

Ethnography, masculinity and value judgements: An exploration into rugby and educational research

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ABSTRACT

I will venture to declare that a coalition with any code of rugby is antithetical to education; as well as one of the most pathetic means a number of teachers use, if and when they can, to abdicate from having to engage in the difficult and often not immediately rewarding task of trying to improve the social, cultural and intellectual horizons of their charges. This coalition is little if anything more than reduction of the potential educational exchange down to one of the lowest of denominators - rugby. It entails and encompasses the adoption, endorsement and thus social acceptance of something closely akin to thuggery. In its own way it is the reduction of culture to the level of the tabloids, and the reduction of values to those propounded by the commercial television arms of those tabloids.

Introduction

In 1937 Samuel Goldwyn produced a movie called *Dead End*. It was a fair to average movie for its time, in which Humphrey Bogart as arch criminal and public enemy returned to his childhood environment, a dead end street on New York's east side, for protection while the 'heat' was on, only to find the tide gradually turning against him and his kind. By the end of the movie justice and decency had largely prevailed; Bogart, revealed as a rat and a coward, had been shot down; and the kids who once idealised him and his way of life had come to realise what he really was and what happens to his kind. In the final scenes these kids go forth ambiguously, but at least now embracing the option, none-too-easy for those of their background, of pursuing the standard American ideals in a lawful and decent manner.

And thus the 'Dead End Kids' were introduced to the world.

Surprisingly, at least for Samuel Goldwyn, the Dead End Kids stole the show; and such was their popularity with the public that Warner Bros stole the Dead End Kids, and subsequently starred them in a further six movies in the following three years. Five of these movies were pretty dreadful while one, *Angels With Dirty Faces*, has become a classic because of the performance of James Cagney, and on account of its justifiably celebrated 'electric chair' scene. But dreadful though the movies may have been, the Dead End Kids remained extremely popular with the public.

Contingencies of the time demanded that they progressively played down their 'criminal' activities and progressively played up their 'endearing humour', and further contingencies also contrived to make it difficult for the six of them to continue appearing together on the screen. But their public wanted them, and so in various reconstitutions they appeared as 'The Little Tough Guys',

'The Bowery Boys', and 'The East Side Kids' in more than 50 movies up until 1958 when at last the formula began proving unfinancial, and by which time the 'Kids' were in their forties and looking somewhat middle-aged.

The original 'Dead End Kids' movies all contained the same set of themes. America, regrettably, had poor neighbourhoods which were breeding grounds for crime. Kids in these neighbourhoods were literally and figuratively facing dead ends, and tended to see the gangsters from their block as models and successful hero-figures. It was thus up to caring folk not to damn the kids to lives of crime but to give them viable alternatives. Basically society was at fault; while the kids were inherently good, but sadly misunderstood.

This scenario, *prima facie*, is hardly compelling. But what served to make it convincing, in the films at least (and one suspects to a very wide audience thereafter) was the studied sympathetic portrayal of the 'Kids' themselves.

To begin with, the Kids were depicted as being poor, but not as deservingly so. They either had no parents, or else lazy drunken parents, or parents already victims of society (i.e. parents who were in gaol). And the Kids were prevented from intervening directly in their own financial straits by both their tender age and the general depressed employment situation. The kids were essentially victims of social circumstances beyond their control.

Second; they were unflinchingly loyal to each other, to 'de gang', and to their territory which they protected from potential usurpers and invaders. They stood by each other, fought for each other, and did not squeal or rat on each other. The depth of their loyalty is portrayed in the film *Crime School* through a totally unreal situation where they all take a two year rap rather than squeal on the actual transgressor in their midst.

Third; they were all endowed with a beguiling sense of humour, which in tum was directed sharply against pompous adults, silly old ladies, and officious fools. They came straight out and said the sorts of things many of us think but do not say openly; and in general most of the marginal things they got up to were portrayed in a decidedly humorous way. They were endearingly cocky little devils.

Fourth; their code of behavior was depicted as being, in its own way, well defined and orderly~ so that what appears to mainstream society as chaotic, random, undisciplined and unordered, is revealed (to those who want to see) as a healthy sensible organised adaptation to material conditions. In fact the Kids' ordered adaptation was commonly portrayed as being superior not just to that of the gangsters but also to that of the rich, and especially to that of public authority. The Kids' own ordered uncorrupted society was continually counterposed to corrupt officialdom, unorderly institutions, political and official buffoonery, along with the whole social mess which had spawned them.

Fifth; the Kids were tough, in a physical and supposedly 'masculine' way. They were never afraid to fight, especially for their rights and their territory. They fought by mainly fair and direct means, preferring their fists to knives and 'gats'. They valued physical prowess, and they tried to succeed in sport (albeit not always in the All American way) as well as in fighting; and they didn't pick on anyone smaller than themselves, even though they were continually picked on by 'bigger forces' such as vindictive cops, local hoods, parents, and other gangs. Needless to say, all the Kids were boys - and they didn't think much of girls or sissies.

Finally, but by no means exhaustively, the Kids didn't really do anything terribly seriously bad. They gave cheek, which hurt no one. They played practical jokes which resulted in nothing more than a snooty kid getting dunked in the river, or a reform school warden getting paint on his face. They fought, but nobody got seriously hurt. They stole occasionally, but we rarely saw the victim, and when we did it was usually a stupid or drunken rich fop who failed to secure his wallet properly, or else a hood who was really trying to rip them off from what was rightfully theirs. But all in all nobody got really hurt by them, except for a crook in *Crime School*, and that only by accident;

nobody got maimed for life, nobody got raped, and nobody got killed. There was no blood, pain or agony. And as it turns out, what society suffers at the hands of the Kids is nothing compared to what the Kids suffer at the hands of society - for not only are they victimised by the cops, unjustly accused, unfairly incarcerated and so on, but these poor victims of an unjust world are also accused of being savages and are blamed for threatening the social order by a series of bungling stupid officious magistrates.

From Tinseltown to Academe

The Dead End Kids and their direct successors stopped posing for Hollywood's cameras in 1958, but the idea of 'Angels with dirty faces' was not altogether forgotten by Tinseltown, and the theme has proved to be quite enduring, both in the movies and in television. And, one must also add, in academia.

In the 1930s W.F. Whyte gave academia its first serious 'in depth' first hand study of American delinquency in *Street Corner Society* (University of Chicago Press); a work not without its indulgences and romanticisation, but justly celebrated for its methodology and its findings. In the 1950s it was A.K.Cohen who continued and furthered the tradition of Whyte with *Delinquent Boys*; a work sounder in its methodology, more startling in its findings and conclusions - especially that 'delinquency was an integral part of modern industrial society' - but still a little indulgent and romantic. And then in the 1970s Paul Willis, in *Learning to labour*, set things backwards somewhat by engaging in a form of indulgence, romanticism and often less-than-covert endorsement of his subjects, superbly and accurately identified by Jim Walker (1985, 1986), which went very near to recreating the Dead End Kids typology/ mythology in England's industrial midlands.

Willis, however, was not the limiting case. When it came to sympathetic indulgence, romanticising and covert endorsement he was left far behind by some of his colleagues at the University of Birmingham's Centre For Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). To get an idea of the flavour of some CCCS analysis in the 1970s (after the Centre's founder, Richard Hoggart, had long since left) consider these snippets of accounts of the Skinhead phenomenon:

... the style of the skinhead may be identified as an attempt to reassert the focal concerns of traditional working class culture in an era when its demise was apparently imminent. Thus when communal space was being removed by urban redevelopment, the football ground was chosen as the place for the celebration of communal and territorial loyalties, to be defended against 'outsiders'. (SP 14)

The emphasis on territory is a crucial one, and the "mob" may be viewed as an attempt to retrieve the disappearing sense of community ... (SP 18)

Their group basis may be seen as a reassertion of the historical collectivist tendencies of the working class against the individualising, nuclear family based effects of urban redevelopment while the violence fulfilled a number of the focal concerns of working class culture ... (SP 14)

Their main activity involved violence at football matches, usually against rival gangs of supporters, and extended to vandalism on the way to and from football matches.... Other well publicised but comparatively minor activities were those of 'Paki-bashing' and 'queerbashing' (their definition of queer stretching to cover those males with long hair and brightly coloured clothing). (SP 14)

... at football matches police impounded large numbers of belts, boots and braces belonging to skinheads. These are of course justified on the grounds of preserving the peace, but involve an unusual extension of police powers and the victimisation of selected groups within the community. (SP 14)¹

From this it would appear that the skinheads were part of a complex historical process, and that they really didn't do anything wrong, give or take some minor 'Paki-bashing' and the like, but were themselves unfairly victimised by authority. But even the extremists within the CCCS were being left behind by another group of researchers who, in their ethnographic studies, seem to have been even

more deeply beguiled by the sort of scripting and sentiment which created the 'Dead End Kids'. I refer here to Marsh, Rosser and Harre, and their work *The Rules of Disorder*, which explores the issue of violence in both the classroom and on the terraces at the weekend football game in England. A sense of the way they approached their data, and reacted to their subjects' behavior, can be gained from the following report (1980; p.83):

Questioner: What do you do when you put the boot in?

Fan A: You kicks em in the head don't you? ... Strong boots with metal toe-caps on and that.

Questioner: And what happens then?

[Quizzical look]

Questioner: Well what happens to the guy you've kicked?

Fan A: He's dead.

Fan B: Nah - he's all right - usually anyway.

This draws an interesting response from the researchers. It is one of concern rather than outrage or indignation, but the concern is for methodological subtleties rather than kicked heads. We are told, as the text continues:

Now quite clearly, a fan who has been kicked in the head with a steel-capped boot is not going to be 'all right'. Neither is he likely to be dead. Without some way of interpreting these answers the transcript is of no value at all.

One has to wonder whether it is just the transcript that is lacking in value. The relatives of Fans 1-39 on that fateful day at Heysel Stadium in Brussels know full well that a fan trapped under a wall collapsed by a surge of marauding hooligans is quite likely to be dead; and they may have some suggestions as to what these researchers, who seem unphased by Fan A's casual approach to inflicting gratuitous violence and even committing murder, yet are seriously concerned with interpreting answers, might do with their ethnographic clipboards.

It will be noted that I have used the term 'hooligan' here in the context of kicking heads and mass physical attacks on other fans at football stadiums. Marsh, Rosser and Harre, however, do not see things in quite this way. Rather, they quote an account of what they take to be a 'typical hooligan escapade' thus (1980; p.72):

... he sees this fat cunt with some of his mates with some tea - and he's moved along a bit to the end and he's pissing down and out through the open bit and it's all blowing down on these cunts' heads and into their tea and all over - and its raining a bit as well so they don't notice,

Me and some others, we run down and were watching this and we're killing ourselves. But Geoff, he don't shout out or anything - he just waits for a bit till they finish their tea and then he shouts out 'Enjoy your tea then', and as they look up he pisses a bit more and they go barmy and they comment, in what appears to be total seriousness: 'This may seem a rather distasteful episode'. They then conclude (1980; p.72):

All this contrasts markedly with the media image of the hooligan as a purely destructive agent. To see hooligans as destructive is to miss the subtlety of their actions ...

Here I admit to having become a bit lost, on two counts. First, I thought, given media images *and accounts provided in books like this*, that hooligans did do things like kicking heads in with metal-capped boots and shoving broken wine carafes in people's faces,² which I suspect are destructive actions in their own way. And secondly I find that I completely miss the subtlety in someone urinating into an innocent and unsuspecting person's cup of tea. This, I am willing to admit, may be a cultural thing, and a lacking on my part. In *Leaming to Labour* Willis (1977; p.55) also relates, as an instance of what he calls 'well-developed physical humour' and a 'vigorous' 'sharp' joke, an account of a worker urinating in his colleagues' communal tea urn; and having spent considerable time in Britain and having taken tea there in many places, I wonder just how common the practice is in that

country. I also wonder, as an afterthought, whether AIDS can be spread in this way, through blood in Geoff's urine from a ruptured kidney following a bit of previous violence on the terraces. If so the 'distasteful' could be potentially lethal.

But leaving these sorts of minor quibbles aside for the moment; what about the things we hear of in the media, like kicking and stabbing and punching and frightening people: does that sort of thing really happen? Marsh, Rosser and Harre seem to indicate that, well, yes, it does; but all in all it's frightfully overblown by those who don't understand the real scene and its deep meanings properly. According to these researchers, when things are viewed realistically there isn't much to be worried about. They state (1980; p.109):

Many fans, for example, talk of 'shitting themselves' when faced with menacing groups of rivals even though they are clearly aware that few people (unless they are very foolish) actually come to grief in those circumstances.

But if the unromanticised truth were told nobody, let alone a few people, should come to grief in those sorts of circumstances, which themselves should not exist. To this it can be added that the 39 dead at Heysel Stadium may not have been very foolish - they might simply have gone out to see a game, as did the person who had his throat cut at the Edgbaston cricket match. Or is it that going to see a game, and perhaps having a cup of tea there, now counts as being very foolish? It is of interest to note that the Mayor of Groningen called off a soccer game scheduled to be played in that town on 15th September 1991, because pamphlets were found urging fans to bring weapons to the game, and the police found bomb-making equipment in the houses of team supporters.³ I suspect that going to see that game, had it been allowed to proceed, may have unwittingly been very foolish for many.⁴

The manner of interpreting and reporting chosen by Marsh, Rosser and Harre tends to overlook the fact that there really are graves, as well as hospital beds and wheelchairs, occupied by the victims of the steel-capped boot to the head and the broken wine carafe to the throat; and in that context, rather than in terms of the stylised bloodless beatings and killings pictured in old movies, their conclusion (1980; p.134) might bear reconsideration. Marsh, Rosser and Harre say:

... we have not sought to excuse the football fan or the classroom trouble maker. Instead we have simply tried to show that the events which outrage us have a different reality and are capable of being construed in a very different manner. We have tried to reveal social order in events which are traditionally seen as dangerously anarchic. And social order, whether it be in the form of ritual or not, is something that needs to be recognised and seen as having utility and merit. When magistrates and police refer to fans as animals and savages ... order is threatened. We may never, given our existing social frames of reference, be able to create a system of schooling which kids regard as relevant to their own culture and socialisation. And without doubt, we will be unable to suppress entirely the aggression and the striving to subdue rivals that has been characteristic of young males in all human societies at all times in history. Given this, we must look to ways of managing hostility and violence rather than naively hoping that they will go away. If we accept that there are, from one significant standpoint at least, rules of disorder, we might be able to develop management strategies which have far more purpose and effect than those which have currently emerged from the atmosphere of moral outrage and collective hysteria.

But there is surely a rational and hardly hysterical case to be made that the events that outrage do so because, to civilised people, they are outrageous; they *are* more akin to the acts of animals and savages rather than of civilised humanity. And it is also the case that this sort of research, which romanticises the outrageous, blames the genes, offensively takes male territorial fighting as given and immutable, which sees violence as something to be managed rather than eradicated, and which unproblematically sees society at fault and its magistrates as foolish, itself makes value judgments which denigrate particular attitudes and, regardless of disclaimers, itself tends to endorse, sympathise with, or at the very least downplay the negative aspects of its subjects' behavior.

Enter a Philosopher

Given the 'tradition' I have just sketched, and especially its tendency to romanticise and/or endorse certain behavior and to shy away from ethical judgments, I was heartened to learn that Jim Walker, a prominent philosopher and the very person who had so perceptively criticised Willis for romanticising and 'applauding' his particular rebels, was to undertake a sophisticated and theoretically contextualised ethnographic study of youth behaviour in the inner regions of Sydney. I thus looked forward eagerly to the publication of Walker's *Louts and Legends* (1988).

Sadly, I was disappointed on a number of counts; of which I shall consider three here. The first was straightforward. Like Samuel Goldwyn, Whyte, Cohen and Willis, Walker (albeit with a serious attempt at justification) confined his study to males.

Second; I suspect that Walker, like the other researchers considered earlier, romanticised his subjects and their behavior, and may have sympathised with their own perceptions of themselves, even to the extent of accepting their self-attributed legendary status.

Three instances focus my concern regarding this issue. First there is the little exchange with which Walker introduces his book, and from which its title is derived (1988; p.3):

Ms Glymour (teacher): ... Murphy's a cocky little creep and Kazikis is the school thug. Why are you interested in all these louts, anyway?

Mosey: Hey Jim! Write in the book, that this book is all about the Stokey legends. We're ...

Omar: Yeah! We're all legends!

Mosey: ... legends in our own lifetime.

Two matters require attention there. The first is the actual counterpoint itself. Certainly it has a neat dramatic effect. It is, however, and regardless of motive or intention, not neutral framing. Rather, it is the very sort of counterpoint of views frequently set up by Marsh, Rosser and Harre (and others), and even more commonly set up in the scripting of the Dead End Kids movies - and in those contexts it is always meant to highlight and deride the 'shortsighted bigoted narrowness' of the adult-official-authority figure perception. Walker has entered an established tradition where silly adults and officials reveal through their judgments their lack of understanding of others. The ground is neither neutral nor ambiguous, and in the framework of a wider context he might well have made his own position regarding these adult perceptions absolutely clear from the very beginning. In not doing so he chances leaving a sense that he may be mocking Ms Glymour's judgment and endorsing Mosey's and Omar's.

This relates directly to the second matter. I think it hardly needs stressing Mosey and Omar are not 'legends', at least not outside the narrow parameters within which Stokey grants legendary status (see Walker 1988, p.3). Walker's counterpoint, however, is not a context of criticism of the vision of the juvenile subjects; and it is followed by later instances where it appears as though Walker might possibly have himself legitimised the self-attributing legends of the inner city. Consider first Walker's description of Kazzo (1988; pp.84-5):

He was a talented footballer and had the intercultural virtue of being physically very strong and aggressive: as a first grade footballer he had a reputation as an 'enforcer' on the field, and he had many off-field exploits to his credit. Precisely because he was an undoubted legend, Kazzo could dispense with many accommodations to the strictly _'Aussie' elements of the footballer culture.

Then this later commentary (1988; p.72):

Because Stokey had a disproportionate number of early school leavers it was often playing against larger and older boys from other schools... This made its achievements even more legendary and produced a 'little Aussie battler' image that was deeply identified with and defended by a seeming majority of students and staff.

The question here is whether, in failing to use scare quotes around 'legend' (they are used around other words in the paragraphs) or some other form of disendorsement, Walker is either directly or indirectly endorsing the 'legendary' status of both Kazzo and Stokey. There is a danger here, and elsewhere, that Walker has not fully avoided the sorts of sympathetic, uncritical endorsement identified earlier in this paper (and which he himself has recognised and criticised in Willis). Part of the other evidence lies in the treatment of the 'footballers' themselves. In his study Walker recognises that his subjects are not all of a like, and he focuses on four groups. But the proportion of attention given to the footballers (it is about three times that given to any other group), and what tends to come over as special enjoyment of their exploits, sets them apart. Their acts of continued drunkenness, drunken brawling, car stealing, endangering motorists, endangering pedestrians and intimidating innocent drinkers at a pub are not the subject of direct criticism; but rather some of these activities are referred to as 'outrageous clowning' (p.56), and good humoured horseplay (p.41). A strong sense comes through that Walker finds the footballers the most interesting group - having humour, order, honour, toughness, honesty and even authenticity - and that there is something vicariously appealing, vital and energetic in their 'macho' activities.

My third area of concern relates to Walker's apparently sympathetic portrayal of those adults and teaching staff who, in a manner similar to Marsh, Rosser and Harre, condone, tolerate, actively support, and thus themselves bestow an aura of legendary status upon the very aspects of loutishness which, it could be argued, it is their job to eradicate rather than celebrate. With that raised I now want to conclude this paper with an extended consideration of the place of overt judgment-making in the type of research under examination here.

This might well be approached specifically by turning to the 'sporting coalition' which Walker so accurately identifies. Two quotations will set the scene (1988; p.37; p.64).

The ascendancy of the footballer culture was reinforced by the sporting coalition in a way that imposed constraints on the options available to other pupils and teachers ... Overall, the footballers enjoyed the most cultural autonomy of the pupil groups and the most social power. Subjectively, this was reflected in a high profile of self-confidence and cultural celebration.

... sport was integral to social control [in the school] ... At the explicit level there was cooperation between teachers and members of ... representative teams which produced a cultural coalition between them [teachers and footballers]. The symbolic focus of this was loyalty to the school - a profound affection for 'Stokey' and a desire for its triumph and glory... Thus a symbolic centre of social unity and moral force was created in concrete practice. This was fostered by many staff as a control strategy in classroom and playground. For the footballers it relied upon, even glorified, one of their chief means to gratification, power and prestige.

While I think it problematic that there was much 'profound affection for 'Stokey' and a desire for its triumph and glory' from any significant section of staff or students, I am otherwise struck here with a sense of *deja vu* by Walker's description. I remember seven years of my life tangled in a sporting coalition at a school not unlike Stokey and in fact just down the road from it. They were actually seven years struggling *against* the sporting coalition; which indicates that this sort of thing is something I am not completely happy with.

There are many problems with the sporting coalition, which might better be called the *rugby league* coalition at places like Stokey, and I cannot, of course, outline all or even many of them here. But I will venture to declare that a coalition with any code of rugby is antithetical to education; as well as one of the most pathetic means a number of teachers use, if and when they can, to abdicate from having to engage in the difficult and often not immediately rewarding task of trying to improve the social, cultural and intellectual horizons of their charges. This coalition is little if anything more than reduction of the potential educational exchange down to one of the lowest of denominators - rugby. It entails and encompasses the adoption, endorsement and thus social acceptance of something closely akin to thuggery. In its own way it is the reduction of culture to the level of the tabloids, and the reduction of values to those propounded by the commercial television arms of those tabloids. To give one example of what I am getting at here, a newscaster on one of those

Channels in Australia recently embellished a preview of a forthcoming State of Origin rugby league match by stating, as part of the evening news (a program in family viewing time that children are encouraged to watch) that he hoped the players would 'engage in some biff this time' in order to 'give full value to the public' and to lend proper seriousness to the match.

Schools, I believe, ought deliberately and actively counter such views and values. Some schools do. But how effectively can they do so where the school's very climate is heavily influenced by a rugby coalition? The problem is that the coalition can become, for those teachers who will enter it, an excuse to opt out of the difficult job of bringing serious point and worth and value to the kids of Stokey, and to accept instead the sorts of values and success that are already inherent there - these being usually based on the intrinsically dubious virtues of being big boned, strongly muscled, being able to run fast, and having the psychological desire and physical ability to flatten, maim, and otherwise physically harm fellow human beings - especially those marked out by overt distinguishing characteristics like the colours of their football jerseys.⁵ I find it of interest when teachers enthusiastically encourage this, but then go into deep seriousness about not discriminating against or harming people marked out by overt distinguishing characteristics like the colour of their skin; and I am yet to fully understand the difference between the logic of football rivalry and that of racism.

It is too true that some teachers at places such as Stokey do enter into rugby or sporting coalitions, wherein they give favours to the footballers, generally glorify rugby (and along with it violence and warring for territorial possession)⁶, and in the process denigrate those pupils who are not footballers, and delegitimise those activities which are not rugby. Again, I would have thought teaching, and especially educating, entails something like the opposite of this. I appreciate that for all teachers it is not a matter of taking the easy way out or subscribing to the 'If you can't lick them, join them' strategy; and that many teachers do seriously try to 'start where the kids are', show an interest in their interests, meet them half way, and then with the coalition established gently lead them on to education. The trouble with this latter strategy is not only that it subscribes to 'the end justifying the means' thesis, but also that it is too often the case that the plan only succeeds in going part way and never reaches 'education' - leaving teachers in the coalition talking rugby, praising rugby, filling assemblies with rugby, rewarding the rugby players, spending far more time coaching rugby teams than preparing lessons or keeping up with the literature on educational theory and research, and eventually giving in to rugby and becoming its apologists. This in turn rebounds on teachers outside the coalition, who tend to be despised by the kids simply for wanting to educate them. And all this is unlikely to have much to do with affection for a school and concern for its glory: rather it is more the case of teachers being drawn in, partially through abdicating and accepting easy vicarious success, to actually conspire with the very social reproduction they might better be seeking to subvert. There is little more pathetic in the world of schooling than a teacher boasting about the exploits of the rugby team he coaches.⁷

I am concerned as to whether Walker has seen this. I am more concerned, however, not whether it is his (and other researchers') place to be judgmental, but rather to what extent and in what areas they *should* be judgmental. All researchers are, of course, judgmental in their selection of which parts of their research they will record and make public. And ethnographers are also judgmental in selecting the activities they will participate in. As Walker himself says (1988; p.172):

I drew lines, however, in deciding at what activities I was prepared to be present, and frequently this meant declining invitations. When events were likely to involve breaking the law (there were not many of these) or violate my own commitments (there were rather more of these: involving 'hunting' and prostitution, for example) I excused myself.

Why not then go further and make overt value judgments about the behavior that is reported, rather than leave such judgements (perhaps not the ones the researcher really wishes to endorse) to emerge covertly from the text? To provide focus for discussing these issues there may be some value in elaborating a situation Walker describes with regard to teacher Wendy Gould (1988; pp.71-2):

Even teachers who professed a detestation of sport, especially physically violent body contact sports like football, felt a strong obligation to support Stokey on big occasions like the grand final; all the more so when they were up against older, bigger and more privileged opponents. Wendy Gould was a social science teacher who ... worked extremely hard and showed great interest in her charges. At the grand final:

Ms Gould: The kids know what I think about football. They know I think it's terrible and barbaric - I talk about it with them. I think they're getting used to my ideas by now.

JW: Then why did you come to the match?

Ms Gould: Well because even though they know what I think about it, I support them and I want them to know that I support them; and they know that I do. I come here to show that and I think they appreciate it.

I want to suggest, at the risk of being unfair to a person whose full and detailed opinion I don't know, *that from what we have available to us* Wendy Gould also appears to display the same sort of sympathy and romanticisation that Marsh, Rosser and Harre (and the CCCS) were seen to display. She, even more openly than they, declares her support for the perpetrators, and perpetration, of what she quite clearly recognises to be 'terrible and barbaric'.

Now a teacher's expression of support for that which she declares to be 'terrible and barbaric' has to be cause for serious concern. Of similar concern is the strange tactic of claiming to oppose something through supporting its perpetrators at precisely the time they are doing it. But where does Walker stand on this? He has chosen to include the exchange, and the revelation of Wendy Gould's attitude, in the finite space that contains his text, just as he chose to begin that text with a particular counterpoint and to include in it descriptions of certain of the footballers' activities. I do not think that he, or any researcher, can ultimately or successfully resort to Chaucer's Nun's Priest's ploy of telling a tale and then saying 'Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille'. Telling the tale or offering the kernel entails making value judgments: why then try to stop half way, and step back from indicating that some activities and social practices (including some teachers' practices relating to supporting rugby) might be good and others bad?

This takes me back to the body of the paper and the more general issue of the pervasive unwillingness or avoidance of declaring bad and unsuitable behavior to be wrong. As one who has favourably embraced Marx's theory of alienation under capitalism, I am prepared to accept that 'society' violates individuals and can be responsible for unwelcome related attitudes and behaviors in those individuals. I cannot see, however, how even a 'society at fault' can be seriously blamed for all such behavior, which does not become manifested in every individual; nor can I see how a 'society at fault' thesis can absolve us from judgment, or allow us to naturalise, laugh at, be sympathetic towards or actually support violence on the part of individuals. But if teachers will not take the responsibility for making the hard decisions regarding values in the day to day situations of schooling, and if academic researchers and philosophers continue to eschew making such judgments in the wider context of their scholarship and research, then who do we turn to; and how far do we risk welcoming Hollywood, or else fundamentalists or fanatics, to define and determine our values for us?

If teachers commonly resort to Wendy Gould's tactics and way of thinking (and if nothing else her car is safer in the playground for her support), and if research becomes reduced to the CCCS, the Willis, and the Marsh, Rosser and Harre stuff, as well, to some extent, as Jim Walker's foray - stuff in which, as with the Dead End Kids movies, no blood flows, murder doesn't really kill, and rape is pushed off-stage (given that ethnographers tend not to be present when it occurs) and so becomes rape out of mind, rape unreported and thus rape-nonexistent, such that we can finally sympathise with and smile in admiration at cocky little devils kicking out at an unjust society in steel-capped boots, or look with admiration at the footballers' onfield and off-field activities - there is surely a message for education and educational research somewhere in this.

Notes

1. i.e. from the once-famous series of 'Stencilled Occasional Papers' produced by study groups within the Centre, and sold very widely. Many of these papers were incorporated into a set of books published by Hutchinson.
2. I admit I got this latter example from the media giving its image of what happened at a cricket match in Birmingham. *The Australian* of 27 May 1987, drawing on World Cable Services, actually reported the incident in clinical and unhysterical terms, thus: During the game a fan's throat was cut by a flying bottle in skirmishes between rival supporters: Riaz Mohammed, 25, suffered a cut jugular vein. Police constable Theresa Sharples gave him first aid until he reached Birmingham Accident Hospital, where he underwent emergency surgery. He is in a serious condition. · Police said they found a blood-covered wine carafe on the grounds after the clashes.
3. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16th September, 1991.
4. The same attitudes and conclusions as those of Marsh, Rosser and Harre were expressed by academics in a 1986 BBC documentary, *Hooligan*. The study under scrutiny here should thus not be regarded either as a one-off aberration, an expression of dated 70s theorising, or a pre-Heysel approach. *Hooligan* dealt with the events at Heysel Stadium at length. And in this regard it is also of some interest to note that the CCCS tended to see violence on the terraces at football matches as normal behaviour. As one Stencilled Occasional Paper (SP 18) indicated:

The "genuine" supporter is no longer the traditional cloth-capped figure ... but has moved towards the passive, selective consumer of entertainment, of the game as a 'spectacle' and who objectively assesses it. Consequent upon this changed image of the supporter is the redefinition of certain previously normal aspects of crowd behaviour as illegitimate - notably those of physical violence and bad language.
5. It is actually against the laws of rugby league to submit voluntarily to a tackle. You have to try and crash through.
6. An interesting development in televised and reported rugby league is the use of statistics related to things such as 'yards in opposition territory'. Although irrelevant to the final score, and thus to the result of the game, such statistics, apart from anything else, allow losers to be pretenders to the winner's circle depending on the criteria chosen. One can say that, although our team technically lost, we held the ball longer than they did. Further, the practice of tucking the ball under one's arm and running into the opposition with no intention of passing is now referred to, in Australia at least, as a 'hit up'. In American football it is referred to less violently as a 'rush'.
7. The male pronoun is used deliberately.

References

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