

School food and the pedagogies of parenting

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Over the past decade the issue of food and in particular, food consumed within schools has come to encapsulate a broad range of concerns regarding children and young people's health and wellbeing. In Australia, the UK and more recently the USA, attempts to ameliorate a range of public health concerns have provided the impetus for an unprecedented proliferation of school food initiatives and legislative reforms governing the types of foods that may or may not be provided within schools. While academic enquiry in this area has largely focussed upon attempts to govern children, recent initiatives in the UK and Australia have begun to target parents in their attempts to promote healthy food practices. In this paper we interrogate the ways in which parents, or more specifically, mothers are positioned in relation to school food discourses in Australia and in the UK and suggest that school food has become a site through which an array of pedagogical opportunities are opened

up to invoke particular subject positions premised on normative views of affective middle class motherhood. In short, we seek to explore the means through which mothers come to be regarded as legitimate targets of school food pedagogy. The paper draws on empirical data from Australia and the UK to compare a range of pedagogic techniques employed in the two countries. Drawing on governmentality studies we explore how school food pedagogies seek to regulate mothers and their children's food related choices. We consider school lunches and the various techniques that have been deployed in both countries to consider the moralising work that takes place around food and motherhood.

Introduction

Over the last decade the issue of school food has dominated the public health agenda across the higher OECD countries such as Australia, the UK and more recently the USA. School food and the myriad initiatives related to healthy eating have provided a forum through which concerns over the future health and wellbeing of children are articulated. As such, the recent campaign of celebrity chef, Jamie Oliver to improve both the nutritional quality and the aesthetic appeal of school lunches has become part of the dominant discourse surrounding school meals and has been recognised as an influential factor in mobilising public opinion. However, the preoccupation with school food is characteristic of far wider concerns about the condition of modern childhood; concerns which are embedded within specific ways of thinking about women, class and the family (Gustafsson, 2002).

While policy and political discourses configure responsibility for the feeding of children in gender neutral terms through the use of the word parent, it is acknowledged that any analysis of feeding practices necessarily entails thinking about motherhood and

femininity (De Vault, 1991; Lupton, 1996; Warin et al., 2008). Such analyses point to the positioning of women as responsible guardians of future generations (Maher et al., 2010) while others have argued that it is specific groups of women, namely the poor that carry the burden of blame for jeopardising the health, education and potential productivity of future citizens (Gillies, 2007; Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989). In terms of parenting, 'Working class mothering practices are held up as the antithesis of good parenting, largely through their association with poor outcomes for children' (Gillies, 2007:2). In relation to school food, working class women are constituted through media and governmental discourse as lacking in taste, education and morality and this is constructed in opposition to the normative position of effective middle class motherhood. Thus while children and teachers have previously been considered legitimate targets of school food education (Leahy, 2009; Pike, 2010; Vander Schee, 2009) contemporary policy and practice is predicated on the imperative to 'educate' mothers with regard to feeding their children. While there are many different spaces that perform this work, it is the role of schools, as appropriate sites for the 'pedagogicalisation' of parents that is the focus of this paper.

Throughout this paper we interrogate the ways in which parents, or more specifically, mothers are positioned in relation to school food discourses and pedagogies in Australia and in England and suggest that school food has become a site through which an array of pedagogical opportunities are opened up to invoke particular subject positions premised on normative views of affective middle class motherhood. We do not attempt to illustrate how mothers take up these subject positions or the impact of these pedagogies on mothering practices. Rather we are interested to explore the means through which mothers come to be regarded as necessary targets of school food pedagogy and how these pedagogies are designed to enlist parents into a moral project of the self.

The paper draws on empirical data from two ethnographic studies undertaken in schools in Australia and England to illustrate the pedagogic techniques and strategies employed in the two countries. In England data were generated in four primary schools in the north of England between 2006 and 2007 using established ethnographic methods such as observations in dining rooms and classrooms, interviews with teachers, head teachers and school meals staff and participatory work with children aged 4-6 years and 10-11 years. Methods used with children included photography projects, draw and write activities, mapping exercises and modelling and role play. In the Australian study, data were generated from 3 secondary schools in Victoria using a range of ethnographic methods including, observations of health education lessons and interviews with teachers, together with a critical analysis of health education curriculum documents and teaching resources.

Initially, we outline the theoretical terrain that frames our analysis before providing an account of contemporary school food policy in both England and Australia. We then proceed to delineate some of the ways that formal and informal school food pedagogies, attempt to shape mothers' fields of action illustrating this with reference to pedagogies of the school lunchbox. The school lunchbox can be regarded as an intersectional space in which an assemblage of governmental techniques and strategies, emanating from a variety different sources, converge. We suggest that such pedagogical practices perform governmental work that is explicitly moral and as such, entices mothers to engage in practices of self-formation centred around notions of effective motherhood. Finally, we conclude by suggesting some of the outcomes of such approaches using the 'Battle of Rawmarsh' as an example of a critical incident in England where mothers resisted attempts to transform their children's school food and were subsequently vilified by the media and celebrities such as Jamie Oliver.

Governing food: the role of school food pedagogies

In order to understand the proliferations of school food pedagogies, and in turn how they work to govern parental food practices we draw on the field of Foucauldian inspired governmentality studies. Foucault defined government as ‘the conduct of conduct’ stating that government relates to the ‘way in which the conduct of individuals or groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick ... to govern in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action’ (Foucault, 1982: 220-221). His various analyses of government explored questions related to how conduct, and attempts to shape conduct, were imagined and enacted within different historical epochs, states and sites (Gordon, 1991). For the purposes of this paper, we seek to understand the role that contemporary school food pedagogies play in attempting to structure parents, and specifically mothers, possible fields of action. According to Mitchell Dean (2010: 18) government refers to:

...any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledges, that seeks to shape conduct by working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs, for definite but shifting ends and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes.

Within this context we understand school food pedagogies to work as governmental devices that provide a ‘contact point’ for government (Burchell, 1996) that connects questions of government, politics, and administration to the space of bodies, lives, selves and persons (Dean, 2010: 20). In essence school food pedagogies provide government with an opportunity to explicitly shape, sculpt, mobilize and work through the food choices, desires and aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of parents, families and children. The explicit intention of food pedagogies is to enlist parents into a process of ‘governmental self formation’

Significantly though, Dean (2010: 19) suggests that any attempt to govern, and hence the various food pedagogies that circulate are accompanied by moral imperatives. He states that:

...the rational attempt to shape conduct implies another feature of this study of government: it links with moral questions. If morality is understood as the attempt to make oneself accountable for one's own actions, or as a practice in which human beings take their own conduct to be subject to self-regulation then government is an intensely moral activity ... It is a moral enterprise as it presumes to know with varying degrees of explicitness and using specific forms of knowledge, what constitutes good, virtuous, appropriate, responsible conduct of individuals.

Therefore we must consider the ways in which these moral imperatives are used to shore up school food pedagogies and the ways that mothers in particular are rendered accountable for the decisions they take about how, when, where and what to feed their children.

School food policy

In both England and Australia, school food has been situated within the public health policy landscape, most notably in relation to the perceived threat of rising levels of childhood overweight and obesity (Department of Health, 2004; Department of Health, 2008; Gard & Wright, 2005; Rich, 2010; Vander Schee & Gard, 2011). In England the importance of campaigns to improve the nutritional quality of school food was highlighted:

Amongst children obesity is growing at a rapid, indeed alarming, rate. This is the reason why campaigns like those run by Jamie Oliver on School Dinners are not a passing fad, they are central to the nation's future health. (Tony Blair, 26 July, 2006)

Aside from the explicitly nationalistic overtones in this quotation, the discursive construction of childhood obesity as 'alarming' an 'epidemic' or 'ticking time bomb' is problematic to say the least (Campos, 2004; Gard & Wright, 2005; Evans, 2006). Nevertheless

the positioning of childhood obesity within this discursive framework has provided a rationale to legitimise a range of interventions designed to encourage subjects to make healthier lifestyle choices (Burrows, 2009; Leahy, 2009; Rich, 2010; Vander Schee, 2009). In Australia and England, this governmentalisation has worked in two ways; first by limiting individuals' fields of action, by curtailing the types of food available to pupils at school and second, by encouraging pupils to act upon themselves as healthy subjects. The former relates to the regulation of the types of foods that can and cannot be served at school. In Australia guidance based, primarily on food groups was published through the *National Guidelines for healthy food and drinks supplied in school canteens* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010) with some variation in terms of implementation between particular states, (<https://healthy-kids.com.au/page/107/other-state-canteen-strategies>) many of which had developed their own set of guidelines prior to this Federal initiative. In England, nutrient based standards stipulate that school lunches should contain minimum or maximum amounts of 14 different nutrients (Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 2359).

In both Australia and England students are able to go home for lunch, bring a lunch from home, or purchase in lunch in the school canteen. English school lunches typically comprise of different hot and cold meal options that might include curries, casseroles, pasta dishes, salads and jacket potatoes along with hot and cold dessert options. Australian students can purchase items such as, sandwiches, pasta salads, fruit and pizza from their school canteen.

Despite differences in approach, both governments are actively attempting to direct school food decision makers to include, reduce the presence of, or remove, certain foods and drinks from school canteens. This directive is based on the notion that 'healthy kids have healthy canteens' and the assumption that the introduction of school food standards will enhance the nutritional quality of food available

to children in schools, and hence will contribute to an overall improved diet and reduction in overweight and obesity. The latter strategy of government which seeks to encourage students to regulate their own behaviour, relates to the plethora of health education initiatives and interventions in which pupils are taught the value of healthy eating and learn how to select, prepare, and grow food that will prevent them becoming overweight in the future. It is hoped that, with appropriate guidance and support, students will become self regulating subjects (Pike, 2008; Leahy, 2009; Vander Schee, 2009). Much of this is predicated on the assumption that students simply do not have the knowledge and skills to make the 'correct' choices in terms of the food they consume without assistance from experts. Thus schools have become key sites for the transmission of particular kinds of knowledge about food and health and the production of particular types of consuming subjects.

However, while schools have been the locus of attempts to ameliorate specific public health concerns, recent interventions overtly seek to recruit mothers into this endeavour through discourses of engagement and partnership (Crozier, 1998; Popkewitz, 2002). Not only do schools encourage future generations to become self regulating citizens, but they also to extend their reach beyond the school gates through increasingly porous boundaries to invite mothers to contribute to this biopolitical strategy (Pike & Colquhoun, 2012). In so doing, mothers are recruited into a network of governmental programs that converge around the issue of school food which crucially work to constitute a particular kind of good subject. We do not wish to imply a simplistic relationship between biopolitical governance and mothers' acceptance or rejection of school food pedagogies. Rather we suggest a more complex picture comprised of a multitude of different positions that may be adopted and in turn that there are many ways in which mothers may be enticed into occupying them. Our concern here though is to illustrate the ways in which

different fields of action are curtailed and opened up through this pedagogicalisation of mothers.

School food pedagogies

It is without doubt that we have been witness to unprecedented policy action in and around food in schools in both Australia and England. As a result a proliferation of school based food pedagogies shape students' food related desires and practices (see Rich, 2011; Vander Schee & Gard, 2011). And whilst traditionally students have been the targets of school governmental interventions, mothers have recently become the object and target of school food pedagogies. Lisette Burrows (2009: 131) documents a range of school based and public food related pedagogies directed towards 'pedagogicalising parents'. Her analyses reveal a plethora of web sites, television programs, advice brochures, advertising and online games that prescribe approaches to good parenting demonstrated through food selection, preparation and consumption.

Whilst we acknowledge that these devices form part of the broader governmental assemblage, in the ensuing discussion we focus our analytical gaze on school lunches, and in particular the school lunch box. School meals have attracted an enormous amount of governmental attention, and we want to explore how the school lunch box has become a site whereby students and their mothers are enlisted into the governmental process via a multitude of pedagogical techniques that prescribe certain practices of preparing lunch boxes, and thus mothering and eating. The school lunchbox is significant in the pedagogicalisation of mothers since it traverses both physical and symbolic boundaries between home and school and represents a performative enactment of the attitude of the mother towards children's wellbeing and education or rather 'it is a sign of a woman's commitment as a mother and her inspiring her child to become similarly committed as a student' (Allison, 1997: 302). Thus, the

composition of and care invested in a child's lunchbox articulates the mother/child relationship, the nature of care given to the child and mother's acceptance of particular truths and knowledge related to **nutrition**.

Pedagogies of the lunchbox

The 'obesity epidemic' has rendered children's lunchboxes governable, and consequently we have witnessed the necessary emergence of a multitude of pedagogical strategies aimed at regulating children's lunchboxes. And although lunchboxes are not governed by food standards in Australia or England, other mechanisms come into play to 'ensure' that mothers place the appropriate contents into lunchboxes.

For example in England, the School Food Trust produced a letter for parents in March 2010 suggesting a three weekly menu designed to improve the quality of packed lunches. Nevertheless, because of the drive to increase take up of school lunches, parents were still guided towards school meals as a preferred option. School lunches enable children to try new foods which "may be a good way of ensuring that your child has a healthy meal which may impact on their behaviour and concentration in the classroom" (SFT, 2010). Good mothers who care about their children's education do not even attempt to provide a packed lunch for them. Feeding children is better left to nutritional experts.

In Australia guidelines and support materials have been developed by various Departments of Health and of Education to assist parents' decision-making about packing lunchboxes. In *Healthy lunch box ideas: save time, money and effort* parents are told that 'packing a nutritious lunch box for your child to take to Family Day Care can be easy. Whether your child is in full-time care, part-time care, out of hours care or after school-care using the four simple steps below will ensure your child is eating well and meeting the Family Day Care

Food and Nutrition Guidelines' (Noarlunga Health Services, 2004: 1). The four simple steps to packing lunchboxes are:

1. Write a list of all the meals and snacks your child will take to Family Day Care. Include breakfast, snacks, lunch, dinner or supper.
2. Use the table below to work out which of the five food groups to pack for different meals and snacks.

Meal or snack	Food group suggestions to pack
Breakfast	cereal product + dairy
Snack	1 dairy + fruit
Lunch	cereal product + dairy+ meat or alternative + vegetables
Snack 2	dairy + cereal product
Dinner	cereal product + dairy+ meat or alternative + vegetables
Supper	dairy + fruit

3. Using the table, decide on the particular food you want to pack. If your child is old enough, you may like to ask them to suggest their own choices from the five food groups.
4. Once you have decided on the foods you will pack over a week, you can add the items to your shopping list.

The brochure provides mothers with practical lunchbox ideas, information about how much food a child needs and what to do about treat foods (which should be excluded from lunchboxes because of the risk of nutrient deficiencies and/or children's overweight). Instead, treat foods should be substituted with stickers, a crayon, a written joke or a favourite toy. In moving beyond the remit of lunchboxes into prescribing appropriate mothering practice, the brochure offers advice about further possibilities for positive reinforcement, for

example an excursion or a visit to a park and suggests other ways to provide comfort, aside from treats, including hugs and cuddles, singing to the child or giving positive facial expressions.

The brochure is certainly not unique and governments and their associated health agencies in Australia and the UK have produced a plethora of material to provide information to parents about providing healthy lunches for their children (see 'Great lunch and snack ideas for hungry kids' – Queensland Government 2004; 'Food ideas for Home and School' – Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Education, 'Change 4 Life', NHS <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/childhealth6-15/Pages/Lighterlunchboxes.aspx>). However, what we wish to emphasise here is the binding of lunchbox preparation to effective practices of motherhood and the extension of school food pedagogies into this broader territory. In addition mothers are interpellated in other ways via a range of mass media. Usually at the time children are due to return to school, women's magazines and television lifestyle shows develop specialised segments to educate mothers about what to pack in their child's lunchbox. These media frequently enlist a range of celebrity lifestyle experts to guide the 'ordinary' consumer in choosing food that is both nutritious and conforms to a particular aesthetic of culinary taste (de Solier 2005, Lewis, 2008; Powell & Prasad, 2010). Thus, the constellation of school lunch pedagogies that converge around school lunches works to cultivate certain parenting practices, from preparing healthy lunchboxes which conform to dominant cultural understandings of taste, to providing treats and offering comfort. Expert knowledges usurp those of mothers' since the implicit message is that food prepared by the state is unquestionably healthy because it is approved by nutritionists. Lunchboxes provided from home require intervention from experts to adhere to scientific principles of child nutrition rather than relying on mothers' knowledge of their children's individual tastes and preferences; and a range of tactical strategies ensure that they do.

Stop and search: strategies of the lunchbox police

The governing of lunchboxes is an ongoing project. Once the lunch box has been packed and sent off to school with the child, lunchboxes (their owners and packers) are subjected to further governmental mechanisms. Lunchbox surveillance is commonly employed as a pedagogical device in both England and Australia and has similarly been documented in other research (see Burrows & Wright, 2007; Leahy, 2009; Rich, 2010). As a governmental strategy, teachers are called on to evaluate lunchbox contents in light of dietary information and to develop pedagogical responses to policing lunchboxes. In the following excerpt we consider the policing of lunchboxes as explained at a teacher professional development seminar. The seminar was part of a broader suite of seminars assembled together by a professional association aimed at building capacity of teachers to work in health related areas in schools. **The presenter discussed a range of strategies that could be deployed by teachers as they attempted to fight the war on obesity. One of the key strategies being advocated was lunchbox surveillance. Teachers were instructed that at lunch time they should check lunchboxes as students sat down to eat. Teachers were encouraged to reinforce ‘good choices’ by highlighting them when they are noticed. For example if a student had a banana in their lunchbox, the teacher could (and should) transform this into a pedagogical moment by praising the contents and deliver nutrient knowledge about the particular item. There were other tactics though too that teachers could draw on. For example if they walked past a bad lunchbox they could either give that lunchbox the silent treatment, or they could express a ‘tsk tsk’ to let it be known that the student’s lunchbox was not acceptable.**

In the English study, the policing of lunchboxes tended to be conducted within the school dining room by the head teacher or by lunchtime supervisors. Once again, children with undesirable items in their lunchbox were made an example of:

Mrs. C (head teacher) gets up to leave the dining room. She leaves through the door nearest to the pack up table. She stops abruptly near the door and shouts loudly and slowly, "I don't want to see crisps in pack ups. They are not healthy! Don't bring them anymore!" Her voice is loud and booming and quite intimidating. She stares at the children on the pack up table with her hands on her hips. All goes quiet and she leaves the dining room. She walks very slowly as if to emphasise the gravity of the situation. It underscores her authority I feel. (Fieldnotes, Cleveland School)

While teachers in the Australian study were encouraged to deploy the silent treatment for lunchboxes deemed to be unhealthy, in the English study, the head teachers' disapproval was overt, unequivocal and embodied. There can be no misinterpretation of the message **in this interaction. But for those students who persisted in bringing unacceptable lunchboxes**, further action was required, particularly where lunchboxes contained chocolate, which was considered the most offensive item for inclusion in a lunchbox. When chocolate was discovered it was immediately confiscated by lunchtime staff, teachers were notified and mothers were spoken to by teachers after school:

A I had to speak to the mum. I just said that they're not allowed chocolate.

Q Were you happy to do that?

A Yes, cos I agree with it. I don't think he should be having chocolate for his lunch. Cos children do tend to leave their sandwiches or leave their apple, and then just eat the sweets straightaway. (Teacher Rose Hill)

For teachers, speaking to mum was considered to be the final weapon in their armoury against the unhealthy lunchbox. However, certain types of mothers were regarded as repeat offenders and these were generally felt to be those mothers that failed to adhere to expectations around the nutritional content and aesthetic quality of food. The assumption was that lunchboxes reflected parents' diets and attitudes

to food. In areas of deprivation, this meant that parents' diets, **food repertoire and nutritional knowledge were poor.** The kinds of foods alluded to in the example below are cheap, processed and characteristically working class (Bourdieu, 1984; Lupton, 1996; de Solier 2005; Powell & Prasad, 2010):

I don't particularly think the parents' diets, the majority of the parents' diet round here is particularly healthy..... generally the parents tend to pack them up with their own packed lunch, and you see the stuff that they've been packed up with and it's just, like, packets of biscuits and crisps and, and, erm, you know, bars of chocolate and packets of sweets and fizzy drinks and it's everything you can imagine an unhealthy packed lunch to be.
(Teacher Crosby)

There are to be sure many variations of lunchbox surveillance as described above. The mandate for conducting such strategies gains its support from obesity risk discourses. We cannot know what the bodily and emotional responses are for those children who are praised, shamed or disciplined because of their lunchbox contents from these data. On the very surface the intention is that praise will reinforce a positive behaviour so that it continues. For those whose lunchboxes were subjected to negative responses, for example the tsk tsk-ing teachers, or having to sit and endure their teachers' silence, the very experience is explicitly designed to encourage the child to bring a better lunch box. The message is clear, if they bring a 'good' lunch box they can avoid having to bear the brunt of the bodily discomfort of shame. In addition, the 'good' lunch box may actually become an exemplar that they could then feel proud of.

Such strategies are designed not only to educate students about healthy eating, but also to educate mothers in nutrition and the aesthetics of food as the lunchbox functions as a two way conduit across the porous boundary between home and school. The logic of this approach proceeds along the lines that teaching children about healthy eating or eliciting affective responses to teachers' approval/

disapproval, will 'educate' mothers and motivate them to uphold mothering practices that are configured around middleclass norms. This intention is explicit in political discourse.

If we teach children about food, they will choose healthier food and educate their parents as well. In disadvantaged areas with Sure Start, mothers and fathers are learning much more about food and food co-operatives are being set up. (Mary Creagh - column 590 Hansard 28/10/05)

The mothers that are targeted by such approaches are those from 'disadvantaged backgrounds' living in 'deprived communities' for example in 'Sure Start' areas, whose children are eligible for free school meals, attend breakfast clubs or who have special needs. As Stephanie Lawler (2005) suggests, these women are characterised by their 'lack'; they lack the appropriate level of cooking skills, they lack taste in terms of their food preferences and they lack the right kind of knowledge to be able to feed their children adequately. But as Lawler and others have suggested, (Skeggs, 2005; Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989;) this 'lack' is intimately bound up with ideas of class and gender and women who are deemed deficient are positioned as 'other' in relation to normative assumptions of effective middle-class mothering practices. Encouraging women to refashion themselves in response to these normative assumptions becomes the explicit aim of school food pedagogies and as such represents their overtly moral function (Dean, 2010). And because ultimately, these practices of self-formation are couched in moral terms, where morality 'is understood as the attempt to make oneself accountable for one's own actions, or as a practice in which human beings take their own conduct to be subject to self-regulation' (Dean, 2010: 19) attempts to resist school food pedagogies are understood as excessive, unruly and immoral.

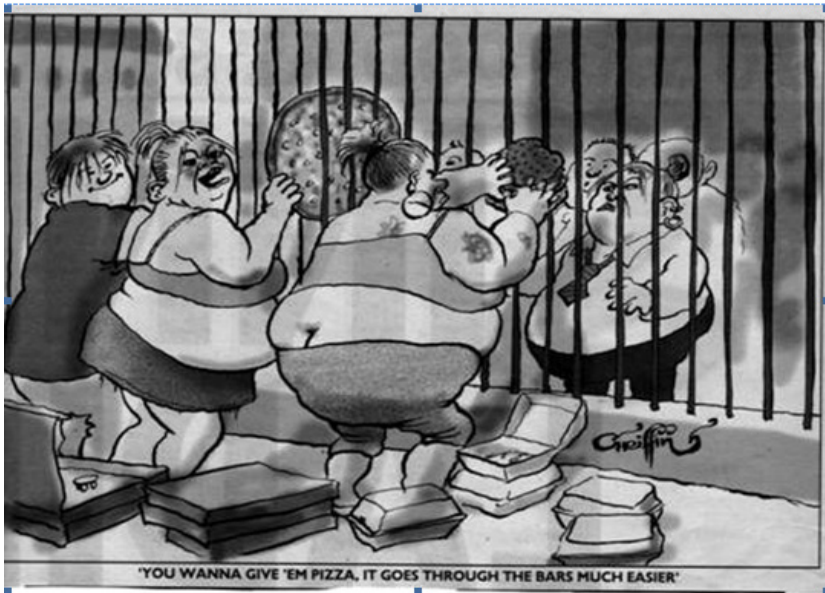
Resisting pedagogicalisation: contested subjects and the Battle of Rawmars

While undoubtedly there are many examples of opposition to school food reforms, the events that unfolded in England in September 2006 at a secondary school in Rotherham, South Yorkshire provoked an unprecedented degree of media attention. For this reason, we turn our attention towards an event which became known as ‘The Battle of Rawmarsh’ as a critical incident in school food pedagogies where different components in the pedagogical assemblage converged and a variety of alignments between the media, health agencies and schools were forged.

In response to high profile campaigns over the quality of school food, the new academic year commenced at Rawmarsh Comprehensive School with the implementation of a revised, healthier school lunch menu. However, some students were unhappy about the quality and selection of food and the time spent queuing in the canteen. Consequently, two mothers purchased food from nearby takeaways and shops and delivered it through the school railings to their children at lunchtime. This enterprise proved more popular **with students than with the head teacher and as trade increased** relationships between the school and the women became increasingly acrimonious. Since the school had no jurisdiction over the space beyond the school railings and both the school and the women refused to reevaluate their actions, a standoff ensued that was played out in the national and international media. With few exceptions, the media characterised these women in relation to their poor taste, their

deficient intelligence and lack of moral integrity and their ineffective mothering practices.¹

Figure 1: The ‘Battle of Rawmarsh’, *The Sun*, September 2006



The physical appearance of the women in the cartoon bears no resemblance to their actual appearance with later pictures in the press revealing the women wearing jeans and t-shirts, with short tidy hair, and a small amount of makeup and jewellery. Nevertheless, the cartoon and some of the written articles invoke particular notions

1 In the UK series *Jamie's Ministry of Food* (Channel 4), Julie Critchlow, one of the "Burger-mum[s]" of Rawmarsh received more sympathetic treatment as celebrity chef Jamie Oliver attempted to recruit her into supporting his cookery campaign. According to the Channel 4 website "Jamie wants Julie, who is actually a good cook herself, to help him to inspire others to cook at home" (<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/jamies-ministry-of-food/articles/about-jamies-ministry-of-food>). This programme specifically targeted the area of Rotherham as a site for Jamie's cookery school because of the 'Battle of Rawmarsh' incident. Furthermore, Jamie Oliver acknowledged in this programme that his previous comments in the press branding the women 'scrubbers' were a little unfair.

of working class femininity that provide legitimacy for school food pedagogies. The portrayal of these mothers invokes an affective response of disgust through the use of recognisable cultural signs that mark these women out as working class, for example, the cheap clothes which expose too much flesh, the ‘Croydon facelift’ pony tails, the tattoos, the huge earrings and of course, the excessive, fat and grotesque bodies. Thus they are presented as lacking in taste, symbolised by their clothing, bodies and appearance (Lawler, 2005, Tyler, 2008). Notions of taste are crucial to aspects of self-formation, particularly in relation to food (Lupton, 1996) and in particular to the constitution of white working class femininity (Lawler, 2002). Thus, the cheap, processed, fatty, take away food that they distributed displays their inability to make adequate healthy and aesthetic judgements. They simply don’t know what good food is.

In relation to their morality, the amount of flesh on show in these cartoons clearly identifies the characters as women with a particular licentious attitude to sexual relations. In the popular press Jamie Oliver branded these women ‘scrubbers’. By drawing on the symbolic associations of fat, and the liberal exposure of it the women are seen to embody excessive appetites. In addition, the women’s lack of intelligence was illustrated in *The Times* which characterised the entire town as “a place where fat stupid mothers fight for the right to raise fat stupid children” (Hattersley, *The Times* 24th Sept 2006). Here the women were deemed to be operating irrationally through their non-compliance with the prevailing orthodoxy around healthy eating, an orthodoxy in which school dinners are considered the *only* means of providing a nutritious meal for children during the school day. This discourse specifically positions the women as irresponsible guardians of future generations with their ineffective mothering practices bound to their embodied status as ‘fat’. But perhaps the most savage attack came from the women’s own regional paper, *The Yorkshire Post*:

If the rest of the world had ever wondered what goes on in deepest South Yorkshire, then they now know, thanks to the 'Rawmarsh Junk Food Mothers'. Quite aside from the sheer stupidity (and lack of respect) of shoving burger 'n' chips to schoolkids through a fence by standing on graves, the good ladies of Rawmarsh have demonstrated that the problems in our education system go back a lot further than one generation.

I am trying not to be personally abusive, because I wouldn't want to come across any of them on a dark night, but, honestly, what an embarrassing shower (Dowle, 22 September 2006, *Yorkshire Post*)

The article continues to stereotype the women further by labelling them incoherent, poorly educated, alluding to their lack of employment and even suggesting that they wore 'saggy leggings' thereby reinforcing their class position and lack of taste (Lawler, 2002; Lawler, 2005). Such caricatures serve to reinforce the distinction between rational, educated, affective middle class motherhood and the irrational, badly dressed, poorly educated, unhealthy working class mothers who are notable because of their deficiencies. By imbuing these women with such a range of reprehensible attributes, the moral work that accompanies attempts to govern is performed. Equating particular kinds of subjects with opposition to school food reforms shapes the field of possible responses that subjects can choose.

Discussion

Throughout this paper, we have attempted to highlight the ways in which school food pedagogies seek to shape and influence the food related desires and aspirations of children, young people and their mothers. Pedagogies attempt to cultivate and shape behaviour by providing the technical means by which subjects can transform their food practices by supplying information, skills, guidance and incitement. In particular we have focused upon the school lunchbox, its construction and the related practices of surveillance, punishment

and reward, as a governmental technology through which certain types of mothers become targets of regulation. We have attempted to locate these pedagogies within a broader governmental assemblage of policy, political and media discourse and the plethora of different agencies that are concerned with school food. School food and the school lunchbox in particular can be regarded as sites where these different elements converge. Through this convergence a complex process of negotiation occurs where alliances are formed, resistance is offered and battles are played out. However, the project of successful government is to ensure that particular governmental imperatives are met, that alignments are forged and resistance is negated in order to enact or rather 'translate' governmental ambitions into practice (Rose, 1999 and 2000).

We suggest that school food pedagogies are essential in achieving the translation of governmental imperatives as pedagogies form 'the various complex of techniques, instruments, measures and programs that endeavours to translate thought into practices and thus actualize political reason' (Inda, 2005: 9). In particular we suggest that school lunchboxes can be regarded translation mechanisms that enable the objectives of government to align with the subjects of government, which in relation to the feeding of children, is generally mothers.

The governmental work that school food pedagogies perform is explicitly moral in that it seeks to encourage subjects to work upon themselves in ways that support particular views of health, consumption and taste and which are tightly bound with concepts of class, gender and what it is to be a 'good mother'. When mothers resist these particular rationalities of government their subjectivity is called into question and found to be deficient. Our brief examination of school lunch box pedagogies and the Battle of Rawmarsh crystallizes the alignment of the school and the media to declare this resistance irrational, immoral, disgusting and unhealthy.

School food pedagogies suggest that choices related to nutrition are unlimited and unbounded, and that they are made rationally. This sets up some mothers 'as less capable, disciplined, intelligent and civilised, even psychologically ill or underequipped to act in ways that 'rational' decent people' know is good for one's health' (Evans et al, 2011: 399). If achieving health is as simple as acquiring knowledge and having the appropriate skills, then this renders mothers who do not comply with the school food agenda as defective citizens who have failed not only in their own moral duty to be well (Greco, 2003), but in their moral duty to secure the health of the next generation.

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