Social Criticism and Educational Practices– An "Outsider's" Perspective

by

Antew Dejene

MA, (English) University of Waterloo, 1996

BA (English/Education) Asmara University, 1985

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Approval

Name: **Antew Dejene**

Degree: **Doctor of Philosophy**

Title: ***Social Criticism and Educational Practices– An "Outsider's" Perspective***

Examining Committee: **Chair:** Dr. Allan MacKinnon
Associate Professor

Dr. Sean Blenkinsop
Senior Supervisor
Associate Professor

Dr. Ann Chinnery
Supervisor
Associate Professor

Dr. Michael Ling
Supervisor
Senior Lecturer

Dr. Charles Bingham
Internal Examiner
Associate Professor

Dr. David Jardine
External Examiner
Professor
Faculty of Education
University of Calgary

Date Defended/Approved: August 31, 2015

Abstract

The author's personal experience of Ethiopia's educational system as both an educator and an educatee during and following Haile Selassie's reign is described in chapter 1. The author forwards a central argument that, whether they are aware of it or not, educators are essentially social critics and they ought to do social criticism in every educational setting; thus the equation, social critic ≈ educator. In order to stage the arguments, three concepts the author considers central to both social criticism and education are offered: hope, myth and the state. The importance of hope in this assumed connection between education and social criticism or between educator and social critic is anchored by hope's constant presence-the hope that education as well social criticism will result in some form of change. Myth is involved at the point when stated hopes are justified and rationalized. The author explains the importance of understanding the distinctions Cassirer makes between "constructed" myths and "genuine" myths. To illustrate the interplay between hope and myth from an educational perspective, the author discusses the boundaries that are usually drawn by social institutes, arguing that the state is a social institution.

Chapter 2 sets the groundwork for the author's contention that educators ought to be social critics. The next chapter outlines in detail what social criticism is and what the critic's roles are. Chapter 4 offers an existential understanding of what criticism is as well as alternative insights regarding the roles of the social critic/educator. The fifth chapter uses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a platform to examine and chart the progress of three basic hopes that commonly support institutionalized educational systems. The transformation of education within the broader understanding of the notions of *deschooling* and the demythologizing of myths is revisited in Chapter 6. The author then concludes that educators have to embrace the role of social critics to be better educators and that, to properly embrace the role of being social critic, educators need to reconsider and reconfigure what is considered local and what is global.

Keywords: Concrete philosophy; Hope; Moral philosophy; Myth; Social Criticism; State

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my friend, wife, and fellow personal life-philosopher and life-coach, Tsige, and to my children, Mamush and Mimi. Without their unconditional love and support, I would not only be able to complete this thesis, I wouldn't be able to be who I am.

I also dedicate this to the countless educators and educatees, with whom I crossed paths in different parts of the world, as my real education is truly the result of their wisdoms.

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I would also like to thank my editor, JoAnn Cleaver, who tirelessly read and re-read my thesis as she edited this work. I appreciate her excellent editorial skills and her professionalism, as well as her kindness and dedication.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Becoming a teacher was rarely a matter of personal choice in the part of the world I hail from. As an Ethiopian, born just a little more than a decade before Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by a military junta in 1974, I belong to the generation of Ethiopians who experienced two distinct educational practices marked by fundamental ideological differences. My elementary years were spent at a private French school that few middle-class families could afford. My elementary school went beyond teaching children how to read and write; many parents wanted their young children groomed to think like French kids—to become as French as it was possible for a black Ethiopian to be. For some of us, mingling with the children of expatriates was an adventure that was marked by constant questions about their homeland. Going to such a school was, for some, reason enough to adopt snobbish attitudes toward those who went to public school. *We were reading Tintin, and that was what French kids read in Paris*—or so we were told by our teachers and parents. We were proud that, over the Christmas season, we received gifts from *Papa Noel* (toys that were superior solely because they were actually produced in France, by French people!), and even prouder to display those toys to our friends who did not attend private schools. December in Ethiopia is one of the dry, warm months, and an Ethiopian Christmas holiday is replete with lots of sunshine. But the decorated Christmas trees our teachers placed in our class every year, speckled with cotton to simulate snow, was one of the rituals that encouraged us to hope for something that did not exist in our world. The cotton on the tree made us long to one day touch and sense and feel this magical thing called snow, to envision ourselves one day travelling to France to fulfil our homesickness for a land that we had never seen: *Snow is like powder, you know? You barely feel it when it falls on you. You have to travel so you can see it for yourself...* Joyful daydreaming accompanied this hope for things and places unseen.

By the time I reached middle school, everything was changing dramatically. The new military authorities staged a coup to wrest power from the Emperor. They told all Ethiopians that the Emperor, who garnered international, continental, and national respect for what he accomplished as a leader, was essentially a reactionary oppressor. Socialism replaced Haile Selassie's constitutional monarchy, and I was promptly enrolled in an English school. The songs we learned in my French school, "Alouette," for example, and dotingly sang for our parents—*Alouette, gentille Alouette*; *Alouette je te plumerai*—were soon replaced by songs like "The International"—*Stand up, damned of the Earth; Stand up, prisoners of starvation*. Our hope of touching and feeling that magical thing called snow and our anticipation of December's rendition of *Papa Noel* were now considered reactionary obsessions that were replaced with new hopes for a socialist Ethiopia. Names such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, Mao, Che Guevara, and even Enver Hoxha became part of our daily vocabulary, not because we understood who they were or what their ideologies entailed, but because they were presented as instruments of novel hopes. Our streets and avenues were decorated with portraits of these figures. Our teachers' language underwent a radical transformation: *Philosophy (socialist philosophy) is the only way forward. Equality of all people is the ultimate hope. Eradicating poverty and establishing communal prosperity will be within our grasp if, and only if, we implement socialist ideals*. We understood little of what those things meant, although we did notice, and sometimes participated in, mass-behavioural changes like growing beards and wearing berets as some sort of socialist fashion statement.

By the time I finished high school, education was a completely state-controlled enterprise. Many private schools were confiscated, and the number of high school students increased tremendously. In the early 80s, college entrance exams were designed to fail as many students as possible because there were simply too few available seats in the country's two universities and its few colleges (Marcucci, 2009); thus the number of seats available for those who passed the national matriculation exam was only a fraction of the number who actually sat for the exam. Those who managed to pass them were simply, and somewhat arbitrarily, assigned to university programs. The grades they received in various subject areas usually determined where they would study and/or what

department they would join. In the late 70s and 80s, under the military junta regime, dreams of studying in Paris or London amounted to treason; they were considered reactionary and imperialistic ambitions that contradicted socialist ideals. Those dreams were essentially replaced with government scholarships to schools in countries such as the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia. But the most crucial thing about going to university was the guaranteed job placements that followed graduation. The job may not have been the one you had hoped for, but at least there was employment and a government salary at the end of the road.

My job as a teacher happened exactly that way, and to this day, I feel that I had neither a true choice nor any control to change it. I was thrown into the profession. I also believe that becoming an accidental teacher the way I had did not make an educator of me. Initially, I was a reluctant participant in the socialist government's system of manpower management. My career as an educator, in the sense of consciously formulating an understanding of the profession and finding meaning within it, did not happen until after I had taught for a few years.

My first teaching assignment was in a small town called Adwa in northern Ethiopia. Like many university graduates of the time, I resented becoming a high-school teacher. It meant having to give up living in the city. It meant losing opportunities for social and other advancement. And it meant living on a small salary in a remote countryside for years. I attribute all of these objections to my elementary school educational experience. But after I arrived in Adwa and met my students, my views gradually started to change or, I should say, interacting with my students gradually changed my perspective.

When I say my teaching job started to transform into a career as an educator, I am not drawing a clear distinction between a teacher and an educator. However, in retrospect, it seems that I was initially a resentful hired gun who was there simply to fulfil what was required of me as a government-paid teacher who had no say in what I wanted to teach or how I wanted to teach it. The transformation occurred later; my students taught me that, as an educator, I had to be more than just a teacher. I had to have a

purpose for being in their midst. I had to try hard to find meaning for my students' presence in the educational space that I shared with them. And they did that by displaying an unprecedented amount of respect to both my person and to our shared space in ways that defy any rational understanding. The respect they granted me became a burden requiring some sort of response on my part, and it was this burden that forced me to question my role as an educator, to wonder whether a teacher ought to do something more than simply teach. The question was, What?

The first burden I felt, and perhaps the heaviest, was the sincere respect the students and the community accorded to the role of the teacher. Their respect was accorded not only to the title of "teacher", the authoritative figure, but to the person who poses in front of both the students and the community in their capacity as a teacher. And it didn't have to be earned. As a newly appointed teacher, I did not have to prove anything whatsoever to garner this respect. Rather, it was simply bestowed upon me as if it were a way to acknowledge my willingness to undertake the role of being a teacher; it was an appreciation of my presence in the community. For a young person struggling to tame his boyhood daydreams of city life, this respect was the antidote that inevitably forced me to question myself. What could I possibly do to earn this respect that was so freely and automatically given me? What was this respect for the teacher and for education about? Obviously, teaching the set curriculum was not enough to engender it. In fact, the respect that was conferred on me preceded any demonstration of my actual teaching ability, and that makes it more difficult to understand its meaning.

The other burden, perhaps as forceful as the first, was learning how superficial my pedagogical demands were, given the kind of lives my students led. Learning how ridiculous the standard demands I tried to impose on my students were, given the context of their everyday lives, was the other lesson that made me reconsider my role as their teacher. Very few of my students were not already shouldering adult social responsibilities that required far more time, sacrifice, and energy than did the normative obligations that generally accompany the role of being a high school student. The socio-political environment was saturated by domestic duties and state-imposed obligations for both male and female students. During the time I was working in Adwa, the nation was

still under ruthless military rule despite the government's assertion that it had been completely transformed into a civil communist administration. The northern area of Ethiopia was the major hub of resistance against the regime. Many of the guerrilla fighters who led the overthrow of the military regime in 1990 were from this region. Apart from being still in recovery from the major drought and famine of the 1980s, Northern Ethiopia was a place where the local community experienced daily armed conflicts between government and resistance forces. My students' lives were frequently punctuated by the loss of family members' lives, perpetual efforts to dodge forced conscription for military services, and a constant fear of retaliation from both sides, either for non-compliance or for taking sides. It was not unusual for the tranquility of any given night to be interrupted by sporadic gun fights. Frequent battles involved all types of guns, artilleries, and machine guns, yet life went on the next morning as if previous night's disruptions were as natural as the sound of thunder we often heard during the rainy season.

And there I was, a new teacher from the city, trying diligently to meet all the requirements associated with being a good teacher: taking attendance, handing out assignments, administering exams—all the usual routines teachers generally follow in classrooms. And there were my students, who had to struggle to secure the very existence of themselves and of their families; there were my students, who were obligated by the government to carry Kalashnikov rifles, travel for hours, spend the entire night in foxholes to guard the town from the liberation fighters, and then show up for class in the morning—sometimes late, sometimes half asleep, and sometimes still carrying their Kalashnikovs.

My burden was to discover the source of this dedication to schooling. What induces this type of devotion among these students to show up at school despite these overwhelming difficulties? What was the rationale behind this respect for education, when the only thing my students (especially those who were forced to carry guns) knew for sure was that there was no guarantee they would live another day, never mind worrying about whether they had done their homework properly?

It was this conundrum that fed my desire to explore the connection between the philosopher and the subject matter of philosophy. The question may appear redundant, especially to a Western-trained mind; the usual response is that a philosopher is one who does philosophy. But when I frame the question in light of my teaching experience and the life experience of my students, it encourages me to find a way to understand what my students' rationale and reasoning was. I am not trying to make philosophers out of my gun-toting students, but I suspect that understanding whatever it is that underlies their determination to get an education against all odds could inform philosophy, and more importantly, the philosophy of education. I had to try to tease out the philosopher/philosophy lurking within those students' lived experience that allowed them to continue to come to my class and display an extraordinary dedication to education. Perhaps the students' rationalization was related to some sort of ability to critically evaluate and understand the social realities of their environment. Perhaps they applied some method of social criticism that allowed them to continue the way they did.

1.1. On Philosophy and the Philosopher

This line of inquiry requires articulating what a philosopher really is, a question that engenders diverse and sometimes contradictory responses. If I approach this from a frame of reference influenced by Western philosophy, I may be inclined to say that making a distinction between *what* philosophy is and *who* the philosopher is cannot be simply a matter of semantics, syntax, and lexicon; it requires ontological and epistemological understanding.

There are presuppositions about what philosophy is or what philosophy does that seem to be applicable to such an understanding. However, when we ask who the philosopher is, a definite answer eludes us, because the enquiry regarding what philosophy is and the potential answers we derive in our attempts to answer this question do not allow us to articulate who is, in fact, the philosopher. Heidegger asserts that there can be multiple paths taken to respond to the question, What is philosophy? (2003). Heidegger's chosen path, however, is one that "must be of such a kind and direction that

what philosophy treats concerns us personally, affects us and, indeed, touches us in our very nature" (2003, p. 23). Ontologically speaking, I suspect that my students could have said the same thing about education; what education treats concerned them personally and, perhaps, affected them in a profound way. With respect to the fact that everything philosophy examines is, in its essence, *a critique*[1] of what we call "existence" in both its social and individual form, it seems that education also offers a way to understand life and, perhaps most importantly, to find out why and how to participate in that life.

Whether the search is for the *good life*, e*ternal truth*, *knowledge*, et cetera, the body of Western literature declares that the grounding notion for all these inquiries is the essence of humankind. Marx was correct in pointing out that "man is the highest essence for man" (Marx, 2002, p. 9), and whatever humankind does, or tries to do, in the name of philosophy, or alternately, whatever philosophy claims to be doing for humankind, it has to be meaningful to the existence of the individual and of the collective. Existence, whether in the form of the individual or the social, as both a philosophical concept and a pragmatic lived experience, concerns everyone in the collective. Collectively or individually, then, everyone has not only a vested interest in what philosophy says about existence, but a requirement to participate in the conversations.

In this sense, philosophy ought to be everyone's business (Adler, 1978). Everyone has a say, a conception, a judgment, about what it means to be, what it means to live as an individual within the collective, what it takes to find reasons and justify actions that make the collective and the individual follow this or that direction.

However, it is difficult to say the same about the philosopher—that is to say, to come up with an adequate definition of what a philosopher is. To simply note that a philosopher is one who does philosophy does not say much at all, and it elucidates even less. Philosophy, though it cannot escape the confinement of the human mind, appears to

[1] Here I am using the term critique to indicate that communications regarding philosophical contemplations, inquiries, analysis, etc., are indeed critiques.

adjust constantly to the way in which we choose to frame our inquiry. René Vincente Arcilla's provocative article, "Why Aren't Philosophers and Educators Speaking to Each Other?" (2002), highlights some of our presuppositions about philosophy, and the responses his article drew (Ellett, 2002; Fenstermacher, 2002) articulate the ideal relationship educators and philosophers ought to have. However, these conversations delineate the inherent difficulty of establishing who should definitively be considered a philosopher.

In this sense, the philosopher becomes an appendix to philosophy by the choice made regarding the various potential paths via which it is possible to frame any particular inquiry. The philosopher appears only after having been characterized by that choice, which serves to identify which part of human existence interests them. The difficulty of articulating the relationship of philosophy to the philosopher is connected to this fundamental challenge of actually naming philosophy.

Of course, many assert that a philosopher is someone who stands out from the crowd; someone who has both insights into the conditions of social existence and the ability to eloquently communicate those insights. Plato offers a variety of explanatory interpretations on this matter. For example, in the *Phaedo* (Plato, 1989), the philosopher is presented as someone who has an affinity with the divine and who is free from worldly pleasures. In the *Republic,* the perfect philosopher is presented as a rare species among men, not because one must be born into the profession but, rather, owing to the stringent nature of the training and education that becoming an effective philosopher entails.

The fact that philosophy is everyone's concern cannot justify the exclusion of all individual members of the collective from sharing, to some extent, the philosopher's role as a social critic. Badiou's interpretation of Plato's *Republic* speaks to this point. During the dialogue between Amantha and Socrates regarding the "fifth form of government," Badiou maintains that Socrates is coerced to admit the following about the philosopher:

> In every country, philosophers must be the ones to exercise leadership positions. Or, conversely, those who are responsible for exercising leadership positions...

> In other words, Amantha cut in, according to our communist principles, everyone ... they all—everyone, in effect—must become philosophers. Really and truly become philosophers, to the extent required by collective action. In short, political ability and philosophy must come together in the same subject. (Badiou, 2012, pp. 165-166).

Badiou's position regarding philosophy is based on his assertion that philosophy cannot be separated from politics, and that politics not only brings everyone together, but it effectively *is* everyone. One way to frame the difficulty of naming the philosopher, then, is connected to this notion of politics. Politics, by definition, not only refers to each member of the polity in the collective, it also implies the existence of diverse interpretations of social existence that each member may hold. The philosopher is perhaps located somewhere in this diverse interpretive role that each member of the collective plays within the polity.

Although Adler is strictly critiquing higher education in his 1978 article, "Everybody's Business," I believe he expresses similar sentiments regarding the point I make here about the philosopher. His central observation regarding educational programs is that the current divisions and categories are flawed; that the options offered by educational institutes are artificial choices that undermine the need for a common educational platform that addresses everyone's needs. The multitude of departments in universities that offer specialized education only produce specifically trained scholars who lack a fundamental grounding in matters that are integral to social existence. I am interpreting Adler's observation as the institutional version of the problem of determining whether philosophy and politics are, or should be, considered in tandem in an educational context.

Adler declares that philosophy must be, and is, everybody's business, but the process by which he arrives at this juncture is based on his binary assertion that science differs from philosophy in both the way it poses questions and the process it follows in proposing answers to these questions.

> The pivotal and crucial difference in their methods lies in the kind of experience to which they appeal, and then, consequently, in the kind of thinking they must do to interpret that experience.

> The philosopher appeals only to the common experience of mankind, the experience that all human beings have simply by being awake, without the slightest effort of deliberate and methodical investigation, without having prior questions in mind to answer by means of investigation.
>
> In sharp contrast, the scientist is, first and foremost, an investigator, a man who devises special methods of observation in order to answer questions he has formulated. As a result of his methodically carried out observations, whether in laboratories or not, whether with instrumentation or not, the experience on which the scientist relies is the very special experience produced by his methodical observations. (Adler, 1978, part III, d-f)

While it is important to note that philosophy relies upon everyday experience—upon social existence at large—I believe Adler may agree with my assertion that potentially everyone shares the role of the philosopher, in the sense that we are all part of the polity. The problem with Alder's assertion is that the scientist seems to be operating outside the realm of human existence. There seems to be a missing component that connects the scientist back to humanity, and Adler addresses how this connection, or the lack of it, affects the scientist's "special methods of observation." In other words, while we can agree with Adler that philosophy is everybody's business, it is everybody's business not because it is different from science but precisely because science is a derivative of philosophy that *should be* everybody's business.

Adler's take on philosophy and science, and his assertion regarding the distinction between the two offers a glimpse into what I describe in this dissertation; namely how mythicized conceptions (be it of science, philosopher, social critic, or educator) and fluid hopes (be it for the betterment of society, better world, better political participation, and so on) play a part in our understanding of educational practices. Therefore, notions of hope and myth are concepts I will address as I see them manifested in the overall discussion of social criticism and education. And since such a discussion cannot be complete without addressing the social institutions where education and social criticism takes place, I also include conversation about the relationship education has to its institutionalized form, particularly the state.

1.2. A Story about a Philosopher

Assuming that philosophy concerns everyday existence and that its interest is to query various essences of existence (or, as Heidegger would say, an "astonishment") as a member of the collective, I believe I have a say in, and a conception of, my existence, despite it taking the form of an inquiry. Like Franz Fanon, I may share the quest to discover, or rediscover, the meaning of "blackness" that I was born into. I might share the same experience of searching for my negritude and its meaning in the social spectrum within which I find myself. I might have shared, in the past, the naivety of being "overjoyed to learn of the existence of a correspondence between some black philosopher and Plato" (Fanon, 1967, p. 205), as if that would have given me an idea on how to understand, not only the connotations of what a philosopher is, but also what my blackness is in the context of humanity. But as Fanon cautions, that may be a futile effort, because it would amount to undermining the very socio-political and economic sphere needed to fully understand what that search implies.

But if we agree that philosophy's main preoccupation is everyday existence and that everybody has input regarding the nature of that existence, then we will surely find a "philosopher" in everyone. And the philosopher we find may not be limited to the attributes that Plato or Badiou articulated, because the paths that one can take to philosophize existence may not necessarily be Western or European. As Heidegger pointed out, the What is philosophy? question implies the existence of the Greek world. For Heidegger, "not only the *what is* in the question—*philosophy*—Greek in origin, but *how* we question, the manner in which we question even today, is Greek" (2003, p. 35, emphasis in original). What Fanon tries to point out is the problematic nature of adopting this culturally deterministic notion of philosophy and the philosopher as the only path, especially for those societies outside the Occidental culture.

Perhaps the story of an educator from Kyrgyzstan best illustrates my conception of the kind of philosopher I am trying to evoke, wherein we glimpse instances of how the common man interprets life and social existence. *Duishen* (translated as either *First Teacher* or *The First Teacher,* depending on the version of the publication) is a short

story by Chinghiz Aitmatov that recounts the experience of a student who attended the very first school in an extremely remote village in Kyrgyzstan in the early days of the Soviet Union, when it was still under Lenin's leadership. The writer, Aitmatov, himself a Kyrgyzstani whose works have been translated into over 69 languages,[2] tells the story of a young member of the Komsomol[3] who returned to a remote village in one of Kyrgyzstan's mountainous regions. His mission was to establish the very first school in the village and then encourage the villagers to send their children to this new school. The central story is narrated from the point of view of one of Duishen's former students, Altynai Sulaimanova, who later became an academician. She was an orphan who was brought up by cruel relatives in the village. Her narrative of the first teacher begins with the words "This is my confession to people" (Aitmatov, 1962, p. 6). Her confession describes the emotional turmoil she experienced in telling a story she believed she owed the world, a story about the devotion of a selfless teacher—one who not only taught and nurtured his students but also passionately protected them from social ills. For Altynai, the person Duishen—who does not even acknowledge the sacrifices he made, whose own education is itself minimal in every sense of the word, who is obsessively preoccupied with his students' well-being (though more in the social sense as opposed to the intellectual)—is not simply the first teacher. He is a critic of the social order, the village's mode of social existence, albeit without the accompanying educational credentials that we often attach to such titles.

Duishen is perhaps one of the most famous teachers in the "third world," as it was referred to at the time, because of the affinity the story has to several culturally diverse countries around the world who shared the discomfiting experience that often took place when institutionalized educational systems were introduced to agrarian societies. It is a story, for example, retold in a different context in novels such as Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*. But what is striking and relevant to this discussion is a particular detail Aitmatov

[2] I initially read the Amharic translation. The current English version was translated by Olga Shartse.

[3] Komosomol is the Young Communist League that was founded in October 1918 immediately after the October Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

offers. Duishen, the first teacher of the village, though he never mastered reading and writing at a level deemed acceptable enough to work in institutionalized settings, was able to teach. He may not be credited so much for teaching his students academics, but he certainly nurtured their ability to recognize their own possibilities, to anticipate and demand change, and to question their social surroundings. He did this by positioning himself, not as an intellectual whose mind is set only on pedagogical outcomes, but as a critic who took his students' social existence as the main focal point. His promise to his students was simply, "I'll teach you all I know myself" (Aitmatov, 1962, p. 13). And surely, Duishen knew more about *how to be* in the village; what was wrong in, or with, the village; what the village needed; and what his students needed than what we would expect a typical classroom teacher to know. Dushien's way of being an educator conforms to what Nel Noddings says about education: "The student is infinitely more important than the subject matter" (Noddings, 2003, p. 176).

Duishen stands side-by-side with Rancière's example of the teacher Jacotot (the ignorant schoolmaster), not in the sense that he developed a "method without method" (Rancière, 1991) to facilitate pedagogical function, but in the sense that Duishen developed his own method of teaching that was contingent on his ability to formulate questions that were meaningful and critical to the social order practiced in the village and to the social existence of his students. Duishen, who was often ridiculed by the villagers and considered to be its only sardonic figure, was able to perform the role of a critic. And in turn, by situating himself as a critic, he was able to become a much more effective teacher, largely because he understood how to formulate appropriate questions to the problems he perceived in the village and how to envision possibilities that would respond to these problems. In this sense, Duishen was the village's critic, its philosopher. He articulated a perspective of hope to his students, and those hopes subsumed a wide range of possibilities.

On a personal note, Duishen was someone who offered me a window to the outside world—who showed me how very different my own environment, my own locality, and indeed, my very existence, were from his. He also showed me how much we had in common: his concerns, his conversations with his students, and his commitment to

the school he wanted to establish, the things he valued, and in the things his students valued. Duishen is the critic who showed me the need to exist simultaneously in what I thought of as "my world" and the "outside world." The lesson Duishen offers is to value and connect with what we consider distant and remote as if it were something near and dear to us, and vice versa. I was not surprised to read what Aitmatov said about writers; I believe it can also be said of the social critic and the educator.

> The responsibility of a writer is to bring forth words that capture, through painful personal experience, people's suffering, pain, faith, and hope. This is because a writer is charged with the mission of speaking on behalf of his fellow human beings. Everything that happens in the world is happening to me personally. (Aitmatov, 2011, para. 17)

I believe the educator should similarly attempt to present to his students everything that happens in the world, because what happens in what we consider the "distant world" is as important as what happens in the locality of the educator and the students. It is important to critique events taking place around the world because they affect us in more ways than we can imagine. I believe that if there is a space where humanity shares a common understanding of certain moral and ethical values—a sense of justice and truth, if you will—then that space is possible through educators' predispositions that lean toward shrinking the gap between local and distant forms of social existence, despite a myriad of social, political, and cultural differences.

Chapter 2. Origins

2.1. Critics and Social Criticism

To proceed with our discussion about the philosopher, perhaps it is important to make a connection between philosophy and politics, because it is helpful to take a closer look at what social criticism is and the role the critic plays in social criticism as a member of the polity. My contention here is that the philosopher is indeed the social critic. Often, the works of critics are oriented toward a range of perceived problems (social, scientific, artistic, or political). We categorize the critic as literary critic, political critic, and so on. When we qualify the critic and say *educational critic*, as opposed to other types of critics (as we often do with other areas of interests such as politics, economics, art, literature, etc.), we find that the educational critic shares an integral common purpose with all other types of critic, a mutual, underlying purpose common to all forms of criticism—articulating problems.

The underlying principle of any critic is thus to formulate appropriate questions and offer plausible solutions to perceived problems. Although we tend to assume that the critic is a qualified expert in the field of education or economics or politics in current conversations, most of the philosophers we consider critics prior to the 18th century did not specialize. For example, John Locke, in addition to his publications on education, wrote significantly more about topics such as economics, government, and religion. We can say the same about Jean-Jacques Rousseau and David Hume, despite the fact that all these writers are prominent in educational discourse. Whether we are discussing education or some other disciplinary field, we often find it useful to classify critics by their philosophical tendency: We say pragmatism is distinct from existentialism; we refer to idealist versus realist conceptions of education; we tend to highlight the difference between absolutism and experimentalism, and so on. At the same time, we tend to

selectively appropriate ideas and arguments from these critics and produce our own individualized critiques.

When we examine the current academic world, research universities tend to generate most educational critiques, and frontline educators then appropriate and implement those research-supported "solutions" within actual educational situations. Perhaps one example in relation to education practices is the controversies surrounding teacher disposition tests and evaluations administered by teacher education and training institutes.[1] The connection between critiques and solutions is always there. This connection may or may not manifest in the form of an articulation for a solution, however, the premise of any critique is always oriented toward highlighting a problem and thus the possibility of pointing towards a desirable "solution". Of course, there are occasions when researchers and frontline educators participate jointly in creating the critique. In fact, collaboration between frontline educators and researchers seems to be the preferred norm. However, a covert distance can be observed between the role of the critic and the frontline educator, because the researcher does something different from what the frontline educator does. This may appear a very superficial observation, yet the fissure we perceive between the roles played by the critics and the frontline educators is the result of our deep-rooted conceptions of what their roles are or ought to be. And this is an important point to consider because it goes back to the problem I raised earlier in regard to ascertaining not only the role of the philosopher but who qualifies as a philosopher.

[1] Please see Cummins, L., & Asempapa, B. (2013). Fostering teacher candidate dispositions in teacher education programs. Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Vol. 13, No. 3, August 2013, pp. 99–119 or Borko, H., Liston, D., & Whitcomb, J. (2007). Apples and fishes: The debate over dispositions in teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 58(5), 359–364.

2.2. The Thesis

In light of the above discussion, I build the following argument: Educators, in all their manifestations (their socio economic positions, geopolitical locations, ideological inclinations, and disciplinary variations), ought to be primarily social critics. It may seem farfetched to imagine a grade-two math teacher as a social critic. After all, there seems to be little evidence for a math teacher to be engaged in the role of a social critic. And yet, theorists such as Nel Noddings suggest that it is not only possible to make the social connections, but that efforts must be made to do precisely that.

Consequently, I argue that the act of educating, the act of teaching, is always preceded by some sort of criticism of social existence. The educator may not be aware of their position as a social critic, may not see the connection between their ability of social criticism function and their role as educator. In other words, the teacher is first a social critic, and good teaching happens as a result of teachers' willingness to embrace their role as social critic. A good characterization of the teaching/learning process is invariably connected to the educators' initial acceptance of their role as a social critic.

2.3. Why Criticism?

The inscription on a gravestone erected by Fanon's family on the island of Martinique[2] (Macey, 2012) reads, "Oh my body, always make me a man who questions" (Fanon, 1967, p. 205). I believe these words capture the essence of the social critic. This is perhaps the simplest, and at the same time, the most profound, articulation of the social critic's role; the critic as the perpetual interrogator of social existence. Duishen is one such person who questions. He questions both his own and the villagers' existence and

[2] Franz Fanon was buried in Algeria. What Macey refers to is a gravestone set up by his family to commemorate his life in Martinique. Macey's version of the above quote reads "My final prayer: Make me always a man who asks questions."

acts accordingly, based on what he believes is necessary to rectify and to improve his students' existence.

The chapters in this thesis are organized according to my interpretation of the above notion, that the educator is first required to be a critic. Therefore, the words *educator* and *teacher* are used interchangeably throughout. However, I also emphasize that teachers/educators ought to be essentially social critics. What makes Fanon's epitaph important to my overall argument is the significance he affixes to questioning—the need for the critic (and for anyone, for that matter) to question in a perpetual manner. Questioning, in this sense, becomes not simply a practice that critics apply to cause change or to champion corrections they believe are needed within the social order, and neither is it merely a method teachers use to ensure some sort of teaching/learning activity takes place. Fanon claims that questioning becomes a necessary way of being, a desirable state of existence. But this assertion should be supported with further inquiries: What does it mean to say that questioning is a state of being? What kind of questions does the critic ask? Who are the questions addressed to? What is the expected result of asking the questions? How does the critic formulate their questions? What is the relationship between the critic and the questions? Under what social conditions does the critic ask questions? Do social conditions influence those questions, and if so, how, and to what end? And most importantly, how do we connect these inquiries to our current educational practices? How do we translate these inquiries to actual educational situations? What do we really signify when we say *teacher*, *teacher as critic*, or simply *critic* within an educational context?

The above questions are by no means exhaustive. However, each is relevant to the philosophical notions that I believe help inform, and possibly respond to, the hypothesis I forward. The main philosophical notions I explore to demonstrate the connection between social criticism and education are *hope*, *myth*, and *the state*. These concepts are relevant, not only to philosophical conversations, but also to educational practices.

2.3.1. A note on hope.

Hope is perhaps the central philosophical concept shared by both educators and social critics. Behind every form of criticism there is an underlying exigency of hope: to attain a goal; to change and transform what is here and now to something better; to propel the individual and the collective to a higher, more desirable, state of existence. Thus, the following questions are all related to this fundamental notion of hope: What questions does the critic ask? Who are the questions addressed to? What is the expected result of asking the questions?

2.3.2. A note on the state.

Social criticism is, simultaneously, a social and an individual practice. The state, not only as a social organ but also as the subject matter of philosophical contemplation, is another important concept that inevitably requires a conversation involving both the collective and the individual. Whether we agree that educators are primarily social critics or not, I believe all must agree that the act of criticism and the act of educating are simultaneously social and individual. Notions such as freedom, ownership, and social justice are intrinsically related to conversations involving the state, because when we inspect these notions, we usually tend to approach the inquiry from the perspective of rights, entitlements, and responsibilities, and the state is typically charged with overlooking the distribution of rights and responsibilities. It is thus difficult to shape the examination of these notions of freedom and justice without addressing our perception of the state, and this discussion cannot be complete unless we frame the inquiry from the perspective of both the individual and the collective.

The performative act of the social critic/educator always blends the individual and the collective. Therefore, the following questions all attempt to interpret the role the state plays in relation to education and educational practices: How does the critic formulate his questions? How are the critic and his questions related? Under what social conditions does the critic ask questions? Do social conditions influence the questions asked? To

reveal this process, I treat concepts such as freedom and social justice from within social, political, and philosophical frameworks to demonstrate that our perception of education and the roles educators play are connected to our understanding of the role of the state.

2.3.3. A note on myth.

The third concept I inspect in this thesis is myth, as it is commonly connected to belief systems. Depending on what one wants to communicate, the notion of myth can range from its ordinary, everyday usage as something that is detached from reality to the more complex notion that it is part of our socio-psychological makeup, a part that is useful in helping society make sense of some of the most difficult and often fundamental questions of existence. By examining myth's connection to educational conversations, especially to a conversation that ventures to bind social criticism to education, I demonstrate not only the desired relationship that should exist between the educator and the social critic, but also elaborate on our very understanding of what we really signify when we discuss the state, the teacher, the teacher as critic, or simply the critic in an educational context. An analysis of myth, in other words, offers an opportunity to examine the overall connections between education and the state. In addition, I trust that a study of myth will also inform us regarding what it means to say that teaching and learning takes place only through the performative action of the social critic, thereby exploring performativity and its relationship to myth.

Although hope, myth, and the state are the main areas examined in support of my hypothesis, my discussion is organized around the concept of the educator as a social critic, and I present the relevant arguments in relation to these three notions as they relate to that argument.

Chapter 3. The Critic

The roles of social critics and of educators intersect regularly in the social realm. However, this intersection is often blurred because we tend to emphasize the pedagogical within the body of a work delineating teaching and learning acts, and alternatively, we emphasize the social aspect of the critic's work when we want to highlight social and cultural issues. In other words, our conceptions of the educator and the social critic oblige us to maintain some distance between the two. If we examine Plato's *Socrates*, we readily find material relevant to pedagogical acts. However, were the issue politics, for example, we could instead emphasize his thoughts regarding socio-political practices and their relevance to current social situations. Any number of historical figures stand as both educators and social critics (Socrates, Moses, Christ, the Buddha, etc.). Social existence is these teachers' primary focus, a preoccupation which essentially makes social critics of them. However, if we, as educators, tend to focus only on the pedagogical schema in the works of these historical figures, we may overlook, or at least diminish, their roles as social critics.

In order to make clear the claims I forwarded that educators ought to be social critics, or that the act of educating is indeed a performance that has social underpinnings, I would like to interject what language theory offers. If we heed the disciplines of language theory or theatrical discourse claims—that performative utterances/actions construct acts that influence lived experiences—then educators/social critics' performative action cannot accomplish this affective goal without simultaneously assuming the roles of both educator and social critic. And this means that the educator/social critic's performative act is preceded by some sort of understanding of what the social problem is, or of what changes they wish to affect in the social realm. In turn, this understanding of the problem is always mediated by our understanding of the social order. This requires addressing themes such as the states' role in education, the way we understand hope (both implied and stated) in educational contexts, and the role of myth in educational practices.

The way one approaches the inquiries I address in this thesis is a key factor in formulating and shaping a viable frame of reference to articulate what we mean when we say that educators ought to be essentially social critics. It is also important to note that the approaches implemented shape our conceptions of the parameters/perimeters the educator (critic) operates within, in both the social and philosophical sense. The divergent and sometimes conflicting philosophical positions on the role of the critic that is evident in philosophical treatises are concomitant to the way one approaches the inquiry.

Historically, there seem to be two major perspectives depicting the roles of the critic. These perspectives appear to have remained constant across all disciplines; sciences, humanities, social sciences, law, art, and so on. The first is that the critic should hold a position that is detached from the object of the criticism. To some extent, this means a position that is neutral, a position that resists the influence of social bias and prior knowledge that can potentially taint the wholesomeness, independence, fairness, and accuracy of the critique. In other words, it is what Michael Walzer (1987) refers to as "critical distance." Walzer defines social critics as those who "are individuals, but they are also, most of the time, members, speaking in public to other members who join in speaking and whose speech constitutes a collective reflection upon the conditions of collective life" (1987, p. 35). This definition locates the critic among the people, and we can deduce from it (to some extent, at least) the potential for any member of the social group to be a critic. Of course, some might object to this statement that any member of the collective is potentially a critic, particularly when questions regarding the requirement for expertise in a particular field are raised. I contend, however, that expertise is necessary for a particular, specialized field of study, but when it comes to social existence—a reflection on the collective life, as Walzer contends—the necessary expertise to become a social critic is ameliorated by the individual's lived experience.

The second perspective declares that the critic's work should somehow be preceded by a position the critic has already taken. This initial position of the critic is important, insofar as the act of stating the critic's position candidly signifies exactly what

the critic is critiquing and indicates a clear partisanship for a particular cause. This perspective contradicts the argument of the first perspective, that the critic's neutrality is crucial to the integrity and scholarly currency of the critique. The second perspective declares that it amounts to mere anachronistic banter to devote time to the tendency that an "ideal of human purity" can be the basis for producing a critique acceptable to scholarly arenas, because it is almost universally agreed upon that such an endeavour is both unfeasible and unachievable (Guine, 2004).

The definition Walzer offers undermines the assumption that the critic must maintain critical distance in order to perform social criticism: Rather, the social critic has to be among fellow critics to generate social criticism, even minimally. The location of critical distance is therefore limited to a mental process (at best), because being, living, and sharing space among the collective is conducive, not to critical distance, but to critical propinquity.

Yet it is worth noting that Walzer's definition of social critics lends itself to further interpretations of the social critic's act via the lens of the theory of performativity. Judith Butler's 1988 essay, "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory," offers a feminist critique on the social perception of gender, in the process of which she highlights what I say here about the social critic/educator. She asserts that gender is a historically and socially constituted identity that has no ontological basis for its existence. She also asserts that gendered bodies/identities, despite their "fictitious" nature, are socially constructed and historically reified identities that eventually persist as entities with an ontological basis. The task of reconstituting these identities poses significant challenges because historical and social reification produces a system of "cultural beliefs" that establishes gender as a universally written, socially accepted, and historically verified "truth."

Butler's contention that reified and naturalized conceptions of gender might be more effectively understood as a constituted phenomenon and that they are thus susceptible to being re-constituted, or constituted differently, provides a strong premise to

my central argument. Butler applies the notion of performativity to demonstrate this process of reconstitution. Drawing upon theatrical and phenomenological conceptions of constituting acts, Butler asserts that performative acts not only constitute the identity of the actor, they also produce a reified and compelling identity that can be an object of belief (Butler, 1988).

This assertion is relevant to the hypothesis forwarded earlier with respect to the role of the educator as social critic. In order to test the hypothesis that the learning process requires the educator/social critic's performative act, I will demonstrate that (a) there are constitutive notions and conceptions about the roles of the educator, the state, and the social critic that are historically reified and accepted as universals; (b) these constitutive notions of the roles of the state, the educator, and the social critic are supported by belief systems or mythologies that intrude, not only on our conception of what we mean by the terms *educator* and *social critic*, but also on our overall understanding of the relationship between the two; and (c) the belief system also intrudes on our conceptions of the teleological ends and goals of education, and upon how we perceive them as they are manifested in our lived experience within the social order (the state).

If my assertion that the teaching/learning process is preceded by specific performative acts or performative utterances is accurate, then the connection between Butler's observation of constitutive acts as related to gender and the role of the educator as a critic lies, it seems to me, in our acceptance that what social critics do is different from what educators do. The mandate we ascribe to educators differs from that which we ascribe to social critics. My argument is that these mandates can and should be re-constituted to clarify the fact that educators are indeed de facto social critics. In other words, we have to re-think the role of the educator to include that of the social critic.

The fact that the critic cannot avoid being naturally positioned within local social, moral, and ideological milieus simply by virtue of being a member of the collective is the fundamental assumption on which my inquiry is based. As such, the educator (critic)

shares certain beliefs that emanate from established social institutions (schools) that inform him about the overall state of social existence. Thus, these institutions' relationship to this social existence both shapes and facilitates the critic's understanding of social existence. It is therefore very difficult to imagine that the educational critic, before engaging in the craft of criticism, has no prior expectations of what it means to be a critic and what is meant by education, even if the critic is genuinely attempting to redefine or reconfigure what a critic is and what role he/she should play in both the social and intellectual spheres. The methodological framework that shapes my inquiry into the role of the critic relies heavily upon the works of Marx, Marcuse, and Badiou, and most particularly, the work done by Walzer. I closely follow his arguments and counter-arguments regarding the role of the social critic and the nuances he teases out regarding criticism's relationship to socio-political, philosophical, and moral considerations. Though my argument builds upon Walzer's analysis of social criticism, I also later delineate a few significant distinctions between his work and my own conclusions.

3.1. Virtues of the Critic: Walzer's Lessons on Morality

To borrow a concept from speech act theory, performativity is not simply an utterance. It is an act of speaking that entails action, an utterance that effects change in the real world. In this sense, one way to understand criticism is as an act of utterance that calls for changes designed to improve the perceived social problems the critic sees. The performative action of the critic is therefore *criticism that is designed to bring some sort of real change to the social order, or to protect what is already there by anticipating some undesirable, foreseeable occurrence*. But this assertion does not completely resolve the direct question, What does criticism mean? I begin my exploration of this question with the forward Walzer wrote for the second edition of his 2002 book *The Company of Critics,* wherein he delineates those virtues he believes the "good" social critic should possess.

Walzer's argument is that in order to execute the role of social critic properly and adequately, the critic must have an underlying moral foundation. He tells us that he generated these virtues as he reflected upon how other critics responded to *The Company of Critics*. In his reflection, he considers moral virtues to be the final yardstick that qualifies the good social critic and as remedies for the potential "traps" that the critic may fall into. These traps, Walzer asserts, include complacency with tyranny, personal passion for power, detachment from the society the critic intends to critique, and so on. Understanding such traps is important because they are directly related to the notion of "moral philosophy," a concept Walzer developed at great length and which also serves as the foundation for his critique of social criticism. These moral virtues safeguard the critic's potential to be a good critic.

Since my central thesis involves the belief that good educators are essentially also social critics (regardless of whether or not they may be aware of that role), I first delineate the three virtues Walzer attributes to the critic, as well as the traps he believes may contribute to their general failure to shed light on the need to recognize the simultaneous roles educators have as social critics.

3.1.1. Courage as the first virtue.

Walzer defines courage as a spiritual and physical strength, and notes that there are several types of courage that range from physical to political. But the most crucial type of courage for the social critic is "the moral courage necessary to continue a critique of tyranny or oppression when one's fellow citizens are silent or complicit and, what is even harder, to confront and condemn their complicity" (2002, p. XIV). Walzer uses Breyten Breytenbach, the Afrikaner poet from South Africa, as a prime example of a morally courageous critic. Breytenbach is the exiled critic who refused to create a critical distance from his people; he is the critic who is "hanging in there" (2002, p. 203), even in the face of despair and hopelessness. Breytenbach's role as a critic epitomizes Walzer's conception of one who displays the political courage to criticize his own people. As an Afrikaner, Breytenbach is among the few white South Africans (Afrikaners) who

recognized the “wrong path” his own people were headed down in their support of the system of apartheid. This example of one who criticized the overall structure of apartheid and South African society may help us better understand the meaning of courage. It allows us to explore whether there may be dis/similarities between, say, an African critic who condemns apartheid and a critique generated from someone in a position of privilege within that same social structure, as Breytenbach was. If we find differences, we have to ascertain what these differences are. Breytenbach’s Afrikaner heritage, his Afrikaans language, his culture and history—all contribute to his ability to process what he sees as the oppression and injustices apartheid imposes on the Africans. They enable him to ask the question, Why do my people fail to see the evil I see—the oppressive and dehumanizing nature of apartheid? He certainly had the moral courage to speak out and criticize his “fellow countrymen.” However, what might we say about those critics who are at the receiving end of the injustices and oppressions perpetrated by Breytenbach’s fellow countrymen? If there are similarities between Breytenbach and other anti-apartheid critics like Stephen Biko, Nelson Mandela, and Mahatma Ghandi, I would argue that their similarities must rest in the shared and intersecting moral values that render apartheid unacceptable. Therefore the qualification of courage as a virtue of the critic must be free from this connection between the critic’s cultural and linguistic heritage and the critic’s ability to criticize “his fellow countrymen.” In other words, it would be incorrect to interpret Breytenbach’s courage in criticizing his fellow countrymen as solely the result of his cultural and linguistic kinship with Afrikaners. This is a particularly important component of the assertion that educators are social critics, because it is rarely the case that educators and students share the same socio-cultural and linguistic heritage. Courage, as a virtue, requires an instance where these cultural elements are somehow connected or shared. We might also deduce that geographical location is rarely connected with these shared values either, as most of Breytenbach’s criticism took place while he was exiled. I would argue that the courage of the critic, despite the specific cultural and linguistic kinship the critic may or may not have with the people he addresses the criticism to, is anchored in their moral or ethical values. Here I have to qualify those moral and ethical values. I am referring to those values that have

universal tendencies that can be readily considered acceptable across cultures and are easily shared by others. Note that one of the traps Walzer cautions us against is that the critic may fall into detachment from the people's pleas owing to there being no "familial or ethnic" connection between the critic and the people. However, the political courage that Breytenbach displayed is not different from Steven Biko's or Mahatma Ghandi's, both in the context of South Africa and on a larger global scale; the moral courage we see demonstrated in such acts of resistance toward apartheid seems to emanate from a shared understanding of its inherent wrongs. These three critics' understanding indicates a mutual moral-value perspective, one that is not generated by their kinship to a society marked by a certain ethno-cultural identity. The implication to educators here is that embracing their roles as social critics allows them not only to educate but also to critique social existence regardless of the presence of cultural kinship. The next section, where I address Walzer's second virtue of the critic, sheds more light on this controversial assertion of courage and on why I argue that cultural kinship must be suppressed when considering courage as a virtue of the critic.

3.1.2. Compassion as the second virtue.

Compassion facilitates the critic's response to the plight of societies' victims. Walzer argues that critics must "be able to sympathize with their society's victims of political tyranny; racial, religious, or sexist bigotry; ideological fanaticism; economic exploitation; or social or intellectual snobbery" (2002, p. XV). The compassion he advocates is a generalized compassion, without which the work of the critic is rendered either inaccurate or untimely. The absence of compassion is "more dangerous" for the critic than is a guilt-driven critique wherein critics, because of their close connection with the reigning tyrants and bigots, are inclined to interpret the victims' pleas in a radically uncritical manner (Walzer, 2002, p. XV).

Walzer offers two possible reasons for the absence of compassion in the critic's work. The first is when the critic is driven by the feeling and perception that there is no familial, ethnic, or religious connection with the victims. This "othering" of the victims

allows the critic to overlook injustices. The second is when the critic fails to notice the suffering of the victims because the focus of the critic is displaced by the perception of a bigger evil; something that the critic believes takes precedence over the suffering of the victims. Walzer includes an example of this sort of uncompassionate critique: During the war in Vietnam, intellectuals were preoccupied with the dangers of the emergence of a totalitarian regime, which undermined their ability to appreciate the actual suffering of the Vietnamese people under the American army. The educator as a critic may not seem to require this degree of compassion in educational practices, but I would argue that we should take compassion seriously in educational contexts, because the educator cannot fulfil his role as a social critic without it. The compassion the educator ought to feel is directed toward the same social issues Walzer urges the critic to sympathize with (political tyranny, racial, religious, or sexist bigotry, ideological fanaticism, economic injustices, etc....), because these issues can be manifested in any educational space. However, it is not reasonable to assert that the failure of the educator to sympathize with victimized students is associated with a lack of compassion owing to the absence of ethnic or familial connection. Othering is already present in the educational space between the educator and the student in the form of ethnic and familial disconnection, power dynamics within the relationship of educator and learner, age (another form of othering as in child and adult), socio-economic status (the well-to-do and the not so well-to-do), and so forth. The educator/critic actually fails to sympathize with victims (in the context of such social problems) only if he fails to acknowledge the absence of these connections. In other words, it is only when the educator acknowledges his own difference from the students (as well as the differences that exist among them, be they ethnic, religious, political, economic, or social disparities) that he can sympathize with the students who require his compassion.

Iris Young's (1990) notion of the "politics of difference" explicates this argument. Young argued that acknowledging differences can sometimes be useful in order to oppose oppression and achieve social justice. She discusses group differences and the need to acknowledge the distinctiveness of group members in order to recognize and

understand the oppression they experience, as well as to plot effective remedial action. The educational implication of Young's assertion is that educators, as social critics in an educational space, must first acknowledge differences to appropriately address the needs of a diverse student body suffering various forms of identifiable social issues such as sexism, gendered identities, socio-economic status, and cultural differences.

3.1.3. "Good eye" as the third virtue.

Walzer defines a "good eye" as a relatively unmediated perspective. His important, yet perhaps self-contradictory, argument is that a good eye is equivalent to an "unmediated experience of reality," despite his acknowledgement that such an experience is almost impossible to achieve:

> Yes, yes, I know there is no such thing as an unmediated experience of reality.... We bring all sorts of mental equipment to our everyday experience; our perceptions are always structured by theories of one sort or another.... Still, I persist in believing because it is a feature of my own dealings with politics and society—and probably of yours too—that some people are more ready than others to look at the world and acknowledge what they see. (Walzer, 2002, p. XVII)

His illustration of the critic's unmediated perception of reality is presented in the context of the Algerian War and the Algerian National Liberation Front. Some critics (such as Albert Camus) are ready to see the reality in the world, whereas others (such as Jean Paul Sartre) lack that good eye. The former sees in ANLF only a terrorist organization, while Sartre sees a liberation movement because he was blinded by some "version of third world ideology." Because the notion of a good eye is connected to a *sense of proportion*, Walzer says, the critic with the good eye must maintain a balance between "his vision and his distances and coolness" in relation to the object of criticism (2002, p. XVII). But here, Walzer is presenting contradictory arguments. On one hand, critical distance is almost an impossible and perhaps a self-deceiving notion that does not exist, yet on the other hand, the notion of the critic's good eye requires some distance

from the object of criticism and a level of coolness regarding the object being critiqued in order to see reality.

But what is more worrisome in this line of argument is the suggestion that one critic is more disposed to clearly see and experience reality than another. It is another way of saying that critics are unequal, but it also contradicts the overarching argument Walzer himself forwarded, that as long as we are all members of the collective, we are not only critics, but our critique is as valid as any other. I discuss the latter contention further on in this chapter.

3.2. Educational Implications of Walzer's Virtues

Despite the problems outlined above, the virtues Walzer attributes to the critic are readily applied to educational contexts. It is not too difficult to imagine educators' central character being marked by courage, compassion, and a good eye. The typical educator is rarely challenged to be as courageous or to pay as heavy a price as some of the social critics Walzer offers as examples, but compassion is certainly something most educators would like to believe they practice in educational contexts. However, educators may well err in the same manner as Walzer's critics do, by overlooking the ways in which they "other" their students. This error may differ from the reasons Walzer listed for lack of compassion (though it may well not). Obvious racial, gender, ethnic, and religious differences are not the only factors contributing to a lack of compassion in educational contexts; economic and social profiling may also affect teachers' levels of compassion.

When we examine the matter of critical distance, the educator is rarely, if ever, in exile in a way similar to Walzer's Breytenbach example, unless we include a form of mental exile that is not manifested in an actual physical sense. Walzer effectively describes the nature of critical distance and alienation using the example of Albert Camus, the "radical" French-Algerian critic of the Algerian War of Independence (2002, p. 137). Camus's alienation from both his fellow Algerians and from France was marked

by his serious criticism of both French colonialism and of the anti-colonial movement headed by the Front de Libération Nationale (Camus, 2013). Camus's double alienation exemplifies the type of mental exile educators may experience; alienation related to the institutional apparatus within which the educator works and expresses his/her disagreements with that apparatus.

Any classroom situation is likely to offer examples of the relationship between what Walzer refers to as critical distance and the sort of mental exile Camus experienced. Educators face roomfuls of students who differ in myriad ways. Despite the usual age and sex differences usually associated with the way we educate (age- and gender-appropriate educational curricula), we often have students from different socio-economic backgrounds who have different sexual orientations and who span a wide range of academic and linguistic proclivities. We have ESL students, "international" students, "gifted" students," and "challenged" students (be they physical or mental challenges). The educational process is expected to respond to all such diversity; in fact, the classroom is the educational space where all these differentiations are manifested. The educator regularly operates based on his/her understanding of these dissimilarities among the educatees. Interpretations of these dissimilarities are ongoing within any educational context. Critical distance, in the educational context, is therefore understood through these differences.

The differences are "real" in the sense that they originate in the social sphere beyond the classroom, yet the educator is expected to not only accept, recognize, and interpret these dissimilarities among the educatees in order to respond effectively, but also to sustain these differences. Such differences are not sustained in the sense of perpetuating them but, rather, in the sense that the institutional apparatus (educational policies, mandates, institutional organizations) requires them to justify its existence. To adapt to these differences and create an environment where the learning process can take place, the educator must create some distance from his students. How else could educators provide instruction that responds appropriately to all these varied differences

without maintaining a critical distance? By definition, pedagogical and curricular design attempts to accommodate these differences. Difference, in this context, is incalculable, and every act of curricular design and pedagogical planning is, to some extent, an act of homogenization, a way of undermining—or, at best, selectively acknowledging—certain differences. Current educational spaces in their institutionalized form not only operate based on these disparities as one of the definitive components of the learning process, but they are also spaces that continuously perpetuate the variations, either intentionally or inadvertently.

Walzer's virtue of courage, in this sense, is when the educator recognizes the importance of looking past such distinctions. Courage in the educational sense requires us to reconfigure Rancière's notion of *equality of intelligence* in both an existential and a phenomenological sense. This reconfiguration requires the educator to shift the current practice of looking at students collectively as a homogenous body, despite their differences. It requires educators to change the practice of prescribing educational programs that attempt to fit each learner into exactly the same program. Such a shift requires a new approach, one that facilitates a focus on each individual learner in a manner that accounts for each one's unique challenges and abilities. Of course, this shift entails reviewing current educational practices from social, political, and economic perspectives. Nevertheless, if we consider courage a virtue that should be associated with educators, it will be manifested as the ability, not only to recognize the need for such a shift, but the capacity to critique and challenge the current *modus operandi* within the educational sphere—an endeavour that may result in the educator being marginalized by fellow educators. It may incur "alienation" of the educator in terms of intellectual and professional relationships. The virtue of courage may then help the educator sustain his vision of change and hold on to convictions that differ from those held by the status quo.

Perhaps simply listing the virtues a critic should possess does not adequately articulate the ideal critic. I would argue that emphasizing the ideal or good critic, as Walzer does, may be a fruitless search that has no definitive response. Being guided by a

set of moral values does not apply exclusively to social critics. If we accept that premise, then we must discover something more that articulates the role of the social critic as compared to other social occupations. The social critic, among all the various academic, non-academic, and intellectual professions, is unique in that the critic's concern addresses the "people at large" (the masses) because the critic's dealings essentially concern the general populace's ways of being. This is so, despite the difficulties the critic faces in legitimating their critique as something that benefits the collective. I do not believe there is only one "reality"; that one critique can be accepted as correct while another is considered wrong, as Walzer claims is the case regarding the Algerian Movement. Walzer correctly observed that there is no prerequisite for one to ascend to the position of a critic in any given society, because every member of the society shares the same potential to become a critic. I may add to this that the only prerequisite to assume the voice of the critic is to simply *be* an equal member of the collective, a member of the society. Critics are concerned with the ways and conditions of being in the social sphere. Problems arise only when we start to search for a critic with "a special pair of eyes." This goes against a moral requirement that we should assess everyone's voice equally, despite our personal determinations of right and wrong.

In the introduction to Rancière's book, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, Kristin Ross notes that equality (here, equality refers to equality of intelligence) is neither "given nor claimed" (Rancière, 1991, p. xxii). This is the vital principle behind what Rancière calls *intellectual emancipation*. I believe that incorporating Rancière's theory of equality of intelligence and his notion of intellectual emancipation with Walzer's concept of virtues would allow us to better understand Walzer's work by using an existential lens. What Walzer's analysis lacks is a clear indication of how the good critic is actually generated, given that social criticism could be undertaken at any time by almost any member of society. Walzer's ideas seem, at times, to be too elitist. His argument, for example, that oppressed classes are not and cannot be agents of change does not lend itself to the argument that everyone can participate in social criticism.

Toward the end of his discussion of the critic's virtues, Walzer makes an important observation regarding the very notion of criticism, saying that *intellectual humility* is another vital asset that every critic should have. He outlines the need to acknowledge the possibility that the critique offered by the critic could be incomplete, "miss the big picture," or simply be dead wrong. Without such an acknowledgment, Walzer argues, the critic may slip back into traps—for example, complacency with tyranny, personal passion for power, and detachment—that render the critic's work incomplete, which renders the critic as the one without the good eye.

3.2.1. Humility (a fourth virtue) and the question of "reality"

I conclude this chapter by positing that Walzer's last observation regarding intellectual humility should be considered the fourth virtue of the critic, and perhaps one of the most important. Humility as a virtue works bi-directionally, allowing critics to check themselves when offering a critique on this or that social issue. It simultaneously allows the very societies critics address through their work to check on the critic herself. Yet, this observation cannot be understood as an agreement in principle with the inequality of critics that Walzer notes in his examples of Camus and Sartre. Intellectual humility works only if we apply it, not only to the critique we study as offered by other thinkers, but also to the critic's own judgment and the way the critic examines and interprets the works of others. Camus's preface to his 1954 work, the *Algerian Chronicles* (2013), provides an example of such humility. Even as Camus harshly criticizes both French society and those involved in the Algerian independence movement, he still demonstrates his humility: "I lack the assurance necessary to think I have all the answers. On this point, terrorism as practiced in Algeria has greatly influenced my attitude" (Camus, 2013, Preface, para. 4). In this sense, intellectual humility is not simply admitting the potential validity of alternative views and analyses that challenge one's own critique. Nor is it expressed simply through the critic's readiness to accept one's shortcomings or to accept the works of other critics with openness, even when the content appears to contradict one's stated opinion. Intellectual

humility should also entail the sincere gesture of admitting the critic's own allegiance to this or that cause and the honest declaration of one's bias; the intellectually honest critic openly admits to any potential partisanship. Intellectual humility must include this honesty, even if that admission causes the critic to be ridiculed and results in being ostracized by other critics. When Sartre declares the alignment between his critical view and what the Algerian popular movement is trying to achieve, it is not indicative of the absence of what Walzer calls his "readiness to see reality" (2002, p. xvii). Rather, he is stating an aspect of a reality that was confirmed by his lived experience, what was real for him and for his critical faculty. Similarly, Camus's alternate reality is no less real than Sartre's.

Reality, for the critic, is always malleable because his perception of reality is mediated through a set of personal variables that include the particular moral, ideological, social, cultural, and political lenses through which the critic sees the world. If that were not the case, we would not require a company of critics, and the function of criticism would be a redundant, repetitive discourse of the same warnings, all of which would lack the potential to bring about change. The possibility of the type of change the critic envisions, particularly social change, is anchored in the principle that reality itself is open to interpretation. What Walzer sees in Sartre should not be the lack of a good eye, but a different interpretation of reality as it pertained to the Algerian movement. What he failed to recognize in Sartre is that he had a different interpretation of reality, one that emphasized the importance of résistance to oppression. What we see in Camus is yet another interpretation of reality. Camus "did not call for an end of French rule" (Walzer, 2002, p. 143), not because he possessed a better critical eye than Sartre but, rather, because his interpretation of the Algerian war was mediated by a different lens. He could not support the call for liberation because the call was led by the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), and Camus considered the FLN to be an agent that might well cause the oppression and marginalization of the Pieds Noirs—a social group in Algeria to which, not entirely coincidentally, Camus himself belonged. Discussing who is closer to the "truth," or whose view more accurately identifies the necessary change Algerians

deserved at the time is not fruitful, because that type of argument simply invites more interpretation. What is relevant is to understand why we have these two different interpretations and how social critics are affected by their own personal moral, ethical, political, and ideological positioning. It is more important to ask what else we might learn and what else we might apply to similar and current social problems today by examining what transpired historically in Algeria and by measuring Camus and Sartre's divergent assessments within the context of the Algerian situation.

Before I make suggestions regarding amendments I believe could prove fruitful to Walzer's analyses, I would like to establish some parameters around the enquiry into what the terms *criticism* and *critic* mean. In the following chapter, I apply an existential understanding of what criticism is and who/what the critic is, not only to delineate how my own assertion diverges from key aspects of Walzer's analysis, but to offer alternative insights regarding the roles of the critic/educator, as well as of criticism itself.

Chapter 4. Criticism and the Critic

4.1. Radical Criticism: An Existential Take

Marx's *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Rights* offers perhaps one of the most radical perspectives on the meaning of criticism. His perspective on the functions of criticism was based on his understanding that the German status quo, which he believed to be embedded in religiosity, was the root cause of the German problem. For Marx, criticism was a weapon that would dismantle the social order; it "no longer assumes the quality of an end in itself—but only as a means. Its essential pathos is indignation; its essential work is denunciation" (2002, p. 4). In other words, Marx's assertion is that criticism is simply a radical way to project a social problem—a problem worth projecting, a problem that requires immediate attention, a problem that cannot be put aside because it is *the* burning issue. At the same time, this criticism must be capable of bringing change about, of altering the object of criticism. Criticism is not "passion of the head, but it is the head of passion" (Marx, 2002, p. 4). Criticism must first be preceded by an acute perception of the object of criticism that arouses indignation, and then it must be able to transform that object into something the critic sees as a necessary and desirable change. Here, we have criticism accomplishing two goals. First, it is a means of identifying social problems and effectively conveying those problems in all their manifestations. It is also the "head of passion" that offers a rational stratagem for action. Criticism's second role actually includes action. Thus, criticism requires identifying myths that should be critiqued, hopes that should be recognized, and actions that should be taken.

What Marx perceived as a problem in this particular work was, of course, the German status quo. He believed it was immersed in "self-deception," because criticism was reduced to an illusionary practice that was not centered on "man." For Marx, humankind is the centre of philosophy, whereas German philosophy relegated mankind to

the margins by prioritizing illusionary religious notions. Marx's thesis in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Rights* can be summed up by what he says about Luther.

> Luther, we grant, overcame bondage out of conviction. He shattered faith in authority because he restored the authority in faith. He turned priests into laymen because he turned laymen into priests. He freed man from outer religiosity because he made religiosity the inner man. (p. 9)

Luther's criticism dismantled the old religiosity by appealing to the common people, by reversing authority. By rearranging the previous configuration, Luther managed to show that priesthood is present within the layperson just as the layperson is always present among the priesthood. He managed to replace faith in authority with the laypeople's authority over faith.

In the same light, we can say that Marx also tried to restore philosophy to the common person, to make philosophers of laypersons by appealing to their conditions of existence. He was trying to free them from the existing German philosophy and, in turn, make philosophy the central purpose of the layperson. In other words, what Marx is proposing is the need for the common people to become critics—philosophers—based on their own experience and their own reality.

Badiou echoes similar sentiments regarding criticism; for him, *consensus* is perhaps what lies at the core of social problems (2010). The role of the critic would seem then to express the indignation Marx alludes to regarding this consensus. Badiou's consensus is equivalent to what Marx meant when he spoke of the German "status quo." What the consensus declares, according to Badiou, is that capitalism is the only system, and that politics exists only in capitalist democracies. In order to counter this declaration, the critic must have a non-consensual mind. Although much has been written about Badiou's notion of *event*, it is nevertheless important to comment on it here, because the transition Badiou calls for, from a consensual to a non-consensual mind, is based on his particular understanding of that term.

For Badiou, the common criticism of the state, in its function as a social organ, overemphasizes the state's oppressive nature. Especially in Marxist literature, the state is considered the primary vehicle of certain sections of society's oppression.[3] However, Badiou reminds us that the state simply distributes what is possible and available. In other words, the state functions as a distributer of possibilities. The event is then a movement that challenges and goes against this distribution and creates possibilities that were not possible within the state-controlled system. Badiou's event, in this sense, signifies "the possibility of emancipatory breaks in the status quo. It has also come to signify a central role for the 'subject' who stays faithful to the event and soldiers through for the realization of new possibilities opened up by this radical break" (Raymond Lotta, 2009, p. 106).

Badiou's event seems to have a strong connection to the past even as it points to the future. The event is always tethered to the past, and it exists in the present only by pointing to future possibilities. There is always a trace of the past that remains in the present to prepare the way for the next event to emerge (Badiou, 2010, p. 12). There are two ways one can prepare for the event, which Badiou suggests means to be ready and subjectively disposed to recognize new possibilities. The first precondition required to be ready for the event is the need to be faithful to a past event, to the "lessons given to the world through that event" (2010, p. 13), while the second is the need to criticise the established world—the need for the critic to be, to use Marx's expression, *indignant* "regarding the established order. Because the established order is a master of possibilities, the critic has to articulate the fact that the possibilities offered by that order are not sufficient, that the possibilities offered are inhumane, that the possibilities offered by the establishment are false possibilities" (Badiou, 2010, p. 14). Most importantly, this criticism is not limited to intellectual exercises; it is, rather, a practical one that requires the critic to take a position. Here, Badiou directly evokes Marx's assertion that criticism

[3] See Lenin's work on the state in the *Essential Works of Lenin: "What is to be done?"* and other writings.

of the weapon does not replace the weapon of criticism (Marx, 2002, p. 8). Even more than intellectual engagement, the critic needs to be occupied in practical as well as radical exercises. The critic has to devise a way to transform theoretical criticism into a radical material force. Badiou's event can then be seen as a thrust that rips open the status quo, thereby offering new possibilities. Badiou's event "is an eruption or rupture of maximal social intensity that is wholly unexpected and unexplainable in its origin and outbreak" (Raymond Lotta, 2009, p. 102).

Badiou's 2012 work, *Plato's Republic*, offers a more succinct meaning of the event. And perhaps it is here we may find some connection to education. Badiou's consensus is a kind of *tyranny of opinions*. From Badiou's perspective, the opinions expressed under the social order seem to be conflict ridden, but they are all actually consensual. And yet these opinions are so incompatible with one another that no single version prevails. However, if there is a prevailing opinion in Western democracies, it is the one that decrees "I am free ... to say anything I want." It prevails because everyone believes it. But it is this "I am free ..." opinion that defeats the potential to approach new "truths" by camouflaging what is offered by the social order as diversified and valid opinion. What the social order demands is the consent of everyone to the false democratic ideal that everyone has the right to "freedom of opinion." To resist this decree and criticize the weakness and false nature of the "freedom" offered by the existing social order—in other words, to declare that "I am not free"—surely invites more "repressive legislation," according to Badiou. To challenge this tyranny of opinion, to resist it, requires more than philosophy alone. Badiou states that "no one has ever changed or will ever change, merely through moral lessons, a character that's been set in stone by prevailing opinion," noting that "philosophy can be effective only if the political divine has intervened first" (2012, pp. 188–189); it is this political divine that Badiou labels an event. Examples of such events, according to Badiou, include the May 1968 mass movement in France, the Paris Commune in the early 1870s, and the Bolshevik

Revolution.[4] Both Marx and Badiou emphasize that philosophy, which can also represent theory, cannot alone bring about change. Some sort of action must accompany it, whether it be radical action in the Marxian sense of the term, or Badiou's unpredictable and unexpected rupture. Philosophy may offer the moral groundwork for that process, but moral ground alone is not enough to affect the status quo. The social order thrives on false notions such as freedom (particularly freedom of opinion), something everyone agrees that all should have. Everyone may also believe that they do enjoy those rights, at least in those parts of the world where democracy is practised. In an educational context, it is difficult to imagine a rapture that might transform current educational practices, although, in the final analysis, this is also a possibility. Rather, the more plausible implication for educational practices is the need to explore whether there are elements that are comparable to Badiou's consensus. If there are—and the work of scholars such as Ivan Illich and critics such as John Gatto tend to support that contention—the critical instruction we can garner from Badiou and Marx includes how the educator identifies them and what the educator does to correct them.

4.2. The Heroic Critic: Critics-at-Large and Matters of Detachment and Objectivity

Perhaps revisiting Walzer's take on the role of criticism is important not only to contrast his argument with Badiou but also to better understand the educational implications I suggested in the previous section. Michael Walzer's 2002 work, *The Company of Critics,* takes a different approach to answer the question, What is criticism? He believes there is a discrepancy between historical notions of the roles and functions of the critic and what the ideology of the left presents. Despite what history tells us, our conceptions of the critic, especially in left-leaning ideologies, is dominated by the notion

[4] For a detailed discussion of Badiou's examples of events, see Lotta, et al.'s 2009 article.

of heroism (2002, p. 225). This notion of heroism basically implies that the critic needs to be detached from society, at least for a limited time, in order to reflect on social problems, devise plausible solutions, and return to articulate what ought to be done. Walzer offers the following list of stereotypical conceptions of the critic based on this notion of heroism:

> The critic must break away from his local and familiar world.
>
> He escapes that world with much attendant drama.
>
> He detaches himself from emotional ties.
>
> He sees the world with absolute clarity.
>
> He studies what he sees.
>
> He discovers universal values.
>
> He finds these values embedded in the movement of the people.
>
> He decides to support the movement. (Walzer, 2002, pp. 225-226)

This list is important for two reasons. First, it is helpful to understand why Walzer believes the source of the critic's mythical conceptions are represented in this notion of the heroic critic. Secondly, it is also important to understand where Walzer's suspicion of what he calls "critics-at-large" comes from. The important contribution Walzer's list makes to my overall argument is that the connection I am attempting to establish between educators and social critics is based on my understanding that the critic-at-large concept comes closest to illustrating this connection. Unlike Walzer, however, I assert that educators fulfill the roles of social critics by adopting the characteristics of critics-at-large.

Comparing Walzer's list against some historical figures who would not meet the criteria assumed to define the critic-at-large undermines Walzer's assertion that the notion of the heroic critic is intrinsically connected to left-leaning ideologues. The traits Walzer associates with the stereotypical critic (as much as he tries to affix this notion of

the heroic critic mostly to what he calls “left tending ideologues”) are not entirely new. In fact, what Walzer offers as the left’s notion of the heroic critic, represented by the critic-at-large figure, seems to be prevalent throughout history. Some of the stereotypical characteristics of the heroic critic Walzer identified are evident in historical accounts of the lives of Gautama Buddha, Moses, and Christ, all of whom can be characterized as critics-at-large. They all underwent some sort of break from their local worlds, often with much attendant drama. Detachment from emotional ties is not only something these historical figures experienced, but in many cases, it is what they advocated in order to see the world more clearly. Their return to their people was also marked by some sort of discovery about universal truths. Perhaps what Walzer offers as this notion of the heroic critic commonly promoted by modern leftist ideologues is merely a distorted version of this ancient conception.

One important distinction between Walzer’s assessment of critics-at-large and the historical figures mentioned above is the level of interest critics are supposed to have in their people. For example, Walzer considers Herbert Marcuse to be a critic-at-large because he has no interest on the everyday life of the real people who are the object of his criticism. For Walzer, the difference between being a “good” critic and being a critic-at-large is that the critic-at-large neglects the importance of connectedness with the people the critic speaks to and about. The historical social critics I alluded to earlier were not only interested in the everyday life of the common people, their social criticism focused completely upon the conditions of their daily existence. I believe this might force us to reconsider the validity of Walzer’s assertion that the critic-at-large is someone who intentionally distances himself from the people, because the critic (and most especially the critic-at-large) must have an interest in the everyday life of the people. I do not believe Marcuse lacks this interest.

Walzer also observes, in his critique of Marcuse’s *One-Dimensional Man,* that “strict objectivity is a goal never achieved,” and views it as an affirmation of the fact that the critic is “partisan from the beginning” (2002, p. 226). But the argument he forwards

later is problematic. He disagrees with two of Marx's principal assertions: first, that "oppressed men and women are not the appointed agents of world-historical transformation" (2002, p. 227), and secondly, that they are not somehow waiting to be instructed by the critic's recommendations regarding the next course of action. I agree with some of Walzer's assessments of the heroic, stereotypical critic we often idealize here in the West—not only left-leaning scholars are prone to such idealization—but I cannot accept his particular view that oppressed people cannot be agents of transformation. If there should be agents for historical transformation and change, surely there are no better candidates than those who most need this transformation, who see the potential for their hopes and dreams to be realized should such transformations be enacted. The social critic's role as the people's instructor can be accepted, but as the leader directing the people in a particular path, it is indeed problematic. However, if we really wish to demystify the notion of critical distance, we surely need to locate the critic among the people. In other words, we ought to consider the oppressed people as both the critics and the agents of change within their own social existence. Thus, the agency for change cannot be separated from the body of the critique that ideally comes from critics who ground themselves among the people.

Walzer, however, considers several historical instances that illustrate how oppressed people cannot be agents of change. He outlines how past movements of the oppressed, despite their heroic origins and their heroic critics, became lethargic, bureaucratic, and corruptible enterprises, and he concludes that mobilized oppressed people can be easily demobilized and conquered (2002, p. 227). That observation is certainly valid enough, but I do not attribute that process to people's inability to becoming agents of change. Instead, it rests on the historical necessity of the particular society and on the degree of the criticism's radicalism.

It is not necessary to examine a long list of historical events to accept the veracity of this observation; current events offer sufficient instances of people being mobilized and demobilized by political actors, whether under the guise of a leftist ideological

agenda or of a liberal Western democratic movement. Critics may no longer declare a manifesto associated with their socio-political agenda, as was the case with the Communist Manifesto of 1848 or the Waffle Manifesto of 1969; as Badiou articulated, the critic's work today is basically presented within the consensual order, where the state is directly or indirectly the distributer of possibilities, at least in terms of communication venues and purveyors of propaganda.

A good way to understand the problematic nature of Walzer's assertion regarding mobilization and demobilization is the "Arab Spring Revolution." Since 2010, the Middle East has been stirred by a number of popular protests that resulted in personality changes in the dominant regime. The movement continues today with an ongoing protest against former regimes and against the few "new" regimes that ascended to power after the initial revolution. The Arab Spring has been a topic of interest for several critics, both locally based and in the West, and it covers a vast geographical region, from western North Africa to the Arabian Peninsula.

Lynch, Glassne, and Hounshell's *Revolution in the Arab World: Tunisia, Egypt, and the Unmaking of an Era* (2011) collates a collage of critiques that address this issue. Before addressing how Lynch's book illustrates the problem of Walzer's contention that oppressed people cannot be the only driving force behind historical transformation, I first examine how Walzer responds to the question, What do the critics of today do?, in light of the general failure of the temporary victories that social movements accomplish to be sustained. Walzer claims that people can be "demobilized and dominated by militant elites acting in their own name—though also in the name of detachment, science, and false universalism" (2002, p. 227).

4.3. Critics of Today: The Apologist, the Critic-at-Large, and the Critic-in-the-Small

Critics currently face unusual challenges in the face of social movements and revolutions' repeated failures. Walzer's explication of how these deficient critics respond to the problems the current world poses consists of three distinct responses that critics tend to resort to, all of which exemplify what he considers to be incomplete social critics.

The first response is that the critic may become an apologist, choosing to intentionally allow the movement that was once considered a demand to potentially alleviate the injustice imposed on the people and/or the suffering of the oppressed, to become lethargic, or worse, to become a tool to demobilize the people. Citing the works of Julien Benda, Walzer points out that what Benda labelled as "intellectual treason" may not appropriately address this apologist response. His critique of Benda's argument is that the treason of intellectuals is not mainly related to "national passion." Walzer admits that nationalistic passion can engender deception, apology, or rationalization of the indefensible, but power and surrendering to power might be the principal reason for the inception of intellectual betrayal (2002, p. 43). His explanation follows:

> [It is the] sneaking admiration for those worldly activists, princes, and soldiers, who do what the intellectual can never do and who seem, therefore, strong and effective in a way he [the critic] cannot be... When intellectuals become defenders of tyranny, it is because they hope to be tyrants—or at least advisors to tyrants. (2002, p. 43)

This characterization of how the critic may become an ally of tyrants forces us to reconsider the possibility and suitability of considering whether this assertion particularly qualifies social critics to adhere to such moral standards. The belief that critics are capable of the things Walzer accuses them of—that is, this generalization of the critic succumbing to power or sharing power with tyrants—can have some appeal only if we somehow establish some sort of equilibrium that eliminates the gap in status between the social critic and the layman, because surrendering to power cannot be an exclusive deficiency of social critics. Justifying tyranny for the sake of becoming a tyrant or of

securing one's place in the tyrannical power hierarchy is not a deficiency particular to the critic; rather, it is a moral treason that can potentially be attributed to any member of the society, regardless of their capacity or role. Both colonial and post-colonial Africa offer plenty of examples where indigenous individuals cooperated with the colonizer and justified their oppressive colonial policies against the interests of their own people. This is not always an intentional, calculated method used to seek power and/or secure a place of authority in the colonial power structure. It is sometimes simply a survival strategy. It may also result from a passionate, albeit mistaken, belief that the colonial policies are indeed beneficial for the nation under colonial rule.

The second factor Walzer explores is his notion of the *critic-in-the-small*, by which he means that the critic chooses to operate within the smallest possible local sphere and have no concrete attachment to real people or causes. For example, the critics may restrict themselves to practicing only "academic criticism," and their criticism tends to become a blend of hermeticism and Gnostic obscurity (2002, p. 228). Here, by way of illustration, Walzer offers us Michel Foucault as the Gnostic-obscure critic whose works are not generally well understood, even by his disciples.

The central focus of this chapter is the argument that Walzer refers to as the *critic-at-large*, as it is most relevant to my analysis of his theory of social criticism. Walzer purports that this category of critics choose to be engaged in criticism of a whole range of issues without any reasonable disambiguation. In this sense, the object of the critic is "to become a critic-at-large surveying the whole world, critical of modernity, popular culture, mass society, bureaucracy, science and technology, the welfare system" (2002, p. 227), and so on.

Although each of the above three responses about 20th century critics deserves an in-depth examination, my focus rests upon Walzer's response to the critic-at-large. I posit that the educator as critic approximates the critic-at-large. Here, I have to clarify that if we view the educator as a social critic, educators must then operate as critics-at-large because this position allows educators to acknowledge the distances that exist between

the educator and the educatee, as I mentioned earlier. In addition, examining Walzer's critic-at-large as a "type" of response provides an opportunity to critique Walzer's own place as a critic and to understand the reasons behind his dire depiction of Marcuse's positions. But most importantly, it also helps to establish the connection I draw between education and social criticism. In this respect, I believe Marcuse's work is more helpful in establishing this connection than is Walzer's. In order to do the above I would like to examine the ways in which Walzer's philosophical basis differs fundamentally from Marcuse's.

4.3.1. Marcuse as critic-at-large.

Critics-at-large, Walzer argues, are those who try to operate from the perspective of critical distance. He suggests that the principle underlying the critic-at-large perspective is the concept that critical distance between the critic and the object of criticism is necessary. Of course, one might argue that when the critic is engaged with an array of social issues, his interests may take him to different parts of the world, where the immediate social problems and the specific social realities may be diverse or even contradictory. Such comparisons will entail limitations with respect to the critic's physical proximity to the object of criticism, as well as potential gaps between intellectual and cultural levels. Perhaps this is one reason all critics start from where they have some connection, despite the alleged critical distance they try to maintain. Socrates' search for the "good life," as much as we want to transplant it in a universal manner to critique this or that social order, is firmly grounded within the Greek culture. As much as we might relate Fanon's critique of colonial subjugation to other forms of oppression or even to other colonial experiences in other parts of the world, his work primarily speaks to the Antilles and Algeria. However, both Socrates and Fanon, as much as they are firmly grounded in their respective localities, are also critics-at-large because "outsiders" recognized shared commonalties in their critique.

Walzer considers Herbert Marcuse to be a critic-at-large whose object of criticism is the technologically advanced American society and the common people living within

that social structure. He maintains that Marcuse keeps a palpable critical distance from his object of criticism and that he expresses his indignation toward this society indiscriminately. I first highlight Walzer's interpretation of Marcuse's position as well as my own as a preamble to my argument that the social critic/educator ought, indeed, to be a critic-at-large.

In the prelude to his critique of Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, Walzer offers his readers a glimpse of what he considers to be an example of an empirically deficient work that lacks sufficient research; his example is an excerpt from Marcuse's introduction to *One-Dimensional Man*. Walzer dismisses Marcuse's assertion that the evidence of one-dimensionality can easily be discovered "by simply looking at television or listening to the AM radio for one consecutive hour for a couple of days, not shutting off the commercials, and now and then switching the station" (Marcuse, 1991).

Walzer makes several valid observations regarding the shortcomings of Marcuse's analysis of technologically advanced society. He argues that Marcuse's theory that one-dimensionality obscures "true happiness" or "true consciousness" or even how the culture of technologically advanced society dehumanizes the ideal essence of humanity through "false needs" is critically flawed. He convincingly argues that Marcusean critique is paradoxical, because what he offers is a landscape where everyone is a one-dimensional subject, without suggesting who or what is the subjecting force, and that the needs we try to satisfy and the choices we make are not really our choices, but are instead needs and choices administered by some unnamed power. So, on one hand, the technologically advanced society offers better living conditions than any other society in history (here Walzer is specifically talking about America). On the other hand, the better the living conditions are, the worse is the administration of false needs and choices that result in the enslavement of the one-dimensional women and men who enjoy them. "Hence the paradox of the Marcusean critique: *the better, the worse*" (Walzer, 2002, p. 177).

There is certainly a hint of simplicity—and perhaps even naivety, as Walzer suggests—on Marcuse's part in generalizing a theory based on what looks like significantly oversimplified ethnographic research—namely, listening to what is being broadcast on the radio. Walzer considers this to be one of the major weaknesses in Marcuse's analysis. However, there is certainly an equal simplicity and naivety in Walzer's counter-argument that any attempt to use the analogy of listening to classical music is "fatal." Walzer replicates the critical distance he identifies as Marcuse's error with a significant flaw of his own. This is important because distance is always there, in one form or another, and it is almost impossible to completely suppress, let alone eliminate, distances between the critic and his object of criticism or, in the case of education, between the educator and the educatee.

Walzer's other interesting criticism of Marcuse's assertion that men and women in industrially advanced societies are enslaved involves the notion of consciousness: "[I]t make sense to insist that the story of the happy slave is the fictional creation of slave owners or of those intellectuals they patronize; it isn't a plausible account of slave consciousness" (2002, p. 176). Walzer further notes that, with respect to modern society, Marcuse failed to show who the masters of the modern slaves are. In the absence of such an identification, the consciousness of the one-dimensional man is but a fantasy that exists only in Marcuse's mind. According to Walzer, such consciousness is not plausible because the technologically advanced society does offer a certain sense of material satisfaction that somehow translates to the possibility of experiencing happiness. The problem with such an argument is that it may only make sense within a strictly Occidental logical framework.

If we look at what other critics say about colonial and post-colonial subjects, we may also find problematic what Walzer rendered implausible with respect to slave-consciousness. Fanon's analysis of the neurotic conditions of existence of a black man or a black woman is one such resource.

As Walzer suggests, it is difficult to imagine and contemplate “the happiness” of a slave under slavery or that of the colonial subject under colonialism and apartheid, and it does not help much to direct our inquiry toward ascertaining what “false” and “true” consciousness are. Fanon claims that what we see is a form of existence suspended in an “inferiority complex” which is, in turn, sustained by a double process of economic deprivation and the “epidermalization of inferiority” (Fanon, 1967, p. xv). The black man and the black woman’s happiness is, in this case, intrinsically connected to the meaning attached to the black and white world—to what is perceived as a black mode of existence and a white mode of existence. When Fanon writes about Antilleans who are disgusted at the idea that they are being confused with other Africans (1967, p. 9) (perhaps the most extreme example of self-consciousness that contradicts “reality”), the distinction the Antilleans are making is not impossible, as Walzer puts it. Rather, it is as real as anything else, because it is an actuality created through a process. The distinction Antilleans make between themselves and other Africans makes sense because they are not the fictional creation of the French colonialists or the invention of some intellectuals patronized by the French. It is simply one way the Antilleans’ categorization of themselves was facilitated by how they understood their position at a particular historical juncture. When Fanon reflects on Mayotte Capécia’s unconditional love for a white man and her refusal to consider taking a fellow black man to be her partner (1967, p. 25), it cannot be anything but an expression of her “needs” as she perceives them. And her perceptions are shaped by the historical conditions she experiences.

Contentment, as it relates to happiness, can be a religious as well as a secular notion that supposedly allows us to negotiate with our own consciousness regarding what we consider to be a happy or a good life. In fact, Walzer alludes to what Marcuse says: that the question of true versus false needs is a matter best answered by individuals (2002, p. 177). But what Walzer finds difficult is not that individuals are incapable of responding to these questions individually, but the qualification Marcuse adds that these judgements regarding true and false needs must be made by “free” individuals who are not slaves of an administered life. It is here that I believe the disagreement between

Walzer and Marcuse regarding happiness, consciousness, and freedom requires us to examine Marcuse's influence existentially.

At the centre of the dissonance between Walzer's and Marcuse's enquiry are the contested concepts of consciousness, knowledge, and truth. For Walzer, the possibility of administering the lives of individuals in such a way that the decisions and choices they make are limited to what the administration allows is almost non-existent (at least in American society). For Marcuse, this is not only possible, it is the very essence of capitalist society, which relies upon this administration in order to exist; Marcuse also insists that the way to escape from this "administered" existence is to become conscious and aware of how one's life is affected by that administration.

The following discussions of happiness, consciousness, and the administered life that are based on the arguments presented by Walzer and Marcuse make two contributions to my explication of the critic/educator. On one hand, we should determine the critic/educator's own position with respect to the administered life. Does the critic/educator believe the possibility of an administered life inherently engenders false happiness or false needs? On the other hand, as a critic and educator, what she/he is offering to educatees will surely be shaped by whichever position the critic/educator holds: The critic will either be conscious of his/her administered life and will, therefore, advocate for finding a way to overcome its effects, or will completely deny the administered life and critique/educate toward what Walzer calls moral philosophy. In the next section, I discuss Marcuse's conception of concrete philosophy and delineate how important it is for the critic/educator to be a critic-at-large.

4.3.2. Philosophizing, knowledge, and truth: Marcuse's concrete philosophy.

I discussed the challenges of articulating who and what a philosopher is in my introduction. Here, I revisit the topic from a different perspective, first because it is connected to the disagreements noted between Walzer and Marcuse, but also because it

illustrates the underlying philosophical position from which Marcuse writes, one that is so fundamentally different from Walzer's that it renders Walzer's critique of *One-Dimensional Man* somewhat inadequate. The implication of this disparity between Walzer and Marcuse also supports my contention that educators ought to be social critics.

Marcuse's idea of philosophy and philosophizing is grounded in an existentialist understanding. It is particularly important to examine his appropriation of Heideggerian existentialism, not only to illustrate his critique of advanced society, but also to establish the philosophical process (he uses the term *concrete philosophy*) through which he offers his critique.

Philosophizing is a useful Marcusean concept to advance this discussion. According to him, philosophizing is not simply a human activity; it is a "mode of human existence" (2005, Chapter 2, para. 1). For Marcuse, searching for meaning [*Sinn*]; asking the question, What is the meaning of being? and asking, To what end do we direct that question? are all intrinsically connected to human existence. However, Marcuse notes that this notion or meaning of philosophizing cannot be conceptualized as the realization of a purpose transcendent to it: "All genuine philosophizing has found its meaning in itself and grasped it through itself. Authentic philosophical effort aims at knowledge as the becoming visible of truth. The meaning of philosophizing can be designated provisionally as *the making visible of truth*" (2005, Chapter 2, para. 2). Marcuse uses two concepts, *validity* and *appropriation*, to explicate what he means by truth in this instance.

He notes that "it is not valid for iron that the magnet attracts it" (2005, Chapter 2, para. 3). However, to the human eye that observes the behaviour of the iron and the magnet, the truth about these two natural objects is that the iron is attracted by the magnet (2005, Chapter 2, para. 3). In this sense, validity is not equivalent to truth, but it is an *essence* of truth. Validity exists, Marcuse notes, only in relation to human existence; it is realized only through human existence.

> To say that certain conditions have validity means that I—to the extent that I am concerned with these conditions—must know of them, must be familiar with them, must act accordingly, must adjust myself to them. This "I" is absolutely essential; it points in every case to human existence. (Marcuse, 2005, Chapter 2, para. 3)

But this does not mean that there are no valid conditions outside the realm of human existence. In fact, Marcuse qualifies his notion of validity by noting that the valid conditions we witness in the natural world are not *true* to nature. These valid conditions, like the iron and the magnet, are simply there. It is their mode of existence; they simply *are*. But when these valid conditions are considered and talked about meaningfully as *true* conditions, they can be true only for human existence. Therefore, validity, or a valid set of conditions, "can be independent of all human existence as far as its *being* is concerned, but validity, as truth, 'is' only for man" (2005, Chapter 2, para. 3).

Marcuse connects the truth obtained through validity to human existence by introducing a notion that he calls the *phenomenon of appropriation* (2005, Chapter 2, para. 4). Appropriation is a process through which human existence not only knows truths, but acts according to those truths. The following paragraph is an attempt to provide a summary of Marcuse's phenomenological notion of appropriation. The key concepts Marcuse presents in providing his complex notion of appropriation include *knowledge, primordial knowledge, truth* and the *appropriation of truth*.

The very nature of truth demands appropriation through human existence. In other words, knowledge of truth lies in truth's demand for appropriation. Knowledge is an appropriation only for one who knows primordially. Primordial knowledge is what Marcuse calls original discovery, and the meaning of original discovery is knowing with one's entire person and/or existence. Without knowing primordially, Marcuse claims, knowledge becomes uncomplicated familiarity, or simple acceptance of things as "true." Therefore, primordial knowledge implies that every genuine truth must be known and possessed. However, knowing and possessing are not temporary acts of human consciousness; they belong to human existence, to human Dasein. Appropriation, thus,

does not constitute being itself, but it constitutes the very purpose of truth. Appropriation constitutes the "to what end" aspect of truth. Therefore, Dasein relates to truth through appropriation. In other words, appropriation belongs to the meaning of truth, but it does not constitute the being of truth. Appropriation is realized through knowing and possessing via the existing Dasein. The existence of Dasein is essentially a form of relating to the world.

The above observation constitutes Marcuse's underlying thesis that concrete philosophy must be grounded in concrete human existence. The basis for Marcuse's existential philosophy is that truth is equated with some sort of action, that truth requires enactment, and that enactment occurs through the process of appropriation. He offers the following synthesis with respect to existential philosophy:

If the meaning of philosophy is the making visible of truth, and if this truth has a fundamentally existential character, then not only is philosophizing a mode of existing, but philosophy itself is, according to its very meaning, existential. One can delineate the domain of philosophy however one likes, but in its search for truth, philosophy is always concerned with human existence. Authentic philosophizing refuses to remain at the stage of knowledge; rather, in driving this knowledge on to truth it strives for the concrete appropriation of that truth through human Dasein. (2005, Chapter 2, para. 7)

To understand philosophy in such terms, it is important to sketch the way Marcusean logic connects *truth* to history. According to the above excerpt, concrete philosophy, as a way of addressing concrete human existence, refuses to be limited only to a domain of knowledge. It requires action, and human action is what we call history. Essentially, Marcuse is arguing that we should look at concrete human existence as the ultimate subject of philosophy. Concrete human existence is embedded in particular "historical conditions." Each individual is delivered into a particular historical condition, and the possibilities of the individual's existence are prescribed by those historical conditions. For Marcuse, history (and by extension, historical conditions) is not a product of Dasein. Dasein itself—existence as it were—is "happening" (2005, Chapter 2, para.

11), and history is this happening that cannot be separated from Dasein. The connection Marcuse makes between philosophy and truth is therefore that philosophical problems and truths also have history, because the problems and truths are "bound to concrete historical existence and are meaningful and true only from the perspective of and for this [particular] existence" (2005, Chapter 2, para. 7). For Marcuse, philosophy, having human existence as its fundamental concern, is always located in particular historical situations. Subjects and objects addressed by philosophy are not interchangeable; each individual is unique in that it exists within a particular activity, a particular social situation, and a particular state the community may be in, and all of these factors evolve through particular natural and historical conditions. In short, this conditioning of existence (Dasein) is what constitutes history.

Another important implication of this existential understanding of history concerns the question of where the critic's criticism should begin. In other words, this Marcusean understanding of history requires one to believe that truths are concrete, as opposed to abstract. The basis for Walzer and Marcuse's divergent views, particularly with respect to where the boundaries and focus of the social critic's critique are, is also related to this connection Marcuse draws between truth and history. It is important to address the controversy regarding whether *class* is the relevant unit of criticism, as many left-leaning scholars and Marxists insist, or whether the unit should be the *nation,* as Walzer insists. In particular, this controversy directly affects educators/social critics in educational spaces because the educator may consider either nation or class to be the relevant unit. The choice made will obviously profoundly affect how one practices education.

4.4. Nation versus Class: An Existential and Phenomenological Understanding of History

Considering the question of which unit of analysis the critic should work with within any given social order ties the previous discussion back into the role of the social

critic/educator in society. History and historicity are key components of that question. The contradiction between Walzer's communitarian interpretation of the most important unit of analysis in social criticism and Marcuse's existential assertion of the vital unit of society is based on the disparity between how these theorists understand history. Walzer considers history to be a simple temporal facticity, while Marcuse believes it is intrinsically connected to existence.

Walzer insists that, for the social critic, "nation and not class is the relevant unit" (2002, p. 234). Borrowing Gramscian terminology, Walzer expands his understanding of the term *national-popular criticism* to mean that critics should maintain some sort of equilibrium between critiques that assume the form of the popular and the content of the national (2002, p. 235). The distinctions he makes between what is *popular in form* and *national in content* is not very clear, but the gist of it seems to be that today's critics must find satisfaction "in an activity that is more often morally irritating than materially effective" (2002, p. 233). This is so, according to Walzer, because the effectiveness of the social critic is measured by the extent of the critic's loyalty to the common people, rather than in the expectation that some supra-human instrument may help the critic better comprehend morality, or in the belief that the instruction to act comes from "history." The critic, in this way, sees the social problems and the necessary solutions in the framework of the "national history and culture" of the particular society, thereby making "nation, not class, the relevant unit for social criticism" (2002, pp. 233–234).

It is difficult to ascertain what Walzer meant by "history and culture," because he does not actually define these notions. However, there seems to be, between Marcuse and Walzer, a fundamental difference of understanding regarding the relevant unit of criticism that the social critic should engage with. It is important to understand the effect of this distinction, as it impacts Walzer's critique of Marcuse's arguments; Walzer does not delineate his interpretation of Marcuse's phenomenological and existential understanding of what history and historicity mean, particularly with respect to understanding the process of how and why Marcuse relates the role of the critic to the

bigger philosophical inquiry he is trying to tackle—*historical human existence*. It is also important to note that Walzer's emphasis is on the "moral" aspect of the critic's actions, and that he neglects somewhat their material aspects. But if we examine Marcuse's argument more carefully, we see that the material aspect cannot be separated from the intellectual, the spiritual, and the cultural aspects of social existence.

4.4.1. Marcuse and history: An existential understanding of historical materialism

Marcuse, as Walzer correctly states, does not hide the fact that his philosophical inquiries are based upon classical Marxist texts. However, he is not simply reiterating and justifying Marxist tenets or, as Walzer implies, being an apologist for them. Neither does he contradict himself, as Walzer also suggests, by simultaneously being a pre- and post-Marxist who laments the disappearance of the proletariat class, because that class served as the main object (instrument) of his critical philosophy. Nor can Marcuse's efforts be reduced to a simple interest in "freer consciousness" (Walzer, 2002, pp. 171–172). Rather, what Marcuse offers is a new mode of understanding, and a better way of interpreting, advanced capitalist society—a method that accounts for the need to unveil the dogmatic interpretation of classical Marxism by substituting phenomenological and existential lenses, thus potentially revealing how history and its motility are intertwined with the individual members of historical existence that encompasses both the material and intellectual aspects of human existence.

Marcuse's position regarding history stems from his understanding of Marxism as both theory and praxis. Marxism, Marcuse insists, is a theory of both social action and historical acts. Critiquing Marxism from a transcendental position that tends to locate itself some distance from its object (and is, perhaps, what Walzer seems to be doing) is problematic, because Marxist truths are not truths of knowledge but truths of *happening* (Marcuse, 2005, Chapter 1, para. 1). History is understood through this notion of happening, and *historical materialism* is the lens that projects the structure and the motility of happening. In this sense, historicity is the entire domain of knowledge that is

concerned with all aspects of historical existence. Marcuse describes this aspect of Marxism as “a disclosure through which a new, revolutionary, fundamental attitude gains a new view, a new of the whole social being by coming to know historicity.” Historicity enables humans to comprehend new understandings of reality that entail the possibility of radical transformation (2005, Chapter 1, para. 2).

In fact, for Marcuse, the mode of being for human Dasein is historical; human Dasein expresses itself through historical situations. This means that knowledge—the very essence of knowledge—has the same mode of existence as does human existence. Therefore, the fundamental Marxist perspective allows for the possibility of *radical acts*; Marcuse refers to these as *historical possibilities*. These acts open up paths for new and necessary realities that have the potential to fulfill the actualization of the whole person. It is in this context that Marcuse declares that the standard-bearer of the Marxist fundamental situation is the self-consciously historical person, and that the field of action for such a person is history (in its existential sense).

The radical act also has an existential meaning related to this understanding of human existence as historical existence. Based on one of Marx’s assertions from *The German Ideology,* Marcuse reiterates that to be radical is to grasp the issue by its roots, that action is always existential. “Every act is a human transformation of circumstances” (2005, Chapter 1, para. 8). But what distinguishes a radical act from all others is that the radical act is capable of transforming human existence (2005, Chapter 1, para. 9).

We can infer from this explication of the radical act that Marcuse’s response to Walzer’s argument, that nation and not class is the essential unit for the critic’s work, is founded in this analysis of history and historicity. Marcuse postulates the following: (a) that the first historical act is the production of material life, and (b) that a society’s spiritual realities are grounded in these material realities (Marcuse, 2005, Chapter 1, para. 14). Based on these postulates, the critic should begin with the premise that human existence is a historical existence. At the same time, if material production is the first historical act of human existence, material production itself becomes a mode of

existence; this implies some sort of production relationship between the material and the social world. Class is the only possible unit the critic should consider for his work, because production is defined/shaped by the relations of production.

Walzer's characterization of Marcuse as a philosopher who laments the disappearance of the proletariat and who believes that America is a society without a proletariat class is problematic when one considers these Marcusean notions of history, historicity, and historical existence. It is true that we no longer see enslaved, exploited proletariats wearing blue overalls in today's American society, as they were depicted in pictures and images from the 19th and early 20th century communist and socialist propaganda leaflets. However, Marcuse's existential analysis does not suggest the absence of the proletariat class in American society, but rather, the transformation of a class that was once considered the vital unit of social criticism into a new, one-dimensional class with new necessities. Today's social critic/educator must therefore approach the sphere of criticism from an understanding that contemporary historical conditions have changed and thus require a different set of questions. What Marcuse's existential approach offers for today's critics is the understanding that one can still consider class the vital unit for social criticism, but specific historical conditions—that is, the historical existence of the individual as well as the class— should also be considered. The question that Marcusean analyses of historicity helps us formulate is not a search for how the "proletariat class" disappeared, but how it is conditioned and transformed to fit into existing historical conditions. It also helps address how the oppressing agent's efforts to transform and condition are facilitated by present, concrete historical conditions. Perhaps this is how we should respond to Walzer's suspicion that there is no oppressor "enslaving" modern, one-dimensional men and women. We should approach our inquiry into the bourgeois class in the 19th century and the capitalist class (however we may define it) in today's society from the perspective of historical existence. Seen through a Marcusean existential lens, what we might expect to see is a historical transformation in its mode of existence. Of course, neither Walzer's argument, and to some extent Marcuse's thesis, addresses the current historical mode of existence of the oppressive

class. While Marcuse focuses on “modern slaves,” Walzer only points out the absence of any analysis of the “modern slave owners” in Marcuse’s critique. However, the philosophical disparity between Walzer and Marcuse can be understood, I believe, when we consider the existential foundation of Marcuse’s analysis of history and historical conditions. Otherwise, the discussion may be no more fruitful than engaging with two critics who speak different languages.

A brief overview of one of the disparities between Walzer and Marcuse illustrates why I tend to agree with Marcuse. For Walzer, “educational dictatorship” is behind Marcuse’s goal, because the social critic is the one who “knows” what is necessary to transform society. That is, critical philosophy seizes power to transform society and free the un-free members of society (Walzer, 2002, p. 175). Marcuse’s weakness lies in his critique of technologically advanced society, according to Walzer. His assertion that critical philosophy should be delivered in a fashion that addresses the few intellectual elites from above is something that Walzer believes modern liberalism and modern democracy abandoned long ago (2002, p. 184). Marcuse’s weakness, Walzer insists, is his naive belief in science and technology, as demonstrated by Marcuse’s belief that techno-elites are responsible for transforming American society (2002, pp. 188–189).

But for Marcuse, knowledge, in the context of critical philosophy and knowledge in its existential sense, is not an object that floats around autonomously. It is neither what the social critic can deliver from the highest pedestal to the oppressed masses, nor is it an object that exists outside of human historical existence:

Even if one may speak of the object of knowledge as being “above” or “beyond” history, the knowing act [*erkennene akt*] is itself not something that descends from nowhere into concrete being; rather, it is always the product of concrete human beings and the historical situation is the conditions of possibility of all knowledge (Marcuse, 2005, Chapter 1, para. 19).

In this sense, knowledge is a way of articulating social realities, a way of understanding concrete social truths that are associated with social existence. Marcuse's understanding of knowledge, therefore, is different from what Walzer suggests. Knowledge is understood as an existential understanding wherein *genuine knowledge* is a *practical* knowledge that brings the human Dasein "into the truth," and meaning is simply the knowledge of historical existence (Marcuse, 2005, Chapter 1, para. 19).

If this is the case, what we can then posit about the role of the social critic in a Marcusean sense is not a neglect of the "real" experience of fellow men and women; on the contrary, it is a call for acute attention to their entire existence, to their lived experience and their historical situation based on a knowledge that is part of their existence. If an instance of tuning in to an FM radio station or turning on a television is a historical act within their social existence, then surely the understanding of this act, understood from the perspective of their historical existence, is meaningful. The Marcusean notion of knowledge requires such an understanding. The implication of this Marcusean notion of knowledge to educators is that educators as social critics have to understand that the "truth" and "knowledge" they want to impart or share or pursue is always anchored in what Marcuse considers "practical" knowledge, where meaning is constructed through a particular historical existence.

4.4.2. Concrete versus moral philosophy: Walzer's path to moral philosophy.

The split between Marcuse and Walzer in the context of social criticism can perhaps best be summed up as a divide between how they respectively conceptualized *concrete* and *moral* philosophy. In contrast to the way I defined Marcusean concrete philosophy above as one that is concerned with the truth of cotemporaneous existence, Walzer's moral philosophy is based on an understanding that "social criticism is best understood as social interpretation" (1987, p. VII). Walzer's 1987 book, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, is indeed a "theoretical preamble" for his later work where he explains why Marcuse's concrete philosophy lacks the propinquity social critics need to

apply their critiques to social issues in a manner that is both effective and meaningful. The two philosophical assertions seem to underline two different stances, where one considers philosophy to be interested in existence and its contemporaneousness, while the other considers philosophy to be an interpretive activity of the moral world. However, this distinction implies a fundamental difference regarding the role of the social critic, because the choices offered to the critic by these disparate theorists determine where critics should start their work, what factors critics should consider in their work, and to what end critics should work. Yet, it is my understanding that these two philosophical stances can actually help the critic, particularly the social critic/educator, if they could somehow be melded. I am suggesting that the need to address existence in all its natural and historical manifestations and the importance of interpreting the social/moral world must be considered jointly and simultaneously. Interpretation, as Walzer pointed out, is indeed one of the social critic's most crucial roles. But interpretation itself is historical. If we agree with Marcuse's analysis of history, it is not difficult to see that the interpretation of any moral world (truths) is bound by historical conditions. In order to expand upon this assertion, I must first review Walzer's explication of moral philosophy.

Walzer identifies three possible paths that lead to moral philosophy, the first two of which are the path of *discovery* and the path of *invention*. These two paths do not lead to moral philosophy because discovery, in both religious and secular senses, is centered on the notion that there is a need to go *out there* and discover a moral world that is alien to and different from the actual social world where the critics start their journey. In this sense, the correlation between the newly discovered moral world and the actual social world where the critic is—the object of criticism, the society—is suppressed by an apparent perception of critical distance. Walzer argues that, most often, the newly discovered moral world and the new morality brought to light by the critic end up looking much the same as the old morality that society already knows.

Invention, as a path to moral philosophy, shares similar outcomes because every discovery and invention is a disguised interpretation of the existing morality we already

know (Walzer, 1987, p. 21). Walzer thus asserts that interpretation is the third and correct path that leads to moral philosophy. Providing analogies to illustrate the three paths, Walzer connects discovery with the executive branch of the modern government, invention with the legislative branch, and interpretation with the judicial branch. The role of the executive branch of any government is to "enforce the law." The social critic who chooses this path, just like the religious sage or even the secular philosopher, discovers a moral world beyond the social world. But this path does not convey the force to execute the "newly" discovered morality on society. Invention differs from discovery, Walzer explains, because the tendency to translate the invention into law is the purpose of philosophical inventors. The philosophical inventor poses as a representative of all members of society, and as their representative, acts as both executer and interpreter of the moral world. The path of interpretation's unique ability to arrive at moral philosophy is in its facility to imagine that the moral world it deals with is neither a discovery nor an invention; rather, it is an interpretation of a moral world that is always there in the social all along. According to Walzer, interpretation "is judgement," and any member of the collective can participate in this activity of judgment.

Conceivably, an instance where Walzer hints at a phenomenological understanding of the critic, and an indication of agreement with Marcuse in regard to how to approach some of the fundamental questions of existence, is this assertion that discovery and invention are simply a distraction to camouflage the effort of finding "external and universal standards" for moral existence. As Walzer correctly notes, "the critique of existence begins, or can begin, from principles internal to existence itself" (1987, p. 21). Interpretation is the possible path to moral philosophy that does not require distance and detachment on the critic's part. Marginality, not critical distance and social detachment, is the appropriate context within which interpretation should be understood (Walzer, 1987, pp. 36–37). Now, marginality is a notion that is often discussed in the context of social criticism. However, in the context of the social critic/educator, marginality is imbued with a special meaning. As I mentioned elsewhere, the social critic/educator has to simultaneously be both distant from and close to his object of

criticism. Marginality, in this sense, is both self-imposed as a conscious, deliberate act by the critic, and externally imposed, because what the critic sees or says is something that the status quo does not support. To illustrate how marginality can best be understood in this sense, we look to what Freire calls dialectical solidarity—the need for educators to know the world in the same way as those whom they are trying to educate, what Freire calls the "reading of the world" and the "reading of the word" (1992). This view that educators must be educated specifically on the "sub-cultures" of the oppressed and marginalized has an important implication for social critic/educators, especially in the context of being simultaneously outside and inside.

For example, if social justice is to be "taught" in classrooms, then the educators' task encompasses an understanding of the world view of the oppressed/marginalized groups, on one hand, and imparting what Freire calls the "forbidden" knowledge intended to bring about a better understanding of social justice, on the other. This implies that the role of the social critic/educator is related to the politics of identity and agency, because knowing the "world" of the marginalized requires inquiry into both the identity, at the subjective level, and the agency, in the context of practical action. But most importantly, when we say "understanding the world view of the marginalized," we are acknowledging not only the marginalization of the educatees (in Freire's case, the peasants of Brazil), but also the extant social distance between the social critic/educator and the educatee. The need to understand the world view of the oppressed implies a gap, a distance, which needs to be acknowledged and perhaps ameliorated. At the same time, once the willingness to learn and understand the marginalized world view of the oppressed is achieved, the social critic/educators have to "be" among the oppressed, have to shift their position (at least in the intellectual and political senses) to "become" one of the marginalized in order to create any meaningful learning experience. This transition, as much as it is self-imposed (given it is usually a choice to ally oneself with the oppressed), is still an externally imposed act in the larger picture, as long as the status quo/social order positions the oppressed along the margins.

4.5. Moral Philosophy and Marginalization

To continue this delineation of Walzer's suggestion that moral philosophy is best attained using an interpretive pathway, I now consider Walzer's characterization of marginality as it relates to moral philosophy and the social critic/educator. Walzer offers key words such as *local*, *insider*, and the *connected critic* as a model. He insists that even a marginalized social critic must maintain a certain locality, a certain connection to the people, and it is this connection that allows the social critic to be considered "one of us" by the same people he criticizes:

> I want to suggest an alternative model, though I do not mean to banish the dispassionate stranger or the estranged native. They have their place in the critical story, but only alongside and in the shadow of someone quite different and more familiar: the local judge, the connected critic, who earns his authority, or fails to do so, by arguing with his fellows—who, angrily and insistently, sometimes at considerable personal risk (he can be a hero too), objects, protests, and remonstrates. This critic is one of us. Perhaps he has traveled and studied abroad, but his appeal is for local or localized principles; if he has picked up new ideas on his travels, he tries to connect them to the local culture, building on his own intimate knowledge; he is not intellectually detached. Nor is he emotionally detached; he does not wish the natives well, he seeks the success of their common enterprise.... The outsider can become a *social* critic only if he manages to get himself inside, enters imaginatively into local practices and arrangements. (Walzer, 1987, p. 39)

Edward Said's *The 1993 Reith Lectures* offers another perspective on marginality that further demonstrates the need for the educator to hold the position of both insider and outsider. He notes that the actual condition of exile does not apply only to those intellectuals who experience dislocation and displacement from their familiar social and political environment, that it also affects intellectuals who are "life-long members" of a society when they become dissatisfied with what is going on in their society. This state of mind defines intellectuals who are "at odds" with their society (Said, 1996, p. 52).

The above description of the ideal social critic is interesting on a number of levels, and its appeal is that the characterization fits almost any 19th- or early-20th-century critic from anywhere in the world. Historically, that era saw the world become increasingly connected in a manner never witnessed before in its history, particularly with respect to social justice, equality, freedom, and other notions that social criticism usually considers its natural objects of inquiry. What began in the 19th century as a proletarian movement against bourgeoisie exploitation—the anti-serfdom movement in Russia and even the earlier abolitionist movement against slavery—were transformed among various Africa nations into anti-colonialism movements and struggles for independence from European colonialism. It was also transformed into social-order reorganizations through revolutions such as the Bolshevik Revolution and the Cultural Revolution of Mao Tse Dung's China. The manifestations of "world" organization that attempted to disseminate either socialism or western-style democracy among the emerging independent nations around the globe (for example, military alliances like the Warsaw Pact and NATO, the establishment of the United Nations, the Cold War détente policy, and the International Solidarity movement spearheaded by the USSR) were all historical conditions that the 19th century bequeathed to the 20th century. It is not difficult to see that events such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the anti-apartheid movements in Rhodesian (presently Zimbabwe) and in South Africa are all both causes and effects of the world's connectedness. Today's social critic, as much as we must concede the importance and effectiveness of loyalty to local issues, always blends the ability to simultaneously see inward into the local and outward to the larger world. Oppression, injustice, exploitation, and other issues that require moral judgments are no longer confined to localized arguments. One cannot exist without the other; the local and the outside world are so intricately connected that it is impossible to limit critiques to the local. Every change critics champion for their local situation engenders necessary accommodations by the outside world. Every critique that speaks to the localized people is incomplete unless the critique outlines the connectedness of this localized problem to the world beyond. It is one thing to consider Orwell's critique as a localized voice that made him "one of the people" of Britain, but it is a totally different

thing to say that his critique was detached from any obligation to the outside world. For that matter, Ghandi's social critique, as much as it was geared toward the well-being of his people, was also a damning critique of colonial Britain's actions and of colonialism at large.

When Aimé Césaire writes that "Europe is indefensible" because it became a civilization that could not justify the problems it had created—namely, issues related to the working class and to colonial rule—it is because a critique of colonial independence can start from the outside to form an assessment of the colonial power, or at least, to formulate a viable understanding of the issue at hand (Cesaire, 1976). Walzer argues that the process of interpreting the social conditions that would lead to a moral philosophy must acknowledge this connectedness between the local and the outside world, thus implying that the social critic needs to be both an insider and an outsider. Walzer's commentary regarding the notion of the *heroic* critic and the circumstances under which people can be mobilized and demobilized is relevant here. His lack of confidence in oppressed peoples' ability to transform history is based on his understanding of the heroic social critic who sometimes turns social movements into lethargic and dictatorial states.

I will now revisit Walzer's doubts related to the connectedness of the local and the world beyond and of the social critic's ambiguous simultaneous position as a local/outsider. This is important because Walzer's doubt is representative of the difficulty we have in making a clear connection between the local/global, especially in educational contexts where localized concerns appear to have nothing in common with the global. Throughout this discussion, I focus upon instances where the social critic/educator is simultaneously holding the position of the insider and the outsider.

4.6. Heroism and Mobilization: Social Movements and the Social Critic

Walzer and Marcuse agree, based on historical accounts, that mobilization and demobilization of people was/is possible, be it in the name of this or that social, political, or religious cause, but their agreement does not seem to hold beyond this acknowledgment. Their understanding of the basis for the failure of popular movements (i.e., the people's demobilization) reflects diverging analyses.

In Walzer's case, the heroic critic is the antithesis of the ideal critic, who relentlessly questions the clichés and myths of his society and expresses the aspirations and hopes of his people (Walzer, 2002, p. 229). Ideal critics identify themselves as members of a specific community. Their values (personal or universal) have to be shared by a particular, localized group of people. When such critics speak, they have already established that they belong to a certain group of people who accept their social existence as "one of them."

Walzer offers several examples of critics who fulfill these descriptions: Camus, Bourne, Silone, and particularly Breytenbach, whose account of the social critic's role in the social sphere is the foundation for Walzer's conception of the model social critic.[5] Walzer uses the metaphor of a mirror to illustrate the ideal, connected critic, a concept he borrowed from Breytenbach. Walzer later developed his theoretical argument that social critics should not only be connected to their own locality and speak the language of the local, but that part of their function is to allow their people to "see themselves," so to speak, through the mirror the critic holds up for them. In other words, the connected critic is the ideal candidate to hold the mirror up so his people can better see themselves reflected in his critiques. From Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Walzer chose Hamlet's plea to his

[5] See page 232 for Walzer's interpretation of Breytenbach's two tasks of the critic, as well as a third task Walzer adds to the critic's list of tasks.

mother to look into the glass as an illustration of the connected critic. The hope here is that the moral agreement that potentially exists between Hamlet and his mother will allow the mother to see her inner "soul" and come to understand what kind of morally acceptable behaviour is expected of a mother, a queen, or even a morally acceptable person. Walzer considers the mirror to be the "most powerful critical instrument" (2002, pp. 233–231) that the critic can apply. Yet, in a footnote (2002, p. 231), Walzer explains how the mirror may not work as a metaphor for all occasions. He qualifies the metaphor of the mirror in the sense that it may not apply to members of society who may be "outside the world of moral agreement." His example of a "Nazi in his boots and swastika" who chooses to admire himself instead of looking deep into his soul to see what is wrong/immoral within him is certainly clear enough. In such a case (however small the number these individuals who can be positioned outside the world of moral agreement are), the alternative Walzer offers when the mirror fails to work on such members of society is to "use fighting," because some members of society (e.g., the Nazi in his boots) fall outside commonly accepted moral boundaries. This advice can be justified in light of historical experiences, but the point I wish to reiterate here is the importance of understanding and acknowledging that the mirror alone is not always sufficient.

But more importantly, there seems to be a subtle issue here related to how the metaphor itself is expressed. The example of the Nazi Walzer offers and the exception he attaches to his metaphor necessitates an examination of the conceptual relationship between the notions of *agreed moral world* and the *connected critic*. There is an apparent contradiction between asserting that an agreed moral world exists, on one hand, and the argument that the critic has to remain local (complete with all the attributes Walzer attaches to the meaning of being local) on the other. *Agreed moral world* is really another title for a *shared moral world*; an understanding of morality that can be shared by those beyond the local. The question is not whether shared moral values exist or not. As Walzer correctly asserted, and as most critics would agree, certain moral values approximate universality. There may indeed be elements that we can presuppose as common in moral

contexts, but if we are counting on these shared values as a starting point, as Hamlet did, then obviously our insistence on connectedness to the local has to expand to include the outside world, as is implied by the concept of shared moral values. For those societies whose cultures and customs are perceived as alien or distant to any given local “customs, common senses, and moral senses” (Walzer, 2002, pp. 230–231), shared moral values are the only legitimate instruments connecting the local with the outside, because those values are common to all. It might be difficult to come up with a catalogue of shared values in order to know what these values are, yet I contend that these common values are perhaps manifested when two distance cultures meet without any prior knowledge of one another’s socio-cultural practices. In other words, the agreed moral world and its elements are the intersecting instruments that allow a critic like Hamlet to hold the mirror up for the other. At the same time, by virtue of their universal tendencies, these elements that constitute the agreed moral world have to be shared by outsiders. Perhaps we need to tweak the metaphor differently to reflect this potential contradiction that Walzer seems to ignore. Perhaps it is necessary to attach to the role of the *critic with a mirror* a task to consciously juxtapose local values with outsiders’ values to better articulate what agreed moral world means and how it relates to larger social movements.

Returning for a moment to social movements, I would argue that *necessity* in the historical conditions of any specific movement is what allows us to gauge the success or failure of movements. In other words, the success and failure of movements, the mobilization and demobilization of people by tyrants and dictators, and the justification of the tyrants’ actions by irresponsible social critics who admire despots with zealotry, as Walzer notes, need to be weighed against the historical necessity of the particular social order. The mobilization and demobilization of people require acts, and the logical question that we can then pose (in a Marcusean sense) is, Are these acts “radical” in their nature? Marcuse’s understanding is that a radical act is driven by necessary historical conditions—conditions that are harsh enough to demand a change in the social order. Thus, the people’s mobilization and demobilization is usually driven by some sort of historical necessity that will result in radical acts.

Radical acts, in the existential sense, are necessary to both the perpetrator and to the societal environment where the acts take place (Marcuse, 2005, Chapter 1, para. 9). When we talk about the people's mobilization or the possibilities of demobilization, the logical Marcusean-oriented question that we should ask is, Are the acts radical enough to cause the desired changes? The success or failure of social movements are thus measured against Marcuse's standards: Is the radical act both necessary and immanent for existent historical conditions? An agreed moral world that does not confine itself to locality is therefore illuminated by notions of historical necessity that are universally held.

The Arab Spring revolution sheds some light on the matter of mobilization/demobilization. Modern Egypt gained independence during the 1952 revolution, when Gamal Abdel Nasir (along with other military officers) took power by overthrowing the monarchy. Since then, Egypt has had only three political leaders: Nasir, from 1956–1970; Sadat, from 1970–1981; and Mubarak, from 1981–2011. All three ruled with the blessing of the Supreme Military Council, the force behind the Egyptian political machine that was formed after the revolution of 1952. The radical change in 1952 was generated by organic (local) movements orchestrated by a group of military officers. The change in the social order came about because of a perception of some sort of historically validated necessity, as mobilization is not possible unless the necessity for change is provided by the extant historical conditions. As such, it is possible to deduce that the need to overthrow the monarch envisioned by the officers was shared by the Egyptian people themselves.

The Arab Spring revolution in January of 2011 appeared, at the outset, to be no different from the 1952 upheaval, at least in the context of the ability for political actors to mobilize the people under a political agenda. Given that, one cannot help believing that there must have been some historically valid justification for the removal of a despotic leader who ruled Egypt for almost 30 years. But according to Lynch et al., the genesis and inception of the 2011 revolution differed significantly from the one that occurred in 1952. Long before the January 2011 revolution, the Centre for Applied Nonviolent

Action and Strategies (CANVAS) claims to have provided training to Egyptian youth on how to mobilize people. Despite differences in terms of culture, language, customs, and political conditions, CANVAS—an organization that was formed by Serbian youth and student movements who contributed to the revolution (Lynch et al., 2011, Chapter 4, sec. 3, para. 2) after Slobodan Milosevic was ousted—was able to translate its experience into a political strategy that could be shared by those hoping to change social conditions in a very different locality and set of circumstances. The training provided by CANVAS to Egyptian, Zimbabwean, Burmese, and Iranian youth (with varying degrees of success) is reason enough to suspect that there are indeed some shared and transferable values between Serbian and Egyptian societies. At the same time, the suggestion that some sort of educational activity, based on knowledge appropriated from a specific historical condition, was being transferred to outsiders can also be considered an example of the world's connectedness. This connectedness demonstrates the existence of shared values. But since the revolution of 2011, Egypt is now being ruled by its fourth leader, one who was once part of the leadership of the Supreme Military Counsel. Marcuse would classify the 2011 Egyptian revolution as one that lacked the radical quality to change Egyptian society in anything more than a superficial manner, that the new social order in Egypt reflects, at its core, the same old social order.

Social problems are often more meaningful when they are examined from the local perspective; however, any remedial act may also involve looking at what transpires in the outside world. It has been said that the social critic/educator's role, particularly those who attempt to articulate the social problems of a particular society and the remedies these problems call for, must first ground their assessment within the local. It has been also said that the social critic/educator performs these roles by articulating and interpreting the hopes and possibilities the society envisions and by debunking the myths that stand in the way of accomplishing this task. I contend that hopes and myths illustrate the world's connectedness in the same sense that shared moral values do. And for the social critic/educator, understanding these shared hopes and myths is another way to affirm the need to unite the local and the global, as well as the need to be simultaneously

inside and outside. The next chapter examines hope and myth as they relate to the role of the social critic/educator.

Chapter 5. Hope and Myth: Social Criticism and the State

I use the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a platform to examine and chart the progress of three myths that commonly support institutionalized educational systems. This exploration delineates the fact that these basic myths, in their expanded forms that we see manifested in schools, have an important (perhaps singular) purpose—to justify their existence, thereby strengthening society's understanding of education as being dependent upon institutions. I then demonstrate how the state, as the definitive social institution, plays a critical role, not only in reifying those myths but also in creating new ones to justify its own existence, as well as the existence of other social institutions such as schools. It is my contention that, today, institutionalized education, in its various forms, is universally administered and regulated by the state and that conversations that assert educators' roles together with the roles of social critics cannot be complete unless there is a clear understanding of the relationship the educator/social critic has with both the institution and the state, and with its myths and hopes.

I start with the premise that the notions of hope and myth are at the centre of social criticism. In particular, I argue that the assertion that educators are essentially social critics requires that there be a relationship between hope and myth. The exigency of hope is always present in both educational practices and social criticism, because both traditions are betrothed to the future. They strive to bring changes having the potential to create better social conditions. Thus, I interpret hope and myth somewhat unconventionally, as closely related notions wherein the conceptualization of hope in both education and social criticism is conjoined with the indubitable presence of myth, which acts as a mechanism to justify, validate, defend, and excuse the stated or implied hope. When we identify possibilities with the potential to take us closer to where we want to be or to what we wish to achieve, we usually present them within a hopeful framework. And yet, regardless of the noble intentions we maintain during the process of formulating these hopes, we might well be reiterating time-tested myths. When

possibilities are overshadowed by the inability to achieve our goal; when we feel powerless to be where we want to be; when we feel that we are being held back from moving forward, from acting and changing our circumstances for the better, we eventually come to understand that what we construed as hope is actually a myth. The connection between hope and myth is the sad possibility for hope itself to often be transformed into myth over time. It may well be that our ability to formulate new hope allows us to carry on, but there is no guarantee that this new hope will not eventually become yet another myth in disguise. In the same way, when we want to convince ourselves and others to change course to one we believe will improve our collective existence, when we try to convince others that society should move in this or that direction and that our suggested course is superior to other viable choices, we usually present the idea under the general guise of hope. Alternately, when we want to persuade others that a certain course of action will have a negative effect upon society, when we differ in principle from a suggested political, economic, or social change, we reduce the course of action that is presented as hope into a myth. Myth is vivid, sensational, passionate, colourful, and wondrous. Hope is silent, implied, and rarely evident unless it has been intentionally stated. This characterization of hope is similar to the idea Bloch presents at the beginning of his 1986 book, *The Principle of Hope*. He discusses the natural development of human beings and considers daydreaming from a child's perspective. The child does not know what to hope for; it is not clear what is missing or what the child yearns for, yet there is a persistent longing and craving for something that is not yet known (Bloch, 1986). Of course, this example is the preamble for Bloch's central thesis of the *not-yet-conscious* as it relates to the conceptualization of hope. This is the depiction I suggest for the connection and characterization of hope and myth.

Simple examples of the interplay between hope and myth are abundant in literature, historical accounts, and political discourses. The Tudor myth surrounding the controversial reign of Richard III is a case in point. Historians such as Polydore Vergil and Thomas More characterized his reign as one of chaos and terror, depicting him not only as a murderous, power-hungry monarch, but also as a person with an unnatural birth

defect (born with a set of teeth and shoulder-length hair). The purpose of slandering Richard III was to increase the likelihood that Henry Tudor could return from exile and be accepted as king in his stead (Kendall, 2002). Historians and literary critics tell us that what we read about Richard III in history books and even in school textbooks is a myth that was circulated to enhance the Tudors' political image. It became so widely accepted that, according to Kendall, it remains viable within some scholarly circles even today (2002, p. 513).

Examples of modern myths created and/or motivated by a specific set of hopes include the sinking of the Lusitania during World War 1, the Vietnam War's Tonkin Gulf incident, and more recently, allegations regarding Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD). One could argue that these are but examples of sinister myths generated for questionable and unjustifiable hopes that did not represent the general public's interest, at least in the sense that they contradicted shared moral values. But hope itself does not have meaning; hope can be meaningful only within the context of its motifs and justifications. Plato's story involving the "noble lie" (Plato, 1989) offers an example where the motive is much less sinister than the modern examples cited above. Socrates' hesitation to propagate that noble lie, despite the fact that doing so would benefit the republic, perhaps shows his moral awareness regarding the fact that it is, at a minimum, worrisome to lie. The hope implied in the proposal—in the creation of the myth—was rooted in a noble motif: the good of the republic. Some may well also argue that Socrates' myth would not have resulted in the deaths of several people (or many, as the case may be). Regardless, I believe that the most interesting question raised by these examples would be to ascertain whether the myth was created because of the stated hope, or whether the stated hope created the myth. There is no obvious or easy answer to this question, but this line of inquiry does indicate that there is a connection between hope and myth.

A brief outline of how various theorists have defined *myth* puts the connection between myth and hope into perspective. Cassirer's extensive historical and analytical

discussion on the notion of myth and its functionality is particularly helpful here, because he examines the concept of myth not only from the perspective of political discourse, but also from that of social realities. In *The Myth of the State*, Cassirer notes that the abundance of theoretical and philosophical elucidations on the exact meaning of myth creates an intellectual conundrum (1946, pp. 4–15). His observation still holds. The body of literature in philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and psychoanalysis, to name a few, approach the theme of myth from various scholarly positions, and these discussions also treat myth longitudinally, from antiquity to the present. It is important, therefore, to qualify how myth and mythical thought is conceived and presented in the context of larger scholarly conversations about myth and mythical thought in various discursive fields of study.

5.1. An Alternate Understanding of Myth

The underlying understanding of myth generally appears similar in all scholarly usages, except when one uses it in the commonly understood disparaging sense that myth is equivalent to fables or lies. We hear this often in political discourses when someone states that "such and such is a myth because it is untrue." Although I suspect this usage of myth as falsehood is rooted within the biases of Western empirical discourse that favours anything "scientific," the general perception of myth is as a sort of symbolic, as opposed to a physical, expression of feelings— that myth should be understood as an expression of emotions, an "emotion changed into an image" (Cassirer, 1946, p. 42). One of the important observations Cassirer makes is that the function of myth is not only to convey feelings that cannot be expressed using empirical or rational logic, but also to function as something that liberates humans from questions and puzzlements that defy rational and/or empirical logic. In some sense, its genesis is attached to humanity's efforts to come to grips with questions and feelings that cannot otherwise be understood (1946, pp. 45–46). This observation impacts the discussion outlined in previous chapters, particularly Marcuse's position on philosophy and philosophizing. The function of myth seems to fall

into the same broad category as philosophy; both are typically human responses to phenomena that are difficult to understand.

Jungian psychology also tells us that myth and mythical thoughts are a way to understand the human condition. Jung reminds us, echoing Marx's warning regarding the necessity of making man the centre of inquiry, that understanding humanity is the key to understanding human and social issues, and that this understanding requires the study of myth. Jung offers this explanation:

The individual is the only reality. The further we move away from the individual toward abstract ideas about Homo sapiens, the more likely we are to fall into error. In these times of social upheaval and rapid change, it is desirable to know much more than we do about the individual human being, for so much depends upon his mental and moral qualities. But if we are to see things in their right perspective, we need to understand the past of man as well as his present. That is why an understanding of myths and symbols is of essential importance. (1964, p.61)

In the following quote, Jung also seems to support Cassirer's assertion on the origin of myths:

> I must clarify the relation between instincts and archetypes: what we properly call instincts are physiological urges, and are perceived by the senses. But at the same time, they also manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images. These manifestations are what I call the archetypes. They are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world—even where transmission by direct descent or "cross fertilization" through migration must be ruled out. (1964, p. 58)

Perhaps we can trace a rough correlation between Jung's archetype and Cassirer's genuine myth. In addition to his observations about myth, Cassirer makes an important distinction between those myths that, according to Jung, have no origin and have an almost universal presence, on one hand, and those myths that are constructs of certain philosophical or moral beliefs, on the other. "Genuine myths," as Cassirer refers to these

universal, origin-less myths, have power over society; they cannot be subjected to questioning or reasoning, and the images manifested in the form of myths are not perceived as images, but rather, as realities.

Without going into Jungian psychoanalysis more deeply than the scope of this thesis allows, I offer a brief outline of this correlation between genuine myth and archetype. Jung considers archetypes to be prevalent regardless of socio-cultural differences, and one of the examples he describes is the hero archetype (Jung, 1964, p. 61). He argues that it is difficult to ascertain its origin, but that as long as humans remain curious about life and death, the archetypal conception of the hero may help satisfy this inquiry by, for example, taking the form of a hero posing as a religious saviour or redeemer. When Cassirer says that genuine myth has power over the subject, he highlights the fact that genuine myths are not deliberately created by individual free will. Cassirer would agree that the myth associated with Jung's archetypal hero figure was not created freely to attain some teleological or epistemological goal; rather, the hero archetype's purpose is to understand and explain what already exists within the individual's social realm.

Myth is the objectification of man's social experience, not of his individual experience. It is true in the later times we find myths made by individuals, as, for instance, the famous Platonic myths. But here one of the most important features of genuine myths is missing. Plato created them in an entirely free spirit; he was not under their power, he directed them according to his own purposes: the purposes of dialectical and ethical thought. Genuine myth does not possess this philosophical freedom, for the images in which it lives are not *known* as images. They are not regarded as symbols but as realities. (Cassirer, 1946, p. 47)

Cassirer's sentiment seems to be supported by Jung, who writes, "I see that many of my pupils indulge in a superstitious belief in our so-called 'free will' and pay little attention to the fact that the archetypes are, as a rule, autonomous entities…" (Jung, 2008, p. 140). Constructed myths, on the other hand, do not have power over the myth's

creator, so to speak, although the effect of a particular myth having power over society could be similar, regardless of its origin. I focus particularly upon constructed myths that are related to education and social criticism, and how constructed myths play out in educational contexts because genuine myths, as it were, are experienced at a deeper level without the requirement of justification, and thus affect all in the same way.

Both myth and philosophy share the same general purpose: trying to find answers to life's most difficult questions. Philosophy is generally perceived as a discipline that asks difficult questions, questions that do not easily lend themselves to empirical and logical methods. In this sense, it is my understanding that Cassirer's characterization that the genesis of genuine myths is similar to the instigation of a "philosophical" inquiry; in both cases, one is attempting to explain and understand puzzling and troubling phenomenon. As Denis Coskun noted,

> Only when man is confronted with a problem or task that seems to exceed his natural powers or that is dangerous and uncertain does myth become a viable option. Myth, however, does not become an effective means to solve his problems. Through myth man makes sense of his world and conjures his gods and demons that the shaman invokes in the name of the community through exactly prescribed rituals (2007, p. 162).

On the other hand, the questions that one asks about constructed myths—those questions that are shaped by intellectuals, philosophers, politicians, economists, and pedagogues—and the explanations devised to understand constructed myths are both related to the philosophical realm because they try to explain current, specific problems. However, constructed myths are driven by explicit political or ideological positions, by ideals and beliefs that are hidden within enquiries. Cassirer's observation about the partition between Socratic and Sophist thought regarding the positions they took to explain the multiplicity of Greek gods illustrates this point. For the Sophist, Cassirer says, the diversity of gods is as acceptable as the multitude of truths and virtues. For Socrates, on the other hand, there could be only "one" truth.

Examining myths in such a manner helps illustrate the process by which myths are experienced. Understanding how such myths represent ideals and beliefs that one holds to be true and thus become a commonly accepted reality is a useful exercise. Giving an example, Cassirer says, “What we may call Socratic scepticism is only a mask, behind which he hides his ideals” and the true intention of the sceptic is to “destroy the many and multifarious ways of knowledge that obscure and make ineffective the only important thing: man’s self-knowledge” (1946, p. 58).

Paul Shepard, in his 1982 book *Nature and Madness*, also makes a similar distinction between myths and what he terms *pseudo myths* by offering a contrasting analysis between pagan mythology and the invention of history. Shepard generally agrees with Cassirer and Jung regarding the fact that myth tries “to explain origins, establish exemplary models of behaviour and provide the conventions of a particular group” (p. 54). However, history, as pseudo myth, is “anti-mythological”; it came into existence after its invention by “the desert fathers” (the term Shepard coined to refer to the Judeo-Christian philosophical traditions’ founders). This observation of history is consistent with Deleuze and Guattari’s assertion that “history is always written from a sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary state apparatus, at least a possible one, even when the topic is nomads. What is lacking is Nomadology, the opposite of history” (Guattari, 1987, p. 23). This distinction, Shepard asserts, has philosophical consequences that imply the battle between *mythos* and *logos* (1982, p. 78). Shepard notes that the Sophists failed in their attempt to find “an organismic relativity of truth to thought,” whereas the Ionian philosophers who sought “what is *true,* instead of what is *good*” succeeded, thereby establishing the dynamics for the new pseudo myth—history. He argues that, in the process of ratifying this new pseudo myth, man created “empires of scientific capabilities to manipulate the phenomenon of nature into enormous manifestations of his own dreams of power and wealth” (1982, p. 78).

Figure 1. Correlations of Concepts on the Distinction Cassirer Makes Between Constructed and Genuine Myth

Cassirer	Constructed Myth	Genuine Myth
Jung	Myth	Archetype
Shepard	Pseudo-myth/ History	Pagan Mythology
Deleuze & Guattari	History	Nomadology

The conclusion we might draw from this comparison is that there are at least two ways to classify myths: those that come about as a result of humanity's necessity to understand and explain existence, and those that are created intentionally to promote specific designs or goals. The connection I highlight is that between hope and myth within constructed myths, which are often preceded by hope, whether implied or overtly stated. One such general hope which is often voiced by educators, social critics, and political leaders communicates a promising goal: the hope for a 'better future society" (Macuse, 2007). This notion of creating a better future society is always accompanied by other derivative myths. However, the regular arena for such a promise is the *state*, which usually presides over the particular social order. In other words, the arena where social critics declare this hope and direct their critique to society and its problems is usually played out in venues provided by the state. Whether it is a radical revolutionary act that opposes its very existence or a moderate criticism of one aspect of the social system (e.g., educational practices), the space to act or voice these criticisms is always mediated by the state, directly or indirectly. At minimum, any social criticism requires the acknowledgment of either the state or of a particular institution which is part of the state. Without utilizing the space provided by the state, social criticism cannot take place. In the

same way, when we address constructed myths, the state is always at the centre. The modern state is perhaps the ultimate administrator of myths.

5.1.1. Institutionalized education and the myth of the state.

The state itself should also be understood as having elements of constructed myths. If my contention that there is a relationship between myth and hope is valid, then myths surrounding the state might also function to mask hidden ideals. Perhaps it is important to briefly explore our general understanding of the state as it relates to myth.

Shepard's assertion that myths are constructed in order to manifest certain dreams of civility, law and order, morality, and unity is a useful place to begin, because those are the kind of concepts we associate with not only the state, but also with social criticism and education. Nietzsche (2000), in his "Second Treatise" in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, has this to say about the state.

> I employed the word "state": it is obvious what is meant—some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unresisting lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad. That is after all how the "state" began on earth: I think that sentimentalism which would have it begin with a "contract" has been disposed of. He who can command, he who has it by nature, "Master," he who is violent in act and bearing—what has he to do with contracts! (2000, p. 522)

As Claude Mangion (2003) noted, Nietzsche's entire career could be considered an exploration of myth, and surely, in the above excerpt, Nietzsche is demythologizing an inventory of myths that are attached to the state. It is not really difficult to imagine the "violence" attached to the modern state, as Nietzsche's first few lines above elucidate, simply because the historical violence he described often does manifest in the same manner today. However, that violence—the domination and the oppression—has been transformed in ways that are made palatable to our current discourse by being masked by certain beliefs and ideals. We justify wars by citing notions regarding the rights of

individuals and the sovereignty of nations; we cite the autonomy and authority of the state and justify the need to abdicate certain rights, the need to submit obediently to the state. The social contract Rousseau argued attempts to answer the most important and difficult social issues related to the individual and the state: how the individual balances his/her freedom with social responsibilities and the legitimacy of abdicating some rights for the good of the whole (2003, pp. 11–13). Rousseau's assertion is based on the assumption that "no man has natural authority over his fellow," and that force or power alone "creates no right." As a result, the possible explanation he offers is that "conventions form the basis of all legitimate authority among men" (2003, p. 4). But it is this *convention* that Nietzsche criticizes. Perhaps, it is in conventions that we find many of the constructed myths operating to engender the hidden and masked ideals of the state, because conventions are fluid, transient, random practices that lack permanent social meanings.

Although it is not a direct comment on the genesis of the state, Pierre Clastres once wrote that "in effect, each of us carries within himself, internalized like the believer's faith, the certitude that society exists for the State" (Clastres, 2009), and this might be the state's most potent, identifiable myth. Of course, this reverses our traditional notion that the state exists to promote society's well-being. Clastres' argument is based on his anthropological research that the West's understanding of the state became meaningful only in comparison with different social organizations. In order to affirm the state form of governance's pre-eminence, the West had to label non-western societies as "primitive" and "nomadic" societies. He believes that this understanding of the state as a necessary organ within the West, based on a comparison of non-Occidental societies against Western societies, resulted in the descriptions we attach to non-Occidental societies as "savage" or "uncivilized." Identifying deficiency as the absence of the state became the key method used to distinguish the "uncivilized", thereby justifying colonization and oppression by utilizing the 'myth' of the 'state'. In other words, the justification for the existence of a particular form of state and its necessity within Western societies is so complete that it is beyond questioning. Societies were thus

measured according to whether or not they had "the state." In fact, recent and current conversations about democratic governance, disseminating democracy, and the global democratization of the world is an extension of this understanding of the state. These societies lack something that the West has—democracy, state, etc.—hence the justification for the need to democratize and so on.

Marxist theory regarding the genesis of the state posits that it is the product of contradictions. Society has fractured interests which inevitably evolve into antagonisms, and the state is then created (or emerges) to suppress these antagonisms without necessarily reconciling them. Lenin interprets Marx's view of the origin of the state as follows: "the state is the product and manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises when class antagonisms *cannot* be objectively reconciled. And conversely, the existence of the state proves that class antagonisms are irreconcilable" (Lenin, 1987, pp. 272–273). In other words, for Lenin, the existence of the state is both caused and sustained by class antagonisms. The dialectical understanding of Marxist historical materialism is based on this premise. The transition from one mode of production to another, from a slave-owning society to a feudal one, or from a feudal to a capitalist mode of production, is basically fuelled by class antagonisms. Irreconcilable antagonism between the slave and the slave-owner class forces that particular mode of production to yield to a new mode of production: the feudal system. But then a new antagonism arises between the serf and the class of feudal lords, which in turn paves the way for the development of a capitalist mode of production, and so forth.

Despite these scholarly variations on the genesis of the state, the common thread that seems to connect all such related conversations is that the state needs to justify its existence, and it must do so continuously. Perhaps Cassirer's eloquent description of the modern constructed myth and how it operates offers a closer look at how the state maintains itself and its institutional bodies.

Myth has always been described as the result of an unconscious activity and as a free product of imagination. But here we find myth made according to plan. The new

political myths do not grow up freely; they are not wild fruits of an exuberant imagination. They are artificial things fabricated by very skilful artisans. It has been reserved for the twentieth century, our own great technical age, to develop a new technique of myth. Henceforth, myths can be manufactured in the same sense and according to the same methods as any other modern weapon—as machine guns or airplanes. That is a new thing—a thing of crucial importance. It has changed the whole form of our social life. (1946, p. 282)

Our notions of the modern state, therefore, are sustained by its ability to procure the legitimacy of its own institutions through its capacity to construct a sufficient number of myths. Similarly, education and educational institutes are grounded within myths that are constructs. Perhaps the earliest educational professionals, the Sophists, are known for their oft-mentioned practice of charging money to educate their pupils. However, the most important aspect of their epistemological practise involved engaging a multiplicity of knowledge, truths, virtue, and so on, as opposed to teaching linear, historical "truth" (Shepard, 1982). In this regard, their stance lies closer to myth and to proper mythological thought than it does to pseudo myth. Since the dismissal of their methodology in Classical Greece by Ionian philosophers, particularly by Plato, the notion of education—and by implication, knowledge itself—became cemented in pseudo myths proclaiming that institutionalized education must be free, must be accessible to all, and most importantly, must be based on the search for "truth", though many would argue that the real driving force behind institutionalized education is the state's determination to produce disciplined consumers (Shepard, 1982). The historical controversy in Greece's classical era may not have been directly related to the newly created myth that institutionalized education should be free; Socrates was known for refusing to charge money for teaching. Rather, the myth is situated in the belief and declaration that "education/ knowledge should be free" itself. The question is, Is it possible to make something (such as knowledge) "free" when it is difficult to imagine that it (knowledge) can be under the control of, or be dominated by, anyone or anything? And if we determine that it is possible to imagine this, who or what has control over knowledge? If

we find it difficult to imagine that knowledge or other similar qualities could, in fact, be dominated by something or someone, then the question is better stated as, What is it that we are trying to make free?

5.1.2. Education and human rights for a "better future society"

The following section identifies three basic myths about education. I explore how these myths were conveyed by some of the key thinkers cited in the above examination. I then delineate some suggestions those theorists offered regarding how to overcome those myths and, at the same time, on how to work toward a "new" project of education with the potential to help diminish social inequities and injustices by asserting the role of the educator as a social critic. I also identify gaps and weaknesses in the approaches they propose.

One of the prominent documents linking states with education in the modern era is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that was drafted largely by the now five members of the permanent United Nations Security Council and three additional countries: Canada, Lebanon, and Chile. The United Nations' website displays a very interesting excerpt from Eleanor Roosevelt, who served as the chair of the drafting committee, which reads as follows:

> Dr. Chang was a pluralist and held forth in charming fashion on the proposition that there is more than one kind of ultimate reality. The Declaration, he said, should reflect more than simply Western ideas and Dr. Humphrey would have to be eclectic in his approach. His remark, though addressed to Dr. Humphrey, was really directed at Dr. Malik, from whom it drew a prompt retort as he expounded at some length the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. Dr. Humphrey joined enthusiastically in the discussion, and I remember that at one point Dr. Chang suggested that the Secretariat might well spend a few months studying the fundamentals of Confucianism! (United Nations, n/d, Article 26)

What can be derived from this observation is that the declaration's drafting committee tried to include diverse philosophical ideals and beliefs that would ultimately

help them arrive at something approximating "universal" moral and social values. It was an effort to identify the universal through the lenses of specific doctrines. However, being eclectic contradicts searching for the universal. Eclecticism requires collating as many diverse points of view as possible, and the result is often expected to generate varied perspectives on any given issue. The hoped-for result of such an endeavour is a set of shared values, values that articulate intersecting areas within that range of diversities. Otherwise, expecting a universal result that can be applied across the board from a process guided by eclecticisms is an almost impossible task. In this sense, if the intention was to pursue universals, what Roosevelt's memoir excerpt depicts is a form of searching for a *truth* rather than a *good* (Shepard, 1982), although the grand narrative states that the intention was to find the "good" for humanity. Since the creation of the UDHR, this important document's contents are often somewhat arbitrarily evoked by states—small or large, strong or weak—to justify or challenge what one state is doing to another, or what a state is doing or not doing to its own people. In this sense, the document was not only created based on myths, but it has now become a myth itself, one that is used to authorize what Cassirer calls the *political myth.*

Myth, Cassirer says, though "it pervades and governs the whole man's social feeling and social life, it is not always operative in the same way or it does not always appear with the same strength. It reaches its total force when man has to face an unusual and dangerous situation" (Cassirer, 1946, p. 278). The genesis of the UDHR was preceded by World War II, and it was a response to the cruelties inflicted during that war. The resort to philosophy in drafting the declaration is, therefore, a way of seeking guidance from philosophical texts in order to establish appropriate answers to "modern" problems. While its drafters were well intended, events that have occurred since—the Korean War, Vietnam, genocide in Rwanda, and the Gulf War—repeatedly demonstrate the document's inability to prevent war, war crimes, atrocities, and so forth.

Article 26 of the declaration ties states to education in a "universal" manner. All three sub-articles contained in the declaration set forth what the committee believed

education ought to be. Unpacking them illustrates the interplay of myth and hope. Article 26 exemplifies a hope that potentially benefits all, an instance where we see hope being intentionally stated.

> (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
>
> (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
>
> (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. (United Nations, n/d)

The first stated hope is that education and academic institutions ought to be free and accessible to all and that elementary education ought to be compulsory. The second stated hope declares that education is an instrument in the development of the "full human personality," that it is a means to strengthen human rights and fundamental freedoms. Finally, the third hope asserts that educational choices must be freely available, and that parents should have the authority and freedom to choose which kind of education their children shall receive.

The overarching notion that connects each of these three hopes is related to their inferred execution. Although the document does not specify who is to ensure the ratification of these stated goals within the various nations, the state is implied as the executive body. *The Preamble* to the UDHR states that "Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (United Nations, n/d). The implication is that the state is responsible for making education available as per the declaration. An interesting instance of hope transforming into myths of free and compulsory education can be found in the following example. A contrast

between what the declaration implies and what some states are enacting within their boundaries can be seen in the relatively recent history of educational development within what was, at the time, the Union of South Africa (Wheeler, 1961). Before becoming the Republic of South Africa, it was a founding member of the United Nations, and it was also a signatory to the UDHR on June 1945. Hendrik F. Verwoerd, who was then the Minister of Native Affairs and later became the South African Prime Minister, introduced the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (South African History Online [SAHO]), which overtly contradicted the principles contained in the UDHR. The pertinent segment of SAHO describes the Bantu Education Act thus:

> African children students were to be educated in a way that was appropriate for their culture. No consultation occurred on this. All the definitions of culture, appropriate education content and levels, all the decisions about purpose and outcomes of the system were controlled by the apartheid government. Its stated aim was to prevent Africans receiving an education that would lead them to aspire to positions they wouldn't be allowed to hold in society. Instead Africans were to receive an education designed to provide them with skills to serve their own people in the Bantustan "homelands" or to work in manual labour jobs under white control. (SAHO, Bantu Education Act no. 47)

This concern for the Africans' education is, of course, presented in the guise of "humanitarian" concerns that the natives (Africans) not be trained for work they were not capable of doing (or allowed to do) and then be disappointed. The overarching thesis of the Act is the same old myth—a better future for the Black South African society. But this myth is presented with a twist; the denial of an equal education to guarantee their betterment. The rational offered is that offering Africans an education equal to that of Europeans creates a catastrophic social psychosis, because Africans will never be "Whites," or "live like Whites." Wheeler quotes Dr. J.G. Meiring's 1959 speech to shed more light on how the 1953 act was justified:

> Our Coloured community is the stepchild of our own community. Coloured students feel frustrated after having finished their courses at a university. A Coloured man with an LL.B. degree can hardly start practicing as an attorney in Cape Town. The reason for that is not political, but traditional. They want to "try for White." But this is a false

> ideal. People who have a false ideal cannot progress. They walk around with a grievance and cause race relations to be troubled. They must strive for a new ideal. The one and only ideal which can make them a true nation is the desire to go out and serve their own people and no longer "try for White." (Wheeler, 1961, p. 247)

The juxtaposition of these two declarations, the UDHR on one hand and the Bantu Educational Act on the other, exemplifies the interplay between hope and myth. In the former, the stated hope was motivated by noble causes, and yet its execution was challenged partly by myths that contradicted its principles and partly by myths that were initially founded in the conception of the hope itself. In the latter case, the hope that was expressed by the Bantu Education Act was to have more control over the "stepchildren" of apartheid South Africa. The justification of the hope is based on the myths Wheeler reified: that Africans were better off if they were segregated, if they stopped "trying for White." This example illustrates why hope is not meaningful in and of itself. It is meaningful only when we know and understand its motives and justifications. The UHRD's intent was to respond to the need to maintain order, civility, human dignity, equality, and so on. The Bantu Education Act's real intention was to maintain the White lifestyle; its grand-narrative was to offer "educational freedom" to the Black population that potentially benefitted the segregated, non-White community. In both cases, institutionalized education was invoked to accomplish these tasks.

5.1.3. The myth of "free" and "compulsory" education.

It must be noted that when the UDHR was ratified by 58 member states in 1948, the entire African continent (with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia) remained under colonial rule. However, the UN's historical account of the creation of the UDHR insists that the declaration was prepared "by a formal drafting committee, consisting of members of the Commission from eight States, *selected with due regard for geographical distribution*" (United Nations, Article 26). The UN's inclusionary perspective is admirable, but inadequate (at best) to remedy the following disjunctures.

First, the UN's attempted geographical inclusion did not apply to those societies under colonial rule that were not even in a position to debate their own social freedom, let alone consider whether education should be free or compulsory. Secondly, the goal of making vocational or higher education readily accessible to all could not possibly apply to many societies around the globe at that time. Finally (and I shall discuss this aspect at some length), a closer reading of Article 26, sub-article 1 (the part addressing free access to education) indicates the problematic nature of the assumption that "elementary schools," although the term is qualified vaguely, are somehow universal. The concern during the drafting stage of the declaration is to seek universality, yet the committee may have failed outright in its attempt to find an eclectic conceptualization of education by not including other notions of elementary education, notions that possibly preclude or contradict "elementary education" as it is understood and practised in the West. By failing to consider alternate social realities of education around the world, the drafting committee seems to have accepted "elementary education" as a universal and then to have invested in the principle that such education should be free. It seems that there were at least two constructed myths affecting the inception of the declaration: (a) that the need for education around the globe was homogeneous, and (b) that the implementation necessary to provide such an education was universally possible through the agency of the state.

Some 60 years after the declaration was drafted, the notion and practice of education and educational institutes continues to be controversial, despite the UHRD's hopes and noble intentions. Illich, in his 2002 book, *Deschooling Society*, identifies the most significant lapse in education, particularly in higher education, as taking place during the 1960s. That decade was when a university education was transformed, owing to post-secondary institutions' awareness of their new-found ability to convert knowledge into wealth. This ability was the result of the "delusion of equal access to public education." In other words, the university's historical role as a space where individuals' freedom of speech was protected and its traditional function of being a liberated space for discussion and discovery (2002, p. 35) was replaced by universities that were market-

driven producers of knowledge, creating wealth for an ever-growing consumer society. This myth of creating knowledge in order to create wealth is also noted by Foucault's 2003 discussion of disciplinary power. In this regard, the myth of compulsory education is connected to the transformation of knowledge into a wealth-creating machine.

Foucault claims that the transformation of education started in the eighteenth century during the Age of Enlightenment, when "an immense and multiple battle" among "knowledges" took place. His use of the plural form of knowledges reflects his characterization of the era as a time where battles were fought between "knowledge against ignorance, reason against chimeras, experience against prejudice, reason against error" (2003, pp. 178–179). The emergence of technical knowledges in the 18th century that are dispersed both in terms of the types of knowledges and their geographical locations was followed by the consequent competition to get access to, and control of, these technical knowledges. Efforts to hide technical knowledges from competitors provided the impetus needed for the state to intervene by applying a disciplinary regime on knowledge through "selection, normalization, hierarchicalization, and centralization" (Foucault, 2003, pp. 179–181). Selection is a process in which "legitimate knowledges" are accepted over "non-knowledges"; it involves the elimination and disqualification of knowledges that are not economically profitable. Normalization is a process of aggregating all knowledges, and it includes universalizing those who "possess" these knowledges. Normalization also implies that what is accepted as knowledge by the system is confirmed and reified, denoting both what "counts" as knowledge and who has the authority to count, thereby creating disciplinary regimes. The processes of hierarchicalization and centralization, Foucault states, are used to classify and control knowledges. This is what Foucault calls the "disciplinarization of knowledge," and the outcome of this process is the "new phenomenon" of the era that we now know as "science" (2003, pp. 181–183). Thus, today's myths that free education is presumably accessible to all and the obligation that the state imposes on every child to attend state-sanctioned educational institutions are intrinsically related to this transformation of knowledge into a process of wealth creation. I contend that this is how hope is

transformed into myth. Examining Article 26 through this lens illuminates the connection between the four processes Foucault presents in his examination of education's transformation into a state-sanctioned, institutionalized process. If we acknowledge Foucault's insight that the process of hierarchicalization was put in motion from the 18th century, enlightenment era onward, the university will be at the peak of this hierarchy, and documents such as the UDHR lose their noble purpose by taking on new meanings and justifications. Foucault's process is also connected to some critics' assertions that the role of the university as "the bastion of autonomy and freedom of expression" has diminished (Giroux, 2007), precisely because the university has adopted a new role centred upon selecting and homogenizing knowledge (Foucault, 2003, p. 183) and then imposing this homogenization on society. The imposition of consumer standards at work and home by the university and its ability to set consumer goals is also related to this new formula that knowledge is equal to wealth (Illich, 2002, p. 35). The compulsory education is therefore a continuation of disciplining not only knowledges but the potential recipients and possessors of these knowledges: pupils, intellectuals, educators, et cetera. The declaration that education shall be free becomes an illusion where the "freedom" attached to it is allowed only when education is encased by a homogenising process that prepares the coming generation to become consumers. "Fringe" elements of knowledge such as *nomadology* or *pagan mythology* are suppressed and filtered out from institutionalized education. As Illich pointed out, schools are based "on the spurious hypothesis that learning is the result of curricular teaching" (2002, p. 60), and the compulsory education the state imposes is driven by exactly this hypothesis. The "free" access to education in modern society, where knowledge is being equated to wealth creation, is not free because education is fine-tuned for the purpose of creating wealth or conditioning tomorrow's wealth creators. Universities' ability, as higher education providers, to improve social inequalities is increasingly eroded because of this equation between wealth and knowledge (Holmwood, 2014).

5.1.4. The myth of “human development,” “human rights,” and “fundamental freedoms.”

Perhaps the more interesting myth about education is the unwavering social faith in the belief that institutionalized education is what makes individuals free and productive. This faith declares that education can potentially create the political subject in every “schooled” person. It enables people not only to assert, but also to secure, their political and human rights. Although the UDHR article does not limit schooling specifically to these political and social goals, it is nevertheless based on the general assumption that institutionalized education is necessary to achieve freedom, productivity, and political participation.

To critique the contents of Article 6 effectively, we must first examine what freedom means, because freedom seems to be the core concept linking the notion of human rights and human development. Cassirer’s main work, *The Myth of the State*, was situated in the specific historical space surrounding World War II. It is often considered a critique of the causes that gave rise to totalitarian states. I believe his analysis of modern political myths may also inform our understanding of institutional bodies and the power of their myths. Its relevance is not restricted to any particular society, form of government, or particular historical junctures. His critique is particularly applicable to current Western “democratic” forms of the state. With this in mind, I would like to summarize the notion of freedom in Cassirer’s work. Freedom, says Cassirer, “is not a natural inheritance of man; in order to possess it, we have to create it” (1946, p. 288). Another facet of Cassirer’s claim is that to conceptualize freedom as something that we can teach, that we can guide and instruct people toward, we must first create a myth about freedom.

Cassirer’s position seems to coincide with Berger and Luckmann’s (Berger, 1966) theoretical work on reality as constructs. The teleological position displayed through the declaration, that the goal and purpose of education is to enable human development and human freedom, is problematic in both the social and political sense, because the very

notion of freedom is one of the most obscure and ambiguous terminologies of philosophical and political languages. “As soon as we begin to speculate about the freedom of the will, we find ourselves involved in an inextricable labyrinth of metaphysical questions and antinomies” (1946, p. 287). One way to avoid this complex labyrinth, Cassirer suggests, is to focus on one particular type of freedom—ethical freedom. He relies on Kantian theory to argue that freedom is equivalent to autonomy and that ethical freedom is qualitatively different from political freedom because ethical freedom requires a free agent. In other words, Cassirer notes that the freedom to follow certain codes of conduct does not come from an external force but from within the subject, who is considered a free agent. This allows the individual to extend his ethical understanding to others in the community freely without the state’s and/or the political system’s interpretation of what is ethically acceptable. However, political freedom is problematic because it cannot entirely be attributed to the autonomy of the subject. In other words, political freedom is already marked by the specific form of political organization, and this particular political freedom defines a relationship that is not simply between one free agent and another; it is a relationship among free agents and between the free agents and the political establishment.

Sartre’s progressive understanding of freedom (from an ontological notion to a political one) echoes what Cassirer asserted above (Heter, 2006). His earlier conception of freedom indicated that freedom was eternally connected to being or existence; he said that freedom is “exactly the stuff of my being” (Sartre, 1956, p. 566), as opposed to freedom being a property of being. Before the shift in his understanding, “Sartre’s view that human freedom consists in consciousness’ ability to escape the present is ‘ontological’ in the sense that no normal human being can fail to be free” (Heter, 2006, Sec. 3, paragraph 2). But what is relevant to the present discussion is Sartre’s consideration of freedom from a material perspective that shows the possibility of losing freedom, but this time, not the “ontological” freedom but a different kind of freedom. “In sum,” Heter writes about the distinction between Sartre’s material freedom and his later ontological conception of it, “we can say that a person is materially free in Sartre’s sense

if (a) she enjoys basic material security; (b) she is un-coerced; and (c) she has access to cultural and social goods necessary for pursuing her chosen projects" (Heter, 2006, sec. 3, para. 11). The three sub-articles in the UDHR are hopes that attempt to ensure educational security by making elementary education free for all children. The document is also a statement of hope that parents should not be coerced into sending their children to a specific program of education (the actual wording of the document implies that the right of parents extends even so far as to choose not to educate their children at all). But the very act of hoping for the freedoms documented in the declaration has become a myth, owing to the fact that, today, we believe that education is providing those freedoms.

The UN is an effective analogy for the state as it is literally an amalgamation of nation-states. A declaration such as the UDHR is obviously the work of politicians. When Cassirer attempted to outline the new political myth by illustrating how politicians and political leaders assume three roles that sociology traditionally attributed to ancient human societies, he is questioning this same notion of freedom. The traits that are somehow ascribed to modern politicians are *homo magus*, a role modelled after the supposed historical phase primitive human societies passed through (often termed the age of magic); *homo faber*, a role historically played by craftsmen and artisans; and *homo divinans* (modeled after ancient spiritual leaders and medicine men), where politicians and political leaders not only claim to be the key to development in technological know-how but also to matters concerning divinity (Cassirer, 1946, pp. 281–290). These three roles that had historically been held by different members of society are now collapsed into one role performed by the modern politician, from whom we expect (or so the politicians assert, at any rate) expertise in all three areas, including the "divine" ability to forecast the future. In fact, Cassirer argues that "prophesy is an essential element in the new technique of rulership" (1946, p. 289). This prophetic role of the state is usually engendered by scientific "facts" that encourage politicians to declare war on the basis of not only knowing what is about to come (the pre-emptive policies politicians usually argue for) but also because their claims are supported by "scientific facts." The weapons

of mass destruction controversy discussed at the UN Security Council just before the Gulf War (UN, February 5, 2003) offers one of the most blatant examples of this process at work in modern times. The current turmoil in the Middle East and Ukraine are also framed around politicians' warnings that freedom will be lost if appropriate action is not taken. One simply has to compare editorials, news analysis, and news reports between competing state-controlled media outlets such as VOA, Itar-Tass, and the BBC regarding how the notion of freedom is interpreted and what justifications are presented for political and military hostilities. Politicians are still donning their prophetic robes and presenting their cases. In almost all cases where nation-states are in conflict, the claim that freedom is jeopardized is made. When freedom is evoked by these politicians, they refer to the material freedom Sartre described. However, the actions and remedies prescribed by these modern-day "prophets" constantly reproduce a world wherein these material freedoms are usually denied, suppressed, or systematically allocated to fit certain ideals promulgated by political ideologues.

Illich presents a very similar analysis of institutional education and the role of educators in modern educational institutes. Just as politicians in our modern political systems have been awarded the role of fortune tellers capable of both predicting the future and prescribing appropriate future action, Illich, like Cassirer, also identifies the roles educators have been granted. Before examining Illich's observations about the roles of modern teachers, it is useful to revisit the second sub-article in the UDHR, where one of the key notions discussed is human development.

In modern societies, this human development is believed to take place primarily in schools with the help of professionally trained and schooled teachers. In other words, institutionalized education is the most influential instrument used to generate human development, at least insofar as the state defines that development. This assertion of development is related to what Illich calls the *ritualization of progress*. It is important to note that Illich is aware of the common tendency to include a discussion about education whenever one tries to critique institutionalized education or schooling, as he calls it

(2002, p. 25). Similarly, I have used the term institutionalized education throughout this paper to distinguish it from education itself. Education can indeed take place outside institutionalized settings, but this form of education undermines the "formalized" structures that institutions rely on; this form of education is not "disciplined." In keeping with this distinction, Illich asserts that a three-fold process transforms the role of the teacher in schools; the teacher is now a custodian, a therapist, and a moralist. It is worth noting the connection between this Illichian assertion and Foucault's notion of the "disciplinarization" of knowledge, as Foucault's process implies the creation of disciplinary regimes and professions that correlate to Illich's three teacher roles. Each teaching function serves specific goals that mirror certain rituals of ancient societies; nevertheless, these rituals are specifically designed to create specific outcomes that engender the political system's (the state's) ideals. As a custodian, says Illich, the teacher is the initiator to life. As a moralist, the teacher substitutes for "parents, God, or the state. He indoctrinates the pupil about what is right and wrong, not only in school but also in society at large. The educator stands '*in loco parentis'* for each one, and thus ensures that all feel themselves children of the same state" (2002, pp. 30–31). Finally, as a therapist, the teacher invades each pupil's personal life "in order to help him grow as a person" (2002, pp. 30-31). [6]

[6] The historical genesis of in loco parentis (in place of the parent) is usually attributed to William Blackstone, a British legal scholar who initiated the notion that parents have the right to delegate certain parental authority to the schoolmasters and tutors they employ, and that this delegated authority includes disciplining and correcting the students' character (Lee, 2011). In general, its interpretations within modern educational establishments are often judicial in nature, implying notions of rights and responsibilities. One interpretation situates the 1960s as a time where there was a movement to challenge the notion of in loco parentis in American educational institutes (White, 2007). That decade was marked by resistance, and a move toward sine parentibus (without parents). In loco parentis was challenged on the basis of respecting students' constitutional and human rights, and questioned the extent to which educational institutes are allowed to share "educational records" with the public. The pendulum swung back later toward a return to loco parentis, as parents moved toward increased participation in matters regarding their children's education.

One of the interesting controversies regarding the rights and responsibilities of parents, students, and educational institutes is that of how to treat disciplinary records held by institutions, and of whether these accounts should properly be considered "educational" records (White, 2007). Any disciplinary act invades the rights of the subject, and institutes, by enforcing disciplinary measures, might be acting in a similar capacity as parents, but the question of who should have access to records of such measures and whether they should be considered proper educational records stems from the suspicion that educational institutions cannot assume the role of parenting without indoctrinating or invading the students' life. Among the various interpretations, the one offering the most plausible explanation is that *in loco parentis* puts "the decision-making control over student life" in the hands of the institution (Lee, 2011, p. 68), and that the institutions' underlying motive in looking after students seldom coincides with our general understanding of parenting, precisely because schooling is something that can be done only in schools.

Gatto's 2010 book, *Weapons of Mass Instruction*, addresses the new role of teachers as therapists from a slightly different perspective. He connects this trend with the introduction of a new state-sanctioned norm whereby teachers in the 1960s were no longer allowed to discipline pupils, and disciplinary procedures began to resemble court proceedings, with both defendants and accusers represented by council. According to Gatto, that change resulted in an increase in mischief and erratic behaviour among the student population which finally led to "The Behavioural Science Teacher Education Project," wherein all teacher-training institutes "prepare all graduates to be teachers-therapists, translating prescriptions of social psychology into 'practical actions' in the classroom" (pp. 7–8).

Significant intersections in the way Illich and Gatto critique the school are evident; for example, Gatto's discussion of the seven-lesson schoolteacher in *Dumbing Us Down* includes discussions of how schools promote dependency and generate a need for discipline (Gatto, 2005, pp. 1–19). However, although Gatto does not reference Illich

in either of his works, what we can derive from their concerns is that institutionalized education, regardless of the angle from which critics approach it, inevitably entails a certain degree of privacy invasion and/or indoctrination, and when educational institutes enact these processes, they transform hopes into myths; school teachers become the enforcers of these myths of personal freedom, human rights, and human development, as they are conceived by the institutes/state. And yet, as Illich says, in the context of the American constitution, children are protected "by neither the First nor the Fifth Amendment when they stand before the secular priest—the teacher" (2002, p. 35); the school's hidden curriculum, which is obscured by these reified myths of educators as the enforcers of human development and freedom, indoctrinates its pupils "into a growth-oriented consumer society of rich and poor alike" (2002, p. 33).

5.1.5. The myth of educational "choices" and parents' authority and freedom to choose.

Another important myth in and between the state and institutionalized education is the belief that there are real educational options available to parents and that parents are, in fact, enabled to make those choices. The institute provides certain ritualized outlets that make this belief seem reliable. In the structural sense, the institutionalized educational system offers functional bodies that enable the public to participate in conversations that shape the system. Universities have senate bodies and school districts have publicly elected trustees. These outlets are designed to offer choices and to remind us that there are choices to be had. In the ritual sense, we have procedural meetings where teachers and parents congregate to discuss students' "progress" and plan for their further "development". In the face of major concerns, public venues are arranged where parents as well as schools can ostensibly resolve conflicting interests.

A recent example from British Columbia, Canada, illustrates how such ritualized processes work to give parents the impression that they have choices. A group of parents challenged the competency of a math teacher, and the story was featured in local newspapers beneath the headline, NEW WESTMINSTER PARENTS SEEK ANSWERS

REGARDING TEACHER'S FAILING GRADES (Steffenhagen, 2012). The crux of the story is that parents became suspicious of a math teacher who allegedly failed an unusually high number of students. The parents were concerned that his students' high failure rate might actually indicate the teacher's own incompetence, and they called on the school board to do something about it. One of the parents was quoted in a subsequent article as saying,

> Our goal is not for our children to get an A ... Our goal was for our children to learn math. We still don't know if that was achieved. There's so many different facets to this now ... I think that this teacher needs to be assessed. I think that we've discovered that teachers in New Westminster are not annually reviewed at N-dub**.** It appears no one has had an assessment or review ... in over five years. (Steffenhagen, 2012)

The story then notes that the parents wanted to have this particular teacher's records of his students' grades for the previous five years. The school responded by asking for a significant sum of money to produce those records, given the extra work required to compile them. There is a good chance that the process instigated by these concerned parents might involve additional institutional bodies, such as teachers' regulatory bodies, the school district and its trustees, the ministry of education, teachers' unions, experts from local universities, and perhaps even the court system.

What is interesting about this story, however, is the parents' "real" concern; the effective teaching of children and the responsibility of a teacher to fulfill that duty. But this concern is somehow instigated by the teacher's habitual methods and standards of grading students' performances. Seemingly, the parents are exercising their right to choose the type and quality of education their children receive by challenging the teacher's competency. However, both the school and the parents based their respective concerns upon many mythical beliefs similar to those Illich identified: the *myth of institutionalized values*; *the myth of measurement values,* and *the myth of packaging values* (2002, pp. 38–42). The parents' expressed myth-driven concern is the emphasis placed upon a number of items: an overemphasis on the value of assessment as one of the expectations of institutionalized educational outcomes; the meaning of "grades" within institutionalized educational environments; and the notions of "passing" and "failing" and

their corresponding meaning within the school system, as well as within the society at large.

The concerned parents' beliefs are that "instruction produces learning" (Illich, 2002, p. 38) and that parents/students are clients who need the services provided by the instructor/teacher/school. Illich argues that "once we have learned to need the school, all our activities tend to take the shape of client relationships to other socialized institutions," and this need for school makes us "easy prey" and facilitates our dependence upon other institutions, thus shifting responsibility from the self to institutions (2002, p. 39). Hence, we have the parents' expectation of the mediation of institutionalized bodies such as the school board or their plea for the teacher to be "assessed" by yet another institutional body, but there is no discussion of what these parents have done to help their children "learn mathematics," or whether there might be other areas where parents can really get involved in their children's actual learning activity, apart from simply expecting that their children should not "fail" according to the teacher's grading standards. Moreover, the conversation revolves around what the teacher or school should or should not do and should or should not have done. The voice of the students is totally absent from the conversation. This is perhaps an example of how certain sets of myths work toward self-deception. For the parents, the issue is clearly "I do not want my child to fail." But at the same time, the parents understand that the 'why' and 'how' of students' failure rests on the performance measurement applied by the teacher, and further, that the remedies for failure are contained within the institution.

Measurement is a myth instilled into institutionalized education. The scope of the myth regarding "scientific" measurements of personal achievements that Illich addresses goes beyond institutionalized educational settings. However, in the arena of schooling, it is one of the prominent myths playing out in this news story of the concerned parents in the newspaper. Illich points out that "once people have the idea schooled into them that values can be produced and measured, they tend to accept all kinds of rankings. There is a scale for the development of nations, another for the intelligence of babies, and even

progress toward peace can be calculated according to body count" (Illich, 2002, p. 40). The choices parents believe they have within an institutionalized system are thus constrained within this understanding of values. In other words, the challenge the parents bring against the specific teacher is a result of the parents' "schooling" that was acquired long before they become parents. The cycle of packaging values Illich refers to coincides with the cycle of curriculum production, and the choices available to parents or students might appear entirely different and new because each cycle may produce a so-called scientifically researched product that has the potential to generate more varieties, such as curricula that are "ungraded, student designed, team taught, visually aided, or issue centred" (2002, p. 41). In this respect, parents may feel that choices are available to them, despite the fact that the myth of choices offer no real alternatives. Most importantly, compulsory schooling is itself a negation of choice, and the myth of choice operates on the beliefs we have about institutions' values—their "scientific" quantification and qualification of measurements in regard to success and development—and the values we attach to the curriculum-driven process of learning. As Illich correctly stated, "in this world the choices which are manageable for the observer or planner converge with the choices possible for the observed so-called beneficiary. Freedom is reduced to a selection of packaged commodities" (Illich, 2002, p. 70). This seems to be the "freedom" these parents are exercising.

Chapter 6. Demythologization and the “Hope” for Transforming Education

Thus far, I have charted some representative myths within institutionalized educational settings that potentially encompass other myths Illich cites in his critique of institutionalism. I used the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a platform to examine these basic myths we have about institutionalized educational systems. I also delineated how each basic myth, along with the expanded forms that are manifested in schools, has one important, perhaps singular, purpose—to insure the justification of its existence, thereby strengthening society’s dependency on these institutions. Now, I would like to revisit the conjectures noted by Illich, Freire, Rancière, Apple, and Giroux regarding the transformation of education within the broader understanding of the notions of *deschooling* and the demythologizing of myths, and offer what additional insights I can to this discussion.

It is almost impossible to exhaust the scholarly and intellectual conversations that have forwarded ideas on how to transform the practice of schooling in a way that would demythologize the ideas and beliefs that are entrenched in our modern conviction that society *needs* schooling. It is also extremely arduous to chart the extensive philosophical and ideological implications of why and how this myth of the need for an institutionalized social existence is so deeply entrenched in our modern society (in comparison to an alternate social existence perhaps governed by co-operative association, for example). Perhaps this is related to deeper cycles of our social existence where myths are needed to create meaningful “realities” every time new and dangerous dilemmas demand answers. Myth might be required to explain and understand these new challenges in order for society to function adequately despite such enigmas. Cassirer (1946, pp. 297–298) notes that as long as we are able to check “the powers of myth” by our “intellectual, ethical and artistic” forces, then “myth is tamed and subdued.” If we agree with the assertions anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists make—that myth is an inherent tool that helps define humanity—perhaps one cannot entirely eliminate myth

from the human mode of existence. The remaining option may be, first, to engage in the process of demythologizing those myths that wield significant harm, and secondly, to continue to reinforce our ethical and intellectual faculties to better check the powers of new and emerging myths. In a broader sense, though, we are still challenged to articulate who is best positioned to engage in this process of identifying the more harmful myths and determining how to demythologize them. In the context of education, I argue that it is worthwhile to consider the educator as social critic as the most effective candidate to perform this task.

Following from this premise, I survey some critics who offer specific insights related to current educational practices. Most of the critics whose positions are reproduced in this thesis express largely intersecting philosophical premises that approach what we call postmodernism. Although the connection between such critics as Illich, Rancière, Giroux, and Freire might appear weak given the way we usually distinguish between critical pedagogy, liberation pedagogy, critical theory, and progressivism, they share an underlying commonality in their rejection of the Enlightenment Era's notion of reason, and in their assertion that knowledge is a construct that has to be interrogated. These theorists also similarly believe that *metanarratives* (which are essentially constructed myths) "are historically situated social constructions developed by dominant groups to legitimize their positions and privileges" (Gutek, 2004, p. 139) and that schools serve the dominant group by engendering their ideals and beliefs even as they dismiss or ignore completely the voices of the dominated.

Illich's description of effective education stands in sharp contrast to that promoted by the UDHR:

> A good educational system should have three purposes: it should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and, finally, furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make their challenge known. Such a system would require the application of constitutional guarantees to education. Learners should not be forced to submit to an obligatory

> curriculum, or discrimination based on whether they possess certificate or diploma. Nor should the public be forced to support, through a regressive taxation, a huge professional apparatus of educators and buildings which in fact restricts the public's chance for learning to the services the profession is willing to put on the market. (Illich, 2002, pp. 75–76)

Illich's ideal educational system is anti-institution. Instead of compulsory education, he advocates for an abundance of alternatives to allow choices to be made by both the individual and the society, as both learners and educators. Rather than merit-based participation, Illich proposes a platform where participation in learning is a choice made by the learner and the one who wants to share their knowledge and skills without the rubric of "discrimination" based on institutionally decreed "competency." Most importantly, Illich insists that there should be a platform for dissenting views, in the form of institutionalized methods that allow members of the collective to voice their disagreement.

As Illich noted again and again throughout his critique of the institution, the key to finding a way to demythologize schooling is to see the problem in tandem with the myths that exist within our understanding of the state and its institutional bodies. In other words, any course of action that attempts to "fix" the problems of education without simultaneously addressing the challenges the state and its institutional organs pose is like "trying to do urban renewal in New York City from the twelfth story up" (Illich, 2002, p. 38).

Michael Apple's 2001examination of the problems and challenges the state poses to education illuminates the current educational challenges in America. The main issue Apple identifies in an interview published by Curriculo sem Fronteiras (Curriculum without Borders) is presented through an examination of ideological pedigrees. Apple asserts that the most influential player in determining current educational practices and policies is what he calls the movement of "conservative modernization." Four ideological groups currently support the modernization movement and shape policies and set agendas: neo-liberals, neo-conservatives, Christian fundamentalists, and technocrats

(Apple, 2001, pp. ii–iii). Details of what each ideological tenet advocates for in relation to schooling (packaging curricular products and enforcing consumer regimes within education, etc.) are outlined in the first section of the interview. However, Apple notes that another movement offers an alternative vision of education:

> There's another side about which I'll be somewhat briefer. This involves those issues surrounding a vision and a practice of democracy that is thicker than the "thin" vision of democracy as consumption practices advanced by neoliberals.
>
> These issues involve the power of (collective) local decision-making, of a curriculum that comes from below, rather than from above, and that responds more and more to the needs, histories, and cultures of oppressed people, of people of color, and of poor people, and a more socially responsive pedagogy. (2001, p. iv)

Apple contends that the two sides that are at odds in shaping educational policies are discernible by their relationship to the state. The conservative modernization alliance led by the neo-liberals simultaneously represents the forces that influence both educational and state policies, whereas the movement that responds to the needs of the locals and tries to address the histories and cultures of oppressed people is located on the outskirts of the institutional boundaries of the state, or, at least, it attempts to create some distance between itself and the state and its institutional organs. The social critic/educator is one who aligns with this latter movement but also with a connection that goes beyond the local. Although Apple is hopeful regarding the gradual success of this movement that attempts to shift our social dependence on the state to a program that counters this dependency using such tools as "democratic schools" (2001), he also acknowledges the challenges created by new mythical concepts that are created precisely to counter these progressive movements.

The creation of new myths is one of the prominent weapons used to maintain the status quo. Apple offers the following example:

> A situation has been created in which the increasingly dominant perspective is one of "it's us against them," with the "we" being the hard-

> working Americans who somehow made it out of poverty by their own efforts, and the "them" who are African American, Latinos, and other people of color. This is creating a climate in which racial and economic segregation is now called "choice." And it is justified using the rhetoric of democracy as consumption practices. It's a brilliant strategy and the effects of it are all too visible all around us. (Apple, 2001, pp. xxv–xxvi)

This "brilliant strategy" can be nothing other than the creation of another myth that in turn helps the state and its institutionalized organs to continue to be the influential architects of educational processes policy.

Apple's suggestion to locate educational practices on the outskirts/margins of the established societal order is something that has been identified as a possible solution to counter myths. Tyson Lewis'*exopedagogy* attempts to highlight the problems associated with the commonly accepted, bifurcated analysis of education as a matter of private and public notions of education (Lewis, 2012). Lewis, based on his reading of Illich, argues that the location of education is one of the fundamental questions educational philosophers and critics struggle with. As such, theoretical conceptions have thus far been limited to considering education as "private property (a corporatized image of the school and the attending reduction of education to job training), public property of the state (as regulated from above by national standards), or political cosmopolitanism (where the model of the relation between the state and a rights bearing subject becomes a transcendental model for global regulation)" (Lewis, 2012, p. 846). Exopedagogy therefore attempts to remove education from these three areas of consideration. His interpretations of the Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest as constituting a "repudiation of state's sovereignty" and as a response to historical revolts by women, serfs, and slaves demanding fair distribution underscores his argument that these historical documents attempt to redefine what is private ownership and what is common ownership. However, Lewis asserts that, conceptually, the common, to be truly common, cannot be regulated by the state, because social production in the common is controlled by individuals rather than by the state:

> Like Hardt and Negri's concept of the surplus-common, Illich's theory of convivial tools forces us to think of use beyond concepts of property that divide the world into "ours" versus "theirs" or "private" versus "public." A new, expansive domain opens up where education ceases to be a commodity that is owned by individuals (through schooling as an "investment") or controlled by the nation-state (through standardization) and instead becomes a tool for promoting conviviality and thus the enhancement and extension of creative powers of production and invention. (2012, p. 858)

As a result; the location of the common must be outside the state's jurisdiction. Lewis's use of a *sea* and *pirates* metaphor illustrates an effective way to conceptualize *common*: as goods carried by a vessel out onto the sea, where they are free from claims of ownership by any particular individual and/or entity. The implication for education, Lewis seems to suggest, is that exopedagogy is a process of relocating education back to what he calls the "multitude." Illich's convivial life, in Lewis's view, offers the possibility of locating education among the multitudes.

I find compelling Illich's depiction of the project of demythologizing as the effort to distance ourselves from the whole myth of institutional schooling in order to resist and actively engage in exposing those constructed myths. This distancing, more than anything, is an individual journey. Illich warns that such an effort "will reveal the resistance we find in ourselves when we try to renounce limitless consumption and the pervasive presumptions that others can be manipulated for their own good. No one is fully exempt from the exploitation of others in the schooling process" (2002, p. 48). In this regard, the initial and most important requirement for the project of demythologizing is an inward journey to the self; to understand and overcome how the myth operates within one's world view. Giroux also proposes a similar platform where one is required to make a self-assessment, a check on myths that are affecting one's social and political views, not only on issues that are strictly educational, but also in the realm of social and political matters. He writes that "education is not only about issues of work and economics, but also about justices, social freedom, and the capacity for democratic agency" (2011, p. 121). Such a connection between education, on one side, and the social

and the political on the other, requires asking ourselves questions that would expose, as Illich said, the unpleasant actuality of our own obedience to the status quo, to the system we are trying to change.

An educational project that is qualitatively different from the existing institutionalized model, one that enables the learner to understand and reflect on oneself (Giroux, 2011, p. 154), is perhaps another common string that connects theorists such as Giroux, Freire, Rancière, and Illich. The role the individual plays in the process of emancipation is paramount to Rancière's conception of *universal teaching*. Similarly, in the works of Freire, *praxis* is defined against the prevailing social order. Illich's learning webs are also intricately related to individuals' ability to access and share knowledge against the strict schooling establishment that enforces institutionalized regimes. Giroux's assertion that education is not neutral (2011, p. 159) also supports the postmodern assertion that knowledge is not only a construct; it has operative meanings that need to be deconstructed in order to transform education, largely by bringing individual socio-political and economic lived experiences to the forefront of the conversation.

Rancière, in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, proposes universal teaching as a new way of educating that counters social inequality and engenders political freedom. The community of equals he envisions is a community that dissolves the difference between those who know and those who do not know (1991, p. 71). But for this community to be real, it requires, in a profound way, the individual inward journey each of us has to make. Rancière notes that the difference between those who possess intelligence and those who do not can be eradicated only in the realization of each person's equality of intelligence, but this realization is not simply a declaration; it is a place one has to reach during this inward journey, "when he withdraws into that privacy of consciousness where lying makes no sense" (1991, p. 71). Rancière's inward journey is not a simple process; neither does the dominant social class, which has already asserted its domination, find it a desirable process, but it is the only principle that allows a community of equals. The withdrawal into the privacy of consciousness strips us of all the myths that we attach to

ourselves. It is the realization that a human "is not born to a particular position, but is meant to be happy in himself, independently of what fate brings" (Rancière, 1991, p. 71). The creation of phalansteries, where the equal distribution of material and economic resources and the distribution of vocational positions seem to be the primary goals, is not something that Rancière has in mind. What he argues for is the understanding of equal intelligence as the only principle that unites humankind. For him, the very meaning of social existence is concurrent to this notion of equality of intelligence: "if men didn't have the faculty, an equal faculty, they would soon become strangers to each other; they would scatter at random throughout the globe and societies would be dissolved" (Rancière, 1991, p. 71).

This is perhaps what the educator as a social critic should consider regarding the process of demythologizing. Perhaps it is also a reminder for educators to engage in such self-examination in a way that transforms not only their roles but the very role of schooling, the space where those distinctions between the knower and the ignorant are sustained.

Freire notes that emerging leaders striving to transform education as well as society at large "must 'die,' in order to be reborn through and with the oppressed" (2011, p. 133). Freire's assertion aligns with Rancière's claim that "the one who is doing the decreeing defines himself and the class to which he belongs as those who know or were born to know; he thereby defines others as alien beings" (2011, p. 134). The alternative Freire proposes is a project led by scientific and humanist revolutionary leaders who undergo a thorough process of self-examination and self-transformation:

> Scientific and humanist revolutionary leaders, on the other hand, cannot believe in the myth of the ignorance of the people. They do not have the right to doubt for a single moment that it is only a myth. They cannot believe that they, and only they, know anything—for this means to doubt the people. Although they may legitimately recognize themselves as having, due to their revolutionary consciousness, a level of revolutionary knowledge different from the level of knowledge held by the people, they cannot impose themselves and their knowledge on the people. They cannot sloganize the people, but must enter into dialogue with them, so

> that the people's empirical knowledge of reality, nourished by the leaders' critical knowledge, gradually becomes transformed into knowledge of the *causes* of reality ... The task of the revolutionary leaders is to pose as problems not only the myths, but all other myths used by the oppressor elites to oppress. (2011, p. 134)

The task of demythologizing in an educational context is demanded of educators/social critics, and their scope must not be limited to myths within educational spheres; it must extend to myths that operate in other social spheres. Perhaps we can qualify these educators/social critics as progressives or revolutionaries, as Freire calls them. But there is still the lingering doubt regarding what we mean by the terms *revolutionary knowledge* and *people's empirical knowledge*. In this regard, there seems to be difference between Rancière's sense of equality and Freire's denotation of critical knowledge. In fact, classifying knowledge as revolutionary and empirical can be misleading if we accept Rancière's notion of equality, though the use of these terminologies and their meanings may simply be a matter of interpretation.

Giroux's 2011 analysis of Freirean pedagogy presents three important aspects that enable individuals to self-manage their lives: self-reflection, awareness, and producing a new life (pp. 154–155). Each of these tasks has specific functions: self-reflection, as in the inward journey to understand the self through the world where one lives; awareness of the myths that shaped one's world view; and eventually, creating a new transformed life, hopefully, one that is free from the crippling beliefs that render us obedient to the dominant metanarratives.

Giroux correctly notes that education cannot be separated from other social and political issues and that it has to be aligned with a new concept of education, one he calls "education as a project of freedom." He advocates for the role of educators to be "first to question the deep-seated assumption and myths that legitimate the archaic and disempowering social practice structuring every aspect of society and then to take responsibility for intervening in the world they inhabit" (2011, p. 158).

Illich's concept of *learning webs* also shares some of the basic assertions proffered by Freire, Giroux, and even by Rancière with respect to demythologizing the self-serving myths perpetuated by the state. However, Illich offers a perspective that is exclusive to his analysis: that it is the unique universalized structure of the school—any school, anywhere—that makes its myth potent. "It is illusory to claim that schools are, in any profound sense, dependent variables. This means that to hope for a fundamental change in the school system as an effect of conventionally conceived social or economic change is also an illusion" (Illich, 2002, p. 74). In other words, Illich argues that, to find a new approach to education, the program itself should not and cannot be planned through the current social order because, by definition, it reflects the current economic and political relations. The four aspects of the learning webs he proposes—reference services to educational objects, skill exchanges, peer-matching, and reference services for educators—are not meant to be understood in terms of current socio-political realities. Their execution requires a political program that precisely distances itself from the usual practice of educational planning that inevitably produces the same (2002, pp. 73–79). The need to guard these learning webs from the old habit of educational planning by technocrats and pedagogues that eventually change it into a method is the one real danger that all democratic, progressive, and liberation pedagogues face. It is the same power the state, the dominant classes, or the oppressors have: incorporating ideas from their adversaries and transforming them into myths that serve the status quo. Rancière foresaw this development while examining how the historical Jacotot introduced a form of universal teaching. Jacotot's innovation was betrayed by well-meaning progressives "who in fact worked for the Old Master's greatest profit" as they successfully institutionalized Jacotot's anti-method experience of learning (Rancière, 1991, p. 127).

The challenge inherent to the task of transforming education is intrinsically connected to transforming the social order in all its spheres: economic, social, and political. The focus on individual transformation, as presented by the theorists whose work I have synthesized above, seems to be one of the main strategies that give hope to educators and social activists. The inward journey that each of us must make is a valuable

and important notion. However, because of the nature of myth and the manner in which it operates on the human as well as the social psyche, I do not believe this alone would be an easily attainable goal for individuals, educators, and social activists. To overcome the myths that have been integrated with our worldviews and to gain the level of consciousness that can somehow translate into a communal consciousness that enforces change in both education and society requires more than self-awareness. In fact, potent dangers accompany this transformation of hope of self-awareness into a myth. Philip Wexler's book review of Gur-Ze'ev's book, *Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy Today*, describes an instance where suspicion about self-awareness is articulated (Wexler, 2008). Wexler's opening statement about critical pedagogy, that "it is being domesticated, appeased, or even castrated by the present order of things" (Gur-Ze'ev, 2005, p. 7), indicates that Bloch's high hopes, Marcuse's critical views, and Freire's passionate arguments on behalf of the oppressed are all being transformed into myth.

Perhaps what can be added to what these theorists proposed to transform "schooling" to "educating"—the self-liberation from myths—is to further explore both the power of myth and the potential to create counter-myths that precisely engender the proposed journey of self-examination. This might take us back to the classic Platonic *royal lie*, yet it is not difficult to imagine how much a counter-myth could potentially accomplish if one could situate it outside the social order so that it might counter state institutionalization, or what such a counter-myth might achieve in dismantling Illich's catalogue of the institute's myths. Therefore, some of the questions educators/social critics should ask are these: What type of counter-myth do educators need to construct? And how does one go about constructing a counter-myth in such a manner that it converts the myth of "better future society" into a hope, perhaps similar to Giroux's assertion that education is about freedom.

I believe Marxism offers an example of such a counter-myth. The idea of socialism and the myth of communism commanded the attention of the oppressed as well as the oppressors. What is important is not the historical analysis of Marxism's triumphs

and failures, or the conversion of Marxist philosophy into an "–ism" to advance the myths of fascist and totalitarian states; rather, the important lesson is the Marxist counter-myth's ability to resist complete domestication—its ability to move individuals and communities to action, its ability to convince individuals and communities that they are capable of changing the social order, its ability to project a *radical* theory that requires action. I believe Marxism was able to accomplish these things because it countered the established myth by speaking of hope—hope for a better future society and for a better world.

As West (1994, pp. 336–337) reminds us, the "trinity" composed of the notions of universal, free, and compulsory in educational vernacular are myths that obscure the real implications of state intervention in education. Despite the fact that they are most likely the result of government technocrats' "successful salesmanship," we still today accept (and from the perspective of hope, rightly so) that these notions of free and universal are the guiding principles in educational spheres. It is difficult to counter such assertions because their justification is potent and their motives, righteous. That is why educators/social critics (whether we call them progressive, revolutionary, or liberation educators) have to consider the potential of constructing counter-myths seriously. Because myth is, and perhaps always be, where humanity's hope resides.

6.1. Problems in Education and the Challenges of Formulating Proper Inquiries

Perhaps it is necessary to start recapping the ideas I presented in the previous chapters by revisiting the conversation about philosophers, and particularly philosophers of education. In this way, we can approach the discussion from both the theoretical level of the philosopher and the practical level of the social-critic/educators. I have argued that education and social criticism are intimately connected—that educators are essentially social critics, or that educators have to accept their role as social critics in order to be effective educators. I have also illustrated that this connection between educators and

social critics implies a certain shared understanding of *hope*. Hope, understood in this context, is a way to recognize possibilities—the potential for something better, something different from what is here and now, in both the educational and social spheres. The idea that hope is a central conceptual notion and an important part of the process of formulating effective enquiries in educational contexts is not new (Perrone, 1991; Halpin, 2003, Freire, 1992). In particular, this recognition of hope is an admission that the premise educators and social critics start from is based on some sort of recognition that something is missing—something that is not yet here, but ought to be. Thus, in any discussions of education and social criticism, hope must be one of the central conceptual starting points. However, we need to narrow our understanding of hope such that it better fits enquiries regarding the inherent interconnection of education and social criticism. One way to approach such inquiries is to pose basic, yet important, questions such as: What is/are the problem/s of education in modern societies? What are we missing in our current educational renditions? and What is/are the hopes we anticipate?

However, this question implies tensions on two levels that require some explication. On one hand, academic discourses, particularly those that attempt to address educational problems, are distinctly different from the language of the common, ordinary, non-academic people—the "masses", as Marxists would say. In a manner of speaking, those who ask the questions are not necessarily seen to belong to the group that will benefit from the enquiry's outcome(s). To illustrate this, it is helpful to consider the notion of educational inquiry functioning as a sort of tether that connects the language and ideas of the academy—the philosopher, the "educated", and the social critic—to the common people's language and their actual lived experiences.

The tether sometimes works in the form of impositions and coercion enforced by some form of institutionalized body (such as the school) that prescribes compulsory rituals and imposes rigid social roles upon certain society members. The purpose is usually to enable the educatee to eventually assume a productive, socially accepted role in society. In other instances, the tether takes the form of a concern for the masses. In this

case, knowledge is what is learned from the lived experience of the masses, knowledge that allows the scholar to understand "what the problem(s) is/are." In this sense, the connection serves as a source of know-how to counter the problem(s). Such knowledge is derived from the masses through observation and conducting academic research. The role of the academician, the critic of education, and the educational philosopher is therefore to explore and understand society's problems. However, the discourse in which the academy presents its findings and its proposed solution(s) must conform to certain ritualized creeds set by the academy, yet the stylized academic discourse must also speak to the society at large. When the focus is on educational problems, it involves the "educated" speaking on behalf of the yet-to-be-educated.

Thus, the first tension in academic discourse is deeply rooted in academia's belief that it can address the educated, the educatee, the uneducated, and the under-educated. Our understanding of each of these classifications—the meaning we attach to what it means to be uneducated, undereducated, or educated—has social and political underpinnings. However, the implications that follow from this understanding give rise to social hierarchies in terms of the social location of the educator and the educatee and the distances between them, all of which contribute to the tension. The educated and the educatee do not often share the same language, at least in terms of critical educational discourse. It is my assertion, therefore, that to mediate this tension and understand the gap in discourse between the scholarly and the common world, educational concepts and ideas are better approached by understanding shared hopes and examining common myths about education, and it is here that the social critic's skills are most usefully applied.

The second tension seated within academic discourse is revealed when we ask who is posing the question regarding the problem(s) in education. This time, the tension is related to the distinctions we often make between the social critic and the educator or, more generally, the philosopher and the educator. Rene Arcilla provocatively argues that Dewey's assertion that the philosophy of education is a marriage between philosophy and

education is no longer valid because educators have abandoned philosophy and are being guided by the social sciences (Arcilla, 2002). The responses that claim draws (Amstine, 2002; Ellett, 2002; Fenstermacher, 2002) speak to the tension regarding who should properly be asking the question.

If we believe that there are problems in education, these problems are eminently attached to sociological, political, and economic matters. Social institutions and the process of institutionalization are also central to the inquiries. Therefore, the critic's challenge is to understand how and to what extent the critique he/she presents is affected by the critic's own position within the given socio-political and economic social order. This is important because to critique social, political, and economic conditions in the arena of educational practices, the critic must first assert their own place in the given social order and acknowledge its effects upon the contents of their critiques.

A conversation that took place during the 1971 Chomsky/Foucault debate helps to clarify this point. The moderator, Don Elders, asked Foucault to comment on which of modern society's sicknesses most impressed him. The conversation went as follows:

> *Elders*: Mr. Foucault, if you were obliged to describe our actual society in pathological terms, which of its kinds of madness would most impress you?
>
> *Foucault*: In our contemporary society?
>
> *Elders*: Yes.
>
> *Foucault*: If I were to say with which malady contemporary society is most afflicted?
>
> *Elders*: Yes.
>
> *Foucault*: The definition of the disease and of insanity and its classification of the insane have been made in such a way as to exclude from our society a certain number of people. If our society characterized itself as insane, it would exclude itself. It pretends to do so for reasons of internal reform. Nobody is more conservative than those people who tell you that the modern world is afflicted by nervous anxiety or

> schizophrenia. It is in fact a cunning way of excluding certain people or certain patterns of behaviour.
>
> So I don't think that one can, except as a metaphor or a game, validly say that our society is schizophrenic or paranoid, unless one gives these words a non-psychiatry meaning. But if you were to push me to an extreme, I would say that our society has been afflicted by a disease, a very paradoxical disease, for which we haven't yet found a name; and this mental disease has a very curious symptom, which is that the symptom itself brought the mental disease into being. There you have it. (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006, pp. 58–59)

If one chooses to be as suspicious as Walzer, then Foucault's response to the question can be dismissed as an intellectual manoeuvre, as responding to a question without really answering it, because he did not directly name the malady society is suffering from, either from a strict pathological perspective or from a general discursive standpoint. However, given that the title of the debate was *On Human Nature* and that its topic was justice versus power, and given the differing stand the two debaters took elsewhere during the interaction regarding the very concept of human nature, one might arrive at a less pessimistic interpretation of Foucault's response that human nature, as a notion, is suspect; he claimed that it can only be "an epistemological indicator" in the history of knowledge and that it would be an error to consider it as a scientific concept (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006, p. 45). Chomsky, however, took the position that there is more or less a definite human nature that constitutes one of the "innate organizing principles, which guides our social and intellectual and individual behaviour" (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006, p. 45).

The challenge to the educational critic in articulating the "problems of education" seems to have some commonality to what is illustrated by Chomsky and Foucault's divergent epistemological assumptions about human nature. Foucault's assertion that it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to articulate, name, or synthesize the one disease modern society suffers most from echoes the difficulties evident in educational critiques, where we have yet to devise a framework that is sanitized from epistemological presumptions affecting the problem of education. The paradoxes between Foucault's position regarding

society and the problem of education that I address here are analogous. In the realm of education, we often apply a particular lens to examine and locate problems, but the lens we use is surely shaped by certain philosophical or ideological presuppositions, hence engendering the very real possibility that symptoms are creating the diseases, as Foucault claimed. And this paradox seems to constantly contribute to the current challenges of generating an effective critique of education. In essence, the social critic/educator is always in danger of either creating the symptoms of the disease or of creating a solution for a disease examined by a pair of diseased eyes.

The immediate challenge both the philosopher and social critic in relation to education face is, therefore, to position themselves in an epistemological sense; to find a space where they can position themselves to examine education as a self-contained discipline, a field of study, or a social practice; a space that allows them to avoid contaminating the critique with their own philosophical presuppositions. This challenge persists in any act of social criticism, and I do not claim to have a clear strategy to overcome it. However, it is my understanding that the challenge is sustained, on one hand, by a belief that education (or the philosophy of education) is indeed a discipline in its own right, with its own theorists and philosophers. On the other hand, we observe the parasitic/symbiotic nature of educational conversations because philosophy of education draws upon theoretical and philosophical works that are not specifically intended to critique educational practices and discourses (although such works do not necessarily preclude education). At the same time, the philosophy of education's theories also interject new ideas, points of interest, and subject matter into social, political, or economic disciplines. It is this elastic nature of education and educational conversations—on one hand, as a self-contained discipline, and on the other, as a parasitic/symbiotic disciplinary field of study—that poses a challenge to any critic's efforts to generate a critique of education. If the critic is to produce a critique that pertains only to education, the historical genesis of education precludes the critic from achieving an autonomous educational position, a space where the critique can be situated and speak narrowly to what we think of as education, because the space education holds

does not consistently declare allegiance to any particular philosophical precept. At the same time, educational conversations have not historically shied away from appropriating multiple tenets from various philosophical positions. For example, Gutek notes that “the challenge of educational theory is to define the purpose and meaning of education, schooling, curriculum, and instruction in terms that accurately describe social reality. To do this requires an exposure to the body of ideas derived from metaphysics and metanarratives” (Gutek, 2004, p. 316). But this requirement to explore and interrogate ideas derived from metaphysics and metanarratives obviously moves the critic toward diverse philosophical positions and does not respond to Foucault’s advice that we should be suspicious when probing abstract notions such as human nature. Perhaps applying a Foucauldian genealogical mode of exploration to the problems of education would reveal venues that describe the mythical ideas imbedded within the notion of education. An inquiry framed in such a manner may allow the critic to articulate the myth behind institutionalized educational systems—namely, how they operate and to what end—and potentially lead to identifying the problem with education that has thus far been unacknowledged and unnamed.

6.2. Locating a Philosophy of Education: Re-situating the Query

> School has become the planned process which tools man for a planned world, the principal tool to trap man in man’s trap. (Illich, 2002, p. 110)

Education, as a philosophical and sociological notion, has clearly accumulated numerous theoretical and philosophical concepts from other disciplines (politics, economics, philosophy, sociology, psychoanalysis, literature, linguistics, etc.), and this has resulted in the accumulation of vast catalogues of important subject matter related to educational conversations. These catalogues, when appropriated within educational discourses, are usually applied to educational situations to probe some of the fundamental questions educational philosophy poses. While they address issues such as what education is and what it can or cannot do to/for individuals, societies, and nations at

large, such catalogues are rarely examined before critics actually admit how thoroughly such seemingly distinct disciplinary fields of study permeate educational conversations. Neither is it often acknowledged how notions of education themselves infuse almost all other disciplines. We do not find many economists, anthropologists, physicist politicians, et cetera, articulating how their schooling and/or education directly influenced their work. The bulk of medical and scientific journals' publications rarely mention education unless there is a specific tangent inherent to a piece of research requiring scholars to address it. The irony there is that all are products and by-products of some sort of educational practice.

The results stemming from the elusive nature of educational conversations are manifested through the various, and sometimes contradictory, positions held by educational theorists (which differ according to their specific theoretical/philosophical leanings), and by the similarly variant prescriptions each proposes to the perceived problems in education. This, in turn, leads us to assert that *philosophy of education* does not really connote any specific set of ideas, but is, rather, an interrelated web of notions extracted from various philosophical positions. As such, within the body of conversations related to educational remedies, we see the emphasis shifting from political issues, to social issues, to institutional powers and their distribution, to notions of ownership, and to notions of social justice. In essence, *education* as a field of study cannot be studied as a unitary field. At the same time, we have to find a way to address the fact that educational conversations are always connected to multiple social, political, economic, and cultural issues. I argue that it is almost impossible to engage in educational conversation without engaging simultaneously with other social, political, and economic features of social reality, that to engage in educational conversation is to engage in all social, political, and economic conversations. What makes education and educational conversations dependent on the myth that education happens through schooling (Illich, 2002) is probably prompted by either the omission of important spheres of life from the discussion or by an over-emphasis on one sphere or another. In other words, a constant contextualization of

the educational conversations to both local and global issues is needed, as is making that connection clear.

These premises prompted my suggestion that addressing educational issues and problems falls to those educators who can also assume the role of social critics. I also believe that identifying the "problems of education" is intrinsically related to the flexible space that education inhabits across disciplines. I believe the problem is also related to the challenges the educational critic faces in trying to establish an "authentic" critique of education and/or pedagogy, because such efforts lead to disconnecting education from the political, social, and economic aspects of life, precisely because there is no 'authentic' educational critique. Trying to situate a critique of education without addressing social, political, and economic issues is problematic. In fact, attempting to offer a critique of education, either by emphasizing only one aspect of socio-political or economic issues (e.g., justice and political rights) or by ignoring other aspects (e.g., social inequality, power relations, access to economic resources) in an effort to offer a "purely educational or pedagogical" perspective is perhaps one of the core problems of education; we fall into the trap of failing to understand the effects of the old myths attached to schooling. These problems of education that we are trying to articulate are essentially connected to much wider social, political, or economic problems.

These arguments are not entirely new; current conversations in educational circles usually note the connections between education and socio-political aspects of life. North, for example, pointed out in 2008 that the notion of justice, and particularly social justice, is not a universalized concept but is, rather, situated within multiple competing theoretical assumptions. North also asserts that, when one tries to contextualize this notion within education, it is necessary to engage in some sort of mapping of the relationship by identifying key theorists and focusing on the tensions and contradictions they present. Gewirtz's 2006 article, *Towards a Contextualized Analysis of Social Justice in Education*, presents a similar argument: abstract notions such as justice require contextualized interpretations because it is difficult to relate the notion to everyday

practices. She argues that the requirement for contextualized interpretations and enactments is based on the very nature of the notion of justice as a multi-dimensional, often mediated, and usually context-dependant phenomenon. The danger here is that not only can the notion of "justice" be lost while teaching it (through failing to properly contextualize it), but the very possibility of teaching it as an abstract notion in different places and under different circumstance is impossible. A well-planned teaching project on "social justice" that does not take contextualization into account would be meaningless if it were to be taught indiscriminately in Gaza, Somalia, Quebec, and/or Scotland. This is why the type of educator who is modeled after the critic at large must study and learn the nature of the contextual conditions of justice in different places, must sift through the shared, common aspects of justice across different cultures and geographical locations so as to ascertain which peculiar features of justice are applicable in which contexts.

6.3. Social Institutions and Education

Regardless of the way we situate the critique scholars offer, the proposed approach requires some form of institutional mediation. Any critique of education must factor in the notion of social institutions, because that allows the various conversations in and around the problems of education to be brought together—including those that highlight the seeming separation of education from the political and social, the way the institution supports the status quo, the underlying assumptions of ownership, and the implicit commodification of education in general.

One of the strengths of Illich's 2002 theoretical framework is that he critiques both the educational institution and the myth attached to modern institutions. I concur with his position that "the analysis of institutions according to their present placement on a left-right continuum enables me to clarify my belief that fundamental social change must begin with a change of consciousness about institutions and to explain why the dimension of a viable future turns on the rejuvenation of institutional styles" (2002, p.

61). Illich's observation implies that educational critics tend to be more or less futuristic. They intend to change educational practices for the better, and their criticism is meant to have a positive effect on society. However, critiques of education and the prescriptions suggested to address its problems remain fixated on the belief that the answer lies within institutionalized platforms, hence rejuvenating the institution. I suggest that Illich is arguing that we have to develop a new way to understand institutions, a new consciousness about institutions; to do otherwise is to revitalize the very institutions that we seek to change.

This fixation on institutional platforms reminds me of an analogy a professor related about thirty years ago, during my first experience as a university student. While discussing the notion of the "colonization of the mind," he told us this story:

Two circus performers, who happened to also be good friends, had performed the same dramatic routine every day for many years. One of the partners stood against a wooden board while the other threw sharp knives at him, placing them close enough to his partner's body to form a perfect outline when the partner stepped away. This act required an impeccable level of accuracy to place each knife just inches from the partner to avoid serious injury, and a high level of trust that the knives would land in their intended places. But the day eventually came when the partners' long friendship changed to animosity, and a murderous plot replaced the longstanding friendship. The knife-throwing partner planned to throw the knives at his partner's heart at the next show instead of following the usual routines. When the time came for the next show, the partner who had to stand against the board took his position, and the one with the knives started to throw them with the utmost fervour, fully intending to kill his newly made enemy. However, at the end of the show, all the knives were in their usual places.7 The

[7] I regret that I was not able to reference this anecdote's primary source. Though the gist of it is accurate, it is a personal interpretation that is dependent upon memory.

fact that conscious intent and conviction gave way to long-established, hardened patterns and conditioning was my professor's intended lesson.

This anecdote is reinforced by Fanon's (1967) depiction of *epidermalization* as an internalized, undesirable concept that defies the subject's conscious, rational efforts to resist it. The task of working on a critique of education faces the same difficulty, because one of the obvious observations critics have repeatedly made about education is that there is a disjunction between the declared intent of education and the actual practices within institutionalized school systems. At the very least, there is a consensus that the school is not doing enough and that more research must be done and more inquiries must be initiated.

This disjunction seems to operate on established myths about schooling. These myths are similar to those discussed in Chapter III, where notions of freedom and human development are evoked. Educational research and inquiries, at the same time, hint at assurances that the problems of education are almost known or are, at the very least, in the process of becoming known. Ironically, Illich's above quotation asserts that these glimpses of assurance are produced and validated within the same institutionalized bodies that are being examined; they proffer a variety of useful lenses, but all are attached to certain philosophical positions and certain methodological frameworks. Despite the critics' best efforts, the disjunction between the intent of changing education and the actual practice of education remains; we have yet to find a way to disempower the myth that the school is the only place where problems and solutions can be processed. And as Foucault observed, we have not yet even been able to name this problem.

Although institutionalized myths manifest in various social realms, Illich chose the school to illustrate how, by examining the myth associated with it, one can also illustrate the benefits of investigating myths attached to other social institutions and realities such as "family life, politics, security, faith, and communication" (2002, p. 2). The connections he establishes between school and these other social spheres explicates what I referred to as the elastic nature of educational conversations. In addition, the

connections he makes between school as an institution and other institutionalized social and political bodies allows us to further explore the need to pursue a concurrent framework that does not disconnect educational conversations from other socio-political spheres. In other words, Illich's framework promotes continued exploration of the assertion that a critique of education is incomplete unless it concedes that socio-political and economic issues are as much educational issues as educational issues are socio-political and economic issues. Another important aspect of Illich's framework is his analysis of the almost universal institutional structures of the school. Illich notes that schools are "fundamentally alike in all countries, be they fascist, democratic or socialist, big or small, rich or poor. The identity of the school system forces us to recognize the profound world-wide identity of the myth, mode of production, and method of social control, despite the great varieties of the mythologies in which the myth finds expression" (2002, p. 76). This is an important point because it allows further conversations regarding how "universalized" and perhaps Eurocentric wisdoms are super-imposed on, and adopted by, other cultures in the rest of the world. In this regard, the "school" has played an important role in pervading all regions of the world, regardless of socio-political, cultural, and geographic differences.

This conversational thread also lends itself to a further critique regarding colonial and post-colonial discourses—specifically, how Western school systems play out in non-Western environs, and how the school system influences local environments in dictating the modes of production. It is also useful to explore the types of social control the school system enforces in these locales and how the structure of social control is modelled after Western school systems. In other words, it opens ways to explore the problems attached to education from a global perspective that includes other institutionalized bodies and structures such as political and economic institutions that often include notions of democracy, development, and financial policies, and how these notions are globally influential. In fact, if one argues that education and social issues are connected, perhaps one of the principal points of connection is this global expansion of Western "schooling." In other words, educators/social critics must not only understand the implications of

education's internationalization, they must also participate in developing critiques about it because education is indeed the most powerful, almost universal, notion blurring the distinctions between the hopes and the myths it projects.

If disturbing the myth associated with institutions is the necessary first step in addressing the problems of institutionalized education, then the question that must follow is why the myths persist despite wide acknowledgment of their damaging role in institutionalized settings. A large number of critiques articulate the myth not only by bringing the various manifestations of it to the foreground of educational conversations in a complex analytical manner, but also by offering detailed analyses of how the myth operates and by prescribing specific strategies regarding how to resist it in order to transform education. Ironically, just like the knife thrower's inability to hit his new target in my professor's story, these critical works—with all their well-intended commitments, clearly stated analyses, and steadfastly articulated intentions to arrive at a place where we can examine education through schooling without its mythical cloaks—seem to reinforce the schools' donning of yet more mythical cloaks. We do this because we continue to insist that the institution is still the preferred site for the critique.

Jacques Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991), Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2011), and John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (2005) offer a few examples where we find, to differing degrees, specific discussions related to the problems of education. These theorists' works are often referenced by those who address education directly. Scholars such as Martha Nussbaum (2006), Nel Noddings (2012; 2003), Eamonn Callan (1997), Seyla Benhabib, et al. (2006), John Rawls (1971), and Paul Shepard (1982) critique broader social realities from various angles (ecological, sociological, legal and human rights, ethics and morality, political rights, etc.), and their ideas are often adapted to educational conversations. Each of these writers, theorists, or philosophers is often classified according to their affiliation with one of the larger philosophical or ideological categories, for example, existentialism, pragmatism, critical theory, continental philosophy, postmodernism, realism, Marxism, liberation pedagogy,

and so on. What is more important to educators/social critics in this regard, however, is not the specific philosophical/ideological inclination of a particular theorist, or what is being emphasized in the particular critique, but the way specific philosophical and ideological beliefs are manifested within or translated to educational practices through the institution of education. All the various inquiries forwarded by any of the educational theorists, whether they take the form of countering an existing "damaging" myth or creating another potentially beneficial myth, are enacted from the institution's platform. Unless and until we understand how the institutional apparatus affects the particular enquiry and critique, how it shapes the enquiry, and how it restricts what can be enacted and what cannot, educators/social critics will be unable to effect any lasting, tangible change.

6.4. Institutional Myths and Inventions

Again, one of the most potent constructed myths is that of institutionalized schooling. To revisit the notion of constructed myth, I inject a more attentive illustration of how constructed myth works as it relates to both education and society at large. Here I rely, once again, on Illich's take of the institution and Engel's analysis of the family, along with a discussion regarding the relationship of "reality" and its "construction." Noting that the connection between schooling and society is always anchored at the level of family is a particularly useful approach to understanding constructed myths as they pertain to education. Even given the emphasis on the need for the educator to be both insider/outsider or local/global, criticism must always begin somewhere, and I believe the notion of family and childhood are key positions from which educators/social critics can start their criticism. This is important for educators/social critics who choose to demythologize harmful myths and perhaps construct their own myths to counter less desirable myths.

Although some prefer to identify Illich with the anarchist school of thought, his work is perhaps closer to critical theory, and to some extent, to liberation pedagogy (as it

arose from liberation theology), because it is both a critique of institutionalized pedagogy and a resounding call for the liberation of society. The following quote is the most salient articulation of the "unchallenged" myth of education in Illich's work:

> There is, first, the shared belief that behaviour which has been acquired in the sight of a pedagogue is of special value to the pupil and of special benefit to society. This is related to the assumption that social man is born in the school-womb, which some want to gentle by permissiveness, others to stuff with gadgets, and still others to garnish with liberal traditions. And there is, finally, a shared view of youth which is psychologically romantic and politically conservative. According to this view, changes in society must be brought about by burdening the young with the responsibility of transforming it—but only after their eventual release from school. It is easy for a society founded on such tenets to build up a sense of its responsibility for the education of the new generation, and this inevitably means that some men may set, specify, and evaluate the personal goals of others. (2002, pp. 65–66)

Even as Illich distinguishes between school as an institutional body and education as a construct (although the modern myth of education is intricately connected to schooling, and vice versa), he makes useful connections between (a) the value we place upon pedagogical conditioning; (b) the assumptions we make about its (school's pedagogical conditioning) benefit to both the individual and society at large; (c) the assertion that the young, conditioned through schooling, must be the sole avant-garde capable of making social changes; and finally, (d) the inevitable danger that these assertions lead to ceding control over the individual liberty of pursuing one's personal goals and aspirations to institutional powers. Based on this analysis, Illich situates the phenomenology of the school by drawing attention to facets such as age, teacher-pupil relations, and full-time attendance. Illich's definition of school is an "age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full time attendance at an obligatory curriculum" (2002, pp. 25–26). The features contained in his definition of school provide foundations for the various myths attached to schooling.

Illich's work also connects the modern myth of education to the invention of "childhood." He says that "growing up through childhood means being condemned to inhumane conflict between self-awareness and the role imposed by society going through its own schooling" (2002, p. 27). Illich's understanding of self-awareness is perhaps better articulated in his 1971 book, *Celebration of Awareness*, but I will first briefly explore what we mean when we say, "the invention of childhood." Together with the notion of the invention of childhood, we must always assume that family is also involved; it is not unusual for the family to be discussed in the context of both childhood and educational practices. So we have, in a sense, tripartitely connected notions of childhood and family and institutionalized/obligatory education. It could be argued that each of these notions is invented to some extent. The historical reflection Illich offers to the discovery of childhood parallels the creation of the school system as a social institution:

Until the last century, the "children" of middle-class parents were made at home with the help of preceptors and private schools. Only with the advent of industrial society did the mass production of childhood become feasible and come within the reach of the masses. The school system is a modern phenomenon, as is the childhood it produces." (2002, p. 27)

Childhood, as a relatively recent discovery, Illich argues, not only perpetuated the ramification of the myth of the school but also intensified "the institutionalization of values." Family is also a concept to which our modern societies attach special, and tremendously valuable, meaning. However, its genealogy indicates that the meaning of the term "family" is connected to something that negates the current, commonly understood meaning of the term. Regarding the origin of the concept of family, Engels wrote the following:

The original meaning of the word "family" (*familia*) is not that compound of sentimentality and domestic strife which forms the ideal of the present philistine; among the Romans it did not at first even refer to the married pair and their children but only to slaves. *Famulus* means domestic slave, and *familia* is the total number of slaves

belonging to one man. As late as the time of Gaius, the *familia*, *id est patrimonium* (that is, the patrimony, the inheritance) was bequeathed by will. The term was invented by the Romans to denote a new social organism whose head ruled over wife and children and a number of slaves, and was invested under Roman paternal power with rights of life and death over them all. (2010, pp. 87–88)

Historically, therefore, there might be a strong case to illustrate that institutionalized education, childhood, and the family are all inventions. However, their current meaning and function have been transformed into something that is necessary to the extent that their absence is unimaginable. In fact, valid arguments could speak to the fact that, despite these notions' historical genesis as something invented to serve specific socio-political and economic needs (similar to the way Engels described the "family" as an invention to serve the socio-economic dominance of the paternal system), these notions have become important and valid to current societies, because educational institutions and social organs such as the family have become not only part of the potential spaces where we try to instil safeguards against so many social and economic injustices, but they are also required for our own social functioning. In the final analysis, then, we may be forced to concede that these socially constructed notions have become both "real" and useful. And if we accept the possibility that reality is socially constructed, then the role of the social critic is to decide which socially constructed realities serve society well, and which should be challenged. This, in turn, implies that educators/social critics must carefully chart what reality they wish to construct.

Illich's analysis is helpful in this regard because it connects economic, social, and political power relations to the general conversation regarding problems of "schooled" education. Illich also implies that it was not only historically possible for society to survive without childhood, but that it may well be possible for modern societies to function without it, as well. In fact, one may push the argument a bit further to say that modern societies would be better off if we could demystify childhood and the institutions that perpetuate it.

The task of identifying the myths attached to institutionalized education by educators/social critics cannot simply be limited to historical perspectives, because such an interpretation entails short-circuiting the task of demythologizing by falling back into some other historical myth generated by the same schooling. Approaching Illich's analysis as a salient genealogical examination that perhaps lends itself to a Foucauldian-influenced interpretation rather than in a traditional, historical sense reminds us of how socially constructed concepts become accepted as reality. The current role that childhood plays as part of our social and psychological reality is better explained through the phenomenological analysis Berger and Luckmann presented in 1966. According to their discussion of "the sociology of knowledge," reality is a social construct. They state that everyday life as reality "does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence," because it is simply accepted as if it were "there." It is only when one challenges the proclamation of everyday life as reality that one "must engage in a deliberate, and by no means easy, effort." For Berger and Luckmann, this transition from the accepted, commonplace understanding of everyday life to theoretical "doubt" illustrates a transition "from natural attitude towards everyday life to a theoretical attitude of the philosopher or scientist" (1966, pp. 23–24). In other words, philosophical engagement requires a problem, and the absence of a problem, or nonattendance to a problem, reinforces the belief concerning what is real, as such reality is proffered in everyday life. The critic's role seems to be consistent with this assertion; the critic of education perceives a particular problem and brings that problem to the forefront to seek possible solutions. Extending their sociological analysis, however, Berger and Luckmann note that the role of knowledge, as constructed by society, is actually to legitimize extant social orders, that this process of legitimization entails a dialectical relationship between institutions and theoretical justifications. It is valid to say that theories are concocted in order to legitimate pre-existing social institutions. But it also happens that social institutions are changed in order to bring them into conformity with already existing theories; that is, to make them more "legitimate." The legitimization experts may operate as theoretical justifiers of the status quo, but they may also appear as revolutionary ideologists (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 128).

Applying Berger and Luckmann's model of a mutually reinforcing relationship between social institutions and theoretical justifications engendered by the process of legitimization to the realm of education illuminates a similar relationship between the critique/theory offered by the educational critic and the institution the critic tries to change. As much as the critic's theory intends to change the institution, there is a strong possibility that the institution similarly changes the critic's theoretical work. This paradoxical relationship between the critique and the institution lies at the heart of my depiction of the challenges faced by the educational critic. It is particularly important to educators/social critics to be aware of this relationship between the institute and the critic if the 'hope' is to identify educational problems and engender change.

Educators/social critics have to understand that social institutions are, by definition, irrational (Rancière, 1991, p. 98). By implication, then, the institutionalized school can be designated as a social organization where irrational conditioning takes place. Although Rancière's general premise is "equality of intelligence," he offers a specific example of how the school as an institution works in tandem with other social and political spheres, noting that modern society seems to promote "people's education" projects to respond to the criticism that schools are sites that reproduce inequality. Rancière's equality of intelligence may well be yet another constructed myth, one that perhaps usefully counters inequalities within educational institutes. However, what Rancière argues is that people's education projects are designed to convince them to participate in the status quo, both socially and economically; to minimize potential resentment directed toward the social elites; to diminish differences in social beliefs and values in order to avoid the disintegration of the social order; and to promote the perception that social mobility is possible for all, though the underlining intent is to maintain the same social order (Bingham, Biesta, & Rancière, 2010, p. 7). The people's education thus exemplifies what Illich refers to as the institutionalized value of schooling, as well as the power that the school, as an institutionalized body, wields over school children and society at large through hidden curricula (2002, p. 32)**.** The role of educators/social critics is then to sift through myths connected to education and decide

which ones help achieve those hopes that they expect will improve the overall social existence.

Educators/social critics can also draw from what John Dewey calls *growth* in relation to the larger societal implication of institutionalized education. Although the core of his assertion in *Democracy and Education* (2008) specifically addresses the connection between politics and education, Dewey, like Foucault, believes that universalized notions such as moral values and human nature are inherently suspect. However, his analysis of the function of school and education, especially his distrust of how widely education is defined as a necessary component of life and growth, seem to suggest a different perspective that is tied to a problematic notion regarding the aim of education. The following excerpt explains Dewey's position more fully:

In directing the activities of the young, society determines its own future in determining that of the young. Since the young at a given time will at some later date compose the society of that period, the latter's nature will largely turn upon the direction children's activities were given at an earlier period. This cumulative movement of action toward a later result is what is meant by growth. (2008, p. 27)

Dewey expands his argument by stating that immaturity is a naturally occurring condition of growth and thus should not be perceived in a negative fashion. Dewey's position differs from Illich's critical perspective of both education and the institution in two fundamental ways. First, Dewey clearly distinguishes between those who need education and those who are in a position to offer it. Secondly, the meaning of growth is connected not only to those activities that are supposedly given to children, but also to what society is. This assertion, in some ways, implies equivalency between educational activities and what constitutes society. It is one way to retrospectively assess the present society according to the type of education that society offered to the previous generation of children. Dewey's logic does not end there, however:

> Power to grow depends upon need for others and plasticity. Both of these conditions are at the height in childhood and youth. Plasticity or power to learn from experience means the formation of habits. Habits give control over the environment, power to utilize it for human purposes. Habits take the form of habituation, or a general and persistent balance of organic activities with the surroundings, and of active capacities to readjust activity to meet new conditions. The former furnishes the background of growth; the latter constitutes growing. Active habits involve thought, invention, and initiative in applying capacities to new aims. They are opposed to routine, which marks an arrest of growth. Since growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself as I suggested above. (2008, pp. 33–34)

Although Dewey clearly argues that growth requires a need for others along with a sort of receptive conditioning and that these conditions are more potent among the young, his principal argument seems to be the importance of active interaction with others: experience is key to Dewey's definition of education. Some critics consider Dewey's notion of growth to be problematic, particularly the equation of life to growing without an end and of education to growing without any aim. As Noddings put it, Dewey's notion of growth may not necessarily mean "a fully operational definition of education," while the idea of education without an aim, just as the idea of a life without any purpose other than "to produce more life," both remain problematic (2012, p. 27). Despite these criticisms, it is fair to say that Dewey's argument creates a certain distance from institutionalized schooling. It also seems fair to say that, in doing so, he is trying to counter the myth by asserting that institutionalized schooling is not the only space where answers to social and political problems can be pursued.

While Dewey focuses on experience—"an ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance" (2008, p. 86)—and argues that there is a dialectical relationship between thinking and experience because "a separation of the active doing phase from the passive undergoing phase destroys the vital meaning of an experience" (2008, p. 90), Paulo Freire (1992) qualifies experience as it is manifested in the social relationship between the cultural spheres of the dominant and the dominated. His discussion notes that the

fundamental “narrative” character of the teacher-student relationship is manifested as a relationship between a subject and an object (1992, p. 71). This relationship is representative of what he refers to as the “banking system of education,” wherein the teacher is all knowing and the student knows nothing, a characterization that could be another example of what Rancière described as “the intelligent caste’s management of the stupid multitude” (1991, p. 131). On the contrary, the dialogic approach, according to Freire, is “a human phenomenon marked by the “word,” and the word is the essence of dialogue (1992, p. 87). It is through the analysis of the word that Freire qualifies experience, more or less in the same manner Dewey did, although for Freire, experience involves two dialectically related entities. The word has two dimensions, reflection and action, which interact so radically that if one is sacrificed, even in part, the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world. An inauthentic word, one which is unable to transform reality, results when a dichotomy is imposed upon its constitutive elements. When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; the word is then changed into idle chatter, into verbalism, into alienated and alienating “blah.” It becomes an empty word, one which cannot denounce the world, for denunciation is impossible without commitment to transformation, and there can be no transformation without action. On the other hand, if action is emphasized exclusively and to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into activism. The latter—action for action’s sake—negates the true praxis and makes dialogue impossible. Either dichotomy, by creating unauthentic forms of existence, also creates unauthentic forms of thought which reinforce the original dichotomy (1992, pp. 87–88).

Distinct similarities are evident between Dewey’s dialectics conjoining thinking and experience and Freire’s praxis connecting reflection and action dialectically. However, the difference between Freire and Dewey in an educational context is that the dialectical relationship between theory and practice (praxis) must be transformative. For Freire, this is the key way to change the world, and it thus implies a purpose, an aim;

while the marriage of theory and practice, for Dewey, is the essence of growth, and growth is also the essence of education and life.

We now know, of course, that what Dewey feared that the school would do to individuals and society, despite his critical admonishment of the school system of his period, did not come to pass. As Eamonn Callan notes, even Dewey's own faith in the progressive teacher and the type of schooling he imagined diminished toward the end of his career (1997, p. 162). We have yet to see the result of Freire's assertion of the dialogic approach through praxis. But what distinguishes Illich from these two theorists is his insight that we need to change our "consciousness" about the institution. I contend that Walzer's critic at large construct perhaps comes closest. Yet, Freire implied that there was a need for some sort of institution and Dewey stated so outright; and for Freire, the need for institutional change is accompanied by the need to create new institutional entities that favour the oppressed.

Overall, I assert that Dewey and Freire's attempts to "change and transform" education failed because both thinkers did not really apply their critique in a way that addresses the society in which the very "education" they critique is engrossed. Their analysis is limited by the belief that the institution of education could be revitalized and that it is not necessary to critic larger social issues in order to change existing educational practices. Illich's analysis is perhaps a better approach for the educator/social critic because he, at least, includes the need to consider larger social issues and the importance of connecting the local and the global.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

Philosophy, education, and social criticism, and the connection between them, are the common threads addressed in this thesis. We all have a preconception of these three notions, either in the abstract or concrete form, though they usually elude rational, scientific, or concrete definitions. Most scholarly works display disagreements that range from mild to radical discrepancies, particularly when the question is “What?”, as in What is philosophy? or What is social criticism? or What is education? The same can be said for the “Who?” question, as in Who is the philosopher? Who is the educator? or Who is the social critic?

My central argument is that, whether they are aware of it or not, educators are essentially social critics and they ought to do social criticism in every educational setting. A closely connected argument is that social critics share the role of philosophers because both share the same premise in identifying a perceived problem, analysing the problem, and offering a critique in the form of synthesizing the perceived problem. Thus I assert that education is indeed a form of social criticism and that, by the same token, social criticism, if not constantly, does the things philosophy traditionally does.

I offer two unlikely notions that centre both social criticism and education, hope and myth, to make my argument. The role hope plays in this connection between education and social criticism or educator and social critic is anchored by its consistent presence, the hope that some form of change will result. The very purpose of education and social criticism is to revise or somehow improve the educatee or society at large. This, in turn, translates to the need for the educator/social critic to elucidate and articulate what is hoped for. To state the hope at all, what is missing or needed to effect change must be identified, a process that includes articulating how and why this hope should be accomplished.

That said, problems arise from the fact that not all hopes are equal; hope is only as valid as its justification. The role of the educator/social critic is then to articulate the

justification of the specific stated hopes. Myth comes into play precisely at the point when stated hopes are justified and rationalized, and my thesis' central argument asserts that the distinction between "constructed" myths as opposed to "genuine" myths is important. Genuine myths do not require justifications because they are ways to understand deeper existential questions and puzzles, whereas constructed myths require justifications, and the role of the educator/social critic is to articulate that justification. This is important whether educators/social critics are constructing new myths that they believe will promote positive change or demythologizing existing ones that they consider damaging. Educators/social critics must also acknowledge the possibility that constructed myths may well become realities, as discussed in the segment regarding "reality as a construct."

I also argue that the connection between education and social criticism is confined within institutional boundaries. It is incredibly difficult to imagine education without the institution. Indeed, I cannot write and present this thesis outside the institution unless I am willing to forfeit all of what it means *to write a dissertation* in the larger social sphere. One of the unifying elements of the problems faced by social critics/educators in educational spaces is how to transform the very institution that produces the critic/educator themselves. It would also be difficult to ignore the relationship between the state and institutional schooling. This relationship is not limited to the administrative, bureaucratic, and economic entanglements educational institutes have with the state; it operates at an even more complex level, one where fundamental philosophical assertions and presuppositions are translated into practices in the form of policies, legally binding decrees, and laws that set the limits and boundaries of what society can and cannot be and do.

Terry Eagleton's 2011 book, *Why Marx was Right*, reflects on how the state, as an institution, should be perceived in a way that ameliorates some of Illich's not quite accurate perceptions of anarchist tendencies. Eagleton asserts that the state, by definition, is not a politically neutral organ, but an institution with clear partisanship that exists,

among other reasons, to defend the status quo against those who would try to transform it. Eagleton highlights that what Marx brought to the fore is not simply the oppressive and violent nature of the state, but the exposure of a peculiar belief—a myth—about the state: that it is a disinterested organ (pp. 197–198).

> What Marx rejected was the sentimental myth of the state as a source of harmony, peacefully uniting different groups and classes. In his view, it was more a source of division than concord. It did indeed seek to hold society together, but it did so ultimately in the interests of governing classes. Beneath its apparent even-handedness lay a robust partisanship. (Eagleton, 2011, p. 190)

Thus, Eagleton too highlights the need for educators/social critics to critique not only the educational institutes they are immersed in but also the larger context of the connection between educational institutes and state. The parallels we can draw about the role that myth plays in both education and the state are numerous, but the most important aspect that speaks to the role of educators/social critics is demonstrated by the exploration of the essentially reciprocal institutional accord between the state and educational institutes. Just as the state benefits from the myth that it is neutral (e.g., justice is blind, basic human rights are accorded to all without qualification, democracy guarantees the rights of individuals), educational institutes similarly declare that they operate independently from the state, at least in the sense that decisions regarding what is being taught and how education is conducted are made independently of the state's direct influence. However, in actuality, the state has always imposed, and is still imposing, policies and decrees on educational institutes. These policies affect the political and social spheres of life in general. But the state does so under the guise that such policies fall under its jurisdiction and that they are distinct and different from what is going on within educational institutions. Educational institutes, on the other hand, are breeding grounds of consensus and dissension. However, institutions are only allowed to play this game of consent and dissent within the boundaries drawn for them by the state/institution. Some theoretical and philosophical works, those considered radical or progressive, have clearly differing views on the social spheres the state claims as its jurisdiction and

directly antagonize the state's position. However, these various "radical and progressive" philosophical stances that provoke established social orders and disturb existing educational practices (and the system that enforces these current practices) enjoy a peculiar freedom of circulation within institutional boundaries. Radical views respecting notions of the equality and emancipation of intelligence speak against the existing social order in one respect or another; such scholarly works include Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991), Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1993), and Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society* (2002). These authors' theoretical ideas are not only meant to transform education, they present a larger agenda that encourages social change and argues against the existing social order and the state that maintains it. Similarly, the works of other scholars in other disciplines, which are often appropriated into educational conversations, also attempt to upset the social order, particularly the state.

The free circulation of these ideas within the educational system's institutional boundaries engenders myths even as it brings revolutionary ideas to the foreground. We believe intellectual freedom is protected by the state, but that seems to be true only so long as ideas remain within the compounds of the school or the university. We also believe that academic institutions are free of the state's influence. In reality, by allowing the controlled circulation of these ideas (radical, progressive, and disruptive programs from scholars and philosophers), the state/institution is protecting itself by limiting their sphere of circulation to the academy. The circulation of these ideas among the status quo seems also to domesticate and adapt their disruptive nature. In other words, the ideas' circulation reconfigures them into what Debord referred to as a "status of a spectacle" (1995), such that the integrity of the system is maintained, and the social order that dictates all discourses within that system remains basically intact. Educational establishments' response to such critical/radical thoughts is to allow them to circulate freely while, at the same time, appropriating and reconfiguring those radical views in such a way that their effects are mooted or, in a worst case scenario, serve the goals and aims of the same educational regimes. Debord's work on the nature of the spectacle is a prime example of the tautological nature of the state's justification of its relationship with

other social, economic, and political institutions, as is the relationship between educators/social critics and the institution within which they function.

The spectacle Debord presents, in other words, is an institution that embodies both the myth and the truth, to the extent that the distinction between them ceases to exist. Debord's assertion that the world under the spectacle is "fundamentally unitary" and that it "frequently rails at the appearance in its realm of spectacular politics, a spectacular justice and a spectacular medicine and all the other similarly surprising examples of 'media excess' " (Debord, 1995, p. 6) speaks to what I argue in this discussion, and it is consistent with my reading of both Marcuse and Illich's analysis of the institution.

For example, one of the three facets of the school in Illich's discussion of the myth associated with school is the requirement for attendance. The amount of time the pupil spends in school is one of the forms of control imposed by the institute. Rancière has a similar understanding of time in the social sense when he discusses Plato's decree that workers and artisans do not have time to participate in other social and political matters; therefore they do not have the extra time required to engage in the state's affairs (2011, p. 88). Rancière insists that the Platonic hierarchy must be reversed in order to assert equality. Equality emerges when (a) workers know that they can make time outside their socially designated roles, and (b) they actually make that time outside the production process (i.e., outside their working time) to engage with political life as equal speaking[8] subjects (2004, pp. 12–13). The insight Debord offers regarding this subject of time is a bit different, and though it may appear unwarranted, I believe it is important to synthesize the notion of time, given how Rancière and Illich's arguments utilize it. The time that we make for ourselves outside the production process or beyond time spent in school is actually already occupied by the system of the spectacle, an unreal reality where

[8] Rancière defines a "speaking" subject as one whose voice can be heard, and who can thus assert equality.

social existence is defined by the spectacle through passivity and alienation, where there is a good chance that this passivity and alienation will be perceived as activity and unity (Debord, 1995, pp. 110–117). In other words, there is a myth of free time—a time we perceive to be ours, and only ours—where we can do whatever we want, free of the guidance, directions, or restrictions of the spectacular system. And yet, this time is not only controlled or predetermined, regardless of the activities we think we dedicate to it; it could also be an illusion of activity and unity, when what we are actually engaged with is alienation and passivity. Time, according to Debord, is ruled by time as a commodity. Under spectacular time, time is everything and man is nothing; he is, at best, time's carcass (1995, p. 110). Adorno also agrees that "free time" is a relatively new concept whose precursor, "leisure time," denotes an entirely different concept that is neither free time nor spare time. The current notion of free time is a particular way the social order enforces its control by positing free time against work time, while in actuality, it is one of the designs of the social order (Adorno, 1991, p. 187).

This analysis of time, free time, and spectacular time to educators/social critics in the context of institutionalized education is generated by the need to understand the very place the educator/social critic holds in the larger society; how the educator/social critic perceives her/his own place in the larger social context; and, most importantly, how this understanding shapes the specific critique the educator/social critic offers.

It may be appropriate to conclude with a final comment on the university, because that institution is probably the ideal example to use to address education. Foucault reminds us that those educational institutes which are in the business of disciplining knowledge also have an intricate institutional relationship with the state. Foucault notes that the university's primary function is to select knowledges:

> It can play this selective role because it has a sort of de facto—and de jure—monopoly, which means that any knowledge that is not born or shaped within this sort of institutional field—whose limits are in fact fluid but which consist, roughly speaking, of the university and official research bodies—that anything that exists outside it, any knowledge that exists in the wild, any knowledge that is born elsewhere, is automatically, and from

> the outset, if not actually excluded, disqualified a priori. That the amateur scholar ceased to exist in the eighteenth and nineteenth century is a well-known fact. So the university has a selective role: it selects knowledges. Its role is to teach, which means respecting the barriers that exist between the different floors of the university apparatus. Its role is to homogenize knowledges by establishing a sort of scientific community with a recognized status; its role is to organize a consensus. Its role is, finally, to use, either directly or indirectly, State apparatuses to centralize knowledge. (2003, p. 183)

Myth, whether it be related to the state, to educational institutions, or to our personal understanding of family and childhood, plays a prominent role; it makes up for the gaps in discourses and communication that exist between the academy, the critic, and the philosopher, on one hand, and the common everyday experience of the rest of us—the "common" people—on the other. My thesis approximates Foucault's critique of the role the university plays in censoring and regulating knowledge. It delineates the fact that "problem/s of education" is/are intertwined with the problems of social institutions and institutionalized social bodies; it is simply not possible to talk exclusively about problem/s of education without including social, political, economic, and other institutionalized bodies or organs of the state. It also illustrates the paradoxical difficulty educators and educational critics face on a number of levels: the flexible nature of education in terms of disciplinary zoning; the peculiar relationship the educational critic has with the institution; and the role that the critic of education may play in helping the institutional myth to rejuvenate—whether intentionally to justify the status quo or inadvertently in an effort to significantly challenge and disturb the social order. I have proposed that educators must be critics at large, not in the narrow sense that Walzer proposed, but in a somewhat modified Marcusean sense; trying to trace the connection between what is near and dear to local situations where the critics find themselves and the distant and remote situations that are considered "outside." In the realm of education, as Illich stated repeatedly, the school has attained a global status where its constitution and its function are so similar that it is difficult to imagine educators as social critics working outside the realm of institutionalized educational spaces. The power the state flexed during Marx's time is now dispersed among various nation states, economic zones,

transnational corporations, and international financial institutions, and thus, the educator must actively critique both local issues and global situations. The critic at large's classroom must be a space where the motto is "everything that happens in the world is happening to us," because that truly reflects the current situation. The distinctions we make between local and global, as important as they are, should always be accompanied by a constant search for points of intersection, and the school, as an institution, is perhaps one of the most useful spaces to trace those intersections. The role of the educator is then to bring forward the myths and hopes shared by both local and global communities, because education is indeed transformative, but local transformation is ineffectual unless it has the potential to transform distant communities.

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