

INTRODUCTION

I therefore turned my attention more particularly to the young; and as my residence was, for some years previous to 1816, on the south side of the river, the most direct way to which lay through the Saltmarket, the very 'St Giles of Glasgow', my eyes and ears were shocked several times a day by the profanity, indecency, filth, and vice, which were exhibited by hordes of young and old, and even infants, who were growing up pests to society, and ruined in themselves, for whose souls or bodies no one seemed to care, and whose wretchedness was enough to disgrace a professedly Christian community. Could nothing be done to stem this torrent of vice and ungodliness?

. . . My object was to seize a dozen of these wild human beings on the streets, and try what, by the blessing of God, might be done with them.¹

It was as if William Hogarth's *Gin Lane* stretched for blocks. The streets were littered with drunks, some vomiting where they stood. The footpaths outside the hotels were strewn with broken glass. People argued with and hurled abuse at one another. Others with vacant eyes stood mumbling soundlessly to themselves, arms whirling like aimless windmills. Through the streets surged packs of feral teenagers with brutish faces and foul, mindless mouths.²

Behind the problems of youth suicide, alcohol and drug abuse and delinquency exists a constellation of psychological traits: alienation, anomie, frustration, confusion, hopelessness, impotence, loneliness. At the end of it all is a crippling lack of self esteem.³

Picture a thirteen-year-old boy sitting in the living room of his family home doing his math assignment while wearing his Walkman headphones or watching MTV. He enjoys the liberties hard won over centuries in the alliance of philosophic genius and political heroism, consecrated by the blood of martyrs; he is provided with comfort and leisure by the most productive economy ever known to mankind; science penetrated the secrets of nature in order to provide him with the marvellous, lifelike electronic sound and image reproduction he is enjoying. And in what does progress culminate? A pubescent child whose body throbs with orgasmic rhythms; whose feelings are made articulate in hymns to the joy of onanism or the killing of parents; whose ambition is to win fame and wealth in imitating the drag-queen who makes the music. In short life is made into a nonstop, commercially prepackaged masturbation fantasy.⁴

The issue of adolescents and tattoos is a relatively neglected area of research and intervention. Studies indicate that there is an association between having tattoos, increased risk taking and antisocial behaviours. Young offenders are found to have tattoos significantly more than do community samples of adolescent high school students. While tattoos can sometimes reflect an antisocial orientation, it is argued that tattoos can also increase the risk of antisocial

¹David Stow, cited in Hunter 1994, pp. 10-11.

²Graham Goodman in *The Bulletin*, cited (not referenced) in Eckersley, 1992 p.7.

³Eckersley, 1992 p.7.

⁴Bloom, 1987, pp.74-75.

outcomes, that is, by creating a particular image they can further increase risk among youths who are already "at risk".⁵

Whereas once youth might be comfortably regarded as something one eventually grew out of, as an interim stage in the movement towards normality, to be incorporated into the (w)hol(i)ness of adulthood, now this orderly passage has become fraught with hazardous uncertainty. Increasingly alienated, in the classical sense, young people are also increasingly *alien*, alienated others, differently motivated, designed, constructed. And the awful possibility presents itself, insistently: they aren't simply visiting us, after which they'll simply go away; rather, they are here to stay, and they're taking over.⁶

The Question(s) of Youth (at-Risk)

Beneath two portraits of a girl and boy in their early teens a full page newspaper advertisement announces that from 'today' over 150 corporations, government departments and research centres, will 'understand our generation a whole lot better'. The advertisement, which lists the names of these organisations, heralds the merger of two Australian market research companies, ACNielsen-McNair and Reark Research. The merger, it is claimed;

will offer the most comprehensive range of services in retail and media measurement and customised research. And, most importantly, we'll now have the added ability to integrate all this vital marketing information. Meaning a more complete picture of today's consumers for our clients. Which in turn, gives our clients an even greater edge in the global marketplace. *We might even find the answer to the vexed question of today's youth* .(*The Age*, 9/12/97, p.A13, emphasis added)

The Question(s) of Youth, of what to do with them, of how to school them, or police them, or regulate them, or house them, or employ them, or prevent them from becoming involved in any number of Risky (sexual, eating, drug (ab)using or peer cultural) practices are questions which have a substantial historical aspect.⁷ In the Liberal Democracies at the end of the millennium the Crisis of Youth (at-Risk) is a key marker in debates *about* Youth among intellectuals, social commentators, market researchers, politicians, bureaucrats, religious groups, (self-appointed) moral guardians and experts

⁵Putnins, 1997, p.13.

⁶Green and Bigum, 1993, pp.121-122 (original emphasis).

⁷For an Australian perspective on these histories, and the ways in which class, gender and race have been significant in these histories see, Beasley (1991), Bessant (1991), Carrington (1991), Collard & Palmer (1991), Irving (1991), Maunders (1991), Sherrington (1991), and Wyn (1991).

in various domains of expertise.⁸ This thesis will argue that the *truth* of Youth at-Risk rehearses, in part, the historical truths of Youth as Delinquent, Deviant and Disadvantaged (Swadener and Lubeck 1995). However, a historically novel aspect of the truth of Youth at-Risk is that, potentially, every behaviour, every practice, every group of young people can be constructed in terms of Risk (Tait 1995). These discussions about youth(ful) populations and their families, their schools, their often Risky (*anti-social*) behaviours and practices, their chances of being employed (and of being employable) are, in the context of this thesis, important at a number of levels.⁹

In the first instance, these discussions about Youth are about populations of historically situated, social, and embodied beings. These populations of young people experience or are exposed to many ways of *being-in-the-world*; ways of being which are potentially rational or irrational; ways of being in which cognitive and affective or emotional aspects of being can be in tension; ways of being in which their embodiment, or 'enfleshment' (McLaren 1991) is experienced as (dis)enabling or (dis)empowering; ways of being in which their performance or (dis)ability is judged by significant or more powerful Others in terms of success or failure; ways of being which cast or position them as *adolescent*, as being less autonomous, more dependent, less mature, as *becoming* (adult) rather than simply *being* (young people). These ways of being are also fundamentally shaped by institutionally structured gender relations, class locations and relations, ethnic background and geographical situation.

At another level, these discussions and debates about the Question(s) of Youth (at-Risk) are about the discourses which structure the categories of Adolescent, Youth, Young People and Risk. At this level these intellectual abstractions, these processes of discursive production are more than mere representations of the transparent reality of Youth(ful) experience. Indeed, a central theoretical and political concern in the

⁸Swadener and Lubeck (1995), for instance, claim that in the US since 1989 over 2500 articles and conference papers have focussed on the issue of children, families and youth at-Risk. They further claim that the narrative of at-Risk structures 'countless' school district, State and Federal task forces which address the 'crisis' of America's Youth. See also Withers and Batten (1995) and Batten and Russell (1995) for reviews of the extensive Youth at-Risk literature from the US, Canada, Britain and Australia.

⁹McRobbie (1996) mobilises the notion of 'different youthful subjectivities' to capture some sense of difference and generation in her examinations of what Youth might mean in Cultural and Sociological studies of Youth. Before I became aware of McRobbie's use of 'youthful' I had used 'youth(ful)' to self consciously acknowledge that in commenting on Youth I was less than youthful; that in commenting on Youth I became implicated in that new class Adult process of constructing 'fantasies'(Walkerline 1997) about contemporary youth(ful) populations as Other.

discussion which follows will be to argue against the possibility of apprehending, or representing the *real* in any unmediated or transparent way. Youth at-Risk will, instead, be understood in terms of the 'conditions of possibility' which enable discourses of Risk to function as true (Henriques et al 1984, p.101); and to function as true within institutionally structured spaces marked by differences in the 'power to mean' (Watts 1993/94).¹⁰ Nikolas Rose (1990) has argued, in this context, that:

Childhood is the most intensively governed sector of personal existence. In different ways, at different times, and by many different routes varying from one section of society to another, the health, welfare, and rearing of children have been linked in thought and practice to the destiny of the nation and the responsibilities of the state. The modern child has become the focus of innumerable projects that purport to safeguard it from physical, sexual, or moral danger, to ensure its 'normal' development, to actively promote certain capacities or attributes such as intelligence, educability, and emotional stability. Throughout the nineteenth century and our own, anxieties concerning children have occasioned a panoply of programmes that have tried to conserve and shape children by moulding the petty details of the domestic, conjugal, and sexual lives of their parents. (p.121)¹¹

At a quite fundamental level this thesis is *not* about the practices, behaviours and dispositions of young people. Rather, my concern is with the ways in which institutionally structured processes of expert knowledge production construct the Question(s) of Youth (at-Risk). I am concerned with the processes by which these largely autonomous systems of expert knowledge production are constitutive of both the 'institutional reflexivity' which characterises contemporary settings, and the forms of identity which emerge in these settings (Giddens 1994 c). I am also concerned with the ways in which these systems of expertise mobilise categories of Risk in diverse

¹⁰ Central to an argument about the 'power to mean' is a view of language as constitutive. Watts (1993/94), for example, argues that 'to think the State' is a preferable phrase to the more familiar phrase 'to think *about* the State'. It is preferable, argues Watts, because it avoids some of the problems of the 'conduit model of language'. My sense of this model is that it is through the *conduit* of language that we are able to access the *real* outside of language; in this instance the essence of the State. To 'think the state' however suggests a model of language as constitutive of that which is being signified; a model which is consistent with the views on discourse and representation which I will engage with throughout this thesis.

¹¹ While this passage refers to Childhood I intend to argue that, where Youth is marked as a process of transition from Dependence to Independence, and where this transitional process is lengthening for contemporary populations of young people, then the processes which Rose refers to can be seen to increasingly take Youth as their object.

attempts to regulate the behaviours and dispositions of certain populations of young people under the conditions of 'reflexive modernization' (Beck, Giddens & Lash 1994).

These purposes are mirrored in the structure of this thesis. *Part One: Expertise and the Question of Youth at-Risk* is centrally concerned with the processes of expert knowledge production which both construct categories and factors of Risk, and the forms of intellectual and political knowledge which might be mobilised to critique these 'ordering processes' (Law 1994). *Part Two: Risk and the Problematics of Government in an Age of Manufactured Uncertainty* is concerned with mobilising a form of intellectual and political practice able to apprehend the tensions, the rationalities, and the sensibilities which enable the truth of Youth at-Risk to mean so powerfully in diverse attempts to regulate youth(ful) identities in an Age of Manufactured Uncertainty (Giddens 1994 a).

In this endeavour I will argue for the possibilities of a productive convergence between theories of *reflexive modernization* (Beck, Giddens & Lash 1994) and *governmentality* (Foucault 1991). This convergence enables Youth at-Risk to be examined at two (interconnected) levels. In the first instance Risk will be understood as constituting a *metanarrative* in an Age of Manufactured Uncertainty. Secondly, the identification of Risk Factors and populations at-Risk will be understood as *techniques* mobilised in diverse attempts to 'make up' rational, choice making, autonomous, responsible citizens within (Neo)Liberal projects of government (Rose 1996 a). Examining the question of identity is fundamental in this project.

The Question of Identity

Identity politics, the politics of being and 'becoming somebody' (Wexler 1992), a concern with the relations, practices and processes which are mobilised in the construction of a sense of self and of others are questions and issues which have a central place in the recent history of Black, feminist, gay and lesbian, indigenous (postcolonial), and other (often marginalised) social movements. Who am I? Who are we? Who can I, or we, speak with, or to, or about, or for? These *base line* questions are often posed in the framing of individual and collective political agenda. Epstein (1991), in locating the emergence of the issue of identity politics in the 'fluidity and fragmentation' of contemporary Western societies, argues that certain group identities become;

increasingly attractive, since they offer an intermediate link between the individual and the mass. In recent years, identity has emerged as the organizing principle of a new politics - exemplified by the black

power movement, feminism, and lesbian and gay liberation...in which the assertion and elaboration of a group identity is linked inextricably with a program for social change. (p.827)

Similar questions about identity have informed recent and ongoing debates in a number of academic fields, such as Literary Theory and Cultural Studies. Postmodernism, poststructuralism and psychoanalytic discourses have shaped discussions exploring the connections between cultural texts and forms and their intended and actual audiences and consumers; their *subjects*. Who are these subjects? What occurs in the text/reader encounter? How are audiences differentiated (by class, gender, ethnicity)? How does difference, and identity, structure or mediate these encounters? How is identity shaped or changed in, and by, these encounters? Here, Richard Johnson (1987) argues that 'texts' are, 'encountered promiscuously; they pour in on us from all directions in diverse, co-existing media, and differently placed flows. In everyday life, textual materials are complex, multiple, overlapping, co-exist, juxta-posed, in a word, 'inter-textual' (p.67).

In Cultural Studies it is argued that these issues have a particular importance in seeking to understand the relationships between individual and group subjects and the globalisation of electronically mediated cultural texts and forms (and their inter-textual companions, their associated commodities). These relationships are often seen to be important when discussing the ways in which contemporary youth(ful) populations construct individual and group identities. As significant aspects of what has been labelled 'techno culture' (Green and Bigum 1993), these relationships and practices are seen to be both *natural* environments for rising generations, and environments which are different to those in which older generations became somebody. In this sense the *generation gap* is seen to be not only *difference* structured by age but by immersion in, engagement with, and understanding of this 'techno culture'. Green and Bigum (1993), in this context, construct contemporary Youth as 'postmodern subjects *par excellence*'.

The Crisis-of-Youth (at-Risk)

In Chapter One of this thesis I will situate contemporary constructions of the Crisis of Youth (at-Risk) in settings which are characterised, from a variety of intellectual and political positions, as Uncertain, as Reflexive, as *Post* (Modern, Traditional, Industrial), and/or as Global. In this context an engagement with intellectual abstractions which construct a Crisis of Youth (at-Risk), or which position themselves in some form of relation to these constructions generates various tensions. The nature of certain of these tensions will be initially illustrated via an engagement with Green and Bigum's (1993) construction of Youth as *Aliens*. I will argue that postmodern Cultural Studies (of Youth) 'rule the roost' in contemporary social theory discourses (Lash 1994 b). These

discourses are useful in that they foreground certain emergent forms of identity, and of the social, in 'techno culture'; that is these discourses tell certain truths about the conditions of existence of a Crisis of Youth (at-Risk). However, I will argue that cultural postmodernism is less useful in acknowledging *continuities* in the institutional structuring of Youth, and the central place that concerns about government and regulation continues to occupy in relation to Youth (McRobbie 1996).

Attempts to regulate the behaviours and dispositions of young people in the institutionally structured spaces of post compulsory secondary schooling (PCSS) illustrate the significance of these concerns. At this particular historical moment a variety of emerging, developed and decaying cultural, economic and social forces are at work to mark PCSS as *the* time and space of *transition* for the majority of young Australians. This moment is marked by; an established trend to near universal retention rates in secondary schooling; an emerging trend to further post compulsory education and training; a paradoxical coupling/decoupling of schooling and work (schooling and school knowledge should be more closely connected to workplace knowledge and needs - schooling emerges as *warehousing* as the youth labour market decays and school knowledge no longer gets you a job); a 'conservative restoration' (Wexler 1987) in many Western Nation States linking an 'education crisis' to the success of national economies and individuals within globalising economic processes (Apple 1993, Goodson 1994). This contested transitional space - from dependence to in(ter)dependence, from school to (un)employment, from non adulthood to adulthood, from non sexual to sexual - is a space in which 'becoming somebody' is at the core of young people's activities (Wexler 1992). This period of schooling, then, is emerging as a setting, a pattern of relationships and a series of practices which is a defining experience of present and future identity options and life chances for most young people. Indeed, it is argued that those young people most at-Risk in these settings are those who fail to complete PCSS.¹² Under such conditions it becomes possible to suggest, as Fitzclarence et. al. (1995) do, that:

The notion of *identity* is quite crucial here. How is identity formed in these circumstances? What are the contexts and resources for identity work? How is identity itself to be understood? And what has changed and is different about postmodern identity formation? This is an important insight for understanding life in and out of school and the changing circumstances and subjectivity of young people today, as well as the widespread public anxiety about contemporary realizations of youth and schooling. (p.147, original emphasis)

¹²A point stressed in the report of the Australian Education Council Review Committee (1991), *Young People's Participation in Post-Compulsory Education & Training*. This report will, hereafter, be referred to as the Finn Review after Brian Finn, the committee's Chair.

The Problematic of Thinking Youth(ful) Identities

At the present historical moment any academy based examination of the question of identity must, at the very least, engage with poststructuralist discourses on identity.¹³ In brief these discourses suggest a non-essential, non-unified, contingent, in process, often contradictory, discursively constructed identity. Informing this view of a discursive identity is a view that language is not a transparent transcendent system which represents the *real*. Instead, language constructs a sense of the *real* and constructs and positions us within representations of various *realities*. These representations are historically, socially, and culturally situated and (re)produced. Meaning and representation is not fixed. Identity is therefore not fixed or essential. Jane Kenway (1992) sees poststructuralism as a 'very loosely connected set of ideas' which seeks to explore the ways;

in which meaning is struggled over and made, the way it circulates amongst us, the impact it has on human subjects and finally, the connections between meaning and power. For post structuralists, meaning is not fixed in language or in cultural symbols and neither is it fixed in consistent power relationships. It shifts according to the way in which a range of linguistic, institutional and, cultural factors come together. It is influenced by and influences shifting patterns of power. And finally, it constitutes human subjectivity which is, again, regarded as shifting, many-faceted and contradictory. (pp.2-3)

(De)constructions of the Self as provisional, non-essential and contingent are valuable in understanding the ways in which identity, our sense of self and others, is constructed for and by us within a complex discursive matrix of meanings. A matrix which is historically, socially and culturally located and struggled over. Importantly, it is made concrete and embodied in our relations with others. Yet what is often missing from poststructuralist accounts is any sense that individuals and groups strive to produce shared meaning and, importantly, continuity in and through social relations. In everyday relations and practices (and for *inter*, and *intra* generational understanding) individuals and groups struggle to construct shared meaning, understanding and representation in relations with others. Which is not to say that such meaning or representation is fixed or uncontested. It is also not to say that meaning or representation is not possible. In calling for a 'post-post-structuralist' account of subjectivity Johnson (1987) stresses the need to return to 'some older but reformulated questions - about struggle, 'unity', and the production of a political will' (p.69). This is not, as Johnson makes clear, a denial of the major post structuralist insights; 'subjects *are* contradictory, 'in process', fragmented,

¹³Kenway and Blackmore (1994), for instance, point to the 'hegemony' of poststructuralism in feminist discourses in the academy.

produced. But human beings and social movements also strive to produce some coherence and continuity, and through this, exercise some control over feelings, conditions and destinies' (p.69, original emphasis).

Government as the Regulation of Youth(ful) Identities

It is in the intellectual spaces opened up by poststructuralist accounts of the processes of identity formation that this thesis will be situated. Thinking about identity in this space will mean thinking about identity in terms of Foucault's (1991) notion of government; where government is conceived in terms of the diverse attempts to *conduct* the *conduct* of expertly identified populations (of Youth at-Risk). In Chapter Three of this thesis I will argue that the literature on governmentality, which builds on Foucault's 'opening gambits', provides powerful intellectual resources for understanding the practices and relations mobilised in the processes whereby 'human beings are made into subjects' (Foucault 1983).¹⁴

Foucault (1991) argues that the 'discovery of populations', or more correctly the discursive construction and systematising of populations, and of populations within populations, became central to the art of European government from the sixteenth century onwards. Foucault traces the production of regimes of truth, or the production and mobilisation of power/knowledge in a variety of domains, as these discourses - on madness, on punishment, on pedagogy, on sexuality - work to define the field in which true and false statements can be made; statements about both these particular fields, and the interconnections between these discourses, these practices and the various sites and populations which they seek to define, construct and govern. For Foucault, the art of government, of governing oneself and others, is made possible and reproduced, refined and *done better* - within general and more particular rationalities, and through a variety of techniques - by coming to define, construct, (dis)assemble and *know better* the diverse persons, groups and populations which are the objects and the subjects of these various rationalities and technologies. Applying Foucault's work to an understanding of youth(ful) populations Gordon Tait (1993 b) argues that youth; 'is best understood as an example of the governmental formation of specific types of persons. That is, 'youth' constructed as an object of knowledge at the intersection of a variety of diverse problematisations' (p.3).

¹⁴ See, for instance, Rose (1990), Rose and Miller (1992), Miller and Rose (1990, 1995), Dean (1992, 1995), O'Malley (1992), Cruikshank (1993), Tait (1995) and the contributions in Burchell, Gordon and Miller (1991).

Governmentality, it will be argued, is a useful and strategic *analytic* for understanding the diverse attempts to regulate young people's identity through the construction of populations of Youth at-Risk. Again the regulation of youth(ful) identities through mass compulsory schooling is usefully understood in these terms. The schooling of youth(ful) populations is marked by both compulsion and coercion, by the legislated, policed and compulsory attendance of young people at schools until some arbitrary age. In a very real sense, power is exercised in this instance by imposing constraints on large populations who are not yet citizens, who are deemed not to be responsible, autonomous members of society, who are being schooled and trained for future participation in economic and social life.

At the same time much of this schooling is also concerned with normalising individuality and autonomy, with 'making up citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom' (Rose and Miller 1992, p.134), including the 'freedom' to remain in some form of post compulsory schooling and training. Discourses on governmentality are useful in understanding how Youth comes to constitute a particular domain of knowledge, of how certain rationalities work to construct 'axes' of normality (Tait 1993 b) around which Youth is made and remade. The ways in which for example, various experts and centres of expertise come to 'articulate' (Hall 1985) *schooling, training, cognitive skills* and *the economy* to construct a pervasive, dominant understanding that thirteen plus years of schooling are necessary in order to make Youth employable.

Further, the *choice* young people make to stay in post compulsory secondary schooling is often made in an attempt to secure that particular view of future autonomy and freedom offered by a *good job*. Of course, what this good job might be and what the *good life* which it (hopefully) secures will look like will differ among young people. However, the normalising discourses which circulate around, and construct these notions of the good job/life, the stories and narratives which young people are told and which they construct, and which constitute, in part, their repertoire for 'colonizing' their futures (Giddens 1991) are an important illustration of this 'making up' in action. Government, here, as Rose and Miller (1992) suggest, is;

intrinsically linked to the activities of expertise, whose role is not one of meaning an all pervasive web of 'social control', but of enacting assorted attempts at the calculated administration of diverse aspects of conduct through countless, often competing, local tactics of education, persuasion, inducement, management, incitement, motivation and encouragement. (p.175)

Reflexive Modernization and the Return of Uncertainty

I will argue that the social practice of intellectual abstraction ('the activities of expertise') which is manifested in attempts to regulate the behaviours and dispositions of youth(ful) populations via the mobilisation of at-Risk discourses, is dominated by those discourses which seek to represent the complexity of being-in-the world as more or less calculable, quantifiable, predictable and knowable within certain narrow rationalistic limits. Moreover, as a social practice this form of discursive production is vested with a form of authority, or seeks to establish legitimacy and authority, through its claims to know, or to predict, or calculate. In this instance expertise and authority are claimed through an ability to know and calculate and measure *better* the Risks associated with being young in the last decades of the 20th century. This legitimacy and authority is achieved within social processes which are contested and negotiated, that is, they are political processes. In the social and institutional milieux in which legitimacy and authority is struggled over little of this intellectual abstraction demonstrates much self consciousness with regard to its limitations as a form of discursive production. In the contexts of epistemological debates about the *modern* and the *postmodern* this is a decidedly modernist, Enlightenment orientation to knowledge production and its role in the quest for meaning and certainty.

In Chapter Four I will argue that processes of reflexive modernization render problematic the quest for certainty which characterises at-Risk discourses. Giddens (1990), for instance, argues that the conditions of 'radicalised modernity' are marked by processes of reflexivity in which claims to certainty in knowledge production - the very bedrock of Enlightenment thinking - become intensely problematic. So much so that the intensification and globalisation of reflexively produced knowledge results in a 'runaway world', of 'dislocation' and 'uncertainty' (Giddens 1994 a, p.3). Giddens (1994 a) argues that human existence is not necessarily more risky under contemporary social conditions but that the origins of risk and uncertainty have changed. For Giddens 'manufactured risk is the result *of* human intervention into the conditions of social life and into nature' (p.4 original emphasis). Moreover, 'what was supposed to create greater and greater certainty - the advance of human knowledge and 'controlled intervention' into society and nature - is actually deeply involved with this unpredictability' (p.3). Giddens (1994 a) argues that the 'uncertainties and opportunities' which are a consequence of the 'advance of manufactured uncertainty' are 'largely new':

They cannot be dealt with by age-old remedies; but neither do they respond to the Enlightenment prescription of more knowledge, more control. Put more accurately, the sorts of reactions they might evoke

today are often as much about *damage control* and *repair* as about an endless process of increasing mastery. (p.4 original emphasis)

For Beck, Giddens & Lash (1994), this 'paradox of human knowledge' is central to understanding processes of reflexive modernization. These processes are marked by the emergence of a degree of collective awareness that *our* contemporary conditions of existence are characterised by the thoroughgoing penetration of the *social* and the *natural* by reflexive human knowledge. Such a situation leads, not to a position in 'which collectively we are the masters [sic] of our destiny'; but rather to a series of settings in which we are confronted with the possibility that, as a 'consequence of our own doings', the future becomes 'very threatening' (p.vii). At the end of the millennium, as Beck (1994 b) argues, 'uncertainty returns'.

One consequence of processes of reflexive modernization is the prominence of 'institutionally structured risk environments' (Giddens 1991). Modern institutions, argues Giddens (1991) 'both permit and entail' a 'concentrated reflexive monitoring' of various environments of human interaction (p.16). The narrative of Risk emerges in this context as a concern with constructing some sense of 'future happenings', as these possible futures are related in particular ways to 'present practices' (p.117). Diverse configurations of time-space, and the reflexivity generated by the penetration of abstract systems into the everyday lifeworlds of modernity, provoke, argues Giddens (1991), a general concern with the 'control of time'. Risk, in this sense, is about the '*colonisation of the future*' (p.111, original emphasis). In these settings, argues Giddens (1991), 'all action', including that which adheres to traditional forms and practices, 'is in principle "calculable" in terms of risk' (p.112).

This impulse to construct and calculate risk scenarios becomes energised within those abstract systems which appropriate the tasks of regulating the disintegrative effects of modernity. Particularly those systems of expertise which attempt to colonise the futures of youth(ful) populations, whose involvement in any number of practices (might) jeopardise desired outcomes (futures). Thus the narrative of Risk, with regard to particular populations of young people, can structure attempts to regulate; young people's involvement in Schooling (in relation to future employability or good citizenship); young people's engagement in sexual activity (the possibility of becoming pregnant, or of contracting HIV/AIDS); the chance that they might attempt suicide; and the likelihood of young people becoming homeless or (ab)using drugs or becoming involved in criminal activities. As Giddens (1991) argues, 'an assessment of likely risks can be made for virtually all habits and activities in respect of specific outcomes' (p.112).

In that Chapter I will further argue, following Beck (1992), that these largely autonomous processes of reflexive modernization, which 'tend to dissolve' the 'traditional parameters of industrial society', result, paradoxically, in a 'surge of individualization' and of 'standardization' (pp.130-131).¹⁵ Under the conditions of reflexive modernization class, gender and family coordinates recede (but do not disappear), and individuals themselves tend to become '*the reproduction unit for the social in the life world*' (p.130, original emphasis). Here there is a sense in which individuals 'inside and outside the family' must assume the role of makers of their own 'livelihood'; a livelihood and a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) project of the Self which is at the same time dependent on and shaped by markets, education and other forms of governmental regulation (p.130).

Within processes of reflexive modernization, and within (Neo)Liberal projects of government which attempt to make up citizens capable of bearing this form of regulated freedom, individuals are compelled to choose; we must choose and decide about 'education, profession, job, place of residence, spouse, number of children' (Beck 1992 p.135). As Beck (1992) argues, the domains of existence, the aspects of the lifeworld 'which are fundamentally closed to decision-making' are diminishing, while those aspects of individual biographies which are 'open and must be constructed personally' are increasing (p.135). These processes force young people, in this instance, to 'learn on pain of permanent disadvantage', to see themselves, to construct themselves, 'as the centre of action' (p.135). Yet these individualization processes, which are institutionally structured, are also, increasingly, institutionally dependent, and thus increasingly 'susceptible to crises', to institutionally generated risks. The risks for the DIY Self under conditions of reflexive modernization are increasingly individualised. In this sense, 'the floodgates are opened wide for the subjectivization and individualization of risks and contradictions produced by institutions and society' (p.136). These institutionally generated risk environments, and the consequences they have for individual biographies emerge as 'no longer just events and conditions' which are visited upon individuals. Rather these risks are the '*consequences of the decisions they themselves have made*' (p.136 original emphasis).

¹⁵Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel (1997) refer to this paradox as the 'epistemological fallacy of late modernity'.

Globalisation and the Nation State

Chapter Five is primarily concerned with understanding the ways in which these processes of reflexive modernization, which carry processes of globalisation, are implicated in the (re)structuring of those regulatory practices of contemporary Nation States which position young people as being at-Risk. This chapter will examine ways of understanding the Nation State in a period when transformations in the rights, roles and responsibilities of the Nation State indicate that processes of globalisation may very well serve to render the notion of Nation(al) sovereignty problematic. There is, I will argue, a need to (re)think the State at a time when so much (Party) political discourse, and theoretical commentary on these discourses, is concerned with reconfiguring the ways in which political and theoretical publics view the State, and its rights, roles and responsibilities. These discourses have a tendency to be framed in a manner which foregrounds the relations between the State, Civil Society and The Economy and the rights, roles and responsibilities of these seemingly autonomous, separate spheres. These discourses about the State and its Others, have a focus, in many Anglo (Australasia, North America, the UK) and European contexts, on reconfiguring the nature of State regulation and government of Civil Society and The Economy. These ongoing political and theoretical debates about the rights, roles and responsibilities of the Liberal State, as a Welfare State, have tended to be structured by a language which seeks to capture a sense of the exercise of power in Liberal Democracies through the positing of certain oppositions; 'between state and civil society, public and private, government and market, coercion and consent, sovereignty and autonomy' (Rose and Miller, 1992, p.174). Not only do these oppositions seek to grasp the nature of the limits of the rightful exercise of power, they also seek to mark out the spaces in which this exercise of power can rightfully occur.

In this Chapter I will argue that these 'principled positions' (Hunter 1994) fail to capture the diversity of interests and the mobilisation of various forms of expertise which characterise attempts to regulate the disintegrative effects of processes of reflexive modernization. Further, these ways of 'thinking the state' (Watts 1993/94) cannot adequately account for the ways in which global 'economies of signs and spaces' are transforming the narratives of Nation(alism), and the attempts to regulate Youth(ful) identities in these emerging spaces. In this context I will argue that Risk, can be understood as both a metanarrative of Uncertainty, and as a technology of (Neo)Liberal governmentality which promises to render operable certain projects of government which take as their object populations of young people. The mobilisation of Risk discourses is, then, an attempt to refine the project of government, an attempt to *do*

better the art (practice) of government, precisely at the time when the practice of government (by the Nation State) becomes increasingly more difficult.

(Neo)Liberalism and Risk

In Chapter Six my intention is to engage with the notion of governmentality in the more restricted sense of understanding the practices of government of the Nation State. I will argue that this way of mobilising the notion of governmentality enables an examination of contemporary transformations in the practice of government, in ways which problematise the constitutive opposites of much principled Left and Right discourse on the (ideal) relations between the State, Civil Society, and The Economy. This form of problematising practice is enabled by Foucault's (1983) particular way of characterising the 'nature' of governmental power relations and their 'effects'. Further, this intellectual practice understands the problematics of government as being structured by the contingent and historically variable interrelationships between particular 'political rationalities' and certain 'governmental technologies'(Rose and Miller 1992).

This form of analysis is useful for understanding the contemporary conditions of existence of powerful governmental discourses which attempt to regulate youth(ful) populations through the narrative of Risk. A concept such as governmentality is useful in this instance because it points to the practices of government, rather than to a primary identification of the ideological or philosophical underpinnings of (Left or Right) political discourses and their principled articulation of the appropriate relations between the State, Civil Society and The Economy. Further, this understanding of the contingent and historically variable interrelationship between certain rationalities and technologies of government is useful in apprehending the ways in which contemporary practices of government are transformed by the 'deeper currents' (Hinkson 1992 b) of reflexive modernization and globalisation.

Nikolas Rose (1996a) provides a reading of both Liberalism and (Neo)Liberalism which is generative in this particular context. Rose (1996 a) sets himself a number of tasks in examining (Neo)Liberalism as a practice of government. Not least among these is his intent to problematise 'those political logics', of both the Left and the Right, which give the appearance of making it 'easy and self evident to be "for" or "against" the present' (p.61). For Rose, the transformations in the problematics of government, which he identifies as 'advanced liberal', are indeed of a different order than that indicated by the 'neo-liberal political rhetorics' which have dominated political discourse in the Parliamentary Democracies over the past three decades. Here Rose (1996 a) situates transformations in the practice of government (of young people) in the context of 'deeper

currents'; currents which are, I will argue, characterised by processes of reflexive modernization.

This last point is an important one. I want to argue that (Neo)Liberalism, understood not as a coherent ideological or political movement, but as a rationality of government has been, more or less, successful in transforming the practices of government in Anglo-American contexts, partly due to its capacity to articulate narratives of 'personal autonomy, enterprise and choice' (Barry et.al. 1996, p.10) to these transformed problematics of government. Moreover, these narratives connect with certain experiences and/or concerns about the social transformations structured by these deeper currents. Here I am thinking of the tendencies within reflexive modernity for the individual to be cast free (set adrift) from more traditional anchoring points in time, space, place and communitarian (class) relationships. Beck (1992) has identified these processes as individualization processes. Giddens (1994b) talks about the reflexive project of the self in post traditional social contexts. This is a project in which individuals are compelled to be free; condemned to choose. Or as Rose (1990), in a different context, has suggested, 'we are obliged to be free' (p.213).

This thesis will argue, then, that theories of reflexive modernization and governmentality permit a focus on those diverse forms of expertise (rationally) producing vast amounts of information and various forms of understanding about the truths of populations of young people at-Risk. Expert knowledge which is produced and reflexively circulates, largely autonomously, structuring and restructuring, with foreseen and unforeseen consequences, the understandings of these diverse populations of young people, and the understandings of young people of their lifeworlds (past, present and future). Moreover, where the conditions of reflexive modernization subject these claims to mastery and certainty (truth) to the principle of radical doubt, they also impel expert systems to further processes of knowledge production. These further processes seek to know *better* these populations in order to attempt to regulate the largely autonomous processes which continuously threaten to escape the limits of expertise. In these conditions of manufactured uncertainty the mobilisation of rationally grounded Risk discourses in attempts to regulate populations of young people emerge in a paradoxical, and dangerous, quest for certainty.

Intellectual and Political Practice In an Age of Manufactured Uncertainty

A point to stress at this stage is that constructions of Risk in relation to populations of young people can be, in Foucault's (1980) formulation of power/knowledge, productive

and enabling. The argument here is that there should be some recognition that these normalising discourses are not inherently *bad*. Mobilising discourses of risk in the attempted 'making up' of certain types of (young) person can bring into being *positive*, *progressive* potentialities. For example, the mobilisation of Risk in safer sex discourses has the potential to bring into being new forms of identity which produce new forms of relationships and understandings of gender and sexuality (Harrison and Dempsey 1997). Some key political and theoretical questions to ask here include: What 'technologies of the self' (Foucault 1988) are being mobilised? What are young people at-Risk of not becoming? What forms of identity are they at-Risk of not performing? What might be the grounds on which concerns with particular forms of identity be constructed? It is, I will argue, a political and theoretical imperative to take seriously Foucault's (1983) admonition: *'My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous then we always have something to do'* (pp.231-232, emphasis added).¹⁶

Foucault's caution that 'everything is dangerous', and the 'paradox of human knowledge' which is foregrounded in theories of reflexive modernization, render problematic the grounds on which at-Risk discourses are constructed. Indeed, taking seriously these concerns also renders problematic any political or theoretical interrogation of these at-Risk discourses which is grounded in 'principled positions' with regard to Education, Identity, Youth and Government (Hunter 1994). This is a position I will develop in Chapter Two of this thesis; a Chapter which will engage with the representational, political and intellectual problematics generated within and by discourses of postmodernism.

The problematic of Youth at-Risk, and its construction and critique by various experts in diverse centres of expertise, generates, then, a number of tensions for an intellectual and political practice which is concerned with power and its effects in telling the truth of Youth at-Risk. This form of intellectual practice can be constructed, broadly speaking, as Left. Further, it can be situated in that space of 'critical' (Educational) scholarship in Anglo settings which is structured, historically, by the 'European Marxist social philosophy' of the Frankfurt School and Gramscian (British) Cultural Studies, and French and Italian Feminism and Post (Structuralism and Modernism) (Popkewitz and Brennan 1997). The tensions generated within this contested intellectual space can, in a reflexive sense, be generative.

¹⁶Foucault follows this advice with a statement which indicates the politics of his intellectual practice: 'So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper - and pessimistic activism' (p.232).

This thesis is situated institutionally in a Faculty of Education. Education (with a capital E) as an institutional practice - in universities and schools - is fundamentally a rationalist enterprise, even though that enterprise can be understood in terms of multiple rationalities and heterogenous interests. Moreover, Educational processes and practices can be understood as being concerned primarily with the 'making up' of certain types of (young) person. Ian Hunter (1994), for example, has argued that the 'self reflecting moral person' is a comportment which education reformers and critics (conservative, liberal and radical) have consistently mobilised in debates about mass public schooling and the 'ideal formation of the person' during the last one hundred and fifty years. Identity, and the processes and practices and relations *necessary* for the development of certain preferred, *ideal* types of identity are, in this conceptualisation, foundational concerns of Education.¹⁷

Education, as an expert system, is then, underpinned by a 'transformative logic' (Walkerdine 1997). Diverse forms of Educational practice take as their objects individuals and groups with the intent to transform the behaviours and dispositions of these populations; to (critically) *educate* them. Positioned in relation to expertly constructed *ideals* about appropriate or desirable behaviours and dispositions, these populations of young people are constructed, within a transformative logic, in terms of *lack* or *deficit*. Education, as manifested in the mass compulsory expert system which has increasingly targeted children and youth during the last century and a half, has been justified and critiqued, at various times, for various purposes, and from various intellectual and theoretical positions (Left and Right), within this logic of transformation. Adult new class (educational) experts, within competing and/or complimentary rationalities, seek to tell the truth about young people (rendered knowable through particular representations of class, gender, ethnicity, and geography); and the forms of Education which might enable the 'making up' of certain (ideal) types of young person. Education is thus transformative and interventionist, and it is so because those who are to be *educated* are constructed, principally, in terms of deficit.

In this thesis I will argue that the 'popular' and 'promiscuous' construction of youth(ful) populations at-Risk (Fine 1995) is a continuation of this historical process of constructing certain populations of young people in terms of a (cultural) deficit (Swadener 1995). Constructing Youth as being at-Risk provokes the possibility of

¹⁷Identity may be a foundational concern of Education, but this concern has, at various times, been signified through a variety of narratives such as 'socialisation', 'cultural deficit', 'class culture', 'gender roles', 'citizenship'. See, for instance, Bartos 1993, Kirk and Spiller 1993, McCallum 1993, Meredyth and Tyler 1993, and Tyler 1993.

diverse forms of intervention in order to transform those behaviours and dispositions which place young people at-Risk. This thesis will work to make problematic the interventionist and transformative logics which underpin this truth of Youth at-Risk. A further aspect of this project will be to problematise both the modes of discursive production which construct this truth and which seek to critique this truth via a further form of truth telling. Thomas Popkewitz and Marie Brennan (1997) call, in this context, for a 'rigorous questioning of the will to truth embodied in educational work and educational research'. In so doing they acknowledge that 'such an invitation may be difficult to accept', especially in an intellectual domain 'centrally concerned with training in truth production' (p.313).

It can be argued, however, that 'critical' intellectual abstraction has no choice but to be open to the uncertain nature of truth telling which characterises processes of reflexive modernization. The tensions generated within these processes are not resolvable. Nor should the 'return of uncertainty' be seen as immobilising in the context of political and intellectual practice. Popkewitz and Brennan (1997) argue that a form of intellectual hubris underpins a concern that a lack of intellectual certainty or prescription undermines the very chance of political action in uncertain times. They argue that: 'People do continue to act; they have no option but to act in their daily lives' (p.313). Further, they suggest that 'we have been living under the specter of certainty since the late seventeenth century', and that 'since certainty has not worked', it may be time to 'give skepticism a try' (p.313).

Zygmunt Bauman (1990 b) argues, in a similar manner, that the 'history of modernity' is a history of attempts to 'exterminate ambivalence: to define precisely - and to suppress or eliminate everything that could or would not be precisely defined' (p.165). The return of uncertainty in the last half of the twentieth century is, thus, a *return of the suppressed*. This return generates enormous tensions, tensions which are played out in the emergence of a 'secular fundamentalism' (Giddens 1994 a); in the re emergence of religious, ethnic and nationalist conflict; and in a politics of difference structured by narratives of Multiculturalism, Assimilation, the Mainstream and the Margins. The outcomes or consequences of these tensions are, indeed, *uncertain*. The intellectual and political practice which structures this engagement with the processes of truth production about Youth at-Risk is shaped within these tensions, and takes some guidance from Bauman's (1990 b) hopes for what might emerge out of modernity's 'anti-ambivalence war of assimilation':

It would be futile to decide whether modern culture undermines or serves modern existence. It does both things. It can do each one only

together with the other. Opposition is its positivity. Dysfunctionality of modern culture is its functionality. The modern powers' struggle for artificial order needs culture that explores the limits and the limitations of the power of artifice. The struggle for order informs that exploration and is in turn informed by its findings. In the process, the struggle sheds its initial hubris: the pugnacity born of naivety and ignorance. It learns, instead, to live with its own permanence, inconclusiveness - and prospectlessness. Hopefully, it'll learn in the end the difficult skills of modesty and tolerance. (p.166)