



CHC Episode 14 : Violence & Power - Part 1

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Interview with Peter Kelly is available [online](#)

CHILDHOOD: History and Critique (CHC) is a series of interviews, commentary, and happenings in the historical studies of childhood by Dr. Patrick J. Ryan, Kings University College at Western University, Canada

On January 16, 2015, I read a [BBC story](#) about [Raif Badawi](#), the imprisoned founder of the [Saudi Liberal Network](#). King Abdullah spared him from a second round of flogging, apparently because a physician reported that he had not healed adequately from the first. Under [international pressure](#), the case was referred to Saudi Arabia's highest court. Unless Badawi is granted [special dispensation](#), presumably, the weekly flogging will resume until he dies from his wounds or endures 1,000 lashes for insulting Islam.*

For the most part, judicial corporal punishment is practiced by two kinds of states: those [influenced by Sharia](#) (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE) and places where public caning established strong roots under British rule (Malaysia, Singapore, and Tanzania). Nevertheless, Badawi's ordeal did not seem foreign to me.

The story caused my thoughts to wander to the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee report on [CIA interrogation](#) since September 11, 2001. Americans are ineffectually split over whether the program amounted to torture, whether it was legally permissible and morally acceptable, and whether it "worked." The [Pew Research Center](#) reported that the debate follows party lines. Over three-quarters of Republicans said the so-called "enhanced interrogation" techniques were justified, two-thirds said the practices yielded important information and that the program should have been kept secret.

Supporters of "enhanced interrogation" justify it as a means of discovery. It is supposed to reveal threats to security and life. To be effective, the discovered truth must remain shrouded in secrecy, even if this means it never becomes evidence at a public trial against the accused.

On opposite ends of the Earth, we have two violent programs or policies executed by the strangest of allies. One corporally punishes dissent, another interrogates terror. In dissent, a game of violence meets the state's monopoly on truth; in terrorism, a game of truth meets the state's monopoly on violence. In the first, physical pain and bodily damage is visited upon an open challenger of theocracy, who speaks "truth to power." In the second, invasive interrogation is visited upon an informant who hides or denies knowledge of violent plans and illicit organizations. Together they form a circle of punishment and interrogation.

If the dream of torture is to establish a universal doctrine, the dream of interrogation is to gaze with the all-seeing eye of discipline. As these dreams become manifest, the second does not eliminate the first. Each opens discursive space needed by the other. What is water-boarding if not a technique that moves between legal questioning and illicit torture? And, if Saudi clerics, jurists, and physicians are caught in a weird debate about when a blasphemer is healthy enough to be beaten (admittedly – this



is only my speculation), might they be approaching a similar bio-political paradox from a different direction? These questions ask us to consider discursive tensions that are being inscribed on the very bodies of terrorists and dissenters alike.

Whatever their immediate causes, the structures that conjoin these stories are not without precedent. More than four centuries ago, Francis Bacon fashioned the architecture of the **punishment-interrogation dialectic** as he tortured English Catholics. Inflicting bodily pain was “used not to produce answers to a particular charge but to discover” existing plots. Elizabethan authorities were not, they insisted, like Papal Inquisitors defending doctrinal truth. They were conducting an investigation of treason against a nascent governmental state – a novel entity in the process of being articulated. English Catholics rejected this understanding of the bodily pain they suffered and the politics of knowledge upon which it rested. The pain they experienced was a trial of faith in the defence of Truth; they were martyrs.[\[1\]](#)

These parallels are stunning, even if they only outline the surface of deeply troubling, complex situations. We still interrogate terrorist/martyrs (Islamicists, rather than English Catholics) in a mirror-image of the ordeal meted out to dissenters against theocracy (liberal writers in Saudi Arabia, rather than heretics facing an Inquisition). The characters and technologies have changed, but the structures of power-knowledge are remarkably stable.

What do such terrible things have to do with childhood and youth?

Around the world today the punishment and examination of children and youth occupies a

privileged place in law, institutions, and common family practices.[\[2\]](#)

Some might object: *how can you equate spanking with public flogging (or) testing with water-boarding?* This objection is understandable, but it misconstrues my inquiry and wrongly assumes that I am interested in supporting or opposing practices based on levels of bodily pain or psychological damage. A few paragraphs about how I am thinking about these issues might head-off confusion and clarify some key concepts.[\[3\]](#)

The concept of ‘power’ is the key. The term is commonly evoked as if it was a possession or an ability of agents and agencies, and particularly as if it was the capacity of the state to prohibit the choices of individuals – to make and enforce law. This way of thinking about ‘power’ places the decision-making subject at the heart of political questions, and therefore, it long has been vital for liberal challenges to master-servant patriarchy and absolute sovereignty. By associating ‘power’ with the capacity to secure liberty or interfere with it, modern political thought encourages us to imagine a bright line separating authoritarian and free societies. Today this line is often temporal (e.g. sometimes located in late 18th-century revolutions), or spatial/cultural (e.g. distinguishing the democratic “West” from everybody else). From this vantage point, an emancipatory project became obligatory: how do we move the world from authoritarian misuses of power toward freedom?

Because the dominant political discourse has been committed to a view of power as an ability possessed and/or exercised by agents and agencies, debates over punishment and interrogation often are limited to whether an act of power is within the boundaries of permissible violence: “When does corporal



punishment become abuse?” (“when is interrogation torture?”). These come with corollary questions: “Does the corporal punishment of children... (or the enhanced interrogation of terrorists)... work?” These lines of inquiry are so strong, they have the ability to translate all others into their own terms. We find ourselves locked into arguing about normative thresholds of violence and determining who, under what conditions, possesses the legitimate power to inflict it. Consequently, questions about the structures and techniques of power relations remain underdeveloped.

If a punishment-interrogation dialectic structures interactions between quite old forms of sovereignty and modern political arrangements, the progressive narrative becomes more difficult to support. Alternative ways of conceptualizing ‘power’ might be helpful.

A Foucauldian perspective on power begins by displacing the idea that the human subject is the origin of politics. Power is neither a capacity that can be possessed, nor is it defined by an opposition between individual choice (& free thought) and state power (or institutionalized authority). ‘Power’ appears as a relation that produces and is produced by techniques of knowing, sensing, or caring for ourselves and others; it is a creative relationship. Admittedly, this runs the risk of inserting the concept of power into everything, but it provides a way to think differently about the transformation of absolute sovereignty that attended the rise of early-modern European state reason (and the birth of liberal individualism). It offers an historical alternative to the essentialist hope that a privatized human subject can be freed from the problems of power. Therefore, it gives us a critical edge for

reconsidering the history and structure of liberal hegemony.[\[4\]](#)

Because I am interested in the structures of power, and think they are produced by historically specific practices and relationships, I will avoid making normative judgments about permissible thresholds of violence. Even if I were to advocate for a threshold of zero violence, my arguments would deploy the dominant definition of power as an action or possession. And besides, numerous well-crafted studies establishing the position against the corporal punishment of children are available. A different type of inquiry will frame CHC Ep14-15.

How have practices of bodily punishment structured generational power relations and being young?

Taking a critical (non-normative) posture toward this inquiry has benefits. It strengthens our capacity to reflect upon the things we hold true, or consider right. It helps us pause before being swept up by breath-taking visions of a world without corporal punishment for children – such as the one offered by Law Professor Susan Bitensky:

“... when spanking is prohibited by law and becomes socially unacceptable, our children are spared fear-ridden, hurtful childhoods. ...[when spanking stops, we will] have it within our reach to humanize our species’ psychological evolution and societal progress through nonviolent child-rearing. With the eradication of physical coercion as a child-rearing technique, future adults will not be as aggressive, authoritarian, or lacking in empathy. Our descendants will then be poised for an epochal psychological breakthrough: at last the human psyche will be free to shun the



tyranny, cruelty, and crimes against humanity that have plagued past millennia.”[5]

Narratives that place humanity at the cusp of liberation from violent power are seductive. Similar calls have been building for centuries, long before Wordsworth wrote that “the child is father of the man.” Yet, I have several concerns about this vision of liberation. Once we accept it, childhood becomes a means for pursuing human authenticity and relationships unsullied by the problems of worldly power. Children and youth become vehicles for our own desires for perfection.[6]

From the historians’ perspective a narrative of liberation through childhood is fraught with problems. More will be said about this in episode 15. Here it is sufficient to say that the “eradication of physical coercion as a child-rearing technique” has been accompanied by the proliferation of interrogatory techniques that Foucault called “disciplinary.” In the Foucauldian sense, discipline organizes space, time, and bodies to foster persons who take themselves as objects. It is strongest when it goes unnoticed in floor-plans, circulates in forms, transcripts, and certificates, frames talk-therapy and self-help programs, bakes its way into chemical formulas, sounds with timed bells, and charts human variation with precise instruments of observation. Disciplinary techniques produce relations of power. Perhaps there is nothing inherently malignant about them, but they are not a means for escaping the problems of power.[7]

The disciplinary institutions of childhood have been explored in many works, including books reviewed on CHC recently – Ansgar Allen’s *Benign Violence* (CHC Ep7) and Karen Smith’s *The Government of Childhood* (CHC Ep12). These investigations do not offer a general theory of how physical punishment and

disciplinary arrangements interact in all situations, but clearly the two share a profound corporeality.[8]

It seems to me we have two somewhat obvious reasons to doubt on progressive visions of generational liberation.

(a) Current reliance on violent punishment in concert with more subtle forms of control is deep and wide. It exists everywhere from exceptional cases of ‘enhanced interrogation,’ to the popular justifications for striking children with paddles and belts.

(b) If forms of violent punishment and interrogatory discipline are interdependent, we should not expect the historical growth of disciplinary techniques to liberate us from violence.

In the remainder of this episode, I offer a reading of two situations involving institutionalized violence visited upon youths and young adults which should complicate the picture of a punishment-interrogation dialectic offered at the outset. To help me make sense of these events, I recorded a conversation with [Peter Kelly](#) of RMIT University’s School of Education. I asked him to discuss his engagements with critical youth studies, generational politics, and the violence facing young people today.

In the next episode (CHC Ep15 – V&P Part 2), I will review ordinary practices and well-established policies that frame the corporal punishments experienced by millions of children and youth around the globe. This will include historical observations about the dialectic of childhood punishment-interrogation and a conversation with [Ben Parson](#), Lecturer in English at Leicester University, UK. We



discussed his work upon medieval discourses of punishment and education, and he provided some observations about a 1669 petition seeking intervention from the English Parliament into the practices of corporal punishment within schools.

Making Sense of Wicked Problems

In 2003-05, South Oak Cliff High School in Dallas used bare-knuckle [cage-fighting](#) as a punishment and to settle disruptive conflicts between boys. A decade later a non-complaint inmate in a Maine prison named [Paul Schlosser](#) was pepper sprayed in the mouth while guards were trying to strap his head into a restraint chair. Perhaps these stories are as unrelated as public flogging and water-boarding, but they expose the brisk flow of illicit violence through disciplinary practices and institutions.

Paul Schlosser is one of about 800,000 [young adults](#) (18-29) incarcerated in America – a country where one in thirty-one people are under some sort of correctional control (prison, jail, parole, or probation). Staggeringly, one-fourth of the world’s prisoners are held in the U.S., and well over half of the young Americans imprisoned are [African-American](#).

Schlosser (who is white) is serving time in Maine for a series of armed robberies that he reportedly committed to fuel a drug addiction at the age of 23. On June 10, 2012 ([video version](#)/[audio version](#)) guards removed him from his cell and placed him into a restraint chair to make him comply with medical treatment for self-inflicted wounds.

Reportedly, institutional procedures were followed until Captain Shawn Welsh fired a hefty crowd-control chemical spray at point-blank range into the inmate’s face. According to investigators, Welsh had a grudge against Schlosser, perhaps because of the prisoner’s

relentless demands. Schlosser wanted his medication to be delivered on a more timely basis, and had told the guards they were “useless.” Moments after spraying Schlosser, Welsh [leaned over](#) him while he gasped for air and whispered: “useless as teats on a bull, huh? what do you think now?”

When I asked [Peter Kelly](#) what he thought of this incident, he said the situation seemed indicative of “[wicked problems](#).” Here, the term ‘[wicked](#)’ does not refer to evil. Wicked problems resist being ‘tamed’ by our definitions of them. A problem is wicked, if it is unclear where it is located, what it includes, and whether it will remain stable over time. Chess problems occupy the other end of the spectrum; they are prototypically tame. You might not be able to solve a chess position, but its terms are definitive, constant, and closed. Perhaps we invent rational games like chess, because we live in a ‘wicked’ world. Statistical thinking, the language of risk, and medical categorization are some of the more sophisticated ways that moderns have tried to

tame and eliminate the ambivalence produced by wicked problems.[\[9\]](#)



Peter and I talked around the concept of wicked problems at-length, as he made a number of related points: (1) many policy

issues and political conflicts are inherently wicked; (2) because the boundaries are not clear, we should “widen out” our investigations of them; (3) take a critical approach to the terms we and others use; (4) but, beware of “dogmatic” statements about what constitutes a critical approach; (5) and accept the ambivalence produced by wicked situations without becoming immobilized.



Like most investigations, the ones conducted by prison officials and mass media on the treatment of Paul Schlosser attempted to ‘tame’ the event in various ways.

Prison authorities located the problem within Captain Welsh, his emotional state, and orientation toward Schlosser. According to them, Welsh’s misuse of power [transformed](#) the conflict from a “security situation to a punishment one.” Here the violent use of power is conceptualized as a capacity possessed (abused) by agents. Once the problem of power has been framed in this light, introducing sanctions against persons abusing power should deter them and others from continuing to do so.

Following this logic, the Superintendent of the prison terminated Welsh’s employment, but this was reduced to a suspension without pay for 30-days by the state’s Correction Commissioner, Joseph Ponte. Ponte [explained](#) his reasoning this way: “When you’ve got a substantial amount of years of good, sound decision-making and performance measured against one bad decision, it’s kind of, you look at the odds.” Welsh was a good risk not to become a repeat offender. Ponte also called in experts from Connecticut to provide training in “non-confrontational” techniques to deal with self-injuring prisoners. [\[10\]](#)

For Ponte, power is something exercised by decision-makers, but his agents have internal depth and operate within contexts beyond their immediate control. Therefore, violence and other abuses of power may not be amenable to swift justice or, in this case, by holding Welsh entirely accountable for the Schlosser incident. Solutions have to be systematic: better training for guards, increased procedural oversight, reduced use of solitary confinement for [young inmates](#), and scientifically-informed treatment

regimes that begin with sorting the mentally ill from the rest. In 2014, Ponte brought this precise [reform](#) agenda to New York City’s [notoriously violent](#) Riker’s Island jail. The terrible stories that emerge from this place, Ponte explained, largely stem from the policy mistake of turning jails and prisons into, “de facto [mental hospitals](#)... diversion is critical.”

Ponte’s attempts to reduce prison violence are consistent with enlightened opinion, well-represented in the 2014 BBC documentary, [“America’s New Bedlam.”](#) But, criticism of the “criminalization of mental illness” are not the preserve of progressive elites. Indeed, Paul Schlosser deployed it cogently and this seems to have precipitated Welsh’s attempt to silence him. Wicked indeed are problems that are inflamed when named. Before his incident with Welsh, Schlosser had been isolated in solitary confinement for two months, during which he complained that he had not had so much as a book to read. He was also unhappy with his psychiatric medication and its delivery, and said that he injured himself to relieve emotional pain. Frustrated, he apparently told the guards they were useless, incompetent to confront his real problems.

Schlosser’s words seemed intolerable to Welsh, who repeatedly told him to stop talking during the incident. Even when his prisoner was totally immobilized, smothering in mace, making muffled pleas for the mask to be removed, what was Welsh’s response? “If you’re talking, you’re breathing.” For Welsh, the canister’s discharge should have ended the debate and demonstrated that he possessed power (“useless” – “what do you think now?”). He proclaimed “I will win every time.” But power is not this simple. The video recording, the canister, and Welsh’s own words guaranteed that he and his guards (not Schlosser) would become objects of correction.



In fact, Welsh’s demonstration of power placed Schlosser words on a global stage, and increased disciplinary controls over Maine’s prison guards. This happened because violence often fails to close the space it creates, just as disciplinary power will always fail to free us from our dependence on blunt forms of bodily force.

Which is to say that the dialectic between discipline and punishment extends from materials and arrangements that we cannot easily dispose. Picture the explosive [canister](#) inches from Schlosser’s bound head. He was neither its first, nor its last victim. These things have [discharged](#) their contents upon the [bodies](#) of countless persons when prison guards have confronted rioting [inmates](#) or when [militarized](#) police [forces](#) have dispersed citizens. Pause to remember students, arm-locked, sitting-down at [UC-Davis](#), and so many others who have tried to make public statements by [occupying](#) spaces or [carrying](#) placards. They all faced the same physical insult to be silent from canisters, boots, batons, and rubber bullets. As parallel artefacts, these things provide a signature for a carceral project which inflicts bodily pain without deadly force. Under the shadows cast by such things, the guard-prisoner and police-citizen dyads are converging.

Is this only a problem for prisoners and protesters; terrorists and dissenters? Maybe, but who remains safely unprovoked – pacified workers and docile consumers? A concluding story might begin to show that the dialectic between violence and discipline goes far beyond prison systems and police forces.

[The news reports](#) about the use of cage-fighting to punish boys at Dallas’ South Oak Cliff High School usually [present](#) it as beyond comprehension. It was not. It appeared in the midst of the skyrocketing popularity of [mixed](#)

[marshal arts](#) with [children](#) and youth, most notably [UCF](#) events and their [central device](#): the [octagonal cage](#). At this time, the movie *Fight Club* starring Brad Pitt and Edward Norton and based on the novel by Chuck Palahniuk had gained a “cult following.”[\[11\]](#) It seems likely that larger cultural threads inspired the South Oak Cliff security guards who instituted the cage. Reportedly they were encouraged to do so by a Principal named Donald Moten – a retired police officer who carried a baseball bat after the fashion of New Jersey’s famous [Joe Clark](#). At least one cage-bout was attended by a group of cheering boys. There was little to [protect](#) the combatants: no gloves or headgear or referee. It is unclear if they padded the cell, as it had served as an ordinary equipment locker. Supposedly the confrontations were limited to 5 or 10 minutes – more than long enough to leave a lasting impression.[\[12\]](#)

Reading the cage is difficult – we have only a profile in comparison to bounty of evidence exposed after the Schlosser incident. This is unsurprising. Recall the cover of [Palahniuk’s novel](#) – “the first rule of fight club is that you do not talk about fight club.” Following Henry Giroux, one might wonder if the cage was inspired by a culture (films, music, video games) where students’ identity formation was detached from “any sense of larger political, racial, and social conditions,” or public sphere. As a pedagogical technique within a single school, the cage might signify a wider, chronic substitution of anomic violence for an education in civil, public conflict between groups (or democracy).[\[13\]](#)

This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that the cage was implemented under vigilante assumptions about educational leadership (via Clark and Moten) that surged with American conservatism. From Giroux’s perspective, echoed by Peter Kelly in our interview, practices



such as cage are more likely to appear in “the context of neoliberalism” with “the devolution of the social state and the corresponding rise of a warfare and punishing state...” As Giroux put it, neoliberalism “transformed the protected space of childhood into a zone of disciplinary exclusion and cruelty, especially for those young people further marginalized by race and class...”[\[14\]](#)

Viewing the cage as a product of neoliberalism has some advantages. It orients our understanding of the problem around recognizable electoral parties and policy positions. It gives us something to fight for and against, and that helps reduce the ambivalence produced by wicked problems. Yet, I’m not satisfied with the standard social democratic narrative on “neoliberalism.” It seems to me that many of the problems pinned to neoliberalism are rooted in modern thought and practices that have been developing for several centuries. This is particularly true for the institutional violence of schools and prisons.

Giorgio Agamben offers a longer view of power and a much less sanguine way to read the cage. The modern public sphere that Giroux praises, (so Agamben says) relies upon “an identity between the sovereign and anomie.”[\[15\]](#) The violence of “bare life” was excluded from social/political relations by its inclusion within the “political formulation of ... the sovereign bond.” To frame Agamben’s point in terms of the South Oak Cliff story: if the cage is a manifestation the idea that violence without rules must be included within the ruler in order to establish a non-violent public space, the device carries forward an ancient tradition which can hardly be blamed on Reagan and Thatcher.[\[16\]](#)

Admittedly, I do not know how the practices of the cage are related to these deeper political

questions. I only suspect that the cage invited boys to taste sovereign power as a state of exception. If so, upon entering this enclosed unregulated violent space, even for a few minutes, the boys would have simultaneously become offenders against rule (*homo sacer*) and the instruments of ruling justice (*sovereign*). More enduring than Captain Welsh’s discharge of mace, the cage might have acted like a depository and distributor (a *dispositif*) of the reliance of institutional discipline upon violent punishment.[\[17\]](#)

Some might say that the Schlosser and Oak Cliff high school stories are exceptions that confirm our enlighten sensibilities. I think they expose passageways. Here disciplinary buildings, equipment, and personnel so easily injured, caused pain, and produced obedience through fear. I would not locate these dynamics in a late-20th-century or “neoliberal” shift. They might be indicative of wicked problems with sources that resist explication, but I believe they are centuries in the making.

Next week we will pose this question (how might we think historically about the punishment-interrogation dialectic?) and turn our attention to situations where corporal punishment of children and youth is exercised in the light of day. If nothing else, moving from illicit practices toward formal policies and law will make it more difficult to dismiss the interdependence between sovereign force and disciplinary control – as if it was something out of the ordinary.

NOTES:

*After this writing, on Sunday June 7, 2015 the BBC reported that Saudi Arabia’s Supreme Court upheld Badawi’s sentence of 10 years imprisonment and



1,000 lashes. See <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33039815>

[1] Elizabeth Hanson, *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 39-40. See especially chapters 1 and 5. Also see interesting dissertation on the theological politics that transformed sovereignty in England, see: Amy T. Linch, "Community and Contention in Early Modern England," Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, 2009.

[2] Part 2 – CHC Ep15 will explore corporal punishment of children more fully. An extremely helpful, well maintained site for obtaining global information on these practices is <http://www.corpun.com/>. In addition to the many citations below and in CHC Ep15, for the English-speaking world see, Murray Strauss and Julie H. Stewart, "Corporal Punishment by American Parents: National Data on Prevalence, Chronicity, Severity, and Duration, in Relation to Child and Family Characteristics," *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* vol. 2, iss. 2 (June 1999): 55-70; Anne McGillivray, "Childhood in the Shadow of Parens Patriae" *Multiple Lenses, Multiple Images: Perspectives on the Child Across Time, Space and Disciplines* edited by in Hillel Goelman, Sheila Marshall and Sally Ross (University of Toronto Press, 2004): 38-72; Bernadette J. Saunders and Chris Goddard, *Physical Punishment in Childhood: the rights of the child* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). On the global prevalence and institutionalization of corporal punishment of children and youth in Spain, Ghana, South Africa, Romania, Israel, China, Japan, India (respectively), and in world-South see: Enrique Gracia and Juan Herrero, "Beliefs in the Necessity of Corporal Punishment of Children and Public Perceptions of Child Physical Abuse as a Social Problem," *Child Abuse and Neglect* v. 32 (2008): 1058-1062; Frances Hunt, "Policy in Practice: Teacher-Student Conflict in South African Schools," in *Education, Conflict and Reconciliation: International Perspectives* edited by F. Leach and M. Dunne (Peter Lang, 2007); Vusi Mncube and Tshilidzi Netshitangani, "Can Violence Reduce Violence in Schools? The Case of Corporal Punishment," *Journal of Sociology and Social*

Anthropology vol. 5, no. 1 (2014): 1-9; Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, "Children's Perceptions of Physical Punishment in Ghana and the implications for Children's Rights," *Childhood: a journal of global research* v. 20, n. 4 (2013): 472-486; Adrian V. Rus et al, "Severe Punishment of Children by Staff in Romanian Placement Centers for School-Aged Children: Effects of Children and Institutional Characteristics," *Child Abuse & Neglect* v. 37 (2013): 1152-1162; Zeev Winstok, "Israeli Mothers' Willingness to Use Corporal Punishment to Correct the Misbehavior of Their Elementary School Children," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* v. 29, no. 1 (Jan 2014): 44-65; Meifang Wang and Li Lui, "Parental Harsh Discipline in Mainland China: Prevalence, Frequency, and Coexistence," *Child Abuse & Neglect* vol. 38, no. 6 (June 2014) 1128–1137; Aaron L. Miller, *Discourses of Discipline: An Anthropology in Japan's Schools and Sports* (Institute of East Asian Studies, 2013); N.S. Mumthas, Jouhar Munavvir, and K. Abdul Gaffor, "Student and Teacher Perceptions of Disciplinary Practices: Types, Reasons, Consequences and Alternatives," *Guru Journal of Behavioral and Social Sciences* vol. 2 iss. 4 (Oct – Dec, 2014); Jennifer E. Lansford et al, "Attitudes Justifying Domestic Violence Predict Endorsement of Corporal Punishment and Physical and Psychological Aggression towards Children: A study of 25 Low- and Middle-Income Countries," *Journal of Pediatrics* v. 164 n. 5 (May 2014): 1208-1213.

[3] The comments provided here can only be cursory. A fuller understanding of the Foucauldian perspective requires sustained effort (see notes 4, 7, and 8). Students might begin with two accessible guides: Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, *A Foucault Primer: discourse, power, and the subject* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University, 1993); Todd May, *The Philosophy of Foucault* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006).

[4] Here I am following a few closely related attempts to reconstruct the history of sovereign violence and its modern transformation into biopolitics. See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press,



1998); *State of Exception* trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Agamben's work in the *Homo Sacer* series builds upon the fragmentary efforts by Foucault in the late 1970s and early 1980s. See especially lectures 9-12 in Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France, 1977-1978* edited by Michel Senellart, Trans. by Graham Burchell (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 227-332; *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979* edited by Michel Senellart, Trans. by Graham Burchell (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). A helpful summary of governmental rationality is provided by Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* 2nd edition (London: Sage, 2010): 101-115.

[5] Susan H. Bitensky, "Spare the Rod, Embrace Human Rights: International Law's Mandate Against All Corporal Punishment of Children," *Whittier Law Review* v. 21 (1999): 161. Special thanks to an unpublished paper by James E. Radford, Jr. "Perfecting the Paddle," for drawing my attention to Bitensky's article and making a similar point. Also see, Susan H. Bitensky, *Corporal Punishment of Children: a human rights violation* (Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers, 2006).

[6] On the romantic poets see Judith Plotz's brilliant essay, "The Perpetual Messiah: Romanticism, Childhood, and the Paradoxes of Human Development," in *Regulated Children/Liberated Children: Education in Psychohistorical Perspective* edited by Barbara Finkelstein (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1979): 63-95; and her book *Romanticism and the vocation of Childhood* (New York: Palgrave Press, 2001).

[7] The starting point remains Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977). Other 'must reads' in the history of child science include, Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Andre Turmel, *A Historical Sociology of Childhood: developmental thinking, categorization, and graphic visualization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[8] The research on disciplinary and bio-political structures of childhood is extensive; also see, Majia Holmer Nadesan, *Governing Childhood into the 21st Century: Biopolitical Technologies of Childhood Management and Education* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Michael A. Peters *et al* ed. *Governmentality Studies in Education* (Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2009); Roger Deacon, *Fabricating Foucault: rationalising the management of individuals* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2003); Kenneth Hultqvist and Gunilla Dahlberg, eds. *Governing the Child in the New Millennium* (New York, NY: Routledge Falmer, 2001); Anne McGillivray ed., *Governing Childhood* (Aldershot, UK: Dartmouth, 1997); Ian Hunter, *Rethinking the School: subjectivity, bureaucracy, criticism* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994).

[9] Tom Ritchey, *Wicked Problems – Social Messes: Decision Support Modeling with Morphological Analysis* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2011); Peter Kelly, "Wild and Tame Zones: Regulating the Transitions of Youth at Risk," *Journal of Youth Studies* vol. 2, no. 2 (1999): 193-219. Also see, Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991); Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[10] David Hench, "Prison Captain Fired, but later Reinstated after Pepper Spraying Inmate," *Portland Press Herald* March 16, 2013.

[11] David Ansen, "Is Anybody Making Movies We'll Actually Watch In 50 Years?" *Newsweek* July 11, 2005.

[12] Frank Hammond, *SOC: Welcome to the Cage* (Bloomington, IN: Iuniverse Inc., 2011) provides a tell-all account of the sexual illegalities, transcript fraud, grade-fixing, and other fraudulent actions of South Oak Cliff High School's staff and administrators. Unfortunately, it offers little insight into student discipline or the Cage.

[13] Giroux outlined his larger thesis on youth culture and the decline of public life in *Fugitive Cultures: race, violence, and youth* (NY: Routledge,



1996): 38. For an important critique of *Fight Club* (the movie) for failing to identify the destruction of the public sphere under neo-liberalism as the cause of young men’s sense of powerlessness and anomie, see Henry A. Giroux, “Private Satisfactions and Public Disorders: “Fight Club”, Patriarchy, and the Politics of Masculine Violence,” *JAC* vol. 21, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 1-31.

[14] Henry Giroux, “Resisting Youth and the Crushing State Violence of Neoliberalism,” in *A Critical Youth Studies for the 21st Century* edited by Peter Kelly and Annelies Kamp (Leiden: Brill, 2014): 225, 228.

[15] Agamben, *State of Exception*, 70.



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[16] Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 9; 31-32; 82-86.

[17] Giorgio Agamben, “What is a Dispositif?” at <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/giorgio-agamben/articles/what-is-a-dispositif/part-1/>