchy. Such judgments are political (in the development of American citizens) as well as intellectual (Dreeben 1968). (They are political in another way: they are the backbone of school socialization of the young. Advocates of reproduction theories look partly to schools for evidence confirming their analyses.) These are the particulars of pervasiveness.

Something so widespread and apparently so unified as a school system, then, can convince through the sheer reach of its operation. And we may infer from this reach educators’ desire to influence. To speak of educating without intent, after all, may be a contradiction in terms (Peters 1968). Education embodies a wilful and purposeful desire to effect behavioural and attitudinal change. However, beneath the tranquil surface are conflicts that should lead us to dispute this conclusion.

Student acquiescence to school norms does not count as an endorsement of school intentions, nor does teacher agreement with those norms signify a commitment to all curricular goals. The regularity of institutional operations, on the basis of which we may assume an interlocking of purpose and influence, can be highly deceiving. Outcomes of schooling may diverge from apparent school intent. Recurrent practices do not in themselves confirm or deny school influence. However, the meanings the participants attach to these recurrences convey their sense of whether such influence exists.

Some studies point to continuing contention and negotiation between school personnel and students, on issues that range from what will be taught and how, to forms of student resistance. Metz’s (1978) and McNeil's (1988) work provide two examples. Their research informs this research by examining how students assess school and its relevance to their lives.
Metz investigates students' and teachers' interpretations of in-class relationships and of the relevance of the curriculum. Authority to teach the curriculum, says Metz, is established by what transpires "around" the school—a moral quality or postulate rooted in the social purposes of schooling. If students accept the morality of schooling and support the values underpinning it, they are more likely to overlook poor teaching or intellectually incompetent teachers. The subjects of this research also evaluate the moral premise of schooling although they don't express the issue as Metz does.

They recount experiences associated with official curriculum (and hidden curriculum to a lesser degree). The moral purpose of education to which Metz refers fits a liberal-humanist expectation evident in the subjects' interviews, and one they assume is the foundation of their own education. Participants believe schools should enlighten students, and are disappointed when they don't. They are frustrated by having to explain to themselves why schools fall short of their expectations.

When I refer to liberal-humanist expectations I mean the role of the state in the development of the self. A liberal-humanist position suggests individuals' needs and personal objectives harmoniously intersect state policies, such that few contradictions arise between personal and social imperatives. Twentieth-century liberalism sanctions using the state to ameliorate social ills while continuing to emphasize the tenets of individual freedom in a modern, pluralistic world. (Eldridge 1983) The establishment of the school as a social institution builds on liberal-humanist tenets. The rhetoric of schooling stresses individual achievement, freedom of intellectual investigation, and the enlightenment of all students. The subjects of this research believe the rhetoric. The school, however, is quintessentially a modern institution devoted to moral indoctrination of the young.

Metz is not alone in her interest in schools. Linda McNeil writes also of how teachers personally, and schools institutionally, gain authority over students. Her value to this work lies in her analysis of students' and teachers' posturing, pedagogical feints, and reasons for compromising in classrooms. The picture of schools that comes from her study shows that we
don't always come close to achieving the goals of mass education, and indicates personal and

group interests of teachers and students becoming part of the negotiating strategies. Learning

is not simply a cause-effect connection, and neither are the questions of whether and how schools influence students.

Negotiating in itself suggests school dynamics are not exclusively established or limited by

the intentions that lie behind school practices. In schools the working out of arrangements and

alliances between students and teachers, and the balancing of power between officially

sanctioned rights of school personnel on one hand and de facto rights of students on the other,

may draw teachers and school officials a considerable distance away from what they think

schools should do. Metz writes of a relationship of authority between schoolers and schooled,

in which the latter accept at least some of the precepts and purposes of formal education, thus

allowing some learning to occur.

What learning does transpire may be the intended result of the official curriculum. But

there is also the hidden curriculum, that domain of unseen yet felt structures and pressures that

"nudge" us into repudiating some ideas, beliefs, and behaviours, and accepting and following

other ideas, beliefs, and behaviours. It is the quiet side of a louder effort.

John Kerr quotes Beauchamp's definition of curriculum. It is, Beauchamp says, "a design

of a social group for the educational experiences of their children in school." (Kerr 1968: 16)

The quiet side of this design--the hidden curriculum--may spark less opposition than the

official curriculum just because it is less visible. But it is not less important to the achievement

of schools' socializing goals than is the official curriculum.

Apple (1985) writes that education teaches what passes for knowledge in society, but that

it also produces knowledge. The knowledge produced consists of economic and political

understandings necessary to assure capitalism will endure. And this produced knowledge (or,

I suggest, most kinds) produces at the same time concepts of deviance.

"Deviance" is essential to social control, and therefore to the punishment and censure of

transgressors in social institutions such as schools. As homosexuality is considered deviant in
most school jurisdictions, it is thus made a basis of discrimination. How does the hidden curriculum support this development? Elizabeth Vallance’s explanation of the hidden curriculum, quoted by Giroux, provides insight:

I use the term to refer to those non-academic but educationally significant consequences of schooling that occur systematically but are not made explicit at any level of the public rationales for education . . . It refers broadly to the social control function of schooling. (Giroux 1983: 47)

As will be seen in later chapters, what remains unexplicit is what frustrated and angered the subjects, and often still does. They believe schools are liberal institutions designed to benefit all students equally. The lack of directness and clarity stems from the rarity of liberal-humanist objectives among the school’s purposes.

Giroux makes more explicit the history and politics that Vallance says is concealed from students and the public: "The nature of school pedagogy was to be found not only in the stated purposes of school rationales and teacher-prepared objectives but also in the myriad beliefs and values transmitted tacitly through the social relations and routines that characterized day-to-day school experience." (p. 45)

Understanding curricular objectives and various forms of school influence, then, can help us account for the arrangements, alliances, and balancings in schools. As will be shown later, variations among schools were minimal in the subjects’ recollections of them. Their experiences and ideas, in fact, delineate the school as a social institution with socializing purposes and design, not as a generalized system of schooling with uniquely differentiated schools. Whereas the subjects see the broadly educative purpose of schools to teach people to fit in society, they do not usually perceive the larger institutional (and political) framework of socialization.

In some respects students are similar to inmates of prisons. The inmates effectively control the prison. Wardens and guards survey the perimeter and tenuously patrol the interior. The life of the prison, the deployment of fear, the establishment of relationships, the coalitions based on race or type of crime, and so on, are determined by those incarcerated.
Of course the analogy is inexact because non-boarding schools are not as sealed off from the rest of society as prisons are. Students are exposed to external cultural influences ordinarily denied to inmates. Nevertheless, students do grapple with school cultures no less limiting or hurtful than the cultures of more security-conscious institutions. In schools students may expect different treatment than what they receive, or expect schools to teach differently. Such expectations are evident among this study's participants.

Homosexuals I interviewed refuse to see themselves as abnormal. They want the school system to teach others that homosexuality is normal, that it is a legitimate, honest, and ordinary set of human dispositions and affinities. Their refusal to accept their "abnormality" makes them stalwart in the face of discrediting ideas and behaviours. Yet they do not see their steadfastness as a sign of school influence despite it coming into play because of experiences they've had in school. The subjects do not think their anger, activated and fanned by classroom experiences, is a reaction to deliberate disparagement of homosexuality in school.

* * * * *

Are schools influential? If participants say they responded to policies of schools, even if they do not describe them as policies, I acknowledge this as school influence manifested as school intent or student response.

I take the view that in a social science argument such as this thesis I should begin with commonsensical, ordinary-language definitions of terms, and then move on to stipulative definitions appropriate to this research. So I start with a few helpful generalities, keeping in mind always that this chapter does not merely follow dictionary definitions.

Data do not always conform to pre-determined definitions. We may mistakenly ascribe influential status to people or events. And it is often difficult to decide accurately who did what to us and how action may be linked to result. Because we are told travel is important and broadening, for example, we may attribute part of our personal maturation and awareness of other societies to some travelling we have done. That travel can be seen to influence our appreciation of other cultures is possible because we also assume travel has inherent value, that
it exposes our narrowness and informs us about other peoples. Whether or not a specific occasion of travel is indeed informative is not necessarily connected to our interpretation of a particular trip. Some general definitions are therefore helpful as a starting point because they allow us to review the overall sweep of our lives without having to establish a cause-effect relationship for every detail of them.

The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (1971: 269-70) provides various definitions of influence: "the inflowing, immission, or infusion (into a person or thing) of any kind of divine, spiritual, moral, immaterial, or secret power or principle" (original emphasis); an "exertion of action of which the operation is unseen or insensible (or perceptible only in its effects)..." Further Oxford definitions refer to affecting a person's mind or action by inducement, inspiration, or infusion.

These definitions allow for the description of a general, cumulative impression. "Our lives have changed," the subjects of this research might say, without being able to specify every nuance of change. But to say that not every nuance is mentioned is not the same as saying none should be mentioned, or that the statement could not reasonably be made unless all subtleties were reported. Further, one might claim that influence was evident without having to indicate dramatic personal change. I assume schools influenced the participants when the latter indicate they had to adjust their behaviour, attitudes, and expression of feelings, in ways counter to their thoughts and inclinations, as responses to their school experiences. I assume experience is influential if its outcome displaced the subjects' own experience and knowledge, because through displacement students become susceptible to school discourse. I assume influence exists when the subjects do not classify these experiences as forms of influence, but nonetheless express anger at being forced to behave differently than they otherwise wanted. Thus, any school experience mentioned by the interviewees that provoked or induced in them a definitional or behavioural response, I consider influential. And I consider influence in both the official and the hidden curriculum. At the end of this chapter I will reconsider the definitions stipulated in this early section, to see how the data change the definitions of
Participants' ideas on influence have been placed in different categories I think help the my general analysis. Nonetheless I hesitate to categorize each participant's interview data, for two reasons. First, I know how adamant most were about feeling trapped by categorical expressions made in school about homosexuality, and how they felt caricatured, demeaned, and utterly dismissed by those stating derogatory or uninformed thoughts. Second, the data itself is not easily classifiable. Uncertainties are occasionally stressed, the subjects grapple with questions they hadn't thought of before, and they try to do justice in their answers to the breadth of their thoughts. Indeed, some interviews "slip" into more than one category. However, I have placed the subjects in one category or another, referring to how they may also fit in another when it is appropriate to do so.

2.2 Student Detection of Influence

Participants' association of school experiences with school's institutional influence more often suggested non-deliberateness than explicit linkage. They did not cite cause-effect connections (nor was I looking for any). But they did assume the influence of teachers and school milieu on other students. The participants believed students detect how teachers categorize people and behaviours, but the subjects didn't tie the categorizing to institutional purpose. "Influence", then, may also be understood, in the practical reasoning of students, as referring to the potential improvement of attitudes and behaviours rather than to its guaranteed outcome. Participants expected that teaching about homosexuality as a normal expression of human identification and affinity would dissolve some anti-gay categorizing and the prejudice accompanying it.

Teaching about homosexuality means making visible what is significantly invisible in most school curricula. Participants suggest school influence exists when they describe sexual prohibition in school culture. They do not specifically name what they see, but they describe
prohibition so encompassing that people learn what not to ask or to display even without the occurrence of open discussion of homosexuality in classrooms. And because the subjects do not name what they experience as a form of prohibition, they detect influence in the daily rhythms of school life that socialize, normalize, and authorize, but do not catch school influence as a broader political intent underlying both the official and the hidden curriculum.

Because they do not understand schooling as a political act, the participants cannot criticize the school as a social institution; they assume school influence, if negative, is so because schools ‘don’t know’ better what to teach. They assume a liberal-humanist curriculum that is meant to--and sometimes does--enlighten students. In this case, however, the liberal-humanist sheen hides the politics of a school system devoted to socialization and only occasional enlightenment. This is the irony in the position of most respondents, for the source of their opposition to the curriculum--and of their uncertainty about whether school influence exists--is what also warrants their acknowledgement of the possibility and value of school influence. They accept the normative, socializing, functionalist raison d’etre of school as an institution--the very purpose that discounts them in school. They accept it without realizing it.

There is a question, however, whether such realization must be consciously understood by students and/or willingly complied with to establish the terms of student-teacher relationships, and thus of some kind of school influence. Willis (1977) writes of some working class boys who resist school culture but who ultimately fulfil the social class and educational expectations of them as learned through the very school experience they allegedly reject. If students do not understand negotiations are regularly conducted over what and how curriculum will be taught, can they consider whether and how schools influence them and their peers?

Gays and lesbians may have a more difficult time than other students negotiating their way through intersecting mazes of rhetorical intent and the actual practices of schools. They recognize the anti-homosexual views that filter through the formal and hidden curricula, either through overtly negative comments or complete exclusion. Participants indicated that lesbian and gay issues were virtually never mentioned in their classes, a phenomenon reiterated in
other research (Rofes 1989; Sears 1991a, 1987; Trenchard & Warren 1985; Green 1991). Harder to identify for the researcher is the actual intent of any given school experience cited by subjects, to decide whether what they sensed in daily school experience is what schools intended students to learn.

* * * *

In its most idealistic and well-intentioned garb, the school system is universally helpful and concerned. Teachers are supposed to be kind, interested in students, and trustworthy. Their primary objective is to nurture, guide, and encourage their students. If students have problems, no obstacle should thwart disclosure of these to a teacher or counselor, or so we assume. However, a chasm separates reality and the ideal. Other research indicates school personnel, including those in continuous contact with students such as teachers and counselors, may be homophobic and discriminatory (Smith 1985; Fischer 1982; Sears 1991). Lesbian and gay students must constantly judge, beyond what is usual for other students, the difference between the ideal and the reality of school life. Webs of hypocrisy may conceal hostile personal motives.

How influential are schools? Do the subjects interpret the "lesson(s)" of the curriculum on sexual matters as being part of a broader, deliberate effort by schools to influence concepts of sexuality, and sexual choices? Do they associate school experience with the development of their own sexual identities? All of these questions arose as discussion proceeded on two brief queries: "Do you think schools influence students? If so, how do they achieve their influence, and in what ways are students influenced?"

Respondents unanimously tied their answers to sexual identity even as they mentioned other aspects of school life. When considering if and how school influence was present in their education, they did so in terms of sexual identity--how such identity was referred to by teachers or texts, whether the allusions were sex-positive or sex-negative, whether the references stereotyped homosexuals, and how the subjects themselves responded to curricular endorsement of only a limited range of (heterosexual) identities. They indicated that what influence there may be is felt most immediately through the daily experience of curriculum
and social interaction.

Daily experience of school life includes expression of students' ideas and behaviours. Some acts, understandings, and ambitions, however, are classified in school as beyond the pale, for no other reason than because a counterpoint to the "norm" is necessary to solidify normative behaviour. To define any identity as "normal" is simultaneously to discredit and deny, in effect if not intent, other identities and behaviour. Schools may therefore be said to influence to the degree they reinforce in students normative expectations of structured environments, and also to the extent they displace personal knowledge and experience with school knowledge.

2.3 Curriculum and Sexuality

When participants were asked if and how schools influenced students, they answered indirectly. Generally speaking, they could not firmly say schools were or were not influential. Most could not remember overtly anti-gay or anti-lesbian jokes by, or behaviour of, teachers, but at the same time found attitudes of hostility towards homosexuals in students.

Hostility was expressed in various ways. Most disturbing of all was the casualness, the easy application, of an epithet--"fag"--to anyone, whether lesbian, gay, or neither. To be singled out and harassed relentlessly because of a known sexual identity is terrible in itself, but to be made into a generic category of opprobrium and disgust is intense vilification. This work is not intended to analyze extensively the mechanisms and effects of this singling out, but the targeting of homosexuals is important to note because participants detected and reacted to it angrily. Students' responses to mention of homosexuality is relevant to the extent the subjects associated school environments with teachers' behaviour.

People who are marginalized, and then repudiated and silenced, may be able, through experience, to develop social responses that slightly alleviate the effects of defamation. But this may be more likely when the defamation is limited to these people or others like them. When the condemnation becomes so diffused in social expression that it appears to dominate
public comments among individuals, the result can be overwhelming isolation and anger. Such condemnation was heard in the schools attended by the participants.

What follows is a discussion of school phenomena that the subjects occasionally think constitute influence, and at other times recognize only as unimportant, surface details inscribed on a broader educational grid. Though the question asked of them was phrased without any mention of sexuality, sex education, or identity, the youth frequently referred to experiences that made them consider their sexuality.

School influence as discussed by the respondents is best discussed, I think, from three vantage points. Each communicates a variant of understanding among the subjects, of their school years. One vantage point is derived from experiencing the official curriculum as a regime that demands sexual invisibility. Another comes from an understanding of schools as procedural (and occasionally, in their view, neutral) venues. The last vantage point emerges from different intensities of subject resistance. All three categories are connected in that respondents express thoughts not exclusively resistant or accommodationist. As the participants strive to collect their memories and analyze them, they invoke implicit ideas of what becoming educated people means, and what expectation we may rightfully assert of how we educate and are educated.

Few people in our society would argue with the value of becoming an educated person. Whether as a gateway to a lucrative career or new insight, education beckons most of us. How and where we acquire the education—whether at home or in a school—is less important to us than what is up for grabs, curricularly speaking. To those who see in an official curriculum the best of a culture ready to be accessed by inquisitive minds, there is rarely a debate about the liabilities of pre-determining subject matter for all students. But for students who perceive in an official curriculum the strictures of regulation and disdain, several possible reactions come to mind.

They may note the offending details and suffer silently or try to evade them as much as
possible; they may try to fit in with everyone else, either because they sincerely believe they
should or because they don't know what else to do; or they may decide to resist, however
feasibly, an ever-encroaching regime. These examples do not exhaust the list of possibilities,
but they do enclose the responses of the participants in this research.

(a) Official curriculum and the experience of invisibility: The Cases of Ann, Brent, and Barry

Not all subjects in this category interpreted and responded to school curriculum similarly.
Although most shared a general sense of invisibility they reacted differently to different
aspects of the curriculum. Ann, 18, saw in school discourse widespread displacement of
students' understandings and awareness of personal experience. She saw the use of power in
school, and the authority derived from it, not as a liberating and enlightening force—as might
be expected in a liberal-humanist institution devoted to the well-being of all its charges—but
instead as an imposing force. School life in Ann's eyes was not the crucible of a personal
journey but a place where students were fitted with cultural templates. The means and the
price of taking on these templates was invisibility. Ann saw the imposition of the price as an
unjustified and capricious use of authority (and power). And students respond accordingly—and
antagonistically. But Ann adds a unique feature to her analysis: students' antagonism is
also the expression of natural conflict with the adult world.

Ann does not allow this observation to lessen her anger, but she uses it to present a complex
analysis of what teachers and students struggle with while in school.

*Ann: Capricious Authority, Natural Antagonism*

Invisibility did not develop in Ann's schooling from a total ban on references to
homosexuality. She heard about it in her classes, but through a discrediting set of standards.

My sexual experiences with girls ... I found them so much more satisfying than the
... ridiculous encounters with guys my age ... I sort of thought, ... how do you feel
... if ... you're told that it's like a phase, that it's totally trivializing something that's
very important to you ... it's part of the adult view towards teenagers that ... you're
not really aware of what you're doing, you don't really have control over what you're doing, you're just doing things because other people are doing them ... it really almost angered me. Because I thought I knew what I was doing, I wasn't just doing it because other people wanted me to.

Ascribed motives and trivialization are what Ann experienced in school. Adults tried to supplant students' understandings with their own, to nullify students' interpretations. Adult power based on assumptions about teenagers' motives disqualified Ann's choices and her reasons for them. In Ann's account, adults do not even recognize a student standpoint (and perhaps an identity?), let alone recognize their conscious displacement of students' self-awareness with externally imposed "awareness."

I assume school influence exists when the subjects mention the displacement of students knowledge with school knowledge. For Ann the lack of recognition from adults that she might understand her own life may be the ultimate disqualification, and in a way she thinks this caused her to suppress memories of early lesbian experience.

At 12 she'd had a sexual relationship with another girl. Though Ann does not directly say sex education influenced her to suppress her recollection of the relationship, she implies as much when she says "in sex education classes they tell you . . . you might have relationships with people of your own sex, but that's only because you're not willing . . . not ready to take off into heterosexuality." Ann said this immediately after recounting her memory loss.

More important than the reliability of her logic here is the fact that she would comment at all in this way. Perhaps the influence identified by Ann was an adjunct to prevalent anti-homosexual influence in society at large. Whatever the explanation, Ann singles out a curriculum she assumes should be representative of people's lives. It wasn't when she was a student, and she attributes her repressed memory to this deficit.

What kind of curriculum gives Ann what she is looking for, a curriculum that illustrates the spectrum of human experience, ambition, and identity? One rarely seen, for it assumes no prior curricular purpose beyond the workings of discovery and developing insight of students. I conceive curriculum as cumulative school experience that unites purpose and growing
awareness of the world and oneself. Such a conception risks becoming reductionist by declaring every aspect of school life, random or structured, a significant source of learning. But what I have in mind is what Gail McCutcheon says, as quoted by Cherryholmes: "By curriculum I mean what students have an opportunity to learn in school, through both the hidden and overt curriculum, and what they do not have an opportunity to learn." (Cherryholmes 1988: 133)

This is the kind of curriculum Ann sees in school, especially in its foreclosure of opportunity. On the other hand, Ann would surely endorse Robert Graham's thoughts on reconceptualizing curriculum. Graham calls on us to recognize autobiography as part of curricular knowledge, to register the importance of "the student's search for meaning . . . in a social milieu" and of autobiography's deserving place in the curriculum. "Autobiography as writing the self," Graham says, is a way of "reflecting on and grounding the self in lived experience," and is therefore crucial to the reconceptualization of curriculum. (Graham 1991: 120) Ann's "autobiography" may not have been acknowledged in the curriculum, but it is still her autobiography, and part of it—her sexual relationship at age 12—was banished from memory.

That Ann attributed her forgetting to her school experience is an intriguing contrast to her broader view of whether and how schools influence. Students, she says, do not learn from textbooks, "they learn from what they see actually in real life or . . . experience in real life." She says this despite her recognition that schools want to influence their students. When asked to explain how intent and result can go awry, Ann became less sure of her response.

I really don't know. I think a lot of times, simply because adults . . . don't communicate. It's not that they're at fault or anything, it's just they can't help it. They just communicate in such a different way . . . teenagers completely seize upon and despise anything that's different. Most teenagers . . . The problem with school is that it takes place when you're still very young, and . . . changing a lot . . . A teacher, no matter how friendly they try to be, or honestly are, or how nice they are, they still have so much power over you, that you're going to naturally resent them. (my emphasis)
Singularly among her co-participants, Ann introduces social relationships beyond school, and also developmental psychology, in her effort to understand what influence schooling may have had in her life.

Power is vested in the authority of teachers, and students, in a natural reaction, may perceive it as capricious and unwarranted. By her use of "natural," Ann intimates inherent conflict between adults and non-adults. Power in Ann's understanding is not merely constituted authority, but interaction between adult and non-adult. This suggests some aspects of school influence cannot be altered because their presence, or non-presence, is embedded in natural psychological affinities and antagonisms. Few subjects provided so complex an analysis of their school experience. Most limited their observations to the infrequent or non-existent discussion of homosexuality in classrooms.

So far in this discussion of invisibility from Ann's position, there are substantial and substantive obstacles to schools meeting the intellectual (and perhaps psychological) needs of students. The curriculum is experienced by Ann primarily as an adult intrusion. Somewhere between what students receive in schools and what they require emotionally and intellectually is an adult standard. The intrusion is unwarranted, a significant articulation of adult power in which control is the essential objective.

Ann and Brent occupy similar analytical ground. Brent also notices compelled invisibility but differs from Ann in his matter-of-fact reaction to it. Given this response he might have been as easily counted among those who fit in with school discourse rather than those who cry out against it. However, Brent introduces a wrinkle to his analysis, despite a statement that schools exist just to educate. He does not merely accept this as the only commission schools should have, as a strictly functionalist outlook would lead him to conclude. He also says that school life confounds personal development. Personal identity is caricatured in school; it waits instead for a more "private," post-high school era in which to flourish. Brent does not give his analysis of schools the political tinge Ann gives hers, but he sees well the adjustments students make to school environments.
This need to adjust, even when it means moving away from more necessary adjustments, fits in the definitional space for "influence" I laid out earlier. Schools induce responses, they affect mind or action, and Brent, 19, doesn't miss any of this.

Brent

Brent, like most other subjects, does not recall homosexuality being an integral part of sex education courses. But in a sense he didn't expect it to. He describes the school as

not a place to educate ... on sexual terms, although in biology we learned how to have heterosexual sex, how to prevent teenage pregnancy .... we were always making fun of [homosexuality], more homophobia rather towards homosexuality [sic] in that no one talked about it, none of the teachers ... it was just something you laughed about and bugged people about .... I think the educational system is just there purely for education.

Apparently education should not include discussions of sex, and yet did. Brent believes in the functional intent of education to impart information, and conceptualizes this in general learning terms. His sense of what schools do is procedural, and his analysis of their influence is based on whether these procedures have resulted in learning. Thus, whatever homophobic joking occurred in school was separate from what schools intend and what teachers actually strive for.

Furthermore, teachers' ineffectiveness (and schools decreasing influence?) may be explained by students' resistance to, or disinterest in, the teachers' efforts.

It's not fully the teacher's fault. I think it's probably more the kids' fault than the teachers' ... there's [only] so much they can do, but if a kid isn't willing to listen to the teacher or whatever, then, you know, it brings [it] back to ... parents and how he [sic] was brought up.

Familial influence in this account supersedes school influence. And peer culture may be paramount over all.

Brent never said explicitly that schools possess curricular or social intent. However, peer
groups do have a functionalist social purpose, and therefore they possess intent; and when they are intransigent to learn, perhaps they possess an intent to obstruct teaching and learning. This is not tantamount to the cultural phalanx that Willis describes in *Learning to labour* (1977). He concludes some working class boys use a common social class identity to try to thwart the school's 'designs' on their future. There is no unifying and rallying culture in Brent's peer group, at least not as he understands it.

Brent's references to peer groups--"it's probably more the kids' fault"--sugget neither that sexual understandings derive from school influence, nor that influence derives from school structures. This is ironic, in that peer groups (and their sometime homophobia) were established by organizing (and early on, segregating) school classes according to age and grade. In contrast to Ann, who refers to the political role of teachers and curriculum, Brent provides no political context for his perceptions. Yet his awareness of school culture is no less insightful than Ann's.

He expresses continuing surprise, for instance, at seeing former high school classmates in gay clubs. As he puts it, "it just blows my mind to see them there." His surprise derives from sexual censure in the school, such that lesbian and gay students are not merely isolated from each other, but don't even know about each other. (This theme recurs in most of the interview data.)

Choosing to make sexual identity visible decrees a heavy burden. Brent associates handling the burden with inner strength, and is skeptical the lesbians and gays he discovered in the clubs could have withstood the peer pressure. "I don't think they would have had the inner strength to stand up to the rest of the school."

In this telling, schools are not benign environments for people who do not fit in. They are not just procedural environments that offer "education" on their narrow conceptual definition. But neither are they politicized environments that ordain some kinds of insight and interpretation and not others.
The social...aspects of high school...stop you from having that inner strength...you always had to go to school a certain way, act a certain way, amongst your friends...I think your independence...is when you really start to learn who you really are and your identity...[but] not till after high school...I chose to find an identity after high school, but a lot of my friends are still the same people they were in high school...I had an identity in high school, but...it was not my own identity, it was sort of the identity of expectations--of teachers, of fellow classmates and friends. (my emphasis)

We have moved from Brent's description of his school experience as modestly placid and non-polarizing, to a description that reveals the need for concealment and camouflage. His sex education classes never touched on homosexuality. Neither he nor his friends had the "inner strength" to challenge the "peer-tide," and nothing in his school experience prepared him to challenge or withstand the peer group. Identity development was postponed until his departure from high school, and the identity he lived during his high school years was not his. At no point in the interview, however, did Brent associate educational context with these experiences.

The school in Brent's understanding, then, is apparently not a matrix but an arena, in which, coincidentally, peer and academic forces vie. In contrast, a matrix-explanation would depict schools as members of socializing and indoctrinating networks, in which we presently find anti-homosexual bias. Presenting the school as an arena only does not allow us to interrogate conceptually how and why this bias develops in school systems, nor how a normalizing force can accomplish the integration.

For Brent, sexual-identity invisibility is powerful enough to be felt as an outcome of schooling, even if it is not seen as an intended one of school curricula. And school curricula include more than just the official curriculum authorized by the state; the hidden curriculum, while not always closely scrutinized by students, is nonetheless intrinsic to how schools socialize and therefore to the development of school discourse. Without formulating a political understanding of curricular--and therefore school--intentionality, it is hard to address practices that make people invisible.

Brent's mid-teens were most satisfying during his solitary time, time when he didn't
have to pretend with friends and conform to others’ demands. The search for solitude was not overt resistance to school discourse, but a marshalling of inner resources that were used after graduating from high school, when he realized he could nurture his own identity and be his own person. However, the solitude was relished precisely because he realized the falseness of his in-school interactions with other students.

Interaction in schools are not wholly determined by school policies, but they are significantly so-determined. For instance, students in open-classroom schools that allow people to roam from one class to another, and that permit students to work on common projects despite being in different grades, will interact differently, on the whole, with others in their schools than will people whose schools assign them to different homerooms, stagger eating times, and classify students according to their academic achievement.

Brent’s thoughts may not justify placing him in another of the categories in this chapter, for example that addressing resistance to school discourse. But neither do they justify his location in a category emphasizing (neutral) procedures. (I include in the latter grouping people who may perceive unjust treatment of lesbians and gays in school practices, but who substantially think that schools do not exist to do more than what they are doing.)

Before I address this category, however, one more participant needs to be mentioned. Whereas Ann explains adult-student struggles in school in political terms, and Brent sees some of what Ann sees but without the political contextualization, Barry detects the politics of gender and sexuality in school, yet understatedly. "Gender" enables him to go beyond sexuality, and to speak of the school in its broader institutional impact. I do not include Barry with Ann and Brent because he speaks of invisibility and sexual identity—which he doesn’t—but because he angrily reacts to his invisibility as an intellectually curious person. In fact, Barry’s sense of himself as a gay individual was complicated and uncertain. He did not want to be so categorized by anyone.
Barry

Although Barry, 21, has much to say about schools, his understanding of them, especially in high school, developed in Catholic schools he attended in a small Albertan community. His exposure to sexuality in the formal curriculum was extremely limited. And what he learned about sex was circumscribed, he thought, by Catholicism.

They didn't tell us anything about homosexuality, they told us about ... the biological organs. ... what things function .... I think it was because of the Catholic school system ... they had ... conservative views on sex education.

The conservatism Barry remembers extended as well to gender policies in schools. When he elaborated on how gender underlay policy, he spoke with some bitterness about being "pushed around like cattle and not being understood as an individual." His example was a choice he and other students were requested to make between two subject options. "In ... grade 8 and grade 9 we had Industrial Arts and Home Economics .... even [though] I checkmarked ... Home Economics, I was forced to go into Industrial Arts." Despite the appearance of subject choice, the school disallowed Barry's selection. He was classified based on gender role expectations. Barry summarized his position by speaking from the school administration's position: "You're a boy so you'll be carving wood and working with motors .... And you won't learn how to cook meals, sorry, that's for women."

During the interview Barry vehemently objected to school as an institution. School policy based on general gender-role expectations ignited his anger, not school policy as an overt reaction to homosexuality. Barry's sensitivity to the implications of gender was more "aroused" than was his sensitivity to anti-gay discourse. He was outraged that his expressly stated selection could be dismissed so easily. But Barry never discussed the possibility he may have been identified as homosexual by school administrators, and therefore placed in Industrial Arts to "clarify" his sexuality. (No other male students in his school had opted for Home Economics.)

Barry vocalized unequivocal feelings about the school as an institution. "I hated school. I
hated school because I didn’t like the social institution totally, and I hated the classroom setting." Barry constantly felt out of place in school, but unlike some of the other lesbians and gays in this study, he contextualized his feeling intellectually, not sexually.

I remember ... in grade 9 I was in math class and I was just ... looking into space ... daydreaming ... and then my math instructor just sort of looked at me and remarked, "Barry, don't veg out" ... I don't ... think I was vegging out, I was actually thinking and that's ... not recognized by educational institutions. Just ... thinking is looked at as being idle and non-productive.

Barry has ideas about how schools are structured and how they work. He might interpret school influence as a cumulative and limiting effect on his intellectual interests and pursuits, but not as an explicit, normalizing lariat around his sexual identity.

All three participants discussed so far recognize a cumulative set of school practices that can be reasonably considered as influence. Brent refers to a false identity continually played out in school, Ann speaks of adult-imposed values, and Barry rages against a system not interested in him as an individual but as a member of the genus "student." What they felt, imagined, hoped for, and sexually desired, were at best irrelevant to school personnel, and at worst the bases for discrimination. Each subject's response to and interpretation of invisibility varies from the others', but each alludes to school as an influential setting.

How homosexual youth adapt to the influence varies, but they must at least see it before they can devise strategies to deal with it. In the next category I discuss individuals who substantially accept the legitimacy of school operations and therefore feel less impelled to devise strategies. Yet even they are not uniformly favourable toward school policy and practice, as they remember experiences that nag at them.

(b) "Fitting in": Living in a Procedurally (Neutral?) School: The Cases of Colin, Michael, Andre, Sean, and James

However great may be the tension between educational ideals and educational practices,
when the conflict is especially acute and the stakes particularly high, the politics of schooling--socializing/indoctrinating the young--require endorsement of the practical rather than the ideal. Further, these politics reinforce in students normative expectations of structured environments such as schools. Even if they chafe at the normative cords, they begin to think of schools as places where these politics should occur.

Knowing this makes Barry, Brent, and Ann resent their invisibility, although not equally. To those who see in schools nothing but what is to be expected in a functionalist system, the sometimes bitter truth of politics in education leaves, less frequently, a sour taste in the mouth. Fitting in with school expectations and standards of behaviour may even conceal the conflict. However, concealment does not mean elimination of the intent to influence. It means that many socializing processes are masked and are therefore more difficult to unveil. Does this masking inevitably lead to the conclusion that all school operations are therefore undisclosed and will always appear neutral? No, and indeed most participants in this section differentiate in their assessments of school administrators' or employees' decisions. And the subjects do not all, or always, react to these as neutral decisions. What is masked, however, is the political backdrop of school operations. The following discussion of Colin's interview on school influence clarifies the point.

_Colin_

To bridge this section on procedural neutrality with the previous one on invisibility, I begin with Colin's statement that homosexuality was never raised in any class he had participated in, and nobody, including him, broached the subject with teachers. However, Colin did try less openly to introduce discussion of homosexuality to other students. This effort brought him into contact with the broad curricular discourse of schools, and also with school influence.

Colin, 18, cites two memories from his high school years that he associated with school influence. One was of his effort to post a sign advertising a youth group for homosexuals on a wall in his school. The other was of a grade 11 teacher teaching about character traits and
genes. The teacher was commenting on

... what you inherit from your parents, and so he says, "Well, what do you like in people?" ... a class filled with real idiots, you know, they're just like, "Oh yeah ... I like big breasts" ... And the teacher's writing this on the board ... I mean that's sexist right there ... and then he says, "Well, what do you not like about people?" ... [A student says] "I hate faggots" ... [so] he writes faggots on the board ... you don't know how incredibly angry I got, and ... frightened ... I would not have said something to him ... when he was writing it on the board. And I really, really wanted to say something to him afterwards. And I didn't ... that still bothers me... He was very selective what he put on the board. He didn't write everything that a person was saying.

Colin's expression of fear and anger is exemplary of what many lesbian and gay students experience in school with teachers, counselors, administrators, and other students (Green 1991; Rofes 1989; Sears 1991, 1991a, 1987; Dressler 1985; Krysiak 1987; Price 1982; Hunter & Schaecher 1987). Colin notes the discrepancy between his feelings and observances in the two high schools he attended (as do Ann, Trish, and Michael of the high schools they enrolled in). However, it is unclear whether Colin would ascribe the behaviour he condemned to the specific culture of the school, the institutional culture of all schools, or the "stupid" behaviour of one teacher.

Colin's sense of the issue is localized. His criticism in the example above is of the teacher, not of the education system itself for possibly fostering, but certainly tolerating, the behaviour which so angered him.

Tolerance for such behaviour, whether an inadvertent outgrowth of existing procedures or a result of school policy, fits well the functionalist discourses of schools. Whatever the specific experiences of students, their predominant impression must be that curricularly-sanctioned attitudes and values are entirely intrinsic to social cohesion. In such a milieu concepts that contradict this dictum are rarely advanced. Students would not readily detect, therefore, ideas that 'exonerate' teachers' behaviour but indict institutional practises. In such a milieu as well, students are more likely to direct their agitation against particular teachers, vice-principals, or principals, than to formulate a social critique of schooling. The thrust of analysis is centred
on the microscopic experience, not the macroscopic intent. Influence is perceived through a haze of 'molecular' incidents and nuances and not through macroscopic awareness. Institutional purposes are obscured by personality idiosyncracies and conflicts.

An environment that nourishes compliance at all costs also encourages superficiality. Students learn they should not challenge the status quo, and that candid disclosure of personal (and "real") experiences is both unacceptable and, for homosexuals, endangering.

Most interviewees discuss their high school experiences in closely circumscribed terms. Almost all had no ongoing school allies, though many did have friends; the subjects had little direct knowledge of other lesbians and gays, and what few anti-homosexual incidents they described were not placed in a perspective of the 'total school'--the school as a social institution.

The circumscription may derive from feeling subordinate, jeopardized, or ridiculed. In a localized state of mind, what participants observe may also be described and analyzed "locally." But the local, or micro-, level, in this instance may have a larger implication: experience may seem singular, but it becomes significant as a benchmark of institutional behaviour when, although singular, it is not repudiated by the system. From this perspective, any clear incident of anti-lesbian/gay behaviour may be a benchmark. And other school experiences not connected to sexuality may nonetheless be linked to it as part of an overall network of imposition. This is certainly Ann's and Louise's view (discussed later), even if they do not always classify the imposition as a form of influence. However they classify it, the value of their 'sight' lies in their sensing of something else behind the singularity. Schooling discomfits them by its ulterior purposes. (The hidden curriculum may be thought of as a medium of ulteriority.)

Colin, however, is not so bothered. His disgust with his teacher suggests a belief school influence exists, but as a force in other students' lives. Notice the language of his consideration of whether or not schools influence.

Their major influence is... trying to make sure the kids... follow the rules... they home in on a lot of things, you know, like lifestyle, and then they keep reinforcing it,
you know ... "Don't break the rules. Do this, do that, do this, do that" ..... family values, getting back to that sort of thing ... Raise a family, work a 9-5 job, that kind of thing. There are a lot of teachers that force it on their students.

There are no personal pronouns here, just a reference to kids. It was not necessarily for his benefit that Colin wanted to tell the teacher of his anger after all, it was for other students' benefit.

This passage does not signify Colin's unawareness of how schools attempt to influence. Rather, Colin detaches himself from this experience as if he is not subject to it, as if schools do not shape through negative and disqualifying messages what Foucault calls subjectivity. Indeed, Colin believes sexual identity buffers the effect of school influence in his life. After he ponders whether schools may be uninfluential despite their efforts, he replies,

I guess when it sort of opposes a person's own personal agenda or, you know, their own patterns ..... all the ..... reinforcements that I got throughout school did nothing for me. I mean, I'm still a homosexual ..... I guess it depends on the person. There are a lot of people that have been convinced that you have to be heterosexual ..... and that's the way you fit in. You're part of the norm ..... But that doesn't always work, it isn't always effective.

Colin has enough self-awareness to understand the stigmatizing implications of the episode with the teacher. This explains why he wanted to reproach the teacher for not dispelling the class's stereotypes and to articulate a principle of inclusiveness. And Colin is certainly aware there's a major emphasis on heterosexism, that "they just want people to fit in ..... to be part of the norm ..... [to] try to change our identity to fit the normal people." But he ends by affirming the countering possibility of personal identity.

Colin is varyingy certain and uncertain about what schools are trying to achieve. He states on one hand that schools do not have an agenda to influence, but that the circumstances of schooling just end up that way. On the other hand Colin associates school influence with sexual identity development, but with a twist. The identity may be resilient enough to offset some of the acculturating messages of the school environment. So schools do not generate identity, but they must contend with it.
Does this jibe with Colin's anger with the teacher for writing "faggots" on the board? Yes, because not all homosexual identities are equally realized, understood, or accepted. I asked Colin if he thought it possible the teacher was trying to be impartial when he wrote the word. Colin rejected this interpretation because the teacher did not use the word "faggots" to raise the level of understanding and empathy among the students in the class. He permitted it to stand on its own and did not reproach some of the students who yelled out their agreement that being a fag was a characteristic worth eliminating.

Perhaps Colin's anger was fed by his assessment of his school as a fairly tolerant place. Students did not usually harass suspected lesbians or gays. While not a model of toleration, this school was a non-threatening environment as compared to the second high school he attended. By the time he attended the second high school Colin had joined a gay youth group and was committed to spreading the word that it existed.

To this end, he asked to put up a poster in the school, advertising the youth group and a contact number. He resented having to get permission to post the information, but tried to arrange a meeting with the most openminded counselor available. He was told by a secretary that all the counselors were openminded, and that Colin would have to discuss the matter with his assigned counselor. Colin described the experience: "He was pretty decent about it......I went in there to generally say, 'would you please put up the youth group poster? .... One out of ten of your students has to be gay .... And even if it's not that much ... you should put it up'." The counselor quickly glanced at the item and said he would bring it up at the next counselors' meeting. Colin assumes he did, but Colin never saw the poster displayed in the school.

Colin's assumption the counselor would raise the issue with other counselors may have been naive, although he never established the point by returning to the counselor to find out what discussion had ensued. When Colin began summarizing for me the meeting with the counselor, he described the man as "pretty decent." Yet, as our discussion continued, Colin's annoyance over the incident was evident.
His account echoes the comments of other participants to the extent that a political analysis of the cultural politics of school systems remains undeveloped. All subjects in this research are young (aged 17-22), and the development of a political theory takes time. However, political discourse emphasizing micro-, personality politics can also restrict the vocabulary and the scrutiny of political analysis. This restriction is present in Colin’s account of his high school years in three ways.

First, to say that politics can be reduced to the effect of individual personalities, or that one person can be singularly influential, is to miss the point in a society governed by defined roles in bureaucratic systems. This is not to say that personalities are meaningless or that personal identities and values are irrelevant to how policies may be developed or implemented. I mean that policies and politics of social institutions, especially those institutions under public scrutiny such as education systems, are not critically guided by the idiosyncrasies of such institutions’ personnel. For all the flexibility in the system, public education became a modern organization when it was bureaucratically invented in the 19th century and became uniformly subject to standards and practices from an administrative and political centre.

Second, individuals may certainly have sufficient latitude to modify school board policy or make up policy where it is not already stipulated. Principals may exercise considerable control over their schools, and may even be profoundly influential. But this generalization refers to local developments in individual schools, not to policy at an institutional level. Curriculum is not easily entirely abandoned or substantially altered at a classroom or school level, in a system devoted to surveilling its personnel.

Colin may have realized the discretionary power of school officials, as is suggested by his request for an openminded counselor. Or he may have sensed what Sears found after studying school faculties’ attitudes about homosexuality: that counselors are, comparatively speaking, more supportive of school programs for lesbians and gays than are teachers (Sears 1988). But Colin occasionally misses the larger political tapestry that makes hanging a poster a political declaration, that places the issue beyond a simple matter of personal discretion and subjects it
to larger political and cultural forces.

Colin understands some aspects of school environments. He requests the counselor keep his name confidential because of homophobia. Colin had no knowledge of anti-gay incidents, but was wary of the general school atmosphere. He knew students casually addressed themselves as "fags." And he noted how girls would say

[oh, yes, you're my lesbian lover] ... they come up and they hug each other and, you know ... they do it just to be really obnoxious ... obviously it's in public and they're just doing it to make a scene and to, you know, belittle it. I find it very harassing ... how dare they ... belittle?"

Colin assumes schools can be influential; why would he otherwise ask to display information, and why become angry when a teacher fails to correct the class's boorish response to a discussion of homosexuality? Colin acknowledges the concern about displaying possibly controversial information, but says

there are so many [posters] up there ... they're trying to combat racism ... why can't they put up a number? ... If a student had come up ... with a poster that promoted drugs, you know, things like that, I mean, it would obviously have to go through administration and probably get rejected. But ... a poster for anti-prejudice, I mean, this is ... one of their major things in the school.

Because the school had already committed itself to other, similar projects of enlightenment, not to be similarly committed to homosexuals angers Colin. Schooling instead punishes and isolates gay youth from each other and from their friends.

But Colin does not see, deliberately obscured as it is in schools, the larger social context in which political messages become acceptable. The political discourses of the society remain undisclosed to him; political analysis, and the resistant action that might come from it, is left to individual counselors, teachers, and others. School function conceals school intent.

Our society does not encourage sustained inquiry into why political analysis is limited, and
thus limiting. Schools readily deter this kind of inquiry, whether conceptual or empirical. Curtis (1988), for example, shows how school structures give the appearance of democratic openness but are in fact non-democratic agents of the state. School boards are a good example. While ostensibly representative of the public, they are in fact creatures of government, constituted by law and obliged in the final analysis to obey government directives rather than their constituents’.

Given this political milieu, Colin understandably detects distinctions and inconsistencies in a curriculum, but cannot see what to do about them. Indeed, he accepts the administration’s right to reject pro-drug posters. What mystifies and frustrates Colin is the exclusion of homosexuals from an anti-prejudice campaign. He does not realize the campaign is not generic -- it is not opposed to all prejudice, including, therefore, prejudice against homosexuals -- but the outcome of specific political pressures pertinent to particular political agendas that not only tolerate but perhaps actively incite and utilize prejudice.

Third, like others in this study, Colin thinks school personnel should help all students, and that his effort to do something constructive for gays and lesbians should have been endorsed by the school’s governing authority. This is the liberal-humanist faith that echoes through many of the interviewees’ ideas. But social systems often mask their real intent, even allegedly liberal-humanist ones. Therefore Colin neither identifies nor challenges the logic and structure that legitimatize school authorities’ right to control people’s lives based on sexuality, gender, or anything else.

He reacts instead to the specifics of the curriculum, for instance the absence of references to homosexuality. However, curriculum in a masked context does not appear as policy. Therefore function and control equate, to use Colin’s observation, with following rules. This is compatible with social demands for conformity, and for exclusion that facilitates conformity.

School discourse is not developed unilaterally and free of outside influence. Prevalent social concepts and functionalist concepts of schooling are mutually insinuating. Social
attitudes and practices intrude on school policies, and all convey to students ideas of gender and sexuality. Colin glimpses the intrusion but does not yet perceive various possibilities of resistance. He also notices the procedures of incursion and knows they are not neutral, but his opposition is to the kinds of rules these procedures support, not to the schools' mandate to foster rules. In this respect Colin tacitly accepts the most fundamental justification of schooling, and consequently the efforts of schools to influence.

Michael is also aware of school stricture and the curriculum underlying it, but contrary to Colin's view, Michael expects schools to influence students through both official and hidden curricula. But in Michael's case it's as if the effort to influence can be separated from how this is done, for he is surprised that school curricula outline models of behaviour and thought that students are expected to take on. Michael can see the strategy and agenda in the desire to influence, but not the political imperative that drives it and requires students be told what models of thought and behaviour to adopt. Michael's observation that schools do not ask students what models they prefer sits alone as an astute but forlorn commentary.

Michael: Sex Without Sexuality

Michael, 21, is an American who experienced schooling in a small midwest-American hometown. He described the sex education curriculum as "very, very, very little"—precisely one class in a school year. The only allusion to homosexuals stressed how they caused AIDS. Other than this, sex education focused on drugs and human reproduction, but not on reproduction as sexuality.

Does this curriculum suggest the school did not want to influence students' sexual interests, expectations, and behaviour, or that its influence was minimal? One might argue that, contrasted to the clearly-communicated message of drug education, sex education that excludes discussion of sexuality indicates no interest in or effort by schools to influence in this matter. This would not, however, be Michelle Fine's view (Fine 1988). She writes that school sex curricula emphasize fear of disease, abnormality, and sexual desire itself. To omit sexuality
from a curriculum supposed to study it deprives students of outlets to explore the meanings of their sexual lives.

This is what the participants object to. Schools create a falsehood that may constrict students' respect for teachers and other school professionals, and persuade them that schools are not where important learning takes place. More than this, some of the interviewees learned they had to conceal themselves from the very people who defined their professional raison d'être as the nurturing of future generations. This was a source of frustration, anger, and despair.

Michael offered no particular conclusion about influence when alluding to sex education, but more precisely referred to it when he summarized the general goals of schooling: "[Schools] were trying to influence who you were, but they wanted it to be in their model, not your own." (my emphasis) Michael's use of "but" intimates he expected schools either to be influential or to try to be influential. His response is different than most subjects' to this extent: he anticipated, even if not blatantly, that schools had a hidden agenda. He senses influence as intent, as something detectable in what he thinks will be forthcoming, but not as an institutional set of interests and indoctrinatory prescriptions. What Michael did not anticipate was influence that would try to counter or undermine the directions, or personal models, toward which the students were already leaning. Instead the schools he attended emphasized "their model," not his. Schools do influence, he says, but their personnel don't realize how influential they can be.

I don't think they know how influential they are .... look at the rebellion that goes on .... schools try to be parents, you know? .... They give you all this parental advice .... but they're not influential in the right ways, like they don't teach ... like where does this guy get off, the health teacher [the man who claimed gays give people AIDS], where does he get off saying that? .... somebody needs to stop this guy and say ... "this is what you should be teaching, is [sic] that homosexuality is a norm." .... you know, I was very prejudiced against homosexuals when I moved to Vancouver ... because I thought, "they're a bunch of freaks."
Implicit in Michael's statements are assumptions of parenting and schooling. Michael hints that the right kind of parenting and schooling, and therefore of influence---*effective and authentic*---is that which enables individuals to pursue their own goals. Whereas others might search for definitional signs of influence in outcomes or effects, as do Colin, and Andre and Sean (both of whom are discussed later), Michael locates definitional signals in intent, as does Louise (who is also dealt with later). But his response to these signals is ambiguous.

Consider that his strongest outcry and feelings of anger stem from the comments of his health teacher. Michael expects schools to portray life and people honestly, carefully, and caringly. His expectation comes from assumptions shared also by Ann, who thinks education should not impose pre-determined values, and by Colin, who thinks opposition to prejudice of any sort would surely be what a humanistic and enlightening institution would be committed to. Michael's health teacher violated Michael's expectation, but Michael evaluates the scope of the betrayal by the variation between his self-knowledge as a gay person and the teacher's comments about gay people. The latter become "official" knowledge because they are expressed in a context of curricular and teacher authority.

School procedure and the hidden curriculum endow teachers' authority and create an impression that teachers always know what they are talking about, and therefore should rarely be questioned or challenged. This remains so even when personal experience such as Michael's contradicts what is said in classrooms. The impression thus created underlies education systems' warrant to teachers. This warrant to teach is an important part of teachers' professional aura. Moreover, procedural influence and the hidden curriculum come into conflict with what some students think are the real social practices and purposes of schools. The conflict brings the work of "influence" to light, for example on Michael's reaction to his health teacher's thoughts on homosexuality.

Despite Michael's self-knowledge and general self-acceptance, his exposure to other gays and lesbians was limited. This limited exposure formed a wedge of doubt that became for a time, self-contempt. After he moved to Vancouver and became connected to the larger gay culture
of the city, Michael reassessed his attitudes about homosexuals. "I mean[,] it was things that I'd heard from . . . . the health teacher . . . . I knew that wasn't true, but at the same time I thought, "well, this guy got his information from somewhere . . . . somebody told him that."

Michael did not speculate when he was in school about where this teacher acquired his information, or about who were the people conveying the information the teacher later adopted as his own. School influence may be said to exist in this case, in that it displaced Michael's personal understanding of himself, and in his mind, of other lesbians and gays he had previously met.

The question is why was his self-knowledge displaceable? Was his self-awareness and acceptance less established than he initially suggested it was? Was he usually uncertain about other matters? Was it just youthfulness that eased the displacement--the lack of experience and clarified identity that we associate with youthfulness?

Psychological analyses are not the purpose of this study. Perhaps some people who are psychologically susceptible to school discourse are more prone to detect curricular murmurs about homosexuality wafting through school corridors. The present study, however, is about school influence as a discourse of power, and how people are 'made' susceptible.

Michael offers us an example of someone wanting to believe that schooling has no ulterior practices and that schools as social institutions have no ulterior motives, despite having both official and hidden curricula. He wanted to believe this at the same time as he saw that schools had a life-model for students that was an unjustified and hurtful imposition.

In the title of this section on influence, "neutral" is bracketed purposely. All respondents discussed here acknowledge school policies and procedures; they realize schools are bureaucracies. However, they do not unanimously see these procedures as neutral operations. James, Andre, and Sean, the other members of this grouping, do explain procedure as a form of neutrality. This takes the argument about influence deeper into the heavy concealment of bureaucratic intent.

I began my discussion of the interview material with Ann, who perceived in school
curriculum the constant use of power to change and direct students. Michael notices power in
schools, but not as a medium of indoctrination. Now I move on to Andre, who identifies the
object of schooling as preparation for work; to Sean, who discerns in school practices the utility
of good teaching and general knowledge; and to James, who sees neutrality in both the daily
rhythms of school life and the lessons of school organization.

Andre

Andre, 21, is untroubled by the possibility of ulterior motives of educators. Schools have
clear purposes, legitimate in themselves. When asked if schools set out to teach about gender
and sexuality, Andre responded with a functionalist description of schooling.

No...they teach you how to become a person in the workforce...they try to prepare
you to go to....university...by the laws of the land [homosexuality is] still not
correct, and so why would they even try to be, you know, different in school, why would
they want to?

Andre is wrong about the legal status of homosexuality in Canada, but more interesting is
the logic of his statement. He says people may accept a school ban on discussion or teaching
of illegal behaviour. However, he has no comment on what is an appropriate role for schools,
such that not following the law justifies exclusion from the curriculum. This thinking reflects
the logic of omission, under which homosexuality is not referred to, and thus underwrites the
invisibility referred to by Ann, Brent, and Colin. There may be many students living "illicit"
lives who might benefit from open discussion in classrooms of the very activities Andre says
are prohibited by law. A particular kind of discourse refuses to allow references to
homosexuality in classrooms, but Andre does not recognize schools as realms of discourse.

In their functionalist offerings schools sanctify the logic of omission. As they teach and
enforce normative behaviour, so do they endorse some behaviours and attitudes but not others.
Functionalist theories often stress the interdependence of social roles and social values in
establishing social order (Durkheim 1966; Jary & Jary 1991). Structural-functionalist theories
depict societies as social systems whose institutions contribute vitally to social cohesion (Parsons 1964). As a normative social institution, the school enforces roles and values considered indispensable to social interdependence. Heterosexual roles and values are significant aspects of the school's normative regime and of society's interdependence. Sex education programs barely mention homosexuality, and if they do the references are frequently negative. Participants in this research reiterate their absence from the curriculum, experienced as both academic subject matter and schools' social environments. Demanding visibility, asserting presence, not only requires a changed discourse, but builds on it as well. Such change, I think, is helped through deconstructing the history of schooling. However, deconstructing or revealing the political (and sexual) interests of school organizations and curricula requires politicizing students and other groups involved in educating, through open political analysis of what and how schools teach.

None of the participants offered this kind of political analysis. The politicization they underwent in school justified the school's objectives and procedures. Andre accepts this justification and has no expectation of education beyond its functionalist, "credentialing" mandate. He did not tie his specific observations to microscopic school practices (face-to-face interactions among students, and between school personnel and students), but did pinpoint a macro-functionalism. "I can't justify anyone's behaviour, I just know ... I can see why things happen. Not that I agree with them," he says.

Andre acknowledges the surface phenomena of school life, but is unsure whether to classify what he observes and senses as formal school policy. He would not, therefore, describe his accommodation to school demands as acquiescence. When contemplating how Andre fits in with school procedures, this is an important distinction to remember. He simply is not agitated by what he sees as the normal workings of school systems. Is this simple acknowledgement of reality or acquiescence in all but name?

I asked Andre whether gay and lesbian lives were portrayed at all in his school, and if so in what ways. He answered, "it wasn't portrayed, period." And he indicated nobody had asked
about the topic in any class. When I inquired why he thought nobody asked, he responded, "why would they? . . . no one's gay . . . . You know what I mean? . . . . why would you ask? . . . . is it important to you? . . . . You know, are you gay if you ask?"

From this passage one may conclude Andre does see some of the system's influence, in that people learn not to speak up in certain contexts. Such reticence is not true of schools alone, of course, and is not true of schools as separate entities from other institutions in society. But for Andre to notice the reticence and still say that school prepares people for working life suggests either that he knows how people can be manoeuvred into silence but doesn't care, or he knows but accepts the prevailing practice because being a working person requires silence.

At first I thought Andre was being ironic. Non-portrayal does not after all signify non-existence, as James (mentioned below) might have concluded in similar circumstances, but a dampening of discussion based on a fear of presumed admission of one's own 'deviant' sexual identity. However, when asked to consider whether schools deliberately try to influence identity, Andre indicated he had no idea: "I've never thought of it," he said. The banishment of a public discourse of homosexuality penetrates to such intellectual and emotional depths that Andre, who recognizes the irony and the possible social danger in merely posing a question, does not interrogate the purposes of an institution that embraced him for more than a decade.

Andre does not contextualize school influence as alienating--a particular analysis most evident in the section on resistance--and thus is unsure, or at least exhibits the uncertainty born of disqualification, of whether or not schools intend to influence their students.

Andre and most other participants detect and object to the sometimes degrading facets of their schooling experiences. What they do not notice as readily is the political context of education, and how the politics of any context endow some vocabularies and quench others.

When students are subject to the politics of silencing, they are deprived of the opportunity to expand and enhance personal and social knowledge, and thus of the chance to initiate or support attitudinal and ideological change. (The deprivation is the core of Trish's and Ann's criticisms of schooling, and the basis of their resistance.) To be knowledgeable in this case
means naming one's sexuality, acknowledging one's identity, and using these understandings to confront or confirm or qualify competing ideologies in school discourse.

When Andre, a gay individual, fails to inquire about homosexuality in his classes to force the issue into the open, he reiterates the political act of silencing. When he turns to a non-gay counselor to discuss his sexual relationship with another student because he believes she will surely have the answers to his questions, as he did in his senior year of high school, he reiterates the political act of being silenced.

Education as a form of intellectual development must include politicization. Education as a normalizing social institution necessarily masks how it politicizes. Even in "conventional" theory about education's relationship to political democracy, politicization (although in the form of citizenship awareness) is deemed essential to a society's intelligent and creative social life (Dewey 1954). Identity and sexuality are powerful components of intelligence and creativity. When subjects discuss whether schools influence students and in what ways, they remember the contrast between being told how they should fit into the social life of their society and how they really did fit in. The functionalist imperative of the school clashed with their personal imperatives.

Sean's comments on school resemble Andre's. Whereas Andre conceptualized schooling in terms of adult work, Sean conceptualizes schooling as good teaching. Both concepts fit a functionalist purpose. A proceduralist understanding of the school accompanies a functionalist interpretation of schooling. Sean articulates both.

* * * * *

Sean: Influence as Effective, Relevant Teaching

Sean interprets school influence to be teaching methodology and useful knowledge for living in the wider world,

You have to bring interest in the class by going off the topic sometimes, discussing issues that are concerning the world, because that's ... something that when we get out
in the real world we're going to have to face. A lot of things that we're taught in school we have never had to use when you get outside. I have never used . . . algebra and geometry.

Sean's interpretation of influence indicates teaching effectiveness is the locus of schools' influence. And effectiveness is closely linked to what teachers inject into the curriculum about life and the world. The way he speaks of it hints this is all that schools intend to teach about. Sean is not worried about the concealment of curricular effects--although he does note them--from which we might glean an understanding of the school's institutional motives. What he sees is what he gets. And what he gets is all that he thinks he can reasonably expect to receive.

Sean stresses the utility of general knowledge. But this knowledge vies with school knowledge, the latter considered a less real and perhaps less personal kind of knowing. However, because Sean thinks curricular relevance means useful public knowledge, he excludes its pertinence to a set of personal and therefore private directions or priorities. In school environments that politicize by encouraging passivity in students, general knowledge is most apt because it rarely incorporates the more personal and politicized issues of students' lives. General knowledge inhibits precise and critical analysis of schools, society, and the relationship between the two.

In such school environments as well, teachers are the immediate line of school-culture contact, in whose classrooms the curriculum's relevance is established. When school experience is curricularly exceptional by not encouraging passivity, the exceptionality is usually because of a particular teacher. In Sean's school background one teacher succeeded in communicating such relevance.

During the interview Sean referred repeatedly to the particularity of this teacher who was always happy to discuss world issues with his classes. Sean's educational interest is in precisely that which brings students' knowledge of life beyond the school environment. In this respect he is close to those already mentioned in this chapter, although he does not specifically allude to the culture of schools. He expects an education to broaden and inform, and therefore to prepare. But he is also pessimistic about whether schools will broaden their students. When I
asked him if sex education introduced real-life issues, his answer was no, it was not very relevant.

Sean did not ask if schools target their influence at identity or personal culture. Influence is understandable to him as a utilitarian curriculum that will assist students' future success, not as a socializing political regimen. Sean views curriculum as a medium of influence, not the influence itself. In this way he nullifies what for other participants is evidence of influence. They may look at the frequent absence of positive portrayals of homosexuality and conclude curriculum is both medium and substance—both the means of persuasion or enforcement and the specifics that are to be learned and obeyed. Sean on the other hand sees the means but omits the specifics, thereby nullifying the value of analyzing the hidden curriculum.

*Personal Idiosyncrasy Versus Institutional Intent: The Influence of the Hidden Curriculum*

This study's participants were not restricted in deciding what aspects of schooling experience might be influential. Nonetheless their answers often went no farther than official books, teaching methods, and teachers' behaviour. The compass of school experience was mired in daily routine. What was intended by schools was what subjects encountered in the schools' regular procedures. This limited scope of analysis is understandable; the hidden curriculum is not usually detected by those engrossed in it. However, the limitation hampers awareness of schools as systemic social institutions. Consequently, individual teachers or counselors bear the brunt of participants' anger and criticism. Systemic and systematic socialization are seen as the idiosyncratic actions of particular school personnel. Schools don't have goals, but specific people do. This indicates how successfully schools have masked their socializing objectives.

Among the Oxford Dictionary definitions was one dealing with exerted yet unseen action, gauged in the end through its effects. Masking interferes with our awareness of, and our ability to, identify school discourse and the action necessary to underpin it. But masking need not have occurred in James' case, for instance, because he assumes schools are neutral. Finally we encounter the idea that schools are procedural and neutral.
James

James, 18, is an exceptional voice in the interviews because he does not see in his school experience the curricular and social omissions detected by others. When asked whether he remembered any teacher who expressed positive or negative attitudes about homosexuality, James said "none that come to mind ...[they were] neutral, neutral." Absence is not, therefore, a political stance that discredits by excluding, as Trish (discussed below) or Ann allege, but instead is a condition of neutrality and detachment. Neutrality leaves unchallenged the outcome of the struggle for control of cultural symbols and values, as if such a struggle were entirely inconsequential.

Within and outside of schools, the struggle is not immaterial. Members of discredited groups are not ‘permitted’ a vocabulary to analyze their social environments critically. James is a member of such a group, and lacks a political vocabulary to identify how absence may instigate and embody the repression of sexual culture. He is hampered in articulating even a condition of non-existence rather than neutrality.

James does not consider the simultaneity of school influence with the growing understanding of his sexuality. He is unique in the group in this view. The more common response is uncertainty about the schools’ intent to influence, or whether they actually experience such influence notwithstanding the schools’ efforts.

Foucault speaks of social institutions as locations of sundry discourses, all in sometimes-shrill but always volatile and unequal contention. In especially small schools such as those Barry and Michael (discussed in the next section) attended, however, the contentiousness is almost mute.

Most schools do not have lesbian and gay social and support groups, and rarely invite to their classes homosexuals who have set up local or regional institutions for gays and lesbians. But this does not mean homosexual students don’t want to hear positive messages. This is why they occasionally try to chip away at the heterosexist armour of schools.
Colin tried to put up a poster. Barry, uncertain as he was of grasping a gay identity, kept to himself his anger about schools and what they taught. Michael did not detect the multiplicity of school messages, but did want to nullify the one, anti-gay message that homosexuals cause AIDS. How? By throwing open the curriculum to all ideas and values? No. He wanted homosexuality taught as a social norm.

Schools are organized around the depiction and projection of a norm (Dreeben 1968). The earliest terminology of the education system—for example, calling pedagogical schools "Normal Schools"—emphasized the regulatory and normative objectives of schooling. School days were and are organized to socialize the young (Curtis 1988). The purposes of this socialization are what the participants do not usually detect. They do not consider that the very concept of a "norm" may be the problem, that to teach any value or behaviour as normative necessarily discredits, suppresses, and demeans other values and behaviours.

Homosexuality is not taught as a norm because it is the imperative obverse of "normalcy." Michael did not experience discrimination and ignorance in school because in his school people failed to understand the usualness of homosexuality and therefore failed to stop the harassment he endured from other students. Michael experienced these circumstances because schools implement the heterosexual ideology society authorizes. What might otherwise be viewed as a benign variation among people must be seen and experienced by students in a heterosexual world as vile difference. Schools develop this understanding.

The Oxford Dictionary definitions mentioned at the outset of this chapter spanned a variety of outcomes and inputs: immaterial things flowing inward, unseen actions but perceptible effects, and inspiration and inducements. But the range, apparently all-inclusive, does not do justice to the subtle adjustments lesbian and gay students must make in school. So far in this discussion of fitting in, for instance, I have said not understanding schools as political institutions blocks an understanding of school policies. But there is another interpretation, one I raise again in my concluding analysis of school influence: that not understanding is one way to avoid acknowledging circumstances that seem impossible to
change. The partial insight into school practices of Andre, Colin, and Michael is a case in point. And even if this interpretation is not viable for all of them—even if Andre and Sean, for example, believe the functionalist rhetoric of schools—they all grapple with the question of disclosure and its accompanying risks. Determining tactics and making choices in these conditions take us beyond the Oxford definitions.

Recognition of the entire socializing apparatus of the school is not an essential prerequisite to changing it. What is prerequisite is understanding its political goals. This means also understanding that socialization, preparing people only for the workplace, and encouraging teaching techniques to spark student interest, all contribute to the success of these political goals. Most participants fall somewhere between limited insight into the agendas of schooling and acute awareness of them. Only a few, however, are willing to resist practices they condemn. Only a few go beyond "sniping" at school regimes, and enter into full-blown criticism of the official curriculum, a step that Trish and Louise take. As was true of the first two categories of discussion, the next one on resistance does not include people who identify and fight against school procedures congruently. But I will begin with Trish, who most explicitly of the three takes this discussion into the realm of resistance.

(c) Resistance: The cases of Trish, Louise, and Zachary

What might a political critique of schooling entail? When discussing school influence mediated by formal curricula, few participants go beyond simply observing the omission or the disparagement of homosexuality. Trish, 21, extends the discussion by politically analyzing normative school influence.

This kind of analysis does not preclude stating what others in this study say about homosexuality and curriculum. Trish is also angered by her 'extinction' in a curriculum (except for a peer counsellor class) so uninterested in her it never refers to the real experiences of real lesbians, but which nonetheless condemns her existence without knowing her.
We only learn about the heterosexual thing, there’s nothing mentioned about homosexuality, that it’s all right, that it does exist. That if you’re going to be this way, you’re going to be okay as well . . . . sex education . . . . only covered the heterosexual part . . . which is very misleading and which really hurt, because I have a sexuality and I can’t put myself into a category, so therefore I will see myself as abnormal. That was a very negative thing. A positive thing was a peer counselling class, where my teacher would bring up the name “homosexual” and that it should be accepted.

In this passage Trish expresses thoughts and feelings similar to those stated by other subjects. Like most of them, Trish is angry and disappointed at not having a category in which to place her life and experience. The anger is driven by an educational expectation: that a system purporting to educate cannot arbitrarily ‘disenfranchise’ some among its target population, that it is obligated to inform dispassionately, honestly, and to provide glimpses of social life reminiscent of the lives students actually live. This echoes the liberal-humanist outlook of schools of other respondents.

Trish believes in the school as an authoritative institution, one that sanctions and should do so. To her the exclusion of lesbian and gay lives is an unnecessary and punitive sanction. What is political about this view of institutions? At the core of Trish’s analysis is profound disillusionment. She could not view disenfranchisement as negative if she did not expect formal education to categorize all experience, including sexual, in realistic terms. "[Homosexuality] . . . it's sort of made invisible . . . it's sort of saying, "this isn't a reality," by not making it part of our education . . . . and therefore one might feel that they aren't . . . . right . . . schools do that deliberately."

When I asked Trish if it might not be strangely positive or beneficial to say nothing about homosexuality, rather than to provide the opportunity to express "put-downs" and negative stereotypes, she said it would not be a better choice to say nothing. Initial introductions to ideas come from friends (who count as informal and possibly uninformed sources); concentrated attention to the topic is needed even if we risk negative expressions in classrooms.

School influence in this case may be seen as the flowing in of immaterial things as mentioned in the Oxford dictionary. Schools don't have control over all ideas and values in
students, but they can implant a kernel of an idea that may counter students' present beliefs and act as a subversive thought, hoping for future change. But this was not Trish's experience; for her school influence was not perceived as action working stealthily to change students (another Oxford criterion of "influence"), but as action to ignore homosexuality.

Systematically ignoring something is not tantamount to an "action-void." It signifies a deliberate closure of inquiry. Not to ask about something is in fact to know about it; it is to know enough not to inquire. School influence thus instills prohibition without mentioning what is prohibited. Identity is not merely ignored, it is denied.

Trish travels into political analysis and resistance when she says schools engrave identity explicitly and methodically.

The things that schools teach that are really important and influential to teenagers are things that will . . . relate to your identity, to your sexual identity, to your cultural identity, and to your intellect . . . . if schools exclude other cultures, other cultural experiences, it doesn't speak to personal power . . . . if we are taught to only have one kind of intellect . . . and we have a different one, we feel . . . abnormal.

Identity as expressed in this passage is all-embracing. In Trish's view, schools may not only disparage sexual identities, but identity—personal power and intellectual understanding—itself appears besieged. This theme is developed in the next chapter. Suffice to say that identity is important enough to Trish that she evaluates whether and how schools influence by their treatment of it, particularly of sexual identity.

Trish speaks of negation here, not of simple omission. The negation is a betrayal of what all students expect of their schooling. (Nevertheless, there remains the question of whether people whose identities are especially dishonoured feel most keenly the negative bite of school influence. Homosexual youth endure conditions that are somewhat different than those heterosexual youth experience. While some heterosexual behaviour may be condemned—such as becoming pregnant out of wedlock—heterosexual identity is not usually a categorical basis for schoolyard taunts or private beatings.) Trish does not merely describe school influence, she
indicts it. The indictment contextualizes her political argument. Schools do not merely 'forget' to include in the curriculum what is most interesting and intrinsic to students; schools betray students' most compelling and insistent thoughts. In all of our lives there are "moments" when some questions are most aptly discussed just because we seem so dearly in need of addressing them. The betrayal spoken of lies in the deliberate avoidance of these questions.

This thing of normalcy, this is what looks normal, this is what normal sex is like, this is what normal people believe in. There are such expectations, and so many ... fail these expectations and don't feel normal and they don't feel part of that school system ... Most students reject the school system because it doesn't speak about their experiences. Whether they are homosexual or heterosexual, it doesn't speak openly about their experience, they do not get questions asked about their own experience, whether it is about sexuality or politics ... Nothing is asked, nothing is answered, therefore between the school system and the student ... there's no real personal reality.

Linda McNeil says authority to teach is "bestowed" on teachers by their students. Obviously this does not eliminate the state as a commanding force in school policy and practice. However, daily interaction between students and teachers involves negotiating how students will behave in class and whether they will listen respectfully to what teachers tell them. McNeil says that, as many teachers assume students are uninterested and therefore relax their efforts, so do many students often withhold authority from teachers. If teachers teach almost motionlessly and without conviction, students pretend to listen so long as their way through the system is facilitated (McNeil 1988). Trish would agree with McNeil's analysis.

What Trish calls personal reality is also ground for 'student-certification' of teachers' authority. She assumes institutional and personal expectations must intersect. Where personal reality is discounted, a fundamental bond between student and teacher, youth and adult, may be ruptured. (Trish understands "reality" as disclosure and exchange among teachers and students, of personal experiences and the meanings derived from them. The usual relationship of schooling that she observes, however, establishes authoritarianism that subordinates students to teachers.) But the rupture need not stop at these relationships.

Ethnic, sexual, and racial diversity in classrooms may opportunely lead to broader social
awareness in all students. However, when school practices limit candid discussion to a narrow band of representation within the wider diversity of the class, they foster previously existing divisions among students or create new ones. Trish understands resistance as exposure and reversal of school conditions that make ruptures and divisions more likely. Discussion of diversity is therefore critical to resistance.

Suppose ....for four years we'll only talk about white heterosexual things. It is obvious that two people are going to be left out, and with the homosexual person, a lot of things go with that. Usually a teenager in high school ....is oppressed more than one ways [sic]. There might be a homosexual person who's disabled, a homosexual person who's an immigrant child like I was, so you have a sort of double prejudice from people ....if the school system ignores this reality for these two people, and only talk about the white heterosexual reality ... they're teaching all of the other eight people that this is the only reality, and i: actually turns them against these two people because they are not included. (my emphasis)

Discussions of associations of sexual identity and school influence requires an understanding that students do not constitute a bloc. Whatever school experiences bind them as peers, these experiences may not override pre-existing prejudices or withstand the derogatory messages in school curricula. Trish perceives divisions that are at least reinforced, if not developed, by schools. Her assumptions of essentialist identity based on skin colour, ethnicity, or sexuality, are debatable. But the value of her reasoning is in its awareness that student solidarity does not rest on a 'student' identity. That in fact, schools play a vital role in 'premising' student identity. This is the nucleus of school influence and subjectivity. Trish's ideas take us beyond just noticing the effects of schooling, from which, according to the Oxford definition, we may extrapolate action undertaken by school authorities or personnel. Influence helps set criteria by which different identities are approved and encouraged or disapproved of and therefore discouraged. This is what I mean by 'premising' identities.

Trish is not critical of formal education just because it influences. Indeed, she commends the power of influence to alter social attitudes. She wants schools to do more and to do better. She wants herself and other students to be influenced, but not in a way that presumptively identifies and encloses people without giving them a chance to tell their life "stories."
School authority is partially constituted through teachers. Trish acknowledges the authority in teachers' power and also in what students assume teachers know. But students still resist. They may screen out most of what is learned in school, says Trish, but people listen attentively in school when questions of morality and values come in.

People don't remember anything about the war, you know. They might remember names, but certain elements are remembered, and those are about sensitive issues that everybody questions. ... and under those sensitive issues, I think, homosexuality falls. (my emphasis)

I emphasize Trish's comment about questions because it reveals a faith in rationality and reasonableness repeatedly expressed in all the interviews except Barry's. No matter what category in the research I have placed the participants—whether proceduralist, acquiescent, or resistant—they assume school systems will respond reasonably once students' needs are made clear. Colin "knows" the school should allow him to display his poster publicizing a gay/lesbian youth group once its merit as an anti-discriminatory gesture is explained. Andre "knows" that schools exist just to teach people, and will therefore do so well. Sean "knows" that teachers are hired to prepare students for life, and therefore this is what they actually do. Schools are social institutions that were rationally established, are rationally operated, and whose policies are rarely capricious.

Rejection of personal experience may instill in denounced or renounced individuals the idea that the denunciation/renunciation is based on good, clear reasons. The participants believe that pre-conceived and 'pre-perceived' stereotypes, even condemning ones, can be dissol vel through rational, reasoned attention. Though not said expressly in this passage, what Trish suggests is that people must first be sensitized to issues if they are not already so, to prepare for discussion of assumptions and values. (The assumption, I think, is questionable. Vilification is not necessarily based on any characteristic of those who are renounced. Reasoned discussion may not banish irrational hatred or fear. But none of this thinking undermines Trish's reasoning about school influence and its potential.)
In the context of school sexual ideology, Trish has an ascribed category, not one she embraces because of a resonant meeting of conceptual description and self-awareness. This desire to see oneself writ large, to be granted one's part of a broader set of understandings, is a recurring theme in this research, and an ironic one at that.

Unconsidered, for instance, is the possibility that categorization is precisely the problem when the categories become supposed axioms of fundamental human differences. Can we categorize identity, behaviour, or anything, without excluding others? If not, it follows that these gay and lesbian voices endorse the very logic that excludes them. (Endorsement, however, does not imply lack of school influence. Exclusion is experienced by the participants as a form of influence.)

Trish, however, is unequivocal on this issue; absence from a curriculum is the result of deliberate action, and therefore counts as influence through omission. Among all participants in the research, Trish is almost alone in applying the concept of omission to other groups. Her example is racism.

[Just like we only have white people's literature in English classes, we only learn white people who have invented things, white politics, and we only learn about the white, white, white ... we don't learn about other sexualities or gay issues ... So because ... students have never been confronted with the subject of homosexuality, they have only been exposed to bad things and ... heard a little bit about people who were bad because they were homosexuals ... young people don't even have the opportunity to think about the subject in a positive way.]

Exclusion has political ramifications. So does inclusion. School influence may lead to both. A double injunction operates here, as both prohibition and compulsion. Students learn what to do and what not to do. But Trish also believes exposure alters perception and that curricular change will change attitudes. Young people can be persuaded to change negative assumptions if given a chance.

This isn't radical resistance. Its agenda does not call out for abolition of schools or the removal of offending school personnel. But it is resistance nonetheless to pre-emptive
categorizing of students based on false assumptions about identity and students' experiences. Schools do not live up to what Trish thinks is one of schools' most prominent tasks—enlightening students and giving them a chance to explore the meanings of their own life-histories.

A thread running through Trish's comments is her assumption that we can know ourselves, and that schools discourage students from raising probing questions about their own and others' lives. Louise offers a similar observation, but her analytical stance bears more suspicion of school authority. She claims not to know what influence is or if she was influenced by school experience. Yet her claim is framed in a series of remembrances about school, and in these memories are inducements and effects of school environments.

Resistance in Louise's case is more personal and inward. She tries to hold the definitional power of school at bay. Not for her a specific category assigned by school discourse, whether general or sexual. Identity to Louise signifies ever-present danger because others may use it for their own, usually discriminatory, purposes.

Louise

Louise might agree with Trish that we can know ourselves, but that schools try to thwart the awareness, if she could be sure of what school influence is. As Louise sees it, all experience is relative and needs comparison to give it texture, delineation, and contrast. She initially disavowed the possibility of knowing the type and degree of school influence. But this did not prevent her from explaining what a school environment is like.


[School is] very superficial and alienating and it's almost like a mini-society of the society we live in now, which is hugely alienating and superficial. So it made me feel more like an ant and it made me feel a little bit less focused than perhaps I would have been if I'd grown up and lived in a process of being with less people... more community and less big school.

In this passage Louise skirts the borders of political contextualization. She can't tell if schools
are influential but she can classify them as alienating and superficial. Louise notes school practices but does not explicitly name them as "political" operations. She does not stipulate the politics of alienation and therefore doesn't see the politics of school influence.

Why wouldn't alienation and superficiality be understood as influence? Why wouldn't feeling oneself to be an ant count as a possible example of influence? Louise does not say she recognizes schools as cauldrons of influence, but that these phenomena do not indicate the influence she knows to be there. Instead she states she is unable to connect her behaviour, attitudes, and feelings while in school with what schools may have intended. Louise attributes her sense of diminished station (being an ant) to the size of the school and not to institutional curriculum, discourse, or culture.

This is considerably ironic, given that Louise spoke of Michel Foucault's work on power. She alludes to teachers who are given unjustified power over students, and to her own strong feelings of powerlessness. "Most of my life I've been the oppressed and I don't like it." Yet she also refers to Foucault's idea that both the oppressor and the oppressed have power played out through their interactions.

Is this an expression of ambivalence about schooling? If the oppressed are as implicated in the game of schooling as the oppressors, is it possible to ascertain influence? How do we identify the intentions and outcomes of a dialectic? Louise vacillates between seeing the influence--associating schooling and self-knowledge, for example--and disclaiming any association given the absence of a comparison with another, potentially influential institution. In her words, "I've spent most of my life in school, so it's hard to look at it objectively."

What Louise means by objective analysis is hard to determine. She assumes there is something else substantively and qualitatively different than school, from which she can decipher school more clearly.

Louise does not speak openly about resistance, but she hints at a relationship of collusion between students and the school when she discusses giving or withholding power from teachers. This relationship hints at possible disruption by students at the very least if teachers renege
on their bargain with students. Disruption in these circumstances is resistance. Louise's attitude about teachers suggests she too might be collusive under certain conditions, but ones that predicate respect in teaching activities.

[Teachers] have more power than I do and I think that's a waste of time unless they're going to play some very good games . . . the teacher . . . I was impressed by was entertaining, and so I didn't mind giving him the power that he had, because in a way he gave it up . . . . he taught what we wanted to know.

So Louise plays the game with an entertaining teacher who infuses the curriculum with questions students think are pertinent. The teacher may always have preponderant power, but Louise can accommodate this if some of her expectations are dealt with.

Nevertheless, after all her uncertainty about whether schools influence students, Louise clearly attributes some influence to school, distinct from other influences. "I think it's been influential in that . . . I have respect for the crowd, that I'm willing to go with the flow . . . . I don't think I would have if I'd had a less superficial experience." (my emphasis)

Surprisingly, from a person who speaks of being oppressed all her life there is no dominant tone of loss or anger at her willingness to obey and respect the crowd. More intriguing is Louise's attribution of going with the flow to the very superficiality she condemns.

To Louise superficiality is an effect rather than a condition. She never fully explains its meaning, but her immediate references after speaking of superficiality are of how much she learned from the non-superficial humorous teacher, and of how the superficiality of her school made her feel small.

However, it is Louise's characterization of schools as superficial environments that suggests influence is a condition as well as an effect, despite her emphasis of it as a consequence. And in its conditional frame of reference it counts as curricular inducement.

Does superficiality make student resignation easier, both as a political choice and as a specific code to follow? Does superficiality propel people into conformity? A clue to her understanding lies in her statement that schools have "obviously had such a huge effect . . . it's
like...you're standing in the middle of a crowd and you say, "well, what would it be like if you were outside the crowd?" I don't know, because I'm not outside the crowd."

The crowd--of peers, primarily--is a context of compelled association. School influence supposedly forces Louise into superficiality. But given the critical eye she casts on schools and society I doubt her analytical power is impaired. What is conveyed here is Louise's awareness of her own conformity induced by school culture. Her uncertainty about school influence--firmly sure of it at some points, claiming to be unable to compare it to anything else at other points--may be less evidence of indecision than of her unwillingness to enter into full-blown resistance.

The one individual in this study who "resists" through educating is Zachary. I use quotation marks because resisting school authority and ideology is not precisely what Zachary does. He sees the need to change social attitudes about homosexuality, but his school experience was positive, even after he publicly revealed his sexual identity. Personal background gave him no reason to condemn school discourse. Nevertheless, I include him in this section because when he decided change was necessary and pushed for it with several other people, he could not know absolutely how school authorities would respond.

Zachary: The Exception

Zachary, 20, grew up in a medium-sized city in Ontario. He had attended eight high schools before graduating. He could not recall the word "homosexual" being mentioned in any sex education discussion. Like the other participants Zachary had good reason to oppose a curriculum that banished him from consideration. He had good reason to conceptualize education in terms of haves and have-nots, in terms of a socializing agent of the state committed to heterosexist norms.

While Zachary does not refer to norms by name, his comments reveal considerations similar to Michael's. Zachary wants people to have "real knowledge of, you know...homosexuality...or AIDS or drugs or, you know, different issues that are coming up. That would be the next
Zachary considers whether schools influence by inquiring into how well schools enlighten students about lesbians and gays. In his eighth school, which he attended in his senior year, he declared his homosexuality. The general reaction was positive.

He helped start a city-wide gay-youth organization and was asked by counselors and teachers from different high schools to address their students on the issue. In his own school non-gay students supported his efforts, offered him protection should he need it, and when a small coterie of students harassed another student presumed to be gay, the administration responded positively on behalf of the maligned individual, although reluctantly at first.

Zachary's assessment of the intent and outcome of school influence, therefore, was tied to how the school dealt with non-heterosexual sexuality. When asked if he thought schools deliberately try to influence students' identity, Zachary replied: "I think in earlier years that's the way it was, but... with the advent of so many new things that are coming out in the '90s and in full force, I think that people are just being forced to be more openminded."

He suggests the larger social environment has superseded not only school influence itself, but the need for such influence. In earlier years, Zachary says, before society had to grapple with AIDS or drugs or other social ills needing a remedy, a deliberate effort to influence was evident and maybe necessary. But that methodical influence has been displaced by "new things," by which I assume Zachary means more accepting ideas about behaviour and values that before had been condemned. As was the case with the other gay and lesbian youth in this study, Zachary does not consider the institutional structure that imbues influential intent with force and will. If he were to do so, he would have to address how a changing world fundamentally alters or undermines the school's institutional mandate to socialize.

Most people live mundane lives permeated by routine. Schools add significantly to the routine. A regular daily cadence gives students' lives an aura of normalcy. Daily normalcy and a normative school ideology convince the subjects their lives are indistinguishable from those
of their peers. They, too, aspire to achieve goals. They also want to be liked and appreciated, and to be listened to and respected. They also become depressed and discouraged, as do their "compatriots." They believe the differences between them and their peers can, and should, be seen benignly. And as they experience the regularity of the school day with its interactions with teachers and other students, they expect schools to teach carefully, honestly, and with integrity. In such circumstances it is difficult to see the school as a social institution with a political/socializing agenda. This, combined with a functionalist discourse that sedates political awareness among students, leads subjects' analysis of schools away from institutional goals and purposes. Zachary's analysis, built somewhat around school experience that was uniquely positive, is also apolitical, but somewhat differently than the analysis offered by other participants. His activism and his school administration's positive reaction explains why he lacks the others' resentment of similar circumstances.

Something else should be considered: a muffled possibility, a deep assumption but partially formulated, a hint rather than an explicit declaration. Zachary indicates the possible displacement of school discourses by personal and social experience, whereas for others in this study personal knowledge was stymied by school discourse.

Zachary's resistance is not as hard as that of Trish and Louise, but he takes his liberal-humanist expectation that schools should educate the entire person one step beyond just articulating the problem and outlining possible responses. Zachary projected himself onto the 'scene' in his school and in the city he lived in. His reaction is consistent with liberal-humanist ideals of educating for social change, and his experience tells him it worked. He therefore might justifiably have said that school influence not only discredited homosexuals, but that its discourse changed and it began to influence students "gay-positively." After all, teachers and counselors in his own school and in other schools called on him to speak about homosexuality. To be sure, they were a minority among school professionals, but together they formed a phalanx of difference. This reassured Zachary of the possibility in schools, and though he never used the word "functionalist," he would likely dispute that a societal mandate to socialize
meant totalitarian foreclosure of all but a heterosexist regime.

Zachary's experience "bends" and expands the definitions of "influence" in the Oxford Dictionary. School was more than just an inflowing of immaterial things, or an environment of aggregate socializing actions. Zachary's experience made him optimistic. But Zachary's experience was also exceptional. No other participant had reason to think so affirmatively about school.

2.4 Analyses

(a) The 'Other' Normative Regime: Resistance in Schools

No participant specified her or his actions in school as resistance to school authority as such. But all of them vary in how they conceive of it.

Developing and sustaining a feeling of authenticity and personal power was important to all the subjects. Louise had some of this feeling in school when the teacher responded well to her and other students' curricular interests. However, Louise remains angry at having to abide by the imbalance of power, and reserves the right to resist, acquiesce, or accord authority to teachers.

Her language shows how the power of formal school relationships may be altered. When speaking of her favoured, humourous teacher, she says "I didn't mind giving him the power that he had." This is not the language of impotence, a formal acknowledgement of what the teacher could take anyway. Rather, Louise asserts an active demand of the school through her teachers, notwithstanding her relative subordination to the power of the school. She has something to withhold and will do so if necessary. This suggests influence can be mutual, but only as a struggle for recognition. And it is a struggle that students often lose.

The power to compel compliance rests with school authorities, but school authority, which brings us close to Foucault's idea of contending discourses, derives from a student's willingness to comply. Louise perceives meaningful education as the outcome of negotiations between
teacher and student on what will be learned and methods of teaching. Although formally constituted apart from anything students may do, teachers' authority must nonetheless be given back to them by their students as a basis of teachers' moral authority.

Louise recognizes this when she comments that in one sense, the teacher gave up the power he had. This epitomizes the moral authority that can bind learners to those who, hopefully, will enlighten them. Teachers can surmount the formal, legalistic definition of office, and replace it with a definition of exchange. In exchange for a realistic and honest discussion of their lives, students will reciprocate by contemplating and learning.

Louise's reading of Foucault helps her contextualize her life as a subjugated being. In her statement that oppressor and oppressed are linked inextricably, that "both the oppressor and the oppressed have power and they're just sort of playing out the interactions as power," Louise perceives her right to withhold her personal benediction from teachers and schools. In the midst of feeling small or ant-like, Louise asserts a student's entitlement.

To resist in school means taking on not only the apparatus of the institution but also those around you who either fit in well, or who do not want to be reminded of their own conformity and its costs. To say as Louise does that she learned to be part of the crowd, indicates acquiescence to practices she feels are deeply flawed and hurtful. When such practices polarize around heterosexual identity and heterosexist assumptions about gender, the hurt penetrates most deeply.

People who fail to see their lives manifested in a curriculum may look for evidence of school influence—and also for a possibility of resistance—in the attitudes and behaviours of their peers rather than in their own life experiences. In such cases resistance may become a remote possibility, especially for homosexual students. In a form of double-exclusion, gay and lesbian students may turn away from educating their peers—which is tantamount to self-exclusion—because they are themselves excluded.

Despite this, the gays and lesbians discussed here have retained their sense of self. Some have viewed school influence as negligible. But they have also, at the very least, reacted to and
struggled with or against, the inertia of the school in order to dispel anti-homosexual feelings. In this manner have they qualified the definitions of "influence" introduced at the beginning of this chapter. To speak only of inducements and occasionally-noticeable effects overshadows how these subjects have struggled and why they decided on their varying courses of action. They assume they can be influential, even though their own lives appear to some of them to contradict this assumption.

(b) Bureaucracy and Mentality in Schooling

The subjects of this study need (as do all students, I think) a vocabulary that permits both micro- and macro-political analysis. Their detection of school practices is primarily on a micro-analytical level. This is the school's real triumph. It is perceived to have only a limited, functionalist purpose--enabling its students to eventually enter the workforce--while it yields a deft political influence.

Bruce Curtis's thesis is that throughout its history, Canadian schools have deliberately fostered an understanding that became so deeply embedded in students they rarely consider, let alone challenge, prevailing norms of political and social life (Curtis 1989). He is not referring to psychology here, although there were (and are) psychological effects of conformity. Instead he points to a range of concepts and related regulatory behaviours that 'installed' a public profoundly deferential to authority.

Deferential publics expect their schools to foster in children respect for authority. Fostering such attitudes and behaviours is consistent with functionalist objectives of schools, as is enforcing heterosexist norms.

Virtually all subjects reacted in some manner to their schooling even as they rejected explicitly the idea of influence. Ann, like Barry, chafed under the controlling regime of school regulation. Sean, Brent, and Andre associated education more with the function or purpose of schooling than with defined, ulterior intentions. Louise and Colin spoke of alienation and phoneyness, and Michael of attitudinal and behavioural models that typified the school's
intentions, not the students'.

Most participants mentioned the discrepancy between their lives and how homosexuals' lives were presented to students. The absence of a presentation counted as a presentation of omission, a de facto acceptance of whatever general assumptions and images students called to mind about lesbians and gays. Ann sharpened her understanding of school influence into a hard look at how schools trivialize and suppress investigation and awareness of homosexuality. Such awareness is an important aspect of general and self-knowledge.

(Self-)knowledge has political connotations and repercussions. The more provocative the personal knowing, the more difficult it is to sustain when confronted by the politics of denial, absence, and 'neutrality.' Denial and absence would mean nothing to the participants if these conditions did not give rise to confining circumstances.

Foucault (1977) writes of truth as a network of rules governing what we can legitimately and reasonably assert as truth, and thus of what counts as knowledge. These rules subjugate or disqualify the truths and knowledges participants identify as central to their self-understanding.

Schools sanction types of behaviour and modes of thinking by "licensing" some knowledges and disparaging others. This is how schooling instills expectations and impressions of what is meant by "knowing," and how individuals come to know anything. As Foucault states,

Education may well be ... the instrument whereby every individual ... can gain access to any kind of discourse. But we well know that in its distribution, in what it permits and ... prevents, it follows the ... battle-lines of social conflict. Every educational system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the powers it carries with it. (Foucault 1972: 227)

From this regime comes a disciplinary consequence.

Discipline, says Foucault, "makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise." (Foucault 1977: 170) That individuals are rendered instruments is most disturbing because it can make us complicit
in our own objectification, and barely or no longer able, to detect that we are complicit.

(c) On Prohibition, Conscription, Resistance, and Influence

A discussion of school influence must take cognizance of numerous fault lines of inquiry. The fault lines run along both institutional and individual school axes. This complicates the analysis because the youths’ insights occasionally focus on institutional purposes, but most frequently on practices in particular schools. This is understandable, but it localizes subjects’ perceptions, thus complicating the effort to differentiate between idiosyncratic school environments—as in Zachary’s case, who experienced very strong support from students and administration—and individual school differences that collectively can be interpreted as institutionally significant.

The pervasive culture of denial and repudiation of sexual identities—crucibles of emotions, understandings, sensitivities, and aspirations—is institutionally significant for gays and lesbians. When the people in this research react angrily to both the absence and presence of references to homosexuality, they do so because both dimensions "misshape" who they are. Their sense of personal knowing may be inchoate, inarticulate, partially unrealized, and to some degree unlived; but their voices resound with the anger of people who know themselves. And they perceive in the knowing not just haphazard absence, but methodical and deliberate exclusion or misrepresentation.

There is more to this in the precise ways schools teach what is not to be questioned, even when the prohibition is so vague as to be essentially unknown—a distinct manifestation of the truth that dare not speak its name. Colin knew the prohibition but did not question or challenge it. Ann realized it and resented how it became dispersed throughout her school life.

Dispersal becomes possible through acceptance of, or acquiescence to, a broad curricular regime of comments, jokes, and silencings. In this study, most people indicate compliance with school regimes. More interestingly, almost all of them do not actively work to thwart the regimes. Does this suggest internal resistance, general acquiescence, fatalism, or collusion? A
precise answer might involve a combination of some of these.

School regimes display broad bands of discourse. Students contend with all of them by colluding, resisting, or "going with the flow." Giroux writes that resistance theories enable us to study how social class and culture set up cultural politics. He goes on to say that such politics enable a "reading of the style, rituals, language, and systems of meaning that constitute the cultural field of the oppressed. Through this process, it becomes possible to analyze what counter-hegemonic elements such cultural fields contain." (Giroux 1983: 101) The people cited in this chapter are not resistance theorists, and are largely unaware of society's political antagonisms, and schools' role in inhibiting, nullifying, delaying, or fostering them. The subjects turn their resistance inward when they do resist. They do not state in school their objections to school practices that inflame them. Except for Zachary they do not initiate common action on behalf of themselves and other homosexuals.

Louise goes along with the crowd. Colin does not pursue the reasons for not putting up a poster advertising a gay youth group. Michael finds he is acquiring negative impressions of gay people in direct contradiction of his few personal experiences. Barry is angered by the nullification of his choice of home economics over industrial arts, but rails inwardly against the system and its personnel.

Conspicuously lacking in many participants' school lives is contact with others like themselves, a contact that might (and after high school does) involve them in lesbian and gay communities. When schools prohibit establishment of youth groups, they also try to negate, or at least to forestall, homosexual awareness. A discourse of forestalling is a form of influence when the discourse inhibits or alters awareness.

Learning not to utter genuinely inquisitive words about homosexuality (or about anything important to students) is to learn as well the injunction to prevent similar inquisitiveness in others. The silence has ramifications beyond individuals to systemic pervasiveness. No institutions for homosexuals can flourish in such a realm unless one lives in a larger centre where, as in Zachary's or Colin's case, a youth group exists or is forming. Important as they
are, these institutions are external to schools, do not embody widespread social values, and are unlikely to penetrate the ideological fields of schools. Schools' sexual and gender influence thus reigns unchallenged.

Awareness of prohibitions--of what to inquire about and what to ignore--was acquired by the subjects without reference to homosexuality. The corollary of this silence is volubility. When the prohibition is not rebuked, its unstated, yet presumed, truth, circulates uncorrected. This is the deafening roar of exclusion and discreditation. One need never have a day in court because the court is never convened.

The gay and lesbian youth negotiated this double disenfranchisement--through the silence and volubility of prohibition--as best they could in the absence of sustaining school environments and a suitable political vocabulary with which to criticize school practices and formulate a response. Although most did not openly challenge school practices they did become angry. Why?

Complicity and Conscript

Foucault's idea of a discipline that makes people objects and instruments of power aptly fits here. Any group of people, as objects of this power, may feel the lash of discreditation. However, the subjects react particularly to their 'conscript' as instruments of this power, although they do not interpret this as influence.

Influence is ascertained by participants indirectly--a facet of influence expressed in the Oxford definitions--through classroom experiences with teachers and schoolmates, and observation of inconsistencies between school rhetoric and school practices. These inconsistencies represent school power as an objectifying force, a force that differentiates and sets up a foundation for discriminatory treatment. Colin's exasperation over the hanging of a poster exposes and illustrates inconsistency.

Schools combat racism because they are supposed to enlighten students. Thus, Colin asks, what explains the school's refusal to put up a poster? The refusal represents school power as
an *instrumental* force, the kind of force that implements a heterosexual, normalizing ideology, and encourages others to live by it and nourish it in others. This aspect of school discourse is missed by Colin and others. Hence their mystification and anger when schools don't live up to expectations they will enlighten people and dissolve their prejudice.

*Does Complicity Lead to Resistance?*

How the participants react to this knowledge differs. But most do notice some kind of effect. Colin knows a school official decided his poster would not be seen in the school. Barry knows someone with power in the school decided he would not enrol in home economics despite his clearly stated preference for it. Andre knows that students remained silent about homosexuality even when it was opportune to raise the issue in class. Brent knows that identity portrayed in high school is often feigned, and that authentic identity is lived only after graduation. Would he have made the same claim were he not homosexual? Disparaged identities are much harder to live openly, and lesbian and gay students may conclude based on the disparagement of their identities, that *all* forms of identity are made false by school and peers.

Must resistance mean overt political action? Is school influence detectable in the determination among young homosexuals (or any students) to resist, and not necessarily in the particular form(s) of resistance undertaken?

I argue that in some respondents' silence there was a kernel of resistant intent. Foucault (1972) writes of the pluralism of resistances. Silence that leads to determination to persist in one's identity is part of this pluralism. Determination in this case means a commitment to withstand adversity rather than succumb to it. Although the question of whether schools influence students was not asked in terms of identity, the interviewees contextualized it this way. That their analysis should fall along this line suggests the power of identity in their lives. Their occasional silence in school does not inevitably signify surrender to the school's sexual discourse. Persistence can be a form of resistance.
I said earlier in the chapter that schools were understood more through immediate events or daily routines than through awareness of institutional goals and bureaucratic organization. This makes it harder to detect the deeper effects of school discourse. More than this, it misidentifies school symptoms as school structure. The subjects do not recognize that school practices comprise the social purposes of schooling, and accordingly the effort to influence. Unified resistance is difficult to develop without a political analysis of schools as agencies reproducing dominant social values.

Trish and Ann come closer than most research subjects to such an analysis, but the greater impression is that the symptoms are the "disease." There is no genus beyond individual characteristics. School as an institution is concealed. To combat this cloaking, all students need a political and a personal epistemology.

Without political education on the functions of social institutions, an understanding of school purposes—and influence—often is benign. These institutions exist solely to instruct, say Andre and Colin. But this conclusion obscures school intent, and in effect frees the education system of having to explain itself to its "clients," as Louise expects it to do when she says she gives authority back to the teacher in exchange for being taught respectfully and reasonably.

To insist on conspicuous action as the sole or most significant criterion of resistance in such circumstances is unrealistic and unreasonable. In the subjects' critical review of their experiences, and in their sense of strengthened identity (to be discussed in chapter 3), resistance is evident.

However, defending personal awareness is not necessarily equivalent to resisting the discourse of schooling. Foucault offers a more systemic conception of resistance, saying that "where there is power, there is resistance . . . [which] is never in a position of exteriority to power." (Foucault 1990: 95) By this account one is never outside of power; nobody can wholly escape its effects. The subject is as much a conveyor of power as its "victim." Perhaps this is another explanation of why Louise goes along with the student crowd.

Foucault's ideas may theoretically bring us together in a grotesque unity: we all suffer and
we all inflict suffering. But this unity does not differentiate among students in the ways they experience schooling. Although Foucaultian power is, theoretically, inscribed macroscopically and individually, its explanatory power is primarily panoramic, catching all of us in its institutional scan. To say homosexual and non-homosexual students are united in the discursive soup obscures how each group is differentiated from each other, and how homosexuals are targeted precisely for being homosexual (Uribe & Harbeck 1991; Sears 1988, 1989, 1991; Dressler 1985).

This is so despite Foucault’s view that education systems have contradictory mandates to acculturate and to enlighten. The subjects were trapped by this contradiction, though neither polarity wholly precludes the other. Homosexual students are additionally trapped by the contradiction between private sexual realities and public assumptions about these realities—and therefore by what issues and ideas can be broached in classrooms. In such contradictions the sexual ideology of schooling is not easily detectable and confronted.

* * * * *

Through this chapter I have referred mainly to the official curriculum of schools because many of the memories recounted are of "encounters" with official policy and in-class activity. To leave the discussion at this level, however, would mean leaving unattended an important part of how schools try to influence. Not all occurrences in schools are results of decisions of school officials. But educators know of the hidden curriculum, of how structured situations may produce changes in attitudes, values, ambitions, and general behaviour.

In Grande Prairie, Alberta, a junior high school will experiment for two years with sex-segregated classes in math and science. The experiment is based on the supposition that all-female classes in these subjects will produce higher marks and subject-interest, more appreciation of their social value, and perhaps will spark ambitions among females to pursue careers as mathematicians and scientists. But the experiment holds together conceptually only if a hidden curriculum exists. Success in these subjects among junior high school females involves more than questions of pedagogical approach and selection of teachers, but also relies
School influence must be understood, then, as more than specific school policies or statements of school intent. The concept of a hidden curriculum speaks to the collective influence of schools to induce, produce, and conduce specific understandings and behaviours. This fits well with Foucault’s analysis of power and institutional discourse, and the criteria set out in the Oxford dictionary.

This question of gender and academic performance echoes in the ideas of Robert Connell, who says sexual politics make some practices predominant and others marginal. For Foucault and Connell social institutions propel and channel some attitudes and behaviours rather than others. Connell’s analysis of gender expands beyond enforcement of particular sexual ideologies, which is not to say he considers this less significant as an influencing mechanism. Connell encompasses heterosexuality in a broader context: a hegemonic gender regime (Connell 1987).

‘Gender’ means practice organized in terms of, or in relation to, the reproductive division of people into male and female .... Gender ... is a process rather than a thing. Our language ... invites us to reify. But it is ... about the making of ... links ... organizing social life in a particular way. (p. 140)

The organization of social life Connell mentions is systematically attempted in schools. Homosexual youth must constantly cope with what Adrienne Rich calls compulsory heterosexuality.

Compulsory heterosexuality prevails in school curricula as it does throughout society, says Rich (1983). Far from asserting itself naturally, heterosexuality acquires an aura of inevitability based on enforcement of alleged norms and on the banishment of candid and honest discourses of sexuality.

Human experience does not grant one interpretation of masculinity and femininity only. But the gender regime of our culture contracts the spectrum of possibility to a one-dimensional concept of each. Creating an imperative of heterosexual masculinity, writes Connell, requires that homosexual males be identified, demeaned, and persecuted, because these men signify the
greatest affront to the definition of masculinity. As gender is defined narrowly, so are the
diverse lives people live depicted narrowly. But to more fully articulate the politics of gender,
Connell elaborates the idea of cathexis.

"Cathexis" refers to the production and maintenance of difference through social hegemony.
It presupposes gender differences, and therefore authorizes their creation. Both desire and
prohibition, for example, are social patterns, but prohibition has no meaning without
simultaneously creating acceptable desires, through which (supposedly generic) desire is
expressed. Specific actions (such as homosexual behaviours) may be banned, but the more basic
intent is to destroy the relationships that contextualize them. School influence for Connell
would consist of any approach to effect the destruction.

Establishing difference as a basis of discrimination requires as well the "closeting" of those
whose differences were to be discriminated against. Participants constantly faced the barriers
of the "closet" as an epistemological medium, from which they offer associations of school
experience and school influence. The closet signifies more than attitude, more than a simple
gender-affection choice. It is the suppressed nub of personal understanding.

The school as closet substantiates for the lesbian and gay students the disqualification they
feel from experiences garnered outside the school. School influence as objectifying and
instrumental force is assisted by the confining silence of the 'closet.' Though their personal
circumstances differ, all interviewees keenly know the censure of this influence.

As Eve Sedgwick states in Epistemology of the Closet,

in the vicinity of the closet even what counts as a speech act is problematized on a
perfectly routine basis. As Foucault says: "there is no binary division to be made
between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the
different ways of not saying such things .... There is not one but many silences, and
they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses." . . .
"Closetedness" itself is a performance initiated as such by the speech act of a silence -
not a particular silence, but a silence that accrues particularity by fits and starts, in
relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it. (Sedgwick 1990: 3)
However they interpret their invisibility in curriculum and classroom discussion, the participants still note the accrual of silence. They feel their silence.

However, the issue of silence involves more than just a question about how to remain concealed. They do not simply sense they are different; they possess identity, personal experience, and knowledge, all of which delineate understanding that contradicts blatant and covert messages of school curricula.

The subjects are caught in a grip of multiply-silencing discourse. They must not appear to support other gays and lesbians because they too may be so identified. The threat of disclosure by association is for many homosexual students sufficiently intimidating to prevent mutual discovery. The fear is so deep it obstructs self-knowledge. This de facto complicity ensures silence. But this silence also "vocalizes" the self-authorization of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1983). Silence that vocalizes and authorizes the very conditions that give rise to the silence itself often demands ‘performance’ from those silenced. They must retain personal perspective even as their behaviour helps their discreditation. This is what Ann means when she says open discussion of homosexuality might lead to blatant, in-class belittling of lesbians and gays, but could also, or instead, facilitate more accurate and thus improved, attitudes about and behaviour towards lesbians and gays.

_Dare Schools Build a New Social Order?_

Having teachers and school personnel improve attitudes in the manner suggested by Ann, however, reduces the importance of sexuality and identity as intertwined concepts. This may have significant repercussions in that politics of subordination operate through ‘braiding’ the concepts. If the goal is only to ameliorate dispositions toward homosexuality, sexuality becomes no more than a matter of opinion or attitude. Sexuality as a premise for organizing and polarizing personal and social values, public discourses, and state policies, is obscured by concentrating solely on dispositions and not deeper cultural practices.

Indignation arises when the subjects sense schools do not intend to organize and teach
The participants' epistemological castings—what they know, how they know, and why they believe they know something, are all repudiated. Lacey says epistemology may be understood as an "enquiry into the nature and ground of experience, belief and knowledge. "What can we know, and how do we know it?" (Lacey 1986: 63) The epistemological discourse of the school's closet not only eliminates from consideration the "what" and the "how," but also the very possibility that lesbian and gay students could know anything about themselves or life that their peers might find interesting and insightful. These students are thus rendered invisible and opaque at the same time, firstly because they supposedly don't exist, and secondly because they do exist and are visible, but impenetrably and inscrutably!

Subjectivity and School Influence

Wendy Hollway (1984: 231) writes of subjectivity that is more than "the sum total of positions occupied in discourses by a person." Subjects take up positions that discourses make available. Referring to gender, Hollway says that categories of "man" and "woman" may acquire meanings in any given social period, but particular men and women take on these discursive cloaks. Although I refer periodically to Foucault's work on subjectivity, it is important to note that his non-differentiation of groups and individuals prevents us from seeing how power nudges people into assuming, and how people propel themselves toward, various discursive positions.

Hargreaves, writing about the power and influence of schools, does not do so from Hollway's position but he does look at schools' sociological role as he criticizes Marxist determinism (Hargreaves 1982). Hargreaves says the merit of reproduction and resistance theories as discussed by Apple and Giroux are dubiously argued because the latter are not empirical and therefore fail to account for evidence challenging what counts as resistance and what outcomes it leads to. Hargreaves continues on to say that, to reverse an imbalance, we should consider schools as "more determined than determining" (p. 123).

I do not intend to debate the fine points of Hargreaves' position; it is sufficient to say I
appreciate his statement that what he calls the "old" correspondence theory of Bowles and Gintis, and the "new" theory of Giroux and Apple, are overly determined and not well argued. I appreciate as well his comment that the later theoretical position comes more from its advocates not wanting to be politically disappointed by having their political agenda made superfluous, than it does from the powerful and clear logic of the their analysis. However, beyond the realm of those who casually converse about resistance theory, there is a vast universe of non-challenged functionalist dogma. Ideology, like beauty, may be in the eye of the beholder, but I perceive functionalist ideology as dominant, at least among the non-academic, "lay" public. And these are the people who constitute the mass of public opinion who need convincing before they will support broad educational change.

Schools, contrary to what Hargreaves suggests, may indeed be more determining than determined. We may credit schools with more power to effect change (personal and social) than is realistically borne out, but society and the operational motives, practices, and purposes of schooling are connected by cultural objectives. Whether intended to change people or entrench social values and practices, curriculum and policy developers assume schools can influence thought and behaviour, something Hargreaves himself points out. The extent to which the objectives are attained depends on how closely aligned they are with students' experience, the rewards promised for complying with them, and the punishments for violating them. Rewards and punishments make up part of what I consider schools' attempts to influence.

Significantly, some participants indicate the diminishing possibility of school influence when it contradicts students' personal meanings. This suggests students demand more persuasiveness than is immediately evident in the curriculum. To present a position may not be enough to move students toward different conclusions than were previously held.

This is an important question for those in this study who want to educate their peers about homosexuality. Reversing or dissolving prejudice is a complex task, but their visibility is a constant rebuke to misinforming and disinforming sexual and gender discourses. The disparity between what they know and what they see and hear, convinces some participants to suspect
the sexual values advanced by teachers, communicated in sex education classes, and enforced through school policies. The subjects do not so precisely conceptualize their responses, but in their suspicions about what they were taught, in the anger that follows understanding of the teachings, and in their frustration at having no opportunity to dispel what they believe are myths about homosexuals, they react to anti-homosexual assertions taught in school. They assert, if only to themselves, their identity.

What is described in the previous paragraph sounds bleak, but schools are not uniformly oppressive. There are, after all, gay and lesbian teachers, support staff, administrators (although most remain invisible to students and employers), and of course, friends of gay and lesbian students. Despite the openness of some of these people, however, many of the interviewees experience school as a "totality."

If we conceive power as a process rather than a series of punitive or retaliatory measures inconsistently applied, we see how ubiquitous such regulatory force may seem. To paraphrase Judith Butler (1990), power is not just a permanently inverted power relation between the subject and the other. Power emerges through a concept of gender that inscribes all behaviour, inclinations, and desires.

The "closet" as an image may be a bit limiting here, because it intimates escape is possible. But its pervasiveness draws the boundary of the closet so vastly it may cause its inhabitants to despair, at least momentarily, of surpassing it. Those not definitionally enclosed within the closet have a vested interest in it, if only because they define themselves against it.

Even in an environment that appears omnipresent, however, we can see challenging rifts. Most participants in their high school years retained self-awareness as different people, which they understood in sexual-identity terms. School influence quelled expression of this difference, and also open resistance to the curriculum (although not to school authority). But it did not dissolve identity.

The topic of this chapter---school influence---perplexed the research subjects. They often
commented that the issue raised an unusual yet serious question; in almost every interview they said they had not thought to ask themselves about their school years from the standpoint of influence. Once their minds were stoked by our discussion, however, ideas came to mind and memories were reconsidered and sometimes reclassified.

As I stated at the beginning of the chapter, influence is more easily grasped abstractly than it is strictly delineated concretely. This accounts for the participants' frequent thinking-out-loud during the interviews as they considered what may have been influential in their own experience.

The discussions on identity were a contrast, however. This was not so because "identity" is easily defined and easily located in specific experience, but because identity seemed more solid ground for the participants. Even as they grappled with explanations of what it is, they felt more secure saying they had an identity or its equivalent. Indeed, the participants came to the research as self-identified lesbians and gays. (This is so even of Barry, who, for all his suspicion about having any identity but 'human,' still volunteered to be interviewed after seeing my advertisement asking homosexual people to participate in the study.)

Being self-possessed gave subjects a foundation on which to build their anger, their psychological resolve to question school sexual discourse, and to more openly resist school practices. Not all of them understood themselves equally well or had equal levels of confidence. They did not all uniformly oppose or resist school practices. Variations of experience, and therefore of self-knowledge, left them looking at the world sometimes similarly and other times divergently. However, for all of them it may be said that school experience significantly strengthened their identities and the tenacity to live them. This is the irony of schooling. Discrediting students' cultures and values does not invariably dispel self-awareness.

But there are questions left to discuss. What do the respondents think identity is? If they resisted blatantly what they heard and saw in school, do they now associate their resistance with identity development? Do they think schools sought to influence their identities, and if so, were the schools at all successful?
Everyone interviewed framed the question of whether schools are influential in sexual-identity terms. Would they do the same as they thought of identity and school experience? Do they associate their tenacity with the strength of their identities? These questions bring me to the next chapter on identity.
Chapter 3

Identity

Identity can be simultaneously a battle cry of personal affirmation and a premise of
difference. How we affirm our own identities and differentiate ourselves from others,
however, involves a careful balance of complicated social/group and private identities. We
may like to think these are compatible or at least mutually reinforcing, but social and personal
identity can infringe on one another in at least two ways.

First, what is important to personal development may conflict with the requirements of a
social identity. Learning to live as a homosexual and get along openly with others, for example,
can mean accommodating oneself to derogatory joking about gays or lesbians and to discussions
of the causes of homosexuality. I am not saying personal development should occur this way,
but that it can in places lacking institutions or organizations for lesbians and gays. Under
these circumstances personal development may conflict with the demand of a gay liberation
agenda--and therefore of 'membership' in a (homo-)social identity--to confront the derogatory
stereotyping in jokes and explanations of the origin of sexual identity.

Second, although we may adopt a social identity for ourselves, it is also to some degree
imposed on us by others. Sexual identity magnifies the intricacy of infringement because it
can refer to both personal and social identity. Who we are may also be thought through as what
we are. And what we are sexually is not removed from society's perceptions and definitions.
In this study identity is considered in its social dimensions, not its psychological ones.
However, most participants experienced the "identity-quest" individually, without benefit of
help from other lesbians and gays and without general support from social institutions
developed by, and devoted to, lesbians and gays.\textsuperscript{2}

None of the foregoing, of course, precludes other analytical lines. Identity has been variously understood as ego development, individuation, self-consciousness, and rational human agency (Humm 1990; Taylor 1985). It is a concept even more difficult to explain all-inclusively than is "influence." How do we gauge the expansion of selfhood, for example? Yet ego development, self-consciousness, and human agency refer to knowledge of oneself, such that we note the harmony of behaviour and self-awareness.

Some explanations of identity are psychological while others stress the relationship of reflexivity and a sense of self, such as Taylor does in his discussion of human agency. As important as agency and self-awareness are to the research participants and thus to the analysis in this chapter, however, I think Cindy Patton's work offers more analytical value.

Patton (1993) contextualizes her writing on identity in the political struggle in the United States over what "identity" means in a postmodern world, how identity will be socially recognized, and over what kind(s) of resistance can/should come from a newly-conceived understanding of identity.

\textsuperscript{2} Analysis of the merit of a wide range of concepts of identity is beyond this chapter's scope. However, I shall refer briefly to several theoretical schools whose ideas on identity may provide bases of future investigation.

Among proponents of cognitive development models, for instance, Piaget is often mentioned. He argues people move through six stages of development, gradually becoming capable of abstracting their world and conceptualizing their place in it. In this model, awareness and explanation of identity changes as one develops intellectually.

Erikson also suggests a stage model of development integral to interaction with significant others. Erikson's stages proceed through eight categories, in each of which we find "competitions," for example between trust and mistrust in the earliest stage, and between identity and role confusion in adolescence.

Bandura articulates a social learning concept of development, recognizing as well the cognitive learning that comes from social observation. Vygostsky discusses the value of psychological tools, or signs, in mastering one's own behaviour. These signs are vital to understanding our thinking, both as "working through" ideas and as its product. (Crain 1992)
The subjects of this study found it hard enough to define and establish identity without considering its postmodern implications. Their struggle to clarify and to "dramatize" their identities occasionally may have left them thinking identity was more a definitional mirage than the substance of character and idiosyncrasy. But for all that they still cherished its personal meanings. Postmodern ideas challenging the very concept of an identity, or the distinctiveness of any identity, dim the respondents' struggles and goals. Their determination to "become" their identity was evident, although "identity" itself was a conceptual riddle for them as they tried to pin down definitionally a seemingly amorphous topic.

Nonetheless, Patton's ideas on what she calls "postidentitarian" politics help my analysis because they suggest a chaotic understanding of identity, as both definition and lived experience, accounts more reasonably and accurately for the turmoil or flux we really experience as we search for, formulate, or create identity. Patton's discussion about what a postmodern outlook on identity might look like contrasts with the liberal-humanist outlook expressed by the participants in this study.

The question now before us, she says, is whether, in the postmodern state, people can feel rooted through identity. This is not a central question of this research, but I do come close to a postmodern understanding of identity in my valuing more the chaotic workings of identity clarification than the fulfilling of an adopted or socially-assigned identity.

To give Patton her due, she extends her argument beyond what I have discussed so far. When she writes that "identities suture those who take them up to specific moral duties. Identities carry with them a requirement to act, which is felt as "what a person like me does"," (p. 147) she addresses an important theme of this present research, one I shall return to very shortly. However, Patton raises another and provocative idea: "[i]dentity is an issue of deontology, not ontology; it is a duty of ethics, not of being." (p. 148)

Her postmodern search for identity that eternally roams but never rests on a specific ontological perch is intellectually tantalizing, but this thesis is not about what identity is. It is about how identity is understood by a specific group of homosexual people. They search for
the reverse of what Patton considers possible. They want ontology, perhaps because their sense of self, place, and knowing are suppressed all around them. Deontology is "nice" if we have an idea of what ontology—the world view we use to make sense of ourselves—we are divesting ourselves of. Who they are is vitally important to the participants, who think identity must be clearly sutured to personal practice. This is especially evident in Colin's, Trish's, and Louise's statements.

Discussion of this research has so far looked at schools as social institutions directed by society to socialize the young. In what we think are societies with stable politics and social order, social identities are assumed to be known. What remains for schools to do is to make students aware of these identities and force students to adopt them. Schooling in a postmodern world, however, if dedicated to the value of constant experiment and invention, would find it harder to enforce codes of conduct based on fixed notions of identity. Schools are not so dedicated, however. The previous chapter dealt with school influence in a culture that either presumes durable and predictable moral and social codes, or wants to have such codes.

What do the participants think about identity in the midst of these conflicting moral and social politics? They were asked, firstly, to explain "identity," and secondly, to consider whether schools influenced their understanding or expression of it. Shining through most interviews is the linkage of sexuality and identity. Identity apart from its sexual aspect was important to the subjects, but it gained much greater significance when conceived sexually.

I said in chapter 2 that "influence" is easier understood abstractly than concretely, that explaining it through generalities is easier than making precise connections. The opposite may hold for understanding identity. What we say and do in daily life is supposed to be the substance of who we are. Sometimes, though, the apparent smoothness of this identity-daily-life integration belies a more troubled state. The concept lying in the dew of daily life is harder to summarize than the specific acts, thoughts, and beliefs it represents. Research participants were stymied by the difficulty. However, this did not prevent them from considering the importance of identity in their lives. Respondents' answers throughout the
interviews hinged on their sense of identity.

The previous chapter addressed an issue important to this thesis: are schools influential? If the subjects had said "no" chapter three would be inconsequential. Given that they said schools are somewhat influential at least, it may be reasonably asked whether schools influence identity—particularly sexual identity, and to what extent and in what ways? With one or two exceptions most participants perceived school influence through a discourse of sexual identity, which reintroduces Foucault's idea of power in social institutions and the shaping of subjectivity. Power in this understanding is not haphazard. While it is not always consistently exerted or congruently experienced, power is always present.

3.1 What Is Identity?

However theorized, identity is the hub of our cultural universe. We discuss it, demand opportunities to live it, and despair when we think we have lost it or its conspicuous presence in daily life. Asking participants whether they associate schooling with opportunity to explore identity or with the despair of living it, placed them squarely on the hub. Delving into their interview data on identity before inquiring how "identity" may be understood, however, would be premature.

Jeffrey Weeks says "identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others . . . [identity] gives you a sense of personal location . . . it is also about your social relationships." (Weeks 1991:184) Weeks continues this line in his summary of Barry Adam's ideas on the matter: affinity, self-actualization, and choice are necessary features of identity, in its formation and as a lived exhibition (Weeks 1991).

He extends his explanation of self-actualization to sexuality when he refers to identity as "a statement about belonging and about a specific stance in relationship to the dominant sexual codes . . . . say[ing] in effect that how we see ourselves sexually is more important than class,
or racial, or professional loyalties. (Weeks 1991b: 68)

The subjects of the present research varied in how strongly they saw sexual identity as their quintessential attribute. However, they firmly valued their sexuality, however much it complicated their lives and exposed them to ridicule and physical harassment. Every person I interviewed participated as a self-named lesbian or gay individual. Whether the naming transpired before high school entrance or after, everyone understood him/herself as self-respectingly lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

In another of his works, Weeks (1986) refers to sex both as an act and as a category of the individual. Sex is generic, he says, as in gender, but it also has specific reference points in social and individual practices that give meaning to, and are given meaning by, social relationships. Participants' intense responses to questions of/about identity had the generic character to which Weeks referred.

Their intensity is explainable if we return to the need for harmony of behaviour and action mentioned above. The category of who we are is solidified when we recognize ourselves in our behaviour. As will be see from the data, anger and dismay arise when the participants detect disjunctures in their lives. Ian Hacking (1990) provides a useful commentary on these disjunctures although his topic is how we "make up people," not whether they feel upset when they cannot live their lives openly.

Hacking wants to know how acts beget categories of persons. He asks how deviant acts beget deviant individuals, but the question is part of a larger inquiry about social control and the merits of nominalist and realist debates about constructionism and essentialism. My interest in Hacking's work does not rest on the outcome of this inquiry but on his discussion of a "medico-forensic-political" language of control that frames humans' past, future, and present experience. Who and what we are converge within particular social frames of reference, but these frames develop simultaneously with the origin of the category. The person is "made up" at the same time as the category is first proclaimed, and from then on both the person and the category evolve.
One need only look at a medical designation—"alzheimer," for instance—to see how this works. People who in pre-alzheimer times may have been deemed "senile" but not necessarily in need of institutionalization, are in modern times seen sympathetically but also in need of constant care. Moreover, there are no senile people anymore. Everyone suffering dementia in old age will be classified as an alzheimer victim. This difference in classification is not benign. "Alzheimer" carries an expectation of violence in some patients, which means all sufferers are suspect because it is not known in advance who may become angry and "riotous." And forgetfulness that at one time may have benignly signified simply that, in this era signifies personal humiliation and inevitable decline.

The alzheimer example is mine, but Hacking's point is that all categories come with their own space of possibilities. Establishing a category, therefore, also establishes what seems possible, likely, desirable, and what is allowable. Hacking quotes Sartre:

"... a contemporary of Duns Scotus is ignorant of the use of the automobile or the aeroplane. ... For the one who has no relation of any kind to these objects and the techniques that refer to them, there is a kind of absolute, unthinkable, and undecipherable nothingness." (p. 75)

My interest in Hacking's article comes from the kind of hegemony that constitutes such nothingness.

The central question of this chapter asks if schools played any role in subjects' (sexual-) identity understanding and development. The question cannot be answered without considering hegemony.

Julia and David Jary explain hegemony as "the ideological/cultural domination of one class by another, achieved by engineering consensus through controlling the content of cultural forms and major institutions." (Jary & Jary 1991: 207) Across North America battles rage over what reading materials students in elementary and high schools will be allowed to read and discuss. These conflicts are not only about cultural symbols but also about what ideas, values, and philosophies are acceptable. My appearance before a local school board in Grande Prairie
did not go for naught because my recommendation for a sexually inclusive curriculum was considered benign. The board rejected my proposal almost simultaneously with my presentation of it because they found it too challenging of common school practices or policies.

The school is a social institution designed primarily to socialize the young, and entrenching hegemonic thought and practice requires a systematic effort evident in socialization. The chapter on influence looked at one branch of this discussion of hegemony, and this chapter ventures out onto another branch. But the central question of this chapter cannot be answered, as well, without thinking about sexuality and identity specifically and generically. This means thinking about hegemony not only at an abstract level but also at a level most people can readily comprehend. At this level, for example, we should ask what kinds of social relationships schools encourage or discourage. It was at this level that most participants felt themselves, at best, ignored, and at worst, openly devalued. Social relationships, after all, help us "fashion" personal identities.

Such is suggested by Weeks’s reference to the unification of act and category. But Weeks does not mean by this allusion an absolute, unavoidable unity. Rather, he introduces a political concept: that our social and personal identities have social and political implications. This is Patton’s point as well even if she wrote her article with a different purpose in mind. In this light everyone is subject to social control devices, of which schools are one.

(Hetero)sexual discourse is important to the school’s mandate as a social institution to inculcate societal values. Integral to this mission are particular concepts of sexuality, gender/sexual identity, and the relationships that may follow from them. Schools become both conduits and contexts of culture, and as such they judge which identities are acceptable or not. Judith Butler says "the cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of "identities" cannot "exist" (Butler 1990: 17). Of course identities do exist, but heterosexual hegemony requires that some identities must not exist viably, credibly, reasonably, articulatedly, or assertively. This is what rendering identity non-existent means. Heterosexist school practices teach that non-heterosexual identities and behaviour are
abnormal and indicate stunted emotional development. (Interviewees picked up on this message--their references appear later in the chapter--and strongly resented it.) At a time in their lives when people struggle to understand and secure identity, exposure to this kind of message profoundly complicates if not obstructs, self-awareness and the connecting with others associated with it. To degrade homosexuality, as most school curricula do, is to mute homosexuals' identity and their social relationships.

The danger is not always overt. By "muting"--a corollary of deliberate, silencing politics--I mean the calculated and systematic closing down of positive discussion and exposure of homosexuality. Gays and lesbians as social beings become unnoticeable to school personnel, to their friends and peer groups, and frequently to each other.

Such politics were unmistakable when I appeared before the school board to ask for an inclusive, open, and anti-homophobic high school curriculum. I was told by the superintendent there were no lesbian or gay students in his system. (But this same superintendent expressed support for a sex education group advocating celibacy before marriage. The group, applying for permission to teach in schools, was given permission so long as it was not political in the classroom. Apparently, advocacy of rejuvenated virginity, and celibacy, is not in itself a political declaration.)

Participants often expressed amazement and anger that their lives were so easily and uncaringly dismissed in school. They indignantly said their sense of fair play and their expectation of being treated respectfully were violated in school. In the continuing debate over what constitutes a gay identity and in what historical period this identity became noticeable (which is not relevant to this study), writers maintain a distinction between homosexual behaviour and homosexual identity, between homosexual activity and the homosexual person as a social definition (Escoffier 1985). The subjects in this study strive to express themselves as social beings. Their identities, whether described in terms of self-knowledge or categorized as "identity," are the crux of their self-definitions as social beings. Most had seen the school as the one location above all others where they could anticipate fair debate, educational
disclosure, and sensitive respect for the psychological well-being of all students.

Unpunished and unsanctioned visibility of gays and lesbians is crucial in their social self-definition. What gay and lesbian students should never have to give to the schools is a "promise" to abandon what they are and to surrender what they are becoming.

The interviews resound with the fervour of individuals who develop, and hold tenaciously to, their identities. With one exception they proudly refer to their growing self-awareness or to the strength they get from identity already formulated. This thesis asks if homosexuals' understanding and development of identity, particularly an unapproved sexual identity, were influenced by their experiences in a specific social institution—the school. For many people schools are important locations of social experience. They spend a great deal of time, after all, with peers, and with adults who in the beginning are usually strangers. In this thesis I inquire if the participants do remember school as being important to their self-defining as social beings.

Most of them indicated such memories, but in a negative vein. They noticed their exclusion from the curriculum, and were/are angry because they think schools influence perceptions by actively reinforcing prejudices already believed, or by not teaching attitudes that challenge these prejudices. These people sense the power of perception; they understand it can be a catalyst to deepening awareness of social issues, and understanding more complexly the private and social dynamics underlying them. This explains their dismay when they observe school personnel ignoring students' prejudice. Perception can spur harsh bigotry or sensitive probing of issues. Among the subjects in this study, perception catalyzed more than interpretation when imbued by what McLaren and Fine separately have called "naming."

Naming is crucial to identity formation, but as a final declaration. Later in this chapter I mention other studies of identity that focus on the stages of coming to terms with one's homosexuality. The last stage is the act of naming oneself. This represents more than mere acknowledgement of a sexual identity; it means accepting it with the intention of living it as fully as possible. (Cass 1979; 1984)
The Collins English Gem Dictionary lists, among a few definitions of the verb, the word "entitle" (1963: 341). Although not usually spoken of in this way, "naming" as a facet of identity development is entitlement—to equal rights and the freedom to express one's orientation openly and publicly. Or, as in the cases presented in this research, an entitlement to visibility in school curriculum, and to the right to share with subjects' friends and peers in school as much of their lives as they want to divulge.

McLaren and Fine also write of the value of naming, but do not refer to the same practices when they speak of it. Nonetheless their views are close enough to be discussed together. Fine's "naming" brings under critical review social and educational practices (for example, those that entrench and enforce sexual inequality) (Fine 1991). Naming in this instance is a liberating identification because it unmasksthe politics of social practices and how we establish them. But liberatory identification says Fine, is what schools strive to defuse, deflect, or dominate if necessary. McLaren explains naming, on the other hand, as the resolving moment in crystallizing identity (McLaren 1992).

All subjects understood what vested interest they had in naming their identities. Two of the characteristics used to evaluate school influence, for example, was how much gay/lesbian visibility was permitted in schools, and the extent of schools' efforts to educate non-homosexual students about lesbians and gays. This suggests the importance to them of sexual identity. Zachary, for example, mentioned a liaison with an older man that had "naming" significance, even though it was not the resolving moment in his self-awareness. For the first time he gave his real name to someone he had met anonymously.

However, just as most participants saw everyday school practices in classrooms as sexually demeaning but not indicative of a deliberate effort to influence, so did they detect the difficulty in expressing their identities openly, but rarely ascribed the difficulty to schools' influence. They chafed at their invisibility but do not usually consider this state a specific goal of schooling. Nonetheless, whether they ascribe invisibility to institutional goals or not, the participants implicitly acknowledge what they will not proclaim openly: that schools do
influence particular identities punitively or nurturingly depending on their prior institutional judgments about them. And homosexual identity is judged unacceptable. Unacceptability and invisibility are closely aligned as school policy. The subjects know this, and felt so acutely their invisibility they framed their awareness in self-knowledge rather than in identity.

Not everyone would remove self-knowledge from the domain of identity, however. For them self-knowledge imbues identity. The two are inseparable. To force a division between them, as if each existed independently, signifies a terrible development for gays and lesbians: the necessity of choosing one over the other. To have to choose signifies, deplorably, one kind of self-imposed invisibility. Students of whatever sexual identity may similarly encounter school, but choice imposed because of sexual identity may cut more keenly. The school demands from homosexuals something they should never have to give.

School discourse thus makes sexual identity a dangerous category. In this danger lie other hazards, one of which is the necessity of developing scripts of behaviour that seem artificial and false. On the surface, this development is usual enough. Everyone "writes" identity scripts, but for homosexuals these scripts are often confining. What they object to here is not just the distorting communication of an identity not their own, but to the loss of opportunity to explore the panoply of meanings implied by "identity." However, exploring is not necessarily compatible with writing scripts. As Epstein puts it,

[t]he constitution of a gay identity is not something that simply unwinds from within, nor is it just an amalgam of roles that proceed according to scripts. . . . It is in the dialectics between choice and constraint, and between the individual, the group, and the larger society, that identities" . . . emerge. (Epstein 1992, p. 43)

It is precisely the opportunity for a dialectical venture into identity that schools suppress. What is a vast plain of possibility becomes in school a narrow lane of linear conformity. Dialectical prospects become ideological heterosexism. One identity, one understanding, and one form of expressing these are the substance of most school sexual discourse as experienced by the participants.
By this I do not mean that individual schools and individual teachers do not chip away at the ideological monolith. Zachary's experience, related below, confirms they can and sometimes do crack it. His school administration substantially supported his efforts to educate people on gay issues, and counselors and teachers from other schools invited him to speak about homosexuality to their students. Such practice, if it spreads, might serve as a countering discourse, in the end leading schools to deal openly with sexual themes and experiences now rarely referred to, let alone systematically studied. Moreover, the commitment of some educators to the principle of educating to children's full potential and to preparing them for life, may persuade these educators to introduce in their classrooms discussion of homosexuality. However, none of these practices would of themselves change the school as a normalizing social institution. The subjectivity developed through schooling would remain intact.

3.2 Power, Subjectivity, and Social Hegemony

Political Schools, Apolitical Schooling

When speaking of school influence I said most participants do not see school as a sociopolitical institution. Why speak of institutions and power in a chapter on identity? Because power is the medium through which institutions seek to influence the content and expression of identity, and through which are entrenched hegemonic assumptions and practices.

In an analysis of identity awareness and expression, and of how these are socially learned, followed, or resisted, a discussion of hegemony is unavoidable. Schools are the most significant formal teaching mechanism of our society. The official curriculum of public school systems is authorized by government acts, and in some provinces even private schools must follow government guidelines. Hegemony may be understood by the effort to institute dominance as well as by the results of the effort. The analysis of schools and influence explored part of this effort. This chapter, contextualized in a discussion of identity, investigates another part. What
meanings of "identity" were detected and considered by participants, and how they expressed or suppressed these meanings are connected to hegemonic messages and enforcement policies.

Subjects who do not understand the dynamics of hegemonic practice or even that dominance is sought, have trouble detecting or explaining what schools do to muffle their lives. Several explanations may account for this. Raising critical political awareness is not usually a goal of school curricula. Such goals may be curricular features of radical or alternative schools, but rarely of entirely state-governed schools.

Furthermore, teachers and principals are the education system's infantry. They are its visage of power. But they do not comprise the entire system. Wanting to change an apparently labyrinthine system may cause students to feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the task. Finally, but no less importantly, students are drawn into the 'zeitgeist' of schooling, thus making it difficult for them to see, much less undermine, school practices. This "drawing-in" is how students experience subjectivity in schools.

Subjectivity may be modestly explained as the "fashioned" awareness and expectations of individuals in environments structured to develop such awareness. Foucault (1983) offers a more complex analysis; people are made subjects through a technique of power that establishes control and dependence. Students, for instance, not only become subjects of school policies and rules, they "convey" the same techniques of power by which school regimes institute subjectivity.

Epstein's discussion of subjectivity includes a quotation from Michael Omi and Howard Winant's treatment of racial formation as a form of subjectivity (an example of reproduction). "Racial formation ... should be understood as a ... set of social practices and beliefs ... articulated in an ideology ... enforced by a system of racial subjection having both institutional and individual means of reproduction." (p. 45)

Racial formation resembles the formation of identity and sexual identity. Sexual identity formation occurs in schools not as a totality—as if the forming of sexuality could occur only
in schools-- but as a totalitarian experience, in which school authority professes a single (hetero)sexual alignment and strives to enforce it. Shane Phelan writes that "the experience of oppression has less to do with what we are told we are like than it does with the rigidity with which we are told what we are like, what we mean, and how we should manifest that meaning." (Phelan 1989, p. 156) The circumstances of such an atmosphere in schools limit significant, honest, and candid discussion of students' real experiences.

Subjectivity is not merely understanding of and obedience to, a set of expected social behaviours. The triumph of subjectivity in schools is realized when, for instance, lesbian and gay students criticize the regime for not educating other students positively about homosexuality. (Several interviewees offered this criticism of schools.) This exemplifies triumph because, while schools would appear inclusive if such teaching occurred, their differentiating and excluding regimes would stay intact.

Displacing prevailing, exclusionary discourse with inclusionary discourse would address this deeper, differentiating purpose. However, if we accept Foucault's concept of institutional power to explain what transpires in schools, we also complicate the task of challenging prevalent concepts of sexuality-- and therefore of legitimate identity--in schools. This is so because Foucault does not see power as separately-competing "bodies" vying for control. Power, for all the contestation within it, is seamless and unitary. It does not consist of discernible pressure points that yield to sufficient persistence, Foucault says, nor is it comprised of an array of specific institutions.

By power, I do not mean "Power" as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state .... I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another ... whose effects ... pervade the entire social body. ... power must be understood ... as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization ... as the strategies in which they take effect, whose ... institutional crystallization is embodied in ... various social hegemonies. Power's condition of possibility ... must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point. (Foucault 1990: 92-93)
If power is dispersed throughout different 'sites', devising suitable oppositional action may be severely hindered, especially where supportive (gay and lesbian) institutions are weak or non-existent. In such environments, homosexual students try to understand and live their identities.

The interviews that follow reveal a range of insights, expectations, and degrees of chagrin at school experience that fell short of what the subjects hoped to get from it. And to give the minority view its due, there was also satisfaction with school, if for no other reason than nothing more was expected of the school than what it offered. But even in these cases, satisfaction was not uniform or uniformly obtained.

I indicated in my discussion of categories of school influence that the participants' analyses sometimes spill into more than one analytical "jurisdiction." I offer the same cautionary note about the categories that follow in this chapter. I choose to start off with what I think is the broader, more fundamental category, and thus one that speaks most closely to the school as a social institution.

3.3 Hegemony, Power, and Difference: The Cases of Jack, Louise, Trish, and Ann

When I first looked at the idea of hegemony in this chapter, I mentioned the cumulative and aggregate importance of societal institutions to reproduce social values and instill an intent, if not an active desire, to comply with specified norms. Jack was nineteen and enrolled in a science program when I interviewed him. He brought to his studies a simple yet assured confidence in the value and intellectual irreproachability of scientific thought and experimentation. "Science" in his sight possessed more authority than other forms of analysis. I begin the interviews with Jack's because his perception is quintessentially hegemonic. Expertise undergirds and sanctions our social hegemony. If social practices can be justified on scientific grounds they are more likely to garner public support. The intertwined history of homosexuality and psychiatry, during which the former was classified as perversion and a
personality disorder, attest to the power of expert testimony to influence public understanding. Social credibility thus rests on what we think is in-depth, dispassionately-acquired knowledge.

However, if hegemony relies partly on the authority of the "expert," we should not assume all authorities are equally expert, nor that all specialists are thought equally knowledgeable. As will be seen from Jack's comments, teachers do not count among the first rank of those who know.

**Jack: The Definitional Power of Experts**

Jack did not so much "anoint" himself as a gay man as did the identity positively suffuse his life.

I've always known I was gay, from a very young age... I've never had a sense that I was not... I didn't look at it as being something very negative... I always viewed my future as being bleak, because... I thought it was something much rarer, something very hard, like in terms of finding a relationship... a few years ago... that view changed... but I never felt myself as being strange... or something horrible.

If Jack had doubts or uncertainties about who he was, they pertained to the enactment and fulfilment of his identity, not to the identity itself.

This does not mean however that Jack never came up against anti-gay ideas before entering school. The youngest son in a Chinese family, Jack became aware of his parents' attitudes on homosexuality but chose to resist their attitudes on this and many other matters. "Very early on in life, I never liked their views... I always steered away from their views... I always found my own... More of my brothers' views were passed on to me." Jack has four older brothers. The strongest relationship was with the younger two.

Jack interviewed as a self-assured person who insisted that life be a catalyst, not a burden. Others interviewed exhibited varying degrees and types of self-assurance. While in school, all subjects noted (to themselves if no one else) how homosexuality was presented, and many resisted efforts to depict them as psychologically bruised and socially subjugated. These people
"countered" school discourse with self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge for some participants is a counterpoint regime to heterosexist curriculum. By "regime" I mean a dominion of selfhood, a self-awareness that does not easily yield ground to school-supported values and policies that prevent open discussion of homosexuality while simultaneously making it a prohibited condition. However, what is not done easily may still be done with difficulty.

However limited their experience with, or exposure to homosexuals, the subjects of this study either sensed or clearly understood themselves to be gays and lesbians when they were in high school. Most had faith in the authenticity or accuracy of what they "knew" about homosexuality. But this self-knowledge did not follow a deconstructionist line. Its vitality and viability did not depend on analyzing and "exposing" school discourse and school authority. Disbelief in heterosexist teachings does not mean skepticism about all school discourses. Despite the difference between how they are perceived and what their lives are like, the lesbians and gays in this research do not universally distrust authority.

Jack, for instance, defers to authority if it is socially constituted as expertise. "I think [it has] more to do with the fact that I am a science student ...I'm not religious ...I have to have facts for any view that I take ...I can't disprove anything without fact as well .... experts tend to have ...you know, more of a sound." Jack later clarified his meaning: experts sound authoritative.

The clarification begged a question about expertise applied to homosexuality, so I asked him "how do you react to experts who say homosexuality is a disease, a disorder ...a sign of stunted growth?" Jack answered "[i]t could be true. I can't say that it's not ...it could be genetic, it could be a result of the social surroundings ....I have to judge through the credits of the scientists ...how they're viewed ...by the ...scientific community." (my emphasis) Jack invokes several debatable premises about sexuality and its origins, at the same time setting himself apart from the other participants.

Other interviewees forcefully rejected any suggestion in their schools of their abnormality
(thereby attesting to the power of schools and experts to set the tone and agenda of the debate),
and demanded schools teach people the truth, that homosexuality is not abnormal. Jack,
however, easily accepts that he may be stunted emotionally so long as such is affirmed by
science, a premise of credibility and "fact" prominent in our culture. If something is
scientifically proven, it is therefore immutable. Judgment--unassailable and apolitical-- has
been executed.

Jack accepts what counts as scientific merit without asking how scientists are accredited
or whether specific arguments about homosexuality are substantive. He does not consider
variations of knowledge, integrity, and insight among scientists. He is willing to rely on what
scientists say about other scientists' work, in effect occasionally relinquishing his judgment to
that of presumed experts.

He does not consider "identity" as it may be shaped by school practices that, to some extent,
are encouraged, articulated, developed, and implemented by experts. Schools admit the
expertise of different professions, for example educational psychologists, in developing
curricula. (It is useful to recall that teachers and other school professionals embody school
expertise. In its early history public school credibility was built partially on pedagogical
teachings only available at Normal Schools. Teachers acquired a professional aura based on
their presumed special knowledge and teaching proficiency.) Hegemonic education rested and
still rests on individuals' supposed expertise, a proficiency that appears fully warranted and
apolitical. Hegemonic circumstances that often seem natural and unavoidable camouflage their
politics. But the experts Jack respects and trusts have political interests that filter through such
professional doctrines as the objectivity of science.

Jack was not the only person to experience the curriculum as objective truth. Some
interviewees expressed similar ideas even as they challenged the "objective" disparaging
insinuations. (Michael, whom I discuss later, articulates this point.) But Jack is willing to defer
to what he thinks is objective expertise.

Why would Jack not respond similarly to school personnel as he says he does to scientists?
Why would he accept an identity "bestowed" upon him by experts but not necessarily by teachers? Why does Jack perceive teachers--authority figures based on credibility established and reinforced by school policy--as less expert than scientists? One explanation may be that Jack was unperturbed by a sexual ideology antagonistic to homosexuality because the source of the discourse was irrelevant in his eyes. Jack simply ignored it.

Another explanation may be found in Jack's comparison of his parents with scientists. "I think that my parents would act more on emotions and ... social influences ... experts are professional and they don't allow things like what they feel to ... enter into their judgement." Neither Jack's parents nor, presumably, his teachers, possess the cachet of scientific expertise. Teachers are not expected to rise above the hurlyburly of life, to formulate professional standards and curriculum that are disconnected from "society." But there is more to this.

Identity in Jack's view is independent of discourse. Identity is apolitical. And the expertise that comments on and judges identity is free of vested interests; therefore its appraisals of normalcy or abnormalcy are impeccably accurate. Do these appraisals judge homosexuality a deficient and abnormal condition? Yes, but this is irrelevant to Jack. He nonetheless contentedly lives his identity. The viability and integrity of his identity are not dependent on what others think or feel about homosexuality. He knows himself and has always been so knowledgeable.

All subjects expressed similarly affirmative thoughts. Their interpretations of their own life experiences allow them to think beyond schools' sexual and gender credos. Nevertheless they know enough of what transpires in schools to feel betrayed by their omission from the curriculum, to be leery of public exposure by others, and to be wary of what they actually disclose or might be seen to disclose if they ask too many, or any, "improper" questions about homosexuality. They therefore understand a feature of school politics.

They are also aware of a broader risk, of politics that infringe their personal space and can penalize them at any moment. Jack, however, lives as if he is not so imperiled, as if no politics could or would arbitrarily target him. In effect, Jack concludes that school is virtually
irrelevant to identity formation, and to its consequent and subsequent meanings.

The irrelevance is better understood given Jack's attempt to explain identity. Ordinarily, an all-embracing idea such as identity intimidates by virtue of that expansiveness. Jack's best answer was to describe it as one's personality, a person's "individualness." A generic explanation proved elusive, as did specific examples that might anchor such an explanation. In fact, all the subjects struggled to provide examples to clarify their thoughts.

Consequently, the patterned thinking, valuing, perceiving, and behaving, citable as attributes of identity—attributes open to normalizing insinuations through school experiences—become instead one's general personality. Because people enter school with personalities already in place, the participants think these are not as susceptible to the school's discursive intrusions.

Discourse is the matrix of both subjectivity and identity. Political interests subtly communicated in and through discourses, "seep" into our subjectivities. This understanding of subjectivity, and of identity, is obscured by a haze of presumed benign objectivity and constructed silences (of, for example, sexual heterogeneity, and particularly homosexuality).

Marianne Valverde (1991) writes that deconstructing (revealing the politics, contentions, and important players now submerged in time and deliberate obscurcation), and exposing, the social fabrication of identity, does not stop oppression when that very oppression is based on assigned identities. "School-assigned" identities is what many participants object to.

Through curriculum, schools fixed the participants in identities they did not recognize and knew to be false. The lives they really lived were rarely visible in the school curriculum; when introduced, the participants felt the depictions were distorted. Their relationships with peers, several report, left them feeling they always lied, pretended, or deceived others. In such conditions, as Valverde suggests, deconstructing identity does not necessarily lead to reconfiguring its politics.

Jack does not consider such transforming of school politics is necessary because he does not think school is significant to naming himself or to his drive toward self-sufficiency and
agency. But in his disregard of the school as a crucible of his identity may be found the rejection of it as signifier. The idea of a signifier is rooted in the concept of signification. It refers to the

distinction between signifier, signified, and sign. The signifier can be a physical object, a word, or a picture of some kind. The signified is a mental concept indicated by the signifier. The sign is the association of signifier and signified. (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner 1988)

In Jack's reading, however, the school symbolizes nothing but a venue for teaching, and the politics of socialization are invisible.

The other participants were not so oblivious of schools. Louise, for example, does not think formative environments can be discreetly isolated and analyzed, such that schools are neither significant nor signifying. However, Louise glimpses the hegemony of school experience without using the term. She sees its relation to identity to the extent she feels it necessary to dance around the concept of identity. We cannot escape having an identity, she says, which gives it the appearance of a yoke.

Canadian and American societies emphasize individual freedom, even if somewhat differently. Identity is rarely valued for its collective classification only, even when we realize we negotiate social and personal identities all the time. We "wear" our hegemony uneasily, experiencing it at different times more as constraint than liberation. To say, then, that we cannot escape having identity turns inside out what others in this research see as a sign of personal achievement and record—developing and sustaining identity. The hegemony of schooling leaves Louise seeking a respite from what I call the politics of identity formation. She wants this despite thinking the search is futile. Hegemony for Louise is not merely dominant, it is ubiquitous.

Louise: Transcendent Identity

Louise, 18, believed that identity has context but that it goes beyond the particular
circumstances of a context whether we want it to or not; it has existence beyond our intentions. "I don't think anyone cannot have an identity outside of a situation," she says (my emphasis). This is reminiscent of Foucault's comment that we are never just in an adversarial power relationship, that we can never escape discourse and power, and that as subjects we conduct power as well as respond to it. For good or ill, school is a formative life situation. Louise also was impressed by Foucault, enough that she referred in the interview to some of his writings.

Louise's explanation of identity intrigues because it portrays it as something constantly emergent but never extant. Identity has conceptual stasis, but specifics alter over time. However, this does not mean Louise abdicates a role in developing her own identity. She may not associate identity formation with schooling--schooling being no more formative than any other situation--but she explains identity as "something you identify with, something that you call your own."

Eluding Identity, Embracing Self-Knowledge

The evidence suggests that Louise echoes Jack's affirmation of identity, but to conclude in this way would be misleading. Louise finds identity elusive definitionally and practically. But there is something else at work here, the study of self, the gathering of self-knowledge in a way that makes it a buttress against identity itself.

Later in this chapter I address self-knowledge in relation to and as distinguished from "identity." At this stage what should be said is that most participants differentiated between self-knowledge and identity, the former representing the most personal--and thus the most reliable--understanding one can acquire. Identity seemed larger, more enveloping, and consequently a type of trap. An example highlighting the difference may be found in Michael's experience (discussed later). Although he knew a few other gay people, and knew himself as a gay person, he believed one teacher's comments that all gays and lesbians were filthy people who caused AIDS. Eventually, after moving to Vancouver, Michael rejected the teacher's conclusions.

For most participants self-knowledge was more delineating because it always shifts; at one
time it is more revealing and informing, at another more concealing and informing. But as much as it shifts, Louise's understanding of self-knowledge is still a more dependable and reassuring understanding than that derived from identity, which Louise perceives as

superficial[,] it's sort of "this is me," and it is by definition superficial .... I don't think I own ... qualities. Foucault owns part ... and other people own part ... which goes through me. Like it's not something that is ... mine .... these qualities are brought out with my interaction with my environment and I can't own them, they aren't me necessarily. I think I have less faith in personal identity than I have in self-knowledge because I can see patterns of myself in the same situation and I can see myself reacting to things similarly and say, "okay, maybe this is a pattern that I intrinsically am and have," but I feel that there's less self ... everything is sort of more one. I'm part of my environment. Also it's too ... arrogant, I believe, to presume that I could have an identity ... my environment is my identity. My reaction to my environment allows my identity. (my emphasis)

In an earlier allusion in chapter 2, I quoted Louise as saying she could not presume to know whether schools influence because she had nothing to compare them to; she could, however, say they were superficial and alienating. Louise carries this wariness into her discussion of identity; she challenges definitive classification but is not fully resistant to its influence. To be someone is important, but not if it means becoming categorically fixed.

Jack's concept of identity as personality is similar to Louise's concept of it as superficial. A curriculum stressing a heterosexist hegemony leads both to emphasize forms of irrelevance. Neither Louise nor Jack--nor anyone--can escape the school's discursive regime, but they respond differently. For Jack, the subjectivity of the school is irrelevant in that he lives life without qualms. Louise tries to minimize the superficiality of school by complying with it outwardly but despising it inwardly.

When I asked her how she would describe herself to me if I met her at a party, Louise replied,

I'd probably laugh and give you something. Anything that came to mind.
Alan: But nothing particularly that you feel attached to?
Louise: No.
The result is permanent elusiveness, a constant destabilization of identity through Louise's unwillingness to become classifiable. James, 18, expressed a similar view when describing what he was like in junior high school: "I was a shadow."

As general openness to life's experiences, elusiveness may be a fortunate development. As a commitment to destabilizing prevailing heterosexual and gender beliefs developed in schools, elusiveness may be a political asset. But as an effort to avoid the scrutiny of school and society, it will fail. Scrutiny cannot be eluded, at least not in Foucault's sense of power. (I think also of Willis's conclusion about his lads. For all their opposition to school ideologies, Willis says, it was the lads' oppositional ideology that left them living anyway the lives they were "intended" to live.)

Wendy Hollway writes of approaching subjectivity "through the meanings and incorporated values which attach to a person's practices." (Hollway 1984: 227) By her account subjectivity is not just inevitable submission to discourse. It is a 'mechanism' by which people actively situate themselves within it. Hollway says individuals invest in forms of power as we align ourselves consciously and unconsciously with particular kinds of discourse. (To illustrate this, Hollway inquires "[w]hy do men 'choose' to position themselves as subjects of the discourse of male sexual drive? Why do women continue to position themselves as its object?" The kind and degree of power in these cases are unequal, but subjectivity "convinces" us to place ourselves, and to be placed, in particular categories of being and not others.) Incorporated values are the array of meanings and beliefs that guide the investing.

Louise does not acknowledge she has specific meanings and incorporated values. Whereas she might interpret identity as something continually in flux, there is another interpretation.

The most poignant and incisive influence of a discrediting institution may be its capacity to prevent or obstruct the development of (non-heterosexual) incorporated values. When Louise says it is arrogant to presume she could have an identity, is she feeling obstructed? Does she mean she could never be, or could want to be, so clearly capsulized? Is Louise following the line of Queer Theory (Warner 1992) by disclaiming the value of a particular identity so as to
parody and distance herself from all identity? Or is she disavowing all conscious embrace of
the kinds of practices Hollway labels incorporated values? Are Louise's comments the
testimony of a chameleon, a person determined to deny all externally-imposed signification,
or an individual who realizes that to be open to diverse possibilities in life requires maximum
flexibility? The latter might reasonably work as interpretation were it not for the last two
sentences of the last quoted excerpt. The environment is her identity, she says; environment
allows her identity.

This may represent a strategic yielding to heterosexism, a way of bending to sexuality
portrayed only heterosexually without submitting to it. But Louise differentiates between self-
knowledge and identity. The former is something more closely obtained and more closely
cherished. Louise thinks identity is relinquishable, for it is merely the glazed surface of social
relationships. And social relationships are induced by power and compel untrue personal
portrayals. Schools are institutions of power where inducements are the backbone of the
curriculum. Louise refers to the power schools have over her, and how powerless she feels.

Among the participants, Louise is not alone in conceptualizing identity as a superficial,
ever-changing response to social relationships. Trish, 21, alludes to identity as "the way you
define yourself socially... who you are, what you are, and what your sexuality is." But this
statement is too vague.

To understand the vagueness, compare Trish with Louise. Louise thinks social relationships
are performances in which one caters the depiction of identity to the crowd's demand.
Whatever the crowd wants a person to be is what the crowd gets. Depiction-performance
requires a script, and Louise's personal script is a permanent response to social expectations
partly conveyed through social institutions such as schools. Is this also Trish's view? Is social
defining for her a matter of rewriting one's sexual and social scripts to fit what Louise might
call choreographed gender and social performances? I am tempted to say yes because Trish
felt she had to portray herself distortedly to school friends and acquaintances to rebut
assumptions about her lesbianism. Hegemonic practices in schools subtly advance
interpretations of life, and encourage us to act on them.

Michael, whom I discuss later, says that we learn to identify difference and to respond to it negatively and sometimes brutally. Anti-homosexual ideas, values, and gender assumptions convince students to understand life more narrowly than how it is actually lived by many people. Whereas Louise experienced the school's hegemony as a wide swath, Trish experienced it more specifically. She had to defend herself against allegations of lesbianism based on a rumour she had kissed another girl. Ideological dominance that constitutes hegemony can be seen in this incident, in that a non-existent act was construed as something substantive. Hegemony here is not encountered abstractly but in a precise milieu encouraging some behaviours and degrading others.

**Trish**

Trish thinks schools play an important role in forming identity. "The things that schools teach that are really important and influential to teenagers ... relate to your identity, to your sexual identity, to your cultural identity, and to your intellect." The teaching she refers to is what transpires on the entire school landscape, not just in classrooms. Curriculum is predetermined; students learn what has already been decided they should learn, complete with expected outcomes. This is tantamount to scripting for circumstances society assumes already exist.

While Trish was in high school, a rumour started that she had kissed a girl in the hall. Trish was in fact in a sexual relationship through her first few years of high school. Yet she was still enraged at the report of behaviour that, were it true, should have warranted no response from anybody witnessing it. As it happens the kiss never occurred but she had to deal with the repercussion of it becoming "common knowledge" in the school. The experience still torments her.

Hearing from other people about the rumour, it's a warning, because when I heard about the rumour, I felt the hate in it, [the] disgust and disapproval of people. So to protect
myself...I would, even to my very best friends, say it was a rumour. And laugh about it. And almost...be homophobic. Almost portray that hate. That kind of hate, it's almost that these individuals were trained somehow by society and schools, to look upon that as a sinful thing. Most people also felt threatened by the rumour.

In such a homophobic environment, to publicly name oneself is extremely difficult. To do so only privately limits the expressiveness of identity and therefore the exposure and possible education of others.

Another thing...is that people have no idea of what to think of lesbians. With two men, they sort of have the fag idea, this physical idea of what they do to each other. But with lesbians it's sort of "what are they all about? What do they do?" It's still a dirty thing, but...People don't know what to think about it.

Trish's observation poignantly reveals the costs of discursive prohibitions.

In an earlier chapter I wrote of prohibitions so penetrating it silences without specifying what the silence is about, or why we must be silent. People learn what not to ask without being told what not to ask about. The obverse of this prohibition is in fact to inquire, but through a mystified mist. As Trish puts it, "what are they all about?" Such questioning by students may communicate muted interest in the prohibited behaviour itself, even as it postulates yet another meaning: incredulity that anyone could or would want to be a lesbian. Identity is thus multiply "extinguished."

Lesbians are constituted as "other" by virtue of heterosexuals' ignorance of real lesbians and their lifestyles. People know about gays but lesbians are inscrutable, even to other females. Schools foster, if in a bizarre and distorted way, awareness of gay men, but the school's gender discourse doubly silences lesbians--as females and as lesbians--and doubly alienates all females from their own sexual and gender possibilities. In such conditions, agency and self-awareness, two facets of identity, are severely impaired. These are vital aspects of naming oneself, of "situating" oneself in identity.

This analytical category on hegemony and reproduction of social values and practices does
not emphasize naming one's identity, but none of these categories stands entirely separate from the others. "Naming" is vital to all the subjects, including Ann.

But I include her in this section on hegemony because she articulates the control exerted by others over important aspects of her life. Such control is a manifestation of hegemonic attitudes and vested interests. It is the enactment of these through regulatory structures. Discipline imposed by a school administration is one example of structural control. (Later in this chapter I discuss an example—the official interference in Barry's choice of a high school course males rarely if ever selected.)

Ann

Ann's perspective on schools is reminiscent of Louise's: they require of lesbians and gays—and perhaps of others judged too different from the norm—dissembling of personal identity. Identity "is how you wish yourself to be perceived . . . you're not really aware of what you're doing, you don't really have control over what you're doing, you're just doing things because other people do them, or because you think that you should be doing them." Although Ann does not mention unsatisfying personal scripts, what she says echoes thoughts of other participants. Scripts can help us, but not when they feel inappropriate to those who feel obligated to live by them.

Colin, on the other hand, never referred to scripts in his interview. But he was confused and angered by the school's refusal to post a flyer advertising a gay youth group. Colin was one who had not yet picked up on the political and differentiating purposes of schooling. His views on identity were consistent with his faith in the rationality and compassion of a system supposed to educate, in his view, all students. Colin measured the school's influence on his understanding of identity in personal, not social or political terms. On this basis Colin could be classified in the "naming and identity" category, but I have decided to include him here because interpreting broader social goals in personal terms is an objective of hegemonic systems.
The most effective indoctrinatory instrument works its "magic" while seeming not to do so. Hegemony is implemented most effectively when it is imperceptible and arouses little if any opposition. Colin localizes the school's political project to its impact on his own life. This is understandable but it obscures the project. This is hegemony at its best.

*Colin: Personal Development as Institutional Intent*

Colin, 18, is skeptical of the entire prospect of school influencing identity. As he puts it,

> it depends on the person. There are a lot of people that have been, you know, convinced that you have to be heterosexual ... through school ... and that's the way you fit in. You're part of the norm ... But that doesn't always work ... obviously all the heterosexual ... reinforcements that I got did nothing for me. I mean, I'm still a homosexual.

In an immediate sense Colin is right. He has, through perseverance if not resistance, sustained his identity. But he associates personal development with institutional intent, as if the details of his life confirm or disprove the intention.

However, Colin's perspective does not nullify school discourse as a renunciatory subjectivity, which is how most subjects experienced school. When Trish, for example, had to laugh at the rumour of her kissing another girl, she had to simultaneously renounce herself and the value of her identity. Colin's view atomizes the reality. Others in the present research felt atomized through their isolation and identity aloofness, but as *responses* to their school experiences. They did not assume, as Colin did, that these are determinants of the *intent* of school ideology.

The participants in this part of the chapter did not use "hegemony" or "ideology" in their interviews, but what they discussed were outcomes of negotiating through and with prevalent heterosexist forces. Nevertheless the outcomes were varied. Of the five people in this group, Louise and Trish offered the most openly political analysis of schooling. They were most aware that identity has social and personal attributes. The rest range from mild political
awareness to very little. But all worked to uphold the integrity of their personal identities.

While this was so of all participants, some accentuated the personal more than the sociocultural or political characteristics of identity. Those who did this most conspicuously I have grouped together in the next category.

3.4 Naming and Identity: The Cases of Barry, Sean and Michael

Naming oneself is presented here separately from the other categories of hegemony and subjectivity, and varieties of difference. But all subjects experienced the powerful desire to name themselves, to know their identities were "real." What they meant by this varied somewhat, but there remained a clear message. They wanted to feel what Erik Erikson says, as he is quoted by Kenneth Gergen. "In the social jungle of human existence there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity" (Gergen 1991: 38) And more than this, that the identity should match "who they are." For all the adjustments and compromises we make in life, for all the times we defer or acquiesce to people or external forces, for all the decisions we put off or avoid making out of fear, uncertainty, or insufficient audacity, we may still feel we have lived our lives if our sense of psychological, emotional, and intellectual wholeness is intact. The adjustments and compromises are less noticeable or more easily acknowledged when we feel unified. But when identity is unauthentic, we gag on the compromises and adjustments. What might otherwise be seen as a clever strategy is instead seen as personal failure. This explains Trish's anger with herself for reproducing or recreating the hatred she saw in her peers when they thought she had kissed another girl. This explains why James describes himself as a shadow, and why Brent (discussed later in this chapter) claims to have had no identity in school.

To name oneself is to seize one's own identity, to try to live authentically in an environment that so often demands compliance but not integrity. This category speaks to how Barry, Sean, and Michael seized their identities.
Barry: The School as Torment

The problems of naming and of contending with "otherness" were complicated in Barry's case because he was the least clear of all participants in his self-acceptance as a gay man. Yet Barry, 21, contested conditions in his high school that indicated the school's commitment to strictly-differentiated gender boundaries. Analysis of his interview begins with a discussion of his understanding of "identity."

When asked to explain identity, Barry stated, "[i]dentity means that you feel as though ... you fit into a group, you have a sense of belonging, you share their values, their beliefs." Barry did not mean by this that a gay group is the only type of collective with whom he might feel a common bond. Quite the contrary was the case. "Even with the gay identity I would think I would have another identity," he said.

Barry feels disunited from other gays. In his words, "I don't have a peer group .... I'm really my own island." Barry is in such conflict over his identity he cannot conceive himself as a gay person. Otherness becomes not just a social category he is compelled to join, it is a personal envelope that he occupies solitarily. He couldn't share their values, he says, even if he were to meet gay people. All homosexual males are categorized as one. Barry essentializes identity into a caricature.

The caricatured view is partly a result of isolation in a small community that did not realistically expose people to the lesbian and gay lifestyles. Furthermore, Barry despises/d his school experience, and may not have listened even if his school had displayed exemplary openness about sexuality. "I hated school ... because I didn't like the social institution totally, and I hated the classroom setting ... to this day ... I feel as though I'm the oddball out here."

The discourses of schooling may vary somewhat, as is indicated by Zachary's positive experience. But overwhelmingly they are marginalizing and ridiculing. And schools may ignore students' subject choices if they are not properly 'gendered', as Barry's school did when it refused to allow him to take Home Economics. Having made what he thought was a good choice, Barry was treated as if he were an "oddball," in that the school authority thought his
choice strange enough to ignore it. This made him strange in the eyes of school personnel and also in his own eyes, both for selecting home economics and for thinking he had the right to do so. Although Barry referred to gender in his interview he did not consider the possible relationship between subject selection in school and a perception among school personnel that he was gay. This lack of consideration is not surprising given Barry's own uncertainty about wanting to be homosexual.

Barry, who on one hand states his interest in gay groups and meeting others like himself, on the other hand says, "I'm not taking a gay identity. Definitely not. Why should I? I haven't done anything gay." (my emphasis)

I will not discuss the origin(s) of homosexuality, and whether any lesbian or gay chooses the orientation. However, Barry believes identity is a choice that can easily be exchanged for another. To take something is to have the possibility of giving it back. This epitomizes naming as a rational act. But it also reveals what Louise indicates: that identity for some of the lesbians and gays in this research is a problematic and a problematizing state, fraught with conflict between personal understandings and an ideology of sex education that emphasizes "plumbing" details and dissuasion of non-heterosexual activity. The result is a displaced, wary, and tentative identity.

Louise reflects others' personality and character expectations, James is a shadow, and Barry is an island.

Consider the last sentence of Barry's last excerpt. "I haven't done anything gay," he says. Gayness is sex. This assumption fits well with sex education programs that stress biology and sexual acts but not sexuality. And certainly not sexual desire, as Michelle Fine (1988) points out.

Barry has homosexual desires, but he doesn't think they constitute identity. He struggles to find a comfortable stasis through his desire to experience sex, his need for identity, and his preferred stance of sexual and intellectual non-commitment. "I've always sort of looked at things differently ... on an outside level ... as an observer, not as a participant ... I don't
feel as though I have an identity just because I'm gay ... does that mean I have an identity just because I'm human?"

Whereas Barry earlier suggests identity is general, almost faceless, here there is a search for identity, but something beyond, even instead of, sexual identity. However, the parameters of identity are unclear to him, and they are certainly not dealt with in school. Uncertain as he may be of what personal identity he wants, he knows he wants at least a social identity. Barry resorts to a fundamental search within the most expansive category of all--"human."

Louise, James, and Barry, try to distance themselves from sexual identity as if there could not be value in it. This holds even as James and Louise have had, and continue to seek, homosexual relations with others. School is so discursively disaffirming that none can see sexual identity constituting the primary substance of who they are. They are, they say, unique, detached, and more than lesbian and gay (as if each of these in itself could signify the totality of being lesbian or gay).

In one sense they are right. People are not just aggregates of desires, interests, inclinations and patterns. However, these categories of impulse, understanding, and experience, nevertheless delineate us in some way. Ideas of justice, views of and responses to authority, and interpretations of life experiences are, for most of the subjects, intertwined with being lesbian or gay. Although most said they would be the same people they are now if they were not homosexual, their answers varied when I inquired about levels of skepticism, attitudes about and toward authority, and about whether they perceive themselves more or less life-experienced than their peers.

Most associated sexual identity with heightened opposition to discrimination against others, skepticism about reports of fact, and a strong sense of having experienced adversity and come through it in ways their non-homosexual peers could not match. They may not be mere aggregates of characteristics, but their personae are intrinsically linked to what they have experienced because they are lesbian or gay. These self-analyses register, most evocatively, the act of naming.
Schools permit students to organize themselves according to sporting and hobby interests, various academic pursuits, occasionally according to religious beliefs, but they almost never allow groupings based on 'deviant' sexuality.

Subjectivity for homosexuals in schools always threatens deprivation--of the value of looking at life differently, of the company and reassurance of others like themselves, and too often of physical security. Schools do not encourage exploration of "unconventional" identities, they do not facilitate their formation, and in the curricular silence on non-heterosexual sexuality they teach without specifying, what must never be mentioned, questioned, considered, explored, or expressed. In this way schools shape the subjectivity of their students.

Should anyone wonder why these participants hesitate to commit themselves to an identity, when the connotations of the word are so entrapping? Understanding identity usually means doing what is commonly prohibited in schools. What does an unexplored, unquestioned, and unconsidered identity amount to? What do we learn about ourselves--and about others for that matter--if we are unable to probe in this way? How do we reconcile our sense of the world with our self-perceptions, and how do we communicate these thoughts to our peers, as they may communicate their thoughts to us? In the absence of this dynamic of self-awareness, identity is something conformed to and complied with. What ensued was anger and disaffection in the participants over the coerciveness of schools. What is missing is the political vocabulary that permits analysis of schools as social institutions, to focus the anger on political and social change.

Sean's memories and analysis of his school experience indicate the value of having a political vocabulary. On this basis alone Sean's interview could have been examined in the section on hegemony. But Sean was proud of his perseverance as a gay man in an institution dedicated to identifying and penalizing differences among its students. Because he strongly accentuated his resourcefulness and resoluteness in being and "staying" gay, I include him here. I count tenacity as an important aspect of self-naming.
Sean: Fabricating Difference

People do not turn out as expected. Coercion and exclusion do not always squelch the spirit of identity. Sean, 22, exemplifies this. He was a fashion iconoclast in high school, dressing very differently and attracting the not-so-pleasant attention of other students. When he named himself as a gay man—only to himself in the beginning and then to others—he made clear that problems over his candor were other people’s difficulty. Being gay was not a problem for Sean. This does not mean, however, that Sean’s experience was entirely positive.

As a Newfoundlander Sean could only attend a denominational school. He attended a Catholic school, the sexual ethos of which followed Catholic scriptural interpretation. He describes the students in the school as conformist and quick to identify and penalize difference.

They just had to find something where they had an excuse to treat me differently. They weren’t successful because ... I just would come to school and ... act whatever way I wanted .... it’s bad enough to be everything bad, but if you’re ... something very specific like being gay, that [is] the ultimate .... Most of these people thought it was morally wrong to be gay.

Sean’s discussion of how his peers justified differential treatment of people, stressed it was a group phenomenon. He does not conceptualize it as behaviour induced by a school regime, in which binary gender values are taught and enforced. Ab/normal, and homo/heterosexual operate as polarized categories rather than interrelated dimensions of human experience. School discourse contextualizes and may openly reward anti-homosexual behaviour on grounds of maintaining "the right" of heterosexuality: heterosexuality as the "right" identity to have, and the "right" of heterosexuals to dissuade, humiliate, or perhaps even eliminate their opposite. Where homo meets abnormal, negative sanctions may be justifiably invoked.

From this regime may come questions such as those stated by Trish, the gist of which is, "what are they [lesbians] all about?" And from this regime comes the self-loathing that Trish remembers feeling after she felt compelled to deny herself and to castigate herself by condemning all homosexuals. She would never have kissed another girl. What girl would want
to do anything so gross?

For a long time Sean concealed his sexuality from other students, and also from friends and family members. But identity solidified in Sean an inner strength.

I am who I am . . . . I had these feelings, I knew it was totally different from what I felt before. It’s not the same feelings I’m supposed to have . . . . for girls . . . . [what] you feel inside about yourself, knowing what you’re capable of doing, knowing where your weaknesses are . . . . just basically knowing . . . . your true self . . . . The part I have to deal with is the people that are negative and are going to be negative for a long, long time.

In contrast to Louise, Trish, and Barry, Sean doesn’t hold identity askance to prevent enclosure within confining boundaries. He does not separate self-knowledge from identity; on the contrary, self-knowledge is wrapped up with it.

Sean is like Jack in this respect. Jack is unperturbed that he may be abnormal, and Sean, now fully aware of his sexuality, is untroubled by the great debates about its origin. His lack of distress stems partly from his assumption that identity is a biological assignation. "As soon as you are born you’re identified as a boy or girl . . . . From there on you are classified . . . . boys are supposed to be doing this and that, this is how you’re supposed to act."

Sean refers to gender, but assumes it incorporates sexuality. Being a boy mandates certain acts that conventional "wisdom" does not associate with homosexuality. However, Sean eventually assumes he is biologically gay and need not concern himself about it. What he must deal with are the reactions of others around him. Sean draws personal strength from his ability to cope with these circumstances. Furthermore, he associates sexual identity with biological destiny. The association dissolves any guilt and lessens the anger and frustration of realizing homosexuality is not part of the curriculum.

Sean’s response contrasts with the other participants’ when they noted their absence/omission from the official curriculum, and their distorted presence in the larger curriculum of school organization. Do schools play a significant and signifying role? None that Sean stipulates. Do schools encourage homophobia in students? None that Sean detected.
Yet homophobia, as the obverse of compulsory heterosexuality, is embedded in the institutional purpose of schooling (Sears 1991; Price 1982; Griffin 1991).

Occasionally teachers and other school personnel introduce alternative views of sexuality, but for most participants schools were unrelenting environments of exclusion and, sometimes, fear. Sears' work canvasses the attitudes of teachers and lesbian and gay teenagers. Although in the latter case Sears is interested in the broader cultural cauldron of family, and friends, school experience ranks importantly because occasionally teachers provided a vital support network. Price investigated attitudes of high school students about homosexuality and Griffin asked homosexual teachers if their professionalism was conceived and acted out differently than was true of their non-lesbian/gay colleagues. All three authors reached similar conclusions. Attitudes do change over time, and anti-homosexual feelings and ideas mellow or evolve. Nonetheless they also found homophobia in schools. If active disqualification of non-heterosexual sexuality did not come from teachers, it came from students unhindered by teachers' interference.

It is worthwhile to recall Sean's observation that other students searched for reasons to treat him differently. This suggests--in a play on Foucault's idea of a "will to power" and a "will to truth"--a "will to differentiate," and therefore to persecute. This is the fundamental premise of subjectivity as experienced by the participants. In an atmosphere of ideological normalization, the coercion underlying supposedly natural and normal social arrangements is disguised. For those who are sexually "different," however, the arrangements become partially visible through actions directed against them by other students, and partly through the inaction of school authorities to control these other students. When gays and lesbians retreat from "identity" as too encapsulating and endangering, they retreat as well from the implicit coercion that politicizes and polarizes identity.

Sean's sense of himself develops despite the behaviour of students and the discreditation of school discourse. His identity anchors how he understands and treats others, and what he expects in return. He is both empathetic and pragmatic. "The gay part [of me] I think is
accepting people for who they are ... being accepting of whatever they are or whatever they've done in the past. It's probably more related to being gay because I want people to accept me for who I am." Reciprocity, contingency, and practicality are predominant concerns for Sean.

Although Sean does not clearly associate identity formation with his school experience, he does refer to the religious atmosphere of the school and how it incites students to identify differences in their peers. He thus contextualizes the possibility of subjectivity forming identity without identifying its achievement.

Sean's awareness of the politics of differentiation is similar to Michael's awareness of how difference becomes the basis of discrimination. Michael also moves through a school system heavily oriented toward social, political, and cultural orthodoxy. And this hegemony was felt daily by Michael in the very small town in which he grew up. But I place Michael under "naming and identity" because he draws significantly on his sense of self-identification. His triumph against constant adversity is conspicuously his own, at the same time as he appreciates the difference between social and personal politics. Sean prevailed through endurance and self-respect. Michael displays these qualities as well, but sees in human interaction possibilities for the politics of change.

Michael

Michael, 21, grappled with the production of difference throughout his school years. "I think, you know, you sort of don't feel different until somebody points it out." Michael's understanding matches what other interviewees remember of feeling different and being treated differently. Most indicate sensing this difference at very young ages. (A question may be posed about how it is that subjectivity enables other young children to identify qualities to be vilified, but does not so enable those who allegedly possess the vilifiable characteristics. Perception is apparently outward, not inward. However, leaving the question this way omits a further consideration. Schools may foster the targeting of children who seem vulnerable, and only afterward is the condemnation rationalized in gender terms.)
Michael grew up in a very small midwestern American town. He attended the local elementary and high schools (except in his senior year). Beginning in elementary school, he was subjected to constant verbal and occasional physical harassment. Teachers living in the community who were friends of Michael's parents did not reveal to them what Michael had endured until after Michael had left the high school. None interceded with students on his behalf.

Michael displayed early artistic interests in dance and music, which may partly explain the designation of difference. He and his family also rarely attended church in a community notable for its consistent church attendance. When they did go, it was to a church located in another town. Conceivably, Michael may have borne the brunt of anger actually directed at his family.

Nevertheless, school shaped his identity through curriculum and tacit permission for students to define and penalize difference. This is what Fuss means by the construction and production of difference (Fuss 1989). Schools establish premises of difference, and the incentives to differentiate. When I asked Michael whether he associated his treatment by schoolmates with self-understanding of his identity, he said "I don't know where it came from, it didn't come from my parents, it must have come from God. I just knew that I was okay and... was going to be all right.... I didn't feel 'oh I'm so horrible, I'm a freak'. I never really went through that phase."

The strength of Michael's selfhood is found in the last sentence. He assumes that to judge oneself negatively is a phase, a waystation to self-acceptance. However, Michael understands some philosophical ramifications of his experiences. "I shouldn't have to label myself. You know, I've thought about this really philosophically... In a utopian society I shouldn't have to label myself, but I've had to in this society."

Labelling is not a necessarily injurious social practice. We are not always snared by its simplifications of people's lives. And it can ease our lives by classifying people, work situations, and personal objectives, as Michael himself recognizes when he says "I don't think
we're at a point in our society where we can do without labels quite yet....I think we need to label some things that people are afraid to label....I think we live in a really racist, homophobic, misogynistic society, and I'm labelling it. (my emphasis) This is discourse by another name.

Labelling in this case may be seen as an example of a Foucaultian will to knowledge or truth. It implicitly conveys the criteria by which we judge anything to be "truth" or "knowledge." Labelling seen in this light also thrusts into the forefront of public vision those practices society conceals, but which are the bases of social discrimination. Michael turns inside out the ideological regime that torments him, and sees the possibilities in using a similar but subversive approach. He who has been named all his life by others now names the others.

The more common assumption about labelling, however, is that it has negative connotations. To label people is to reduce their lives to a few caricatured penstrokes. The character, the panache, the frenzy of individuals' lives, are eliminated by a taxonomic whim. What is left is barely, if at all, the people the labels are meant to describe.

Michael notices the negativity of labels. He too detects, as do Louise, James, and Barry, the sharply confining effects of what they call "identity," and of what Michael calls "labels." The terminological difference is important I think, because Michael does not feel harnessed by his identity. The others do feel constrained because they sense their identities are somewhat determined by others' attitudes toward, and assumptions about, them. They cannot claim the kind of ownership they believe should inhere in the embracing of an identity.

Subjectivity in one sense stretches identity--blurs its contours and defining features, giving an appearance of all-inclusiveness--so that all seem to have a stake in what it becomes. But the "stake" in this abrogates identity as parody (both of the idea of identity, and of conventional understandings of what identity is and how it should be expressed), as refuge, and as personal invention.

Few of the participants conceive identity pluralistically, as multiple identities that are simultaneously tried, explored, revamped, and maybe discarded. Something so dearly acquired
and defended as identity is not always looked upon so playfully. For Louise, identity means concealment; Barry is reluctant to have an identity, but if he must he prefers it be human rather than one more definitive; and Michael affirms his identity but thinks he may be admitting himself to a corps of sex-crazed people (as one of his teachers imagined gays and lesbians to be).

Michael considers himself self-made, and in this view he affirms the inventiveness of identity, the persistence indispensable to invention, and the liberatory capacity of naming oneself. Michael is one who says schools do influence, deliberately and in effect, but in terms of their model, not models chosen by students. Persistence is critical in a milieu devoted to a specific form of influence. Michael believes he has surmounted and transcended the severe persistence of his school persecutors because he has emerged a proud and tenacious gay man.

Being in such an adversity has made me drive to find my source—I'm a very spiritual person—and along the way I'm finding out things about myself, and I think a lot of people don't have that drive, they just go along with the crowd, just have a bit of a ... sheep-like attitude, and they're perfectly happy people.

Accurate though this view of himself may be, in a Foucaultian sense Michael never transcends the experience. He is condemned by peers, left to fend for himself by teachers, and struggles with an image of gay people he senses is wrong but can't, in the beginning of his intellectual awareness of who he is, prove otherwise. Michael's responses are shaped by the quality and discursive pattern of his stigmatizers. Michael does not see this, or at least does not refer to this. He expresses his struggle more as an example of opposition to and endurance of their pointing out his difference.

In the previous chapter I mentioned the lack of political awareness that might unveil the vested interests, the narrow indoctrination of specific values, and the casual brutalities sanctioned by an education system insistent that such values be instilled. The same political "gap" illuminates Michael's view that he deflected the formative purpose of the school. It also casts light on the other participants' assumption that, by finding in self-knowledge a
comfortable resort, they avoid the oppressive "finger-tap" of identity. This political gap is a central point of my research. Whether discussing if schools influence students or their understanding of identity formation in schools, the subjects seldom raise their sights on the institutional dimensions and objectives of schools.

My point is not to diminish the personal drive Michael esteems or tarnish the achievement of his identity. My intent is to respond to the last excerpt, which raises a question of how resistance, thwarting, and inciting new discourses are facilitated when those who instigate these processes are substantially unaware they are occurring, and thus of the possibilities that accompany them.

Michael had an idea of what possibilities existed. He stridently denounced racism, sexism, misogyny, and saw in his denunciation the power that came with labelling others. Other subjects also saw possibilities. Zachary’s insight came from actual experience. In fact his entire "story" of schooling is unique to this group of participants, and merits inclusion in the last category highlighting differences in school experience though not necessarily in discourse. Brent "accompanies" Zachary but for a different reason. Brent's school difficulties early on stemmed from racial discrimination, not assumptions of "dubious" gender.

3.5 Varieties of Difference in Schooling and Identity Formation: The Cases of Zachary and Brent

Zachary

Zachary, 20, not having reason to hide his sexuality, does not have to consider what strategies may lie in new discourses and personal resistance. His school experiences were unusually positive. He was regularly invited by counselors and teachers to address classes on homosexuality. Most students of whatever sexuality were supportive and curious. However, Zachary does not distinguish between the school he attended and the school as an institution.
He does not conceptualize the school as a crucible of identity, but rather as a location where exposure to curricular details occurs. This is so even though he contrasted his school background with that of lesbians he knows, and is fully aware they were impugned in ways he never had to deal with.

When I inquired how he might explain identity Zachary said it was being honest, that it meant "opening up and . . . being yourself." Identity is therefore a lived experience, not just a category of mind. This is very important to Zachary. Confirmation of who he is comes from his experiences. One in particular was salient in identity acknowledgement as a naming act.

Zachary met an older man one day and after hours of conversation they had sex. This was not Zachary's first sexual experience, but it was the first time he gave his real name. It was of "coming out" signification. "It was . . . the first time I came out to somebody and used my real name with somebody I had met . . . . I can remember the date." I refer to this experience to feature the omissions of school curricula and the consequent gaps of subjectivity in schools.

The event raises issues about sexuality that an education system interested in authentic growth of its students should welcome. The relationship between fantasizing and expressing identity, between imagining and inventing oneself, between being labelled and naming oneself, is compelling. But the questions arising from this relationship are the kinds of questions not considered in school.

An educational ethos shines through the expectations of the people highlighted in this study. They want schools to lighten intellectual darkness. When they see contradictions between their own and others' lives, and the contradictory depictions of these same lives in curricula, they are outraged and frustrated. They cannot understand why schools would exclude them, who have knowledge that might break down sexual superstition and bigotry. What they do not understand, as well, is precisely what persuades them that enlightenment is an educational ideal.

Rather than contemplate that schools do not want to educate in this way, the subjects condemn school personnel for not living up to the school's supposed ideal. Without political
awareness of the discourse of social institutions and their socializing mandate, analysis of schooling yields only frustration and anger. Participants understand that they hide their identities from peers and adults, but don't understand as clearly why they conceal them.

Brent's tale presents an ironic turn in this consideration. He knows that he hides from family and friends, that in elementary school children barred him from their play because of his skin colour. The irony is that Brent separates gender and race, thereby removing what for many others is an important source of political and social insight, the relationship of different prejudices to a common hegemonic imposition. Brent therefore provides an interesting and different outlook on difference.

Brent: Race and Sexuality as Separate Journeys

For some people identity is an interior quality, best nurtured alone and free of external demands. Brent, 19, believes this, but still acknowledges the role of exterior circumstances in developing identity. The interior-identity relationship, therefore, cannot be understood and lived in an environment that insists upon compliance with views and behaviours not believed in by students.

I think being alone ... nurtures my identity .... you don't have to put on an act. You don't have to pretend .... I had an identity in high school, but ... it was not my identity, it was .... the identity of expectations--of teachers, of fellow classmates and friends .... I just went through high school knowing a lot of people and having a lot of friends, but not any real friends, because no one knew who I was .... No one knew who I was totally.

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students are not the only students who feel bogus in schools, but their search for outlets and supportive institutions is a more precarious ordeal than that faced by heterosexual students. Institutional support is sparse, even today with all the strides in gay and lesbian rights. Looking for them entails a bit of risk, and a great deal of self-acknowledgement and assertiveness.

The precariousness of Brent's search might have been compounded by the racism he
experienced. "In elementary school I never went out for recess or lunch . . . because I'd get spat on or get rocks thrown at me . . . you know, parents told their children not to play with me because I was [sic] brown."

Despite this experience, Brent does not connect racism with sexuality. He compartmentalizes them. The directly racist part of his life occurred when he was a child. Racism still exists, but not for him. His identity project presently is homosexuality. This presents an interesting dichotomy. Brent suggests he can work on different aspects of his identity discreetly, as if the larger sociopolitical context does not intrude on his effort. Whereas Michael detects racism in his society and aligns himself with those he thinks are similarly oppressed, Brent says "I right now am dealing with my homosexuality. I don't think there is any problem with the racism aspect of it. Sure, I see it out there and it bugs the hell out of me, but I don't think my being brown is a . . . minority." For Brent, the great racial battle is over to this extent: it no longer impedes his life, his identity is strong, and identity formation is a highly personal journey. As he says, identity is best nurtured in solitude, where it won't be battered by the expectations of peers or, presumably, school practices.

Brent's understanding of identity inverts the other participants' interpretations. They see identity as a buttress against a demeaning world. Brent wants to live his identity, but the identity itself is kept close in a strict harbouring of self-knowledge, social awareness, and personal ambition.

However, to say that who we are is among the most personal realizations we will have does not mean, says Brent, that schools should do nothing to assist gay and lesbian students. He understands the value of groups in creating cohesion among their members. And that groups project images that counter prohibiting and censuring meanings. He thinks there should be clubs in schools for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. "I think there is a necessity because in high school . . . I went through thinking that I was the only . . . gay person in my whole school . . . . I wanted to portray . . . myself . . . you didn't really see that portrayal in schools, so . . . I thought I was alone, all alone." Brent says later in the interview he is convinced that at least
in the school he attended, and in the schools he is aware of, such clubs will never exist.

Brent is matter-of-fact about the state of affairs for gay and lesbian students. He knows the loneliness and the isolation of an identity so disparaged it cannot be referred to publicly. At the beginning of the chapter I cited Jeffrey Weeks' linkage of identity to social relationships. I said that identity is tested, adapted, probed, discovered, and invented through relationships.

Most participants associate school with the obstruction of their identity formation. This is not explicitly stated, but the association is in their accounts of students' or teachers' anti-homosexual deeds perpetrated or ignored, and of curriculum deliberately derogatory of all sexuality but heterosexuality. When Brent says he "chose to find an identity after high school," he intimates not only that we consciously search, invent, and name our identities, but also that we may choose not to find one.

Schools penalize choice that defies the sexual ideology of heterosexism. But if Brent's belief that we can choose not to choose is accurate, the penalty is more severe yet. Presence, even if oppositional, possesses its own documentation. To be compelled not to choose is the counterpart of being a shadow, an island, an apparition before one's peers and perhaps the world. This subjectivity demands self-renunciation.

3.6 Analyses

Identity and Empowerment in the School

The literature on identity in gay and lesbian studies often focuses on the dynamics of acknowledging to oneself and others a same-sex preference. Works by Vivienne Cass (1979, 1984), DeCecco and Shively (1984), Harry (1984), Weinberg (1978), Troiden (1989), and Herdt (1989) plot a trajectory of social and personal change. Their main investigative interest is in when individuals begin thinking they are lesbian or gay and how they come to terms with
themselves.

As social attitudes have shifted, so have there been changes in when a person acknowledges a lesbian or gay identity, the criteria by which one comes to self-disclosure, and the availability of support, social, and counselling groups to ease the way for those distressed by their realization.

At this stage of gay/lesbian social visibility, questions and theories about identity have added to the coming-out literature. A greater attention to the complex interplay of life experience, social knowledge, and self-awareness, in multifaceted situations, is now possible. For example, DeCecco and Shively explore the meanings and implications of homosexual relationships. Gilbert Herdt's view of sexual identity is of a social construct roaming on a sexually experimental voyage mediated by cultural expectations. Vivienne Cass writes on how we synthesize identity by resolving contradictions among our various identities. And Richard Troiden believes in a socially constructed identity, characteristic (especially) of adolescence, based on scripts. We acquire sexual scripts, he says, that foster or weaken sexual self-awareness.

From all this interplay come the criteria of identity. However, the interplay experienced in school is a minefield. And this is where this thesis fits in the broader investigation of lesbian/gay experience, supplementing the coming-to-terms-with psychological studies of homosexuals. Schools are significant places for homosexual youth because they are normative institutions expressly established to foster some attitudes, habits, and behaviours, and to quench others. In the pantheon of quenchable categories, homosexuality ranks high.

Self-Knowledge and Identity as Mutual Exclusions

In the accounts and analyses of their school experiences, most of the subjects indicate their ability to withstand anti-gay discourses, but they are wary of identity, of being embodied by a category, and of becoming trapped by it. Their wariness may not be a terrible development if it signifies awareness of various identities beyond sexual ones. Steven Seidman (1992) writes that sexual object-choice is conceptually insufficient to cover the nuances of identity. In their
insistence on communicating the "wholeness" of their lives to their classmates, there is evidence among participants of self-knowing beyond sexual interest.

All speak of empowerment through hardship. By empowerment I mean naming oneself as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Self-actualization as empowerment is closely tied to sexual identity for many of the participants. But self-actualization through growing self-knowledge should not be seen as a set of scripts or a series of choreographed interpersonal relationships despite the effort of social institutions such as schools to affect identity formation by validating some scripts and suppressing others. Another process may be under way. Troiden, for example, does not discuss the "de-acquisition" of meanings. Yet we "unlearn" scripts in the same way we learn them, and unlearning can be a powerful source of identity development. Furthermore, to unlearn a script does not mean it is replaced by another one.

We must contemplate the normalizing value of scripts of prohibition. Scripts name and "un-name." Thus are our meanings and self-knowledge "de-acquired," or are, as Foucault might say, disqualified. And disqualification is not what these subjects have in mind when expressing the tie between sexual identity and empowerment.

Developing an identity is a matter of becoming more than of sudden realization. Are scripts more important to becoming or realizing? If we emphasize scripts more than the contexts in which they develop, we are left theoretically less able to understand how context and its discourse permeate individuals' understanding and aspirations. Power as an aspiring force projected from numerous sources may "confer" agency and undermine it simultaneously, may foster individualism and penalize it concurrently. Scripts do not enfold the subtlety of this operation of power. What I am discussing here transcends scripts.

Foucault theorizes about the complexity of the scripts we adopt and discard, and the political dynamics that underlie what, why, and how we adopt and discard. His notion of discourse encapsulates scripts. In schools, some scripts are obvious and complied with, while others--as expressions of the hidden curriculum--are screened. Ann refers to behaving in certain ways without knowing why; Michael speaks of a model of outlook and behaviour he
must conform to, but it is the school's model, not his or other students'. Barry says he loathes school because its institutional imperatives supersede his, and Louise is willing to tell me whatever I want to hear about her identity because what she says doesn’t matter anyway.

The participants are well aware of scripts. They feel suffocated and extinguished by them. And without the gay/lesbian/bisexual clubs considered by Brent, there are few possibilities within schools for homosexuals to develop their own scripts. While important as bases for ritualizing social interactions, scripts do not account for the greater amplitude of discourse.

Scrutiny should not stop at scripting identity, but should also descend upon the relationship between power and identity formation. Emphasizing identity as a cognitive result of resolving contradictions, for example—as Cass does—does not address the conditions which shape, propel, and obstruct the formation of identity. Furthermore, synthesis suggests finality, an evolution reaching its apogee. Life, however, is rarely so clear or ultimate. Certainly the people I have quoted on identity would not think so. Louise's elusiveness, Barry's resistance to being classified as anything but human, and Trish’s observation that people have an idea—however distorted—of what "gay" is, but have no idea of what it means to be lesbian, all attest to contestable meanings, searchings, and yearnings. Were students able to contest openly in schools—if school curricula acknowledged in content, and school authorities permitted expression of, life’s volatility—the reactions of this study's subjects might have been different. Striving to locate themselves in the world might still leave them gasping occasionally for air, but they might not rebuke schools for complicating the experience.

Any rebuke must be contemplated in relation to renunciatory subjectivity. Central to this subjectivity is the signification of homosexuality as exclusion. Schools are political in the ways and extent to which they "produce" knowledge that creates and censors. As homosexual youth strive to retain some sense of agency by blurring their identities, never wanting to be fully determined by them, so do they constitute their marginality and their exclusion. And exclusion becomes the leitmotif of the education system.
"Are Politics of Change Possible?"

Is constituting one's own marginality a desperate situation from which there is no respite? How might gays and lesbians create a politics of change? Queer Theory suggests possibilities. In de Lauretis' words,

"Queer Theory" conveys a double emphasis--on the conceptual and speculative work involved in discourse production, and on the necessary critical work of deconstructing our own discourses and their constructed silences. (de Lauretis 1991: iv) [Furthermore,] homosexuality is no longer to be seen simply as marginal with regard to a stable, dominant form of sexuality (heterosexuality) against which it would be defined ... by opposition ...(p.i)

As a conceptual call to arms, Queer Theory incites and directs us to deconstruct. It asks us to do what Michael sees himself doing in labelling misogyny or racism, namely to expose the more accurate social purposes lurking behind benevolent-sounding rhetoric. But Queer Theory also compels historical surgery, the unveiling of the history underlying contemporary social motives. But Valverde may remind us that this alone does not rid us of oppression. If identity is a basis of challenge to and transformation of school practices, it will be so because of identity politics beyond schools that will eventually infiltrate schools. Homosexual students will bring insurgent concepts and practices into the schools. Would these dispel the politics of boundary-setting between social and personal identities?

"Identity" is a politically perilous social terrain. The affiliations and social agendas radiating from identity engage opposing politics invasive of identity itself. "Identity" is no longer conceived as a private domain but is polarized between private and public experiences of it. People may have private homosexual dispositions and desires, but they are gay or lesbian by virtue of society's definitions, policies, and politics. Deconstructing the silences of definitions and dispositions necessarily draws people beyond their own lives.

What appears as local or individual content is often only the facade of deeper vested interests, political alliances, and historically-suppressed alternative ideas and recommendations. When these become visible people perceive themselves as more than individuals bearing a
unilateral burden of "otherness." Deconstructing thus makes homosexuals "queer," transforming personal identity into social identity.

However, social identity may not feel more authentic. Identity is harder to come by when, as for all minoritized groups, homosexuals are hedged by competing yet appealing choices. To challenge public misconceptions requires abandoning privacy and invisibility. To beat back the surge of falsification means as well that, ironically, the nuances of private, personal identities are abraded into an essentialized social identity, the very thing so many participants object to. Homosexuality, even when constructed positively, may be distorted (and distorting).

Self-knowledge as a social category of understanding has not yet been as overtly conscripted into identity politics, and so it seems more stable and private. However, identity politics--politics that instigate, and are based on, social defining, and differentiating according to these definitions--engage state and social forces. Patton refers to Alain Touraine's distinction between metasocial identity politics and state identity politics (Patton 1993). Metasocial politics tout transcending criteria, for example a common humanity, as a foundation for identity. The state appeals to citizenship and patriotism, expecting such appeals to inspire us beyond social, professional, geographical, and personal differences and identifications.

Schools are state institutions that are also vortices of power. Their functionalist, socializing ideology, filtrating through institutional practices, is disguised in normalizing language. The regularity of practice creates an aura of normalcy around how and what schools teach. But all practices have justifications. The problem is that "good" reasons underlie every institutional operation.

The social definitions that tint identity--that significantly inform and embellish it--are quietened through curricular defamation. Participants continually cite instances where they wanted to express, or have expressed by others, the full range of homosexual experience. Instead most heard nothing at all, or else nothing positive, about any sexuality but heterosexuality. Curricular silence became personal silence.

At the beginning of this chapter I discussed the power of a declaration of selfhood. School
practices hamper the declaration.
Rigoberta Menchu, writing of her struggle against the Guatemalan military and of the parallel evolution of her identity as a revolutionary Indian, says "we have kept our identity hidden because we have resisted." (Menchu 1993: 220) Concealment in this case is necessary because resistance imperils lives. (No participant in this research suffered the degradations witnessed by Menchu, but crimes are committed against homosexuals just for being homosexual.) Concealment is a pre-requisite of successful guerilla resistance, but the opposite equation is supported by many lesbian and gay activists.

Visibility is deemed pre-requisite to changing attitudes about homosexuality. In their desire to be discussed and studied in schools, to show the tableaux of their lives to their classmates, the participants in this study endorse the activists' view.

This thesis has explored what associations of school experiences and identity development occur to a group of gay and lesbian youth. They discuss what influence and identity are, ruminate about their own identity development, and consider whether they "affiliate" this development with their school experiences. All detect circumstances and attitudes that disparage homosexuality and shunt to the periphery all serious discussion of it. The subjects are less unified in concluding whether these detections confirm the intent of schools to influence, and whether what they remember counts as evidence of influence.

4.1 Are Schools Influential?

Andre, for example, believes schools are not influential. He believes they have a simple functionalist purpose: to teach facts straightforwardly. Sean inclines more towards Andre's
view than the others'. Colin, who wants school curricula to incorporate teachings on homosexuality, assumes schools can influence; why else would he want to include in the curriculum lessons on lesbians and gay men? However, Colin excludes himself as one who could be influenced. After all, he remarks, he turned out gay despite the curriculum.

Louise disclaims any power to analyze influence because she has nothing to compare it to. Ann and Michael, in a contrary position, see adult imposition of values in school operations. Ann, however, is bitter about it. And Trish inveighs against a regime that does not repudiate behaviour constituting "otherness," such that she was forced to deny she is lesbian in a way that left her disgusted with herself. These people, these "others," have learned to hedge their bets, whether the question is about school influence or about identity.

Most participants, despite their criticism of schools for making them invisible, tacitly accept the ideology of the education system. The subjects believe in a system that fosters, encourages, enlightens, and enables its students. They believe in this system both as an ideal and as a realistic appraisal of what schools do. They do not consider that a schooling ideology, heavily based on a binary understanding of gender that relentlessly counterpoises masculinity and femininity, male and female, and hetero/homosexual, requires the very invisibility and silence they detest.

Invisibility and silence, however, do not fully represent the stipulations of normalizing logic. To establish heterosexuality as normal, homosexuality must exist as a countervailing but reviled sexuality. Silence about "abnormal" identities and behaviours is compelled in schools, but as a constituting force that "names" what must never be expressed. In such circumstances, what seems benign and apolitical is in fact highly political. Colin's simple effort to put up a poster about a youth group, which to him is compatible with the school's efforts to foster tolerance, is thus transformed into a political act that must be stopped by school personnel.

Colin unwittingly transgresses the boundary between something so vile it cannot be cited--though we all know what 'it' is--and "normal, healthy" sexuality. Colin mistakes the face value of a discourse of inclusion for the underlying purpose of schooling. Most participants make
the same mistake. Their mistake is partly based on not knowing the dynamics of normalization. Establishing a norm demands accepting the idea of a norm. This is the conundrum of school structure that participants grapple with. They want schools to "police" slurs and reprimand harassment aimed at them. But the subjects understand the harassment mostly as isolated incidents, not ones facilitated by assumptions of gender normalcy that 'inform' school curricula, especially sex education. They expect an institutional response to protect them without realizing the provocations are themselves institutionally protected.

Subjectivity does not equate with producing automatons. It refers to the de facto collusion of individuals in the incessant enactment of power. Subjectivity does not depend on sexual differentiation explicitly to "shape" subjects, but a discourse of normalcy is the particular medium through which subjectivity is developed. To most participants, the discourse appeared total, unreasonable, and unbreachable.

Not all subjects experienced slurs and intimidation. Zachary received support from some faculty and counselors and also from other students. He spoke often in his school and others in his hometown. But his was an isolated case compared to the other subjects.

When discussing school influence in chapter 2 I suggested that singular instances of calumny against people characterized as "other," become examples of institutional exclusion when such examples are not repudiated by the education system. Zachary's positive experience in his senior high school year, however, does not represent the inverted example: disregarding institutional ideology in particular situations is not equivalent to negating institutional intent. While such disregard may cause some people to rethink their sexual values and commitment to particular norms, it does not nullify the concept of a norm itself. Thus individual exceptions such as Zachary's are easily enveloped by a larger set of purposes.

These purposes, notwithstanding how they are enforced, are, at least in these thirteen cases, not completely achieved. The participants' identities remain intact. Indeed, all refer to their personal strength as a derivative of what they have endured in silence. This brings to mind Judith Butler's point that to be constituted by discourse is not to be determined by it. Agency
is not foreclosed by virtue of a constituted subjectivity (Butler 1990). The subjects do not usually realize this, which explains their "flight" to self-knowledge from identity, which they think is a conceptual straightjacket.

And agency, although not so specifically mentioned in the interviews, is what the interviewees want. They want to be respected as people and as homosexuals. Such respect is more than personal; it also cherishes how intellect, desire, values, sexuality, and gender consolidate into identity.

In our culture, possessing identity is a premise of belonging, of knowing the world and being known in it. Identity is expressed as a powerful naming act, a self-induction into the world and into life. School experience impaired the induction of the subjects by politicizing and endangering the "naming," and by disguising the politicization and endangerment as an effort to foster mental health and normal sexual attitudes.

On the other hand, "naming" that is coherent and free of duress is not what the subjects are looking for. Coherence does not imply seamless harmony. Coherence and dissonance often coexist. The lesbians and gays I interviewed were uncomfortable with identity that comes with coherence. By this I do not mean their specific identities, but rather the idea of identity. Their quandary is that they want to be known in the world, to "live" the identities they have named. But in a world still prone to constituting demonology and deviance, and thus to penalizing demons and deviants, living an identity means jeopardizing oneself. And in a world that formally educates its young in schools, the normalizing school entrenches the hazard.

Thus, once the participants' exasperation with teachers or counselors is expressed, their anger still percolates, but often without direction. They respond by exercising whatever power they have, which is to avoid being classified in the hardened casing of "identity." Yet it is precisely identity--sexual identity--that schools want to influence.

Self-knowledge impresses the participants as a more reliable premise of both self-awareness and self-protection than that provided by identity. But self-knowledge in this case assumes ontological integrity beyond social and educational discourse on gender, sexuality, and what
counts as personal knowledge. Such freedom is illusory.

The participants strongly desire to affirm their own values and understandings, but not arrogantly. They favour open discussions about sexuality, including homosexuality, but realize these rarely occur. Since they believe schools exist to educate (which meaning some assume is to "enlighten"), they grapple to understand this silence. As they contend with compulsory heterosexuality, they blur the importance of identities in their lives. Thus do they constitute their own exclusion so as not to be trapped by it.
Gay and lesbian youth, until recently, have not been an easily reachable source of data. Isolated and uncertain in their efforts to present themselves to the world, many teens hid from family members and friends. Many still do. However, across North America youth groups and counselling programs have gradually drawn young lesbians and gays into their orbit, and media expressive of and produced for homosexuals are now available. It is therefore easier now to investigate the lives of lesbian and gay youth.

Schools are not renowned for their openness to researchers, and certainly not to those researching homosexual teenagers. What research into schools and homosexuals has been done have concentrated on the latter's social isolation and feelings of difference (Hunter & Schaecher 1987), on how homosexuality is depicted in sex and health curricula (Whatley 1991), and on the silence about homosexuality in the curriculum (Rofes 1989; Trenchard & Warren 1985). Other works have investigated high school students' (negative) attitudes about homosexuals (Price 1982), and the necessity of special schools for lesbians and gays (Green 1991; Uribe & Harbeck 1991).

Additional research explores the gamut of attitudes about homosexuality among school guidance counselors (Sears 1988), educators (Sears 1991), and prospective teachers (Baker 1980). Identity formation is discussed by Troiden (1979) and Cass (1979; 1984) as a series of developmental stages through denial/confusion/resistance to general acceptance. Hetrick and Martin (1987) also discuss identity, but not the psychology of its developmental stages. They are interested instead in social identity development in a stigmatizing environment.

This thesis builds on what these and others have examined in Gay and Lesbian Studies, taking in another direction studies of difference and how homosexual youths cope with their
differences.

Identity as discussed here is not the psychological workings of "coming out," nor is it about becoming socially able to live in a frequently discounting world. This discussion inquires into what the participants understand identity to mean, and whether school experience informs their understanding. This research is about identity formation and participants' interpretations of how and why the formation occurred. Because the formation discussed here is specific to schooling, this work unites two themes that are usually addressed separately.

Although this study does not test a theoretical premise, it benefits from various vibrant theoretical analyses, such as those of social institutions by Michel Foucault, of compulsory heterosexuality by Adrienne Rich, and of Goffman's writings on stigma and identity.

Future Inquests

The most interesting area of future study is most likely impossible for some time: an ethnography of openly gay and lesbian students in schools, and perhaps of teachers using anti-homophobic techniques and materials. However, other ventures are possible. As more homosexuals speak openly about themselves, their interpretations of their school lives become more accessible to researchers.

Other lines of inquiry include homosexual students' interpretations of school culture, investigating whether homosexual youths think sexuality contextualizes knowledge differently than is true of non-homosexual youths, and whether lesbians and gays think they experience life differently from their heterosexual counterparts.

Brent's experience introduces racism and sexuality as intertwined strings of investigation. Does one factor intensify the social judgment of the other? For instance, if one is assumed to be, or is known to be, gay, does this increase racist ideas and sentiments? Does fitting into one category more easily lead to ascription of the other, in a sense binding together categories "worthy" of discrimination? Similar questions might be asked of gender and sexuality, and also of ethnicity and sexuality.
My suggestions indicate my academic and intellectual interest in "prospecting" whether and how identity may intertwine with perceptions of experience and epistemological statements about the world.
Appendix

A list of the structured interview questions may be of interest to the reader. It offers a broader exposure to the range of topics and ideas considered in the interviews as a whole.

1. Can you relate episodes or experiences from your school experience that indicate official enforcement of a specific view of sexuality and gender?

2. Who, among the students, teachers, and administrators, were involved in these episodes, and in what way(s)?

3. Do you think schools set out to teach and enforce standards of gender and sexuality? If so, are these ideas antagonistic to all but heterosexual norms?

4. How would you explain tolerance and openness? Were the high schools you attended examples of tolerant and open environments?

5. Was homosexuality dealt with in your classes? If so, in what context, and with what effect(s) among students?

6. Is schooling influential in the development of identity? If not, is this for lack of intent by the education system?

7. How would explain self-knowledge; identity?

8. Do you equate teachers' behaviour with the school's educative intentions?
9. Describe the interactions of the student body in your school. Were there cliques? If so, based on what differentiating criteria?

10. Was the student body in your high school ethnically, economically, or racially diverse? If yes in any sense, did the diversity contribute to, detract from, or remain irrelevant to, the degree of tolerance and openness of the school environment?

11. If your school was tolerant, was it equally so on all grounds, or were some attitudes and behaviours accepted more than others?

12. Were you "out" in high school? Whether yes or no, was your decision wise? Did you enter into alliances, cliques, or friendships with other students for your protection and well-being?

13. Are you audacious, assertive? If so, how related are these qualities to being gay or lesbian?

14. Does your homosexuality make you more or less conforming to social convention? Are you skeptical of expert advice?

15. Do you think you lack life experience that your peers have already acquired? If so, of what nature is the deficiency?
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