Justice for Youth Versus a Curriculum of Conformity in Schools and Prisons

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In Search of Justice for Youth

As an educator with an interest in education for social justice, I often find myself engaged in conversation with colleagues about teaching issues of social justice to young people. Topics of diversity and anti-bullying are particularly popular these days – it seems an urgent need has been identified to teach young people to behave ethically towards others. I acknowledge the importance of teaching young people about justice, of working to raise their awareness around issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc. It concerns me, however, that I am less often engaged in discussion about how youth, and particularly so-called "at-risk" youth, also comprise a marginalized group in our society deserving of justice. Rarely, do the organizations and institutions serving youth with which I am involved, focus inward to examine the ways they do or do not practice or model justice for youth.

In Canada, I trust, we want to avoid the dire situation described by Giroux (2003) in the USA, where "zero-tolerance policies in communities and schools amount to the criminalization of youth, and schools grow more like prisons than institutions of education" (p. 553) – where youth have become a generation of suspects. Yet, with high school "drop out" rates in Alberta amongst the highest in Canada, and particularly amongst our growing Aboriginal population (Bowlby, 2005; Statistics

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Canada, 2005), I am compelled to ask whether justice is being served for all students in our schools. What do schools do to contribute to the dropout phenomena and what might they do differently to create environments that are welcoming and relevant for all youth? I am skeptical that justice for youth can co-exist with the hidden or tacit "curriculum of conformity" that prevails in the institutions in which I work. A re-thinking of institutionalized relations and practices is warranted.

A way in which our schools and other social institutions deny justice for youth is exemplified by use of the term "at-risk," for example. The term is commonly used in education as well as health care and criminal justice, to talk about youth who do not meet society's expectations. We are eminently concerned over youth dropping out of or failing at school, engaging in behaviour detrimental to their health or committing crime, based on the implications these youth behaviours have for economic sustainability (Tanner, Hartnagel, & Krahn, 1995). This attitude, however, is based on a deficit model that blames youth, their families and communities for deficiencies, focusing on ways that they need to change (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1985). It is rarely acknowledged that the predicament of "at-risk" youth is a symptom of larger social problems – that school factors and social structures might actually contribute to putting youth "at-risk" (Apple, 1995). I suggest that, in the name of justice for youth, the label "at-risk" must be rethought (Conrad, 2005).

A similar concern is raised by media reports of incidents in which youth have allegedly perpetrated horrible criminal acts, such as a recent story of the beating of a man by four youth on an Edmonton city bus resulting in the man's death (Ebner, 2006). It is almost unfathomable that youth described by family and friends as "good kids" could commit such acts. Public responses commonly call for the harshest of punishments – long imprisonments under harsh conditions. Indeed, up until the induction of the new Youth Criminal Justice Act in 2003, Canada had one of the highest rates of youth incarceration among Western countries, and for the most serious crimes young offenders are still held accountable in adult court (Canadian Children's Rights Council, 2006). Rarely, in the media reports, however, is any reference made to the social factors that may contribute to producing young criminals. I ask myself, what it is

inherent in our social fabric that encourages youth to develop such criminal tendencies. While I admit the need for youth to take responsibility for their actions, I doubt that incarceration is the solution to youth crime. As a society, perhaps we need to re-consider the ways in which we are educating our young.

In this paper, by drawing on examples from two drama-based research projects, one at a rural Alberta high school and another at a local young offender facility, both largely were involving Aboriginal youth, I scrutinize taken-for-granted institutionalized practices in search of justice for youth within the school and prison contexts. Like Giroux (2003), the link I make between schools and prisons is deliberate. The youth prison context, I have found, encapsulates in their extreme, institutionalized practices and relations of power that also exist in schools.

A Framework of Domination and Resistance

Foucault (1991) speaks to my concern for justice for youth within institutional settings. His notion of *governmentality* is an analysis of the mentality of governance – the government of conduct, focusing on the collective, taken-for-granted ways of thinking behind institutionalized practices that attempt to normalize individuals' behaviour. In Foucault's (1979) genealogy of prisons, which he saw as analogous to schooling in that both were founded as disciplinary bodies, reveals both schooling and incarceration as apparatus of power and punishment. Within these institutions, modalities of power channeled through normalizing regimes of practice, Foucault contends, are accompanied by attitudes toward those over whom power is exerted, which constitute individuals as objects of that power, to which individuals respond – sometimes with resistance. An unbalanced distribution of power, which engenders resistance in institutional settings, I suggest, is antithetical to the project of education for social justice.

Scott (1990) further informs my thinking regarding possibilities for justice for youth in schools and prisons. Scott's historical study documented examples from peasant uprisings, slave rebellions, working-class culture, gender relations, prisons and classrooms – wherever relations of domination and subordination had traditionally existed. He

shows how subordinated peoples throughout history have resisted incorporation by the dominant ideology through their seemingly insignificant performative acts, and the subversive potential of these acts to protest their oppression against the odds. Scott describes covert or low profile forms of performative resistance as the "infrapolitics" of the powerless – those who do not have the luxury of direct confrontation. As Scott suggests, we cannot take the public behaviour of those over whom we have power at face value. As such, in my analysis, youth behaviours commonly deemed deviant in the face of the dominant "curricula of conformity" in our schools and society are "infrapolitical" acts of performative resistance in search of justice for youth by youth. Whether deliberately or only tacitly, youths' resistant behaviours can be seen as responses to relations of domination and subordination.

A Performative Method

In the discussion that follows, I offer scripted adaptations from two performed ethnographies (Denzin, 2003; Saldaña, 2005), to examine youth behaviour in the context presented above. As a methodological approach, Denzin (1997) calls ethnodrama "the single most powerful way for ethnography to recover yet interrogate the meanings of lived experience" (p. 94). For Conquergood (1985) ethnographic performance is a moral act, an embodied, empathic way knowing and "deeply sensing the other" (p. 3).

The two examples are from two research studies employing popular theatre approaches with two different groups of youth. The first example is from a popular theatre project I facilitated for my doctoral study at a rural Alberta high school (Conrad, 2004a), in a community whose population was of majority Aboriginal descent. The second example is from a pilot study for my ongoing research with incarcerated youth at a local young offender facility (Conrad & Campbell, in press). The group in the pilot study was also comprised largely of Aboriginal youth. Tragically, in Alberta, Aboriginal youth are amongst those most often labeled "at-risk" in schools (Alberta Learning, 2001) and disproportionately over- represented in the prison system (Solicitor General of Alberta, 1991)[1].

Popular theatre, which served as a pedagogical approach to working with the youth and as a participatory arts-based research method

(Conrad, 2004b) for both projects, was developed from the popular education methods of Paulo Freire (1970). Popular theatre is defined as a process of theatre for individual and social change that engages members of communities in identifying issues of concern, analyzing conditions and causes, and searching for points of change (Boal, 1979; Prentki & Selman, 2000). It draws on participants' experiences to collectively create theatre and engage in the discussion of issues through theatrical means.

The popular theatre work in these two studies engaged the youth in critically examining their life experiences and shed light on the youths' perceptions of and responses to the hidden or unofficial curricula (Jackson, 1992) to which they were subjected.

I employed ethnodrama (Saldaña, 2005) as an arts-based, performative means of representing the research for dissemination, adaptations of which are included below. Both ethnodramas were based on data collected via the researchers' journals/fieldnotes, photos, video and audio recordings of the research. I use these scripted descriptions as a basis for discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992) and performance analysis (Counsell, 2001; Schechner, 1988) drawing on critical, postmodern, poststructuralist and psychoanalytic theories.

The Curriculum of Conformity in Schools and Prisons: The Bus Trip

As part of my doctoral research I spent one month living in a rural Alberta community working with a group of high school drama students. The theme that emerged from our popular theatre project was "Life in the Sticks," based on the students' initial claim that their rural environment determined the issues that they faced. "The Bus Trip" was one of a series of scenes that the students and I created to represent and examine issues they identified as relevant to their life experiences.

"The Bus Trip," was based on a story students told about an incident of rule breaking that had occurred the previous year on the bus on the way home from a class trip. A group of students had been caught, after the fact, for drinking alcohol on the bus. Many of the students with whom I worked had been on that bus. We created a scene to depict the original bus trip incident and then used various popular theatre techniques to animate the scene – to dig deeper, explore implications,

examine issues and search for alternatives raised by their understandings of the incident through theatrical means.

Image 1 – *This image is a layering of two photos – one, a photo taken of the bus trip scene that we staged as part of our popular theatre project, the other a photo taken on an actual bus trip our group took to a neighbouring school to present our scenes.*

In an early part of our work around the bus trip scene, a student who code named himself Shadzz, playing the character who bought the alcohol and was later expelled for it, as part of our animation of the scene, stated his inner monologue at the moment that he and his peers were drinking the alcohol as: "I'm cool. I'm the man. They're all drinking my booze." He was pleased at the status the illicit act gained him and, as he also indicated, was quite certain that he would get away with it. But even if he had not gotten away with it, chances were that the "outlaw" activity would still have gained him status amongst his "outlaw" peers who believed they understood how the Law operated and could break it to their advantage. When asked what his motivation was for buying the alcohol Shadzz, in character, said he did it "for the rush."

In the following ethnodramatic vignette of our work around the bus

trip scene, students and I are exploring another potential moment of the bus trip ordeal. In the out-scene that we improvised, the students from the bus were called to the principal's office. They were seated outside the office waiting their turns to be interviewed. Earlier in our work students had indicated that they thought the administration had found out about the illicit incident via a fellow student who had told on them. The issue of peer informing becomes an important aspect of our dramatic exploration. To begin the scene, I, as facilitator, touch students on the shoulder in turn to hear their inner monologues at that moment outside the principal's office. Employing another popular theatre animation technique, I also stop the action to question students in character about their perspectives.

The facilitator touches each student on the shoulder in turn.
Daryl: Shit! Now I'm in big trouble. My parents are going to kill me.

Joker: What's going on? I didn't do anything.

Tess: I only took one drink.

Shadzz: No problem. It's cool. They don't know anything.

Lady: I hope they don't find out I told.

Facilitator: *(Stopping the action momentarily.)* Stop there for a moment. So Lady, you did tell on them. Why did you do that?

Lady: I was mad at Tess.

Facilitator: Is that why people tell . . . for revenge?

Carlos: And to look good in front of the teachers.

Facilitator: So tell me how you feel about informers.

Shadzz: Informers? . . . They're rats!

Lady: They suck!

Facilitator: And what would you do if you found out that someone had informed?

Shadzz: Beat them up, or if it's a girl, you get a girl to beat them up.

Facilitator: Does beating them up solve anything?

Daryl: Yes, it stops them from doing it again.

Facilitator: Okay. So put yourself in the shoes of the school administration for a second. Do you think there is a need for rules like: No drinking on the bus?

Tess: Yes.

Shadzz: But rules are made to be broken . . . you have to break the rules once in a while.

Facilitator: From the perspective of the administration is there a need for informers . . . to help enforce the rules?

Daryl: Let them worry about their own rules . . . if they didn't find out we were drinking…

Lady: We do need rules . . . drinking on the bus isn't good, but neither is informing (adapted from Conrad, 2004a, p. 157).

The bus trip scene took our discussion to the heart of student resistance to schooling via rule breaking and the ultimate consequence of rule breaking, getting expelled or pushed out of school. There is some truth to Shadzz's statement that "rules are made to be broken . . ." It is a common precept after all. Indeed, according to Žižek (1994), the transgression of public laws is inherent to their functioning, as there must be an element that stands outside any system to sustain it. Rule breaking, then, is part of the "obscene underside" or "obscene supplement" of the law – for which we hold individuals responsible. Informing is a perverse discourse caught between the law and its underside, with informers doing the law's dirty work.

Exemplifying traditional acts of resistance against forces of

domination, Scott (1990) describes an ethos amongst subordinated groups by which informers are regarded with contempt. Likewise, Lady declared that informers "suck." Shadzz called them "rats." Carlos suggested that students tell, "to look good in front of the teachers." All express disdain for peer informants. In naming peer informants "rats," the students also name themselves (Butler, 1997). They implicate the school authority as a dominating force and identify themselves as members of a subordinated community at odds with the law that governs them, which they perceive as unjust. In such instances of unequal power relations, Scott suggests, the norms of behaviour generated amongst the subordinate group are often the only countervailing power to their behaviour as determined from above. For subcultures outside the law, as for these students, informing is condemned.

Lady, who voluntarily took up the role of the despised informer, stated that her motivation for informing was for revenge against Tess, at whom she was mad. Her informing then was not for the prevention of harm, by which school authorities might justify the act of peer informing, but a performative speech act intended to harm (Butler, 1997) and perverse in that Lady used the law to prop up her anger. Thus, the act of informing, promoted an injustice, which the school context permitted in the name of upholding the rules and the greater good.

Postmodern theories (Derrida, 1992; Litowitz, 1997; Lyotard, 1984) make a useful distinction between law and justice that apply here. The law is a system of rules that are constructed, based on an arbitrary set of customs, and backed by the authority of the system, which the law serves. While laws attempt to be just, justice is beyond the law, exceeding the law, and at times contradicting the law. Justice is a multiplicity of "justices" based on an ethical relation with the "Other," and the imperative to do the right thing. This involves respect for the incalculable and unpredictable alterity of the Other (Zylinska, 2001). While justice can never fully be accomplished, it must be attempted with the awareness that injustice can result from the practice of law, from the clash of two conflicting systems of justice (Lyotard, 1988).

In this case, the school authorities did not find out about the drinking on the bus until after the fact, and then only, the students suspected, because one of their peers had informed. Daryl's comment, "Let them

worry about their own rules . . . if they didn't find out we were drinking . . ." exposed the arbitrariness of some rules and questioned their purpose. What harm would likely have come from drinking on the bus trip if the school authority had not been informed? Like Žižek (1994) the students questioned whether, in fact, a rule had been broken if the authority remained uninformed.

Considering the dire consequences of Shadzz's act – his expulsion from school, did catching and punishing the culprits really serve the greater good? Was expulsion a just punishment in this case? Whose purpose did it serve? The students felt that as no harm had come from drinking on the bus, the punishment of expulsion was too harsh.

Like the students – recall Lady's statement, "We do need rules" – I acknowledge the need for rules to maintain social cohesion. I value public safety and looking out for one another, but I question the need to uphold the rules at any cost. I acknowledge that informing does provide assistance to law enforcement in the prevention of harm, but as a practice it also needs to be interrogated. While I do not condone students' solution of "beating up" informers, what other power do they have to assert their sense of justice?

Lady's conclusion, "drinking on the bus isn't good, but neither is informing," revealed the complexity of the situation suggesting the need to take time to unravel the subtleties of behaviour within the school context in order to promote ethical treatment and justice for all. In blind obedience to the law, no justice is served. Rather, as for Noddings (1999) and Sevenhuijsen (1998), the practice of justice is based on an ethics of care. Untempered with care, a search for justice can lead to injustice. In Zylinska's (2001) ethics of the feminine sublime, rather than judging on the basis of a system of rules we should search for the rule that may do justice to the case – a search that is endless.

Recti"fuck"ation[2]

The following is a collage of ethnodramatic vignettes adapted from a longer ethnodrama (Conrad & Campbell, in press)[3] based on a popular theatre project with a group of 12-18 year old boys at a young offender facility in Alberta. A colleague and I conducted the study as part of the Centre's Community Transitions Program with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the experiences of incarcerated youth towards

finding appropriate approaches to meeting their needs, and exploring the potential contribution of popular theatre to this end. Our work with the boys explored their life experiences prior to incarceration, their experiences of being incarcerated and their goals for the future. The ethnodrama depicted the popular theatre work with the boys focusing on the researchers' experiences of facilitating the project, the themes and issues raised by participants, and the theatrical process that transpired. The text examined the perceptions of the young offenders in relation to the institutional context and the perspectives of the researchers, raising questions about what the popular theatre work revealed.

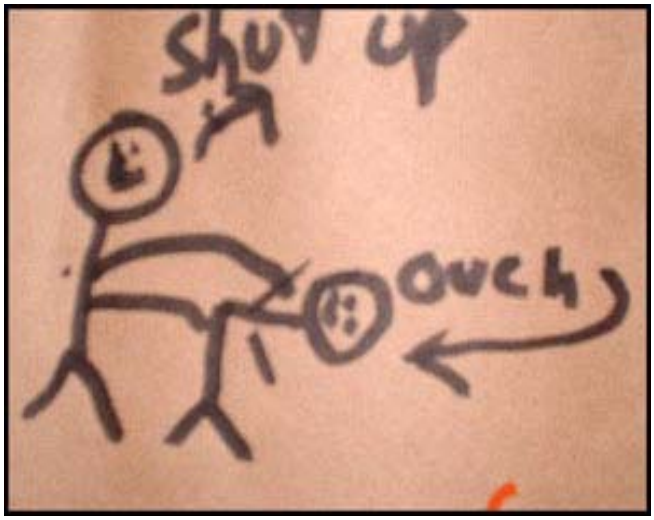

Image 2 – *This image is one created by the boys for a graffiti writing/drawing activity that was part of our popular theatre process. The image is illustrative of a recurring theme that we identified in the boys' responses during our ongoing work.*

The scripted collage highlights a recurring theme that emerged in our work, which we titled "Recti'fuck'ation." We identified a profusion of comments, jokes and improvised scenarios that the boys offered throughout our work together as representative of their anxieties surrounding their identity formations as young men (O'Neil, Good, &

Holmes, 1995) clashing with the institutionalized realities of the prison context.

A police officer leads a youth (James) in leg irons and handcuffs into the young offender center.

Police Officer: Come'on. Move it . . . what's your problem? Oh, first time, eh?
Well, you may be going in a tight end, but you'll be coming out a wide receiver. *(Laughs.)*

He leads James into a room where a guard meets him.

Guard: Okay, you're next . . . get over here.

The guard undoes James's handcuffs and leg irons.

Guard: Now drop your pants, bend over and spread 'em.

James does as he's told. The guard bends over and shines a flashlight to get a view of his behind. When he finishes he stands up and turns the flashlight off.

Guard: Now, that wasn't so bad was it? *(Laughs)*

James quickly does up his pants. The guard hands him his stack of bedding and sends him to unit.

Guard: *(Laughing)* Off to the condos.

James enters the unit for the first time. A group of boys is sitting around the common area. One of the boys – Fred, calls out to James.

Fred: Hey new guy, come'on over here.

James hesitates, shakes his head and moves towards his room.

Fred: Oh ya, well be that way then . . . but don't turn your back in the shower, bitch.

All the boys laugh.

Researcher: After several months of drama workshops with the boys my co-researcher and I became aware of what we identified as a recurring theme in their work . . . these homo-erotic images and stories that kept coming up. Gay characters, pick-up lines, scenes of male prostitution, bum fucking jokes all mixed up together with talk of hiding things up there – "hooping" they called it, strip search and references to prison rape.

We asked our staff person if this kind of stuff actually went on in here. She said that *(In the character of Janice, the staff person)* . . . I noticed all the sexual references too and was surprised how they kept coming back to it. But, you know, there has never been a case of sexual abuse or rape reported in the center . . . Although of course, the boys are subject to a strip search at any given moment. If there is even a suspicion of an unsavory visitor or if something goes missing, like a nail from the shop, the whole unit is strip-searched.

(As Researcher) We had read that rape was a real threat in adult prisons. With all the jokes and rumours that the boys heard, we wondered if it was their fears that something like this could happen to them made them bring up all these images. We imagined how we would feel if we knew we could be strip-searched at any moment, even if we hadn't done anything wrong.

In adult prison it's not even so much about sex, as it is about power.

It is a week after James' arrival at the center. He is sitting in a corner of the common area alone, reading. Neil enters and sits down beside him.

Neil: So has anyone hit on you yet?

James: What do you mean?

Neil: You're lucky, man. After my first week in here, I had to get twelve stitches in my ring. *(Neil makes a gesture to indicate his behind.)*

James: Really?

Neil: *(Smiles and puts his arm around James.)* That's okay, stick with me. I'll look out for you. (adapted from Conrad & Campbell, in press)

The "curriculum of conformity" in the prison setting it which this study was set was largely overt: A set of strictly defined rules of dos and don'ts; a daily point system for behaviour that awards or revokes privileges; regular pat downs; the risk of dorm confinement for bad behaviour, and the ever-present threat of strip-search. That the need for security in prison demands such stern and consistent measures is essentially taken-for-granted by those both within and outside of the prison (Foucault, 1979). Strip-search is necessary, it is argued, to counter inmates' resourcefulness, born of desperation – the strategy of hiding contraband on their person or "hooping it." Assuming, for the moment, that incarceration is a viable method of social management, without this level of control and predictability, the prison would cease to be a prison. However, there is an insidious undercurrent to the prison's "curriculum of conformity" that goes beyond the need for security.

The theme of "Recti'fuck'ation" explored in the excerpt above illustrates one aspect of the "curriculum of conformity" as it plays out in the youth prison context. Based on the nature of our participants' persistent homoerotic innuendo steeped in nervous laughter, we speculated that the boys experienced anxiety brought on by the jokes, rumours and threats they told us they heard from police, from corrections workers and other inmates, about homosexual relationships in prison and prison rape that clashed with their homophobic fears. These anxieties conflated, it seemed, with the common prison practice of strip-search.

Research suggests (Martino, 2000; Watts & Borders, 2005) that during adolescence males are particularly prone to gender role conflict – adolescence being a sensitive stage in the formation of their masculine identities. As Foucault (1978) theorizes, sexuality plays a major role in the technologies of self by which such gendered subjectivities are constituted. In a social environment of heteronormativity, then, boys vigilantly police the formation of their own and others' masculine identities (Martino, 2000).

While our staff person assured us that homosexual relations and rape did not occur in the youth prison, for newcomers to the setting, jokes, rumours, intimidations and threats of the kind the boys told us they heard could indeed prove unsettling, even if they were intended only as harmless teasing, bravado and/or as part of the unofficial petty

humiliations that support the disciplinary regime (Foucault, 1979). That strip-search became conflated with the theme of abject homoeroticism was also not unprecedented. In the prison system strip-search is commonly perceived by inmates not only as a disciplinary act, but also as a sexual violation engendering humiliation – where humiliation is sexualized for maximum effect (Davis, 2006) [4]. In our analysis of this theme in relation to our participants, what was more insidious than the absolute demand for conformity to the authority of the institution was the inherent threat posed to the boys' vulnerable male identities. This threat had the potential to provoke gender role conflict or even psychic trauma, which could then be exploited for coercive power and control by prison staff and other inmates.

The Alberta Office of the Solicitor General (personal communication, February 17, 2006) insists that beyond deprivation of liberty imposed by the courts, the role of the youth prison is not to discipline and punish, but to rehabilitate. In that case, I am left baffled: How can humiliation contribute to an agenda of rehabilitation? Can education and personal development occur in a climate of persistent threat of humiliation? Does the level of security required to enact incarceration allow room for transformative change? Can justice exist within an atmosphere of suspicion? Can injustice be avoided in a carceral context? While I do not presume to have answers to such difficult questions, I raise them in search of justice for youth in institutional contexts. If we are unable to model social justice in our institutions, to teach justice by example via our treatment of youth, how can we expect ethical behaviour from youth?

Toward a Curriculum of Justice

The two examples I have provided here, one from a school context, the other set in a youth prison – the incarceration of youth being symbolic of the dilemma faced by youth put "at-risk" by our society – speak to my desire to see justice for youth enacted in our institutions. If we are truly concerned for the welfare of youth, we must reflect critically upon institutional practices that may inadvertently perpetuate injustices. My examples point to a few specific practices that are suspect: in school, adherence to fixed and inflexible rules, the use of peer informants and

expulsion; insensitive humour or teasing, strip-search and petty humiliations in the prison context. Other institutionalized practices must also be interrogated – from archaic no-hat rules to grading practices currently taken-for-granted or tolerated as necessary evils.

My examples also speak to the suggestion (Foucault, 1991) that the inequitable distribution of power in institutions engenders youth resistance, with destructive results. Based on the participants' resistant responses to the "curricula of conformity" that prevailed in the institutions we inhabited, I venture to suggest that the subtle or overt demands for conformity by our institutions are antithetical to the aim of social justice.

As Scott (1990) insists, acts of performative resistance are "infrapolitics" – real politics aimed at a re-structuring of current power relations. Then, if only as tacit responses to relations of domination and subordination in search of dignity and autonomy, perhaps youths' resistant acts have the potential to ultimately undermine and transform unjust social relations. Viewing resistant youth behaviour as "infrapolitical" calls for changes in the way we perceive youth and implies a critique of current relations of power inherent in schooling practices, prison procedures and the social structures that support them. In this sense, youth resistance can be turned to productive ends.

If education is to have a transformative impact in the lives of youth, our institutions must live what they hope to teach. We must seek to provide environments for youth that are caring, compassionate (Noddings, 1999; Sevenhuijsen, 1998) and critical in order to nurture ethical attitudes. We must prevent a situation similar to that in the USA where more money is spent to imprison young people than to educate them – where "youth problems" are relegated to the police, the courts and the prison system (Giroux, 2003).

Educational research into youths' perceptions of practices encountered in schools and prisons, and critical inquiry into institutionalized practices can contribute to advocacy for youth towards positive social change.

Endnotes

[1] With regards to racial minorities being disproportionately over-represented in the prison system, trends in Canada, regarding our Aboriginal population, resemble trends in the USA where the large majority of prisoners are Black and Hispanic – non-Whites being more often targeted for surveillance, apprehended by police and given harsher sentences than Whites (Giroux, 2003), revealing the systemic racism inherent in both societies.

[2] My apologies to anyone offended by my use of the "F" word. In this case I felt it appropriately expressive of the allusions (sexual violation, anal rape) and emotions (anger, indignation, humiliation) raised by the theme. I couldn't resist the play on the word rectification implying the corrective function of the prison. I found it fitting in the context of my analysis, which looked at prison culture and practices, meant to contribute to the rehabilitation of young offenders, but potentially perpetuating harm and injustice.

[3] I would like to acknowledge and thank Gail Campbell, Assistant Professor of Drama Education at the University of Windsor, Ontario for her role as co-researcher of the study and co-author of the ethnodrama *Arresting Change* from which the excerpts included here are drawn with her permission.

[4] Other prison research concurs that strip-search is a matter of contention amongst inmates (Balfour, 2004; Bosworth, Campbell, Demby, Ferranti & Santos, 2005; Thompson, 1998). Long-time prisoner rights advocate Angela Davis (2006) suggests that like recent incidents of torture in Iraq, disciplinary acts such as strip-search and body cavity search in US prisons are deliberately sexualized for the maximum humiliating effect.

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