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The Moral Oppression Of The Teaching Profession: Learning To Transcend

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THE MORAL OPPRESSION OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION:
LEARNING TO TRANSCEND

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is both descriptive and philosophical, and at its core, it justifies the need for social foundations of education courses and programs in the university setting. It begins by analyzing the meaning of oppression and the part knowledge plays in confining the individual. The analysis then draws upon Patricia Hill Collins' theory of intersecting oppressions to get at the complexities and restrictions of working in the public schooling institution. It works through the ways in which sexist, classist, and racist practices afflict everyone in the institution through the bureaucratic mechanism and collateral oppression. The four components that make up the wires on the cage (gender, class, race, and bureaucracy) not only confine; they cause varying degrees of direct and indirect harms (psychological, emotional, moral, financial) to those on the inside.

The concept of the institutional cage is then merged with Rodman Webb's work on schools as total institutions. Through an analysis on the characteristics of total institutions, it becomes apparent that standardization, technological developments, and the influence of venture philanthropy have brought schools more in-line with the total institution. The study then clarifies the ways in which corporatic, bureaucratic, and technocratic mentalities infect the institution, where they intersect, and how they restrict those within. The components coalesce into the conceptualization of moral oppression: the act of being coerced to ignore and suppress one's morality, moral impulses, and moral way of knowing.

The remainder of the study explores the meaning of moral action and suggests some ways educators can let go of the ways of thinking and acting that may be keeping them from confidently doing what they know to be good and just.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

abundance of academic and emotional support. I am not only indebted to them, but I now believe late-night-philosophy-via-text might actually have pedagogical promise.

Randy Hewitt is far too humble and stubborn to acknowledge the profound impact he has had on me and the way I have been able to make sense of the world. When I stumbled across him, I was overcome by a throng of deeply felt problems: emotively known and linguistically incoherent. He introduced me to a language that allowed me to speak about the injustices I have known since my youth, and his suggestions and guidance have been nothing short of therapeutic. Our interactions have been most important to my growth, but above all, they have been most appreciated.

I have learned the most about inequality by watching my mother grapple with the frustrations and restrictions of our sexist and classist society. As a child, I had no choice but to share in her experience; my mother's struggles have always been my own. Fortunately, though, these struggles provided the foundation for the only thing I truly know: tenacity, sarcasm, humor, and love are necessary not only for survival, but for movement in this world. Her confidence in me has been a precious gift, and the same must also be said of the person who has been my friend and my partner for half my existence. Needless to say, Kelly knows me amazingly well, and still his patience and love remain unyielding. I cannot thank him enough for the support he has offered me over the years and in all aspects of life.

Finally, I must thank Clara. This good-natured, loving little person has given more to this thesis than anyone. Her beauty was the catalyst for this project, her kindness and sense of humor help me persist, and she continually reminds me that retreating from the struggle for a more humane world is no option. Clara is my intellectual companion, and I thank her for teaching me that philosophy plays a truly beautiful accompaniment to parenthood.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

<u>An Exercise in Parrhesia</u>

…injustices may not be perceived as injustices, even by those who suffer

them, until somebody invents a previously unplayed role. Only if somebody

has a dream, and a voice to describe that dream, does what looked like nature

begin to look like culture, what looked like fate begin to look like a moral

abomination. For until then only the language of the oppressor is available,

and most oppressors have had the wit to teach the oppressed a language in

which the oppressed will sound crazy - *even to themselves* - if they describe

themselves as oppressed (Rorty, 1990, p. 4, original emphasis).

I devoted four years of my life to a Title I, public elementary school. The bonds I

developed with my peers, the parents, and my students ensured that these people became 'my

community' even though my home was an hour drive from the campus. I taught third grade

for a couple years, and my last position was as the head of the school's technology

department. The position allowed me to experience a teacher-to-teacher social dynamic that

contrasted with my previous, and sometimes isolating, dynamic in the grade-level classroom.

The gain of adult interaction that accompanied the technology position came with the loss of

the close, heart-warming bonds that developed throughout a year of working with my

students. One position was not necessarily better than the other; they were just different.

The technology position allocated most of my time to troubleshooting the problems of

my peers. I quickly realized that effective troubleshooting began with a diligence in listening

to and understanding the difficulties the staff faced. The process required research, creativity,

and persistence in the quest to devise and test possible solutions. The job could best be

defined as one perpetual, learning-to-fix-it cycle: a prime example of John Dewey's process of reflective experience (Dewey, 1910/1997b, p. 68). I thrived on the challenge, and I derived energy from the resolutions that followed the exhaustion of collaboratively wading through problems with my peers.

Many of us worked rather late as we wrangled with the chaos of the profession. The typical technological difficulties were often addressed once the children had vacated for the day, in the isolation of the computer lab or in the stillness of a child-free classroom. It was in these atmospheres where my colleagues would privilege me with access to their perspectives on many things. Conversations about their issues with technology often evolved into issues with our profession in general. Many people expressed an intense frustration at the constant onslaught of changes and meaninglessness that continually dragged them farther and farther away from simply being able to teach. In fact, the veteran teachers were especially effective in illuminating the useless, technological changes that flowed from the county, through me, and to them. I took their suggestions and concerns to heart and acknowledged the tendency of my department to complicate their work. Upon this realization, I charged myself with the task of assisting them in any way possible, and I became deliberate in my attempts to buffer them from any further meaninglessness.

The agonies my colleagues' expressed were very familiar to me. In fact, my own toil with the wrongness of the burdens placed upon classroom teachers gained in poignancy upon my move to the technology department. The change did liberate me from the restraints of testing, accountability, and standardization, and I was finally able to experience autonomy in both my lessons and my department. However, this absence of restrictions created a keen awareness for how truly unbearable things were prior to my fortune in freedom. As my

observations and conversations traversed the school, I was persistently made aware of the cruelly, illogical and seemingly oppressive experiences that both my fellow teachers and our students endured.

So many of us were strapped down to practices with which we simply did not agree: drill and kill, test prep, testing strategies, scripted teaching programs and methods, incessant assessments that both stole time away from learning and provided us with no more knowledge than we possessed prior to administering them (Dewey, 1916, p. 56). We tokenized lessons about people and ideas which we shamefully admitted were worthy of far more time than the scope and sequence allowed. Our time was to be devoted to pounding away at the meaningless skills that distant, faceless policymakers and bureaucrats devised. No amount of effort or hyper-curricular-integration could ever free up enough time for all the students to understand the multitude of standards required to be taught and tested in one year. With so little cohesion or continuity, and with such high-stakes attached to student and teacher 'performance,' it felt impossible to dedicate the necessary time required to teach anything of quality. And sadly, the curricular overload caused a scarcity of time that meant we frequently put off or skipped over the most important things: the student-generated curiosities and conversations that lent toward our social and emotional growth.

The prevalence of similar sentiments grew with every teacher I encountered, and some portion of everyone's frustration, anxiety, and fear became embodied in my own experience. My uneasiness and distaste for the ways we and our profession were being shaped intensified because everything I knew to be good was eroding under the pressures and mentality of accountability. For example, I entered the classroom with a solid understanding of the term 'critical thinking,' but the meaning of that phrase suffered a horrific contortion by

bureaucrats, policy makers, administrators, and even teachers. Its perpetual misuse, with a suspicious parallel to the corporate world, came to mean climbing the ladder of higher order thinking skills. The beauty and import of the *critical* portion of its identity was successfully erased through redefinition, like some sort of bizarre, forced marriage to Bloom's taxonomy.

The "teachable moment" also became a warped modification of itself under the constraints of accountability (Havigurst, 1953, p. 7). It no longer comprised an educator's ability to discern the educational appropriateness of a task in relation to a student's cognitive readiness. The teachable moment was twisted to mean a rare mini-lesson whose content could be seized from the interactions of the working classroom. The frequent misuse implied expectations of scarcity and the minimal amount of time allocated for such events. If one of those slick, little moments was lucky enough to weasel its way through an unforeseen crack in the rigidity of the day's structure, then we were permitted to spare it a 'moment' so we could squash it on our way to the 'important stuff.' The pressures upon our learning environment ensured that meaningful encounters had all the frequency and status of an endangered species. It often left one questioning if things were intentionally structured to weed out trace elements of organic meaningfulness.

A problem began emerging. I had entered the profession with the belief that the university had prepared me well. But, the reality was that I was completely unprepared for why and how the structures of bureaucracy, accountability, and standardization that were being forced upon our environment would slowly whittle away at us, our practices, and our humanity. Critics of my narrative could certainly argue that this experience was just part of learning 'to play the game' in the workplace: employees appease the authoritative hierarchy, doing whatever is pushed down upon them, so they can maintain the hope of skirting the next

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round of layoffs and perhaps even make it to see another pay raise. In response to such sentiment, I do not propose that teachers *deserve* a different work dynamic than anyone else in the labor force, for it is tragic that any person should feel pressured to compromise their moral obligation to self and others. There is one small factor, however, which tweaks the moral perspective when comparing many jobs, particularly those of the corporate world, with the profession of teaching: our work is with the lives and souls of *children*. And the real question is whether this what *they* deserve?

While people come to the profession for numerous reasons, it is unlikely that many would approach the classroom with the intent of doing harm or creating obstacles for their students. In fact, many of the teachers with whom I have spoken have affirmed that the students provide the greatest, and often the only, rewarding factor for working in the profession. Therefore, I believe that the people who dedicate themselves to the role of educator are loving people who have a strong sense of moral obligation and a deep intrinsic desire to work toward the common good.[1] John Dewey's (1916) thoughts attest to the intrinsic value derived from finding one's place in a fulfilling occupation. He stated,

> An occupation is the only thing which balances the distinctive capacity of an
> individual with his social service. To find out what one is fitted to do and to
> secure an opportunity to do it is the key to happiness (p. 360).

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[1] Application requirements for the public schools (college education, criminal background screening, fingerprinting, drug test) reflect the public expectation that educators be obedient and mindful of the law. See also Hansen (2001) regarding the moral practice of teaching; and Bushaw & Lopez (2011) for the public perspective regarding trust, esteem, and respect for educators and the profession.

However, this is also the very point where the predicament becomes particularly problematic, especially for those educators who have discovered the pride and satisfaction which Dewey describes. If educators feel as though the restrictions and demands of the job coerce them to compromise their moral integrity, then they are doing so to the detriment of their communities' youngest and most innocent human beings. This clearly creates an ethical dilemma, but the cruelty of the scenario intensifies. The teachers' hands are directly responsible for administering the meaninglessness to which their students struggle to resist, thereby tasking the teachers with the sad responsibility of slowly abrading their own occupational incentive. Michel Foucault's (1975/1977) analogy of the medical doctor being charged with overseeing executions can assist in fleshing out the issues related to the dilemma of the educator. He stated,

> Today a doctor must watch over those condemned to death, right up to the last moment – thus juxtaposing himself as the agent of welfare, as the alleviator of pain, with the official whose task it is to end life (p. 11).

The educator, one who aims to foster the growth of her students, finds herself in a very similar juxtaposition. The metrics may temporarily indicate that the children's scores are growing, but any person who listens to and interacts with the youth will perceive that their bodies, their words, and their morale indicate that the love for learning in most of them is simply dying. Educators are forced to confront the realization that highly-standardized and techno-bureaucratic education policies require an infliction of so much meaninglessness and harm that they actually require educators to 'teach' their students to death.[2] Meanwhile,

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[2] There is no shortage of research and qualitative examples that have addressed the emotional, psychological, and intellectual damage caused to students and teachers by these mentalities

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anxiety compounds under looming feelings that refusal to oblige the demands of the institution increasingly results in greater threats to one's personal livelihood. It stands to reason, then, that many educators quite literally find themselves in positions where job requirements and the necessity for work coerce them to not only knowingly do harm, but it forces them to give into and take part in their own moral erosion: they sacrifice the best-interests of their students for their own well-being.[3]

So, the irony is exposed. The very things which draw people to the profession (the desire to teach, to experience growth, to engage with and assist the youth, to take part in a moral or civic obligation to the community) become warped under the bureaucratic, corporatized, and technocratic structures of the institution. The educator, then, finds herself

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and constraints (Berliner, 2006, 2009; Heybach & Sheffield, 2013; Hsieh, 2013; Maxwell, 2013; Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Strauss, 2013). The institutional lack of concern for student well-being, the lack of trust for the school personnel, and the levels of surveillance are best underscored in the protocol for the occasion when a student vomits on a state-mandated test: I was told to call my administration, they would place the ruined test in a plastic bag, it would be returned to the state, and that another test would be provided to the student.

[3] The word "harm" refers to the fact that educators knowingly teach lessons which are of little or no benefit to the students simply because mandates require them to do so. It is assumed that any lesson or activity which is not worthwhile or beneficial to the children results in stagnation, and thus meaning that the educator is not working toward her occupational aim. Dewey (1916) said, "Any aim is of value so far as it assists observation, choice, and planning in carrying on activity from moment to moment...if it gets in the way of the individual's own common sense...it does harm (Dewey, p. 125).

in the position where her actions are directly responsible for destroying that which she loves; unless she feels she has other financial options, she comes to live out the exact antithesis of her occupational and moral aims. If Dewey is correct about the relationship between happiness and occupation, then the realization that one's job security rests upon such a moral compromise must result in nothing short of psychological trauma and misery. Such an environment provides the perfect medium for breeding a moral identity crisis.

<u>Relevant Evidence</u>

The effects of such trauma, misery, anxiety, and fear associated with the proposed moral dilemma increasingly find evidence in the actions and behaviors of the country's educators. For example, Diane Ravitch (2010) detailed the damaging effects of corporate-style educational reform efforts on San Diego's public schools between 1998 and 2005 (p. 47). During this period of "dictatorial" rule, employees from the school district reported enormous levels of stress-related illnesses (p. 64). In a conversation with a state, psychiatric social worker Ravitch discovered,

> ...from 1999 to 2005, San Diego teachers came to the clinic "in droves" with "work-related depression and anxiety due to the hostile work environment." She said they were "under pressure by their principals to raise scores." She said the phenomenon ended when [a new superintendent] took over. From 2005 to 2007...not a single teacher appeared with a similar problem (p. 65).

A substantial amount of allegations also emerged in 2011 against teachers, administrators, and superintendents for incidences of cheating on state standardized tests. Such cases arose in Atlanta, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington,

D.C. Although many of the cases are still in processes of investigation and prosecution, the

testimonies by the accused are not surprising. Some teachers denied the accusations outright,

while others denied wrongdoing because they were merely assisting their students. Many

also blamed their actions upon stress over job-loss, blackmail, and complete fear (Blume,

2011; Osunsami & Forer, 2011). An investigation of Atlanta Public Schools concluded that

not only has cheating occurred in the district since the inception of NCLB, but that "[a]

culture of fear, intimidation, and retaliation...created a conspiracy of silence and deniability

with respect to standardized test misconduct" (State of Georgia, 2011).

The most horrifying evidence to raise questions about the powers of policy coercion

upon educators' moral integrity and psychological well-being, though, is teacher suicides.

The suicide of Rigoberto Ruelas, a dedicated veteran teacher of fourteen years, gripped the

attention of the public in 2010. His death followed a public posting of the effectiveness of his

teaching abilities on the *Los Angeles Times* website (Zavis & Barboza, 2010). Another

veteran teacher from California, Kirk Spiegel, committed suicide during a period when his

district prepared to lay off 4,500 teachers (Wilson, 2011). Linda Walker, also a veteran

teacher, hanged herself in her kindergarten classroom (Hibbard, 2011). Another dedicated

teacher from Wisconsin, Jeri-Lynn Betts, took her own life after twenty-five years of service

to her community. Her colleagues alleged that her death was related to the harsh educational

policy her state had enacted earlier that year (Rothschild, 2011).

Mary Eve Thorson, a teacher in a small Illinois district, wrote a six-page suicide note

prior to stepping in front of the moving truck that ended her life on Thanksgiving weekend.

All but one paragraph of that letter referred to her school and profession. She wrote about

student poverty, the lack of resources and respect from the administrators and district, and of

"her love for the children and her pain at their daily trials." Thorson's words about the struggles of being a teacher are both telling and concerning, but the conversations that transpired in the months that followed her death are equally worthy of the citizenry's attention. A school board meeting was held in response to the tragedy, and educators and union representatives concurred with Thorson's frustrations. To the school board's shock, attendees described a schooling atmosphere contaminated by tones of intimidation, retribution, and fear. One teacher admitted, "We don't speak out because we have been intimidated...We have signs all over the building about anti-bullying...Our staff gets bullied." The educators of Ford Heights validated the claims in the suicide note as more than mere evidence, but as truths about life in the field. In doing so, Thorson's colleagues took up her post-mortem call for action: "We must speak up about what's going on" (Schlikerman, 2012, p. 1).

Tragically, the preceding list of educators who committed suicide between 2010 and 2011 is by no means exhaustive. The stories of these people's lives are not meant to trivialize the complexities that likely played into their reasoning, nor do they necessarily mean strict lines of causality. Instead, the circumstances of their deaths; the claims by families, friends, and colleagues; the nationwide prevalence of cheating; and the steep incline of anxieties that parallel reform efforts all coalesce to support a holistic suggestion for the presence of a troubling undercurrent flowing in the educational community's psyche. If these examples indicate the scarring effects the current techno-bureaucracy has left upon this particular adult human group, what could it possibly be doing to the nation's children?

Statement of the Problem

In cases of striking novelty or unusual perplexity, the difficulty, however, is likely to present itself at first as a shock, as emotional disturbance, as a more or less vague feeling of unexpected, of something queer, strange, funny, or disconcerting. In such instances, there are necessary observations deliberately calculated to bring to light just what is the trouble, or to make clear the specific character of the problem (Dewey, 1910/1997b, p. 74).

The seepages of depression, anxiety, and fear have left traces throughout the educational community, and it stands to reason that the examples provided in this chapter are the unfortunate and agonizing symptoms of a much greater problem. Thus far, I have attempted to detail aspects of the moral perplexity that I believe is causing internal rot to the integrity of the educational institution. The potential range for individual strife is vast, of course, but the corporate and technocratic elements certainly appear to hasten the human damage by setting into motion a confusing oscillation between the intrinsic and extrinsic needs and desires of the individuals who labor in this field. The necessity and the desire to secure a livelihood, to contribute to a hopeful future, to protect personal reputations from public humiliation, to express love for students, to experience humane growth, and to invest in human connection as a means for personal rejuvenation all become entangled in this conflict. Not everyone experiences any or all of these perplexities, but there is a palpable hopelessness that oozes within the institutional walls which suggests many educators are currently embroiled in some portion of this dilemma.

This is not to say that many teachers are failing to resist and persist in the face of it. In fact, both my experience within the schools and my continued contact with educators have

provided countless instances where the greatest successes and aesthetic moments in the classroom are often related to how frequently educators ignore the mandates of their administrators and district. The teachers who have expressed such truths to me in confidence stand in their convictions that their successes with students are directly proportional to their willingness to "fly under the radar," "break the rules," and ignore the expectations which are continually being redefined for them. Sadly, these educators are also quick to admit that they would never share this information with peers or among the authoritative hierarchy because their desire to openly resist and criticize is arrested by their fears of retribution.[4]

Unfortunately, in such cases where educators remain silent and isolated, the praise for their efforts and skill in the craft is unjustly stolen from them. It instead defaults to the worthless curricular programs they quietly refuse and the dictatorial system they feel they cannot openly reject. Silence, thereby, buttresses an oppressive cycle that causes harm to the educator, their colleagues, and their students. It accelerates the progression of harmful practices while simultaneously frustrating moral obligations to the self, to the children they teach, and to the communities they serve. Moreover, the fact that an educator would feel fearful or wrong for striving to act toward the benefit of one's students further evidences the presence and compounding nature of the moral conflict that has been developing throughout this chapter. Something is inherently askew when people feel conflicted for acting in ways they know to be just.

The working hypothesis in this endeavor is that educators are suffering from a moral oppression that has swelled in response to the strangling-nature of institutional constrictions. That is, by spinning a web of confinement over the schooling institution, the sprawling

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[4] See Edelsky (2005) for information and examples on teacher resistance.

corporate and techno-bureaucratic structures have constructed a scenario where educators are coerced to suppress or, at the very least, wrestle with their moral integrity. This is both problematic and relevant because the current climate simultaneously dismantles value and quality in the nation's schools while causing harm to the human beings within them. The intensity of emotions that has been discussed is the indication for the severity of the conflict; it is also the evidence that the institution has not only halted the growth for many individuals, but that it has actually caused a fissure in the moral habit of these people. Therefore, the depression, anxiety, and fear are simply festering symptoms of a complex and interwoven moral conflict that rages within a caring group of people when it is continually incentivized and pressured to work against its understanding of humane action in the quest for the common good.

Progression beyond the devastating affects and effects of this dilemma and this system requires two things: a language by which to speak about the oppressive institutional environment and a re-articulation of the meaning of moral action. By clarifying the larger issue of what it means to be moral in the field of education, it will be possible to unwind some of the tension and confusion that has intertwined with the smaller and more personal conflicts.

Method

In *Fearless Speech*, Foucault (2001) elaborates on the act of parrhesia and the severity of risk associated with engaging in the practice.

Someone is said to use parrhesia and merits consideration as a parrhesiastes only if there is a risk or danger for him or her in telling the truth... when a

philosopher addresses himself to a sovereign, to a tyrant, and tells him that his

tyranny is disturbing and unpleasant because tyranny is incompatible with

justice, then the philosopher speaks the truth, believes he is speaking the truth,

and, more than that, also takes a risk (since the tyrant may become angry, may

punish him, may exile him, may kill him). The parrhesiastes is someone who

takes a risk…Parrhesia, then is linked to courage in the face of danger: it

demands the courage to speak the truth in spite of some danger. (p. 15).

Acknowledging and contesting the institutional tyrant are certainly important and worthwhile endeavors. However, Cornel West (2004) suggests the need to extend parrhesia beyond the institutional emphasis. He said,

The Socratic commitment to questioning requires a relentless *self-examination*

and critique of institutions of authority, motivated by an endless quest for

intellectual integrity and moral consistency. It is manifest in a fearless

speech—parrhesia—that unsettles, unnerves and unhouses people from their

uncritical sleepwalking (p.16, emphasis added).

West forwarded a key necessity in his understanding of parrhesia: the requirement that the individual turn inward.

This quest for understanding finds its beginning in both Foucault's (2001) and West's (2004) use of the word "fearless," because any hope for democratic participation can only begin to find realization in the exercise of moral courage. This is particularly so in the face of the tyrant, whether its nature is institutional, social, or personal and, therefore, internal. If the nation's education scenario is to improve, it cannot do so without the open engagement of its educators. Following the lead of these two scholars, then, clarity and the attempt to

ameliorate the moral conflict intuited, observed, and experienced in the educational

institution will be explored through philosophical inquiry.

Reflective thinking begins when belief is broken by uncertainty. Doubt's dissonance

causes a fracture in the routine ways we see and act in the world. In our attempts to resolve

the disequilibrium associated with that which we *thought* we knew, we begin searching so we

may repair or recreate belief. This act of searching, this seeking to understand and make

meaning of the difficulties that naturally emerge from qualitative life experience, is the

essence of inquiry (Dewey, 1910/1997b). Growth, then, can only come from persistently

moving through life's phrases, and by taking on the varied transitions between dissonance

and consonance in our quest for intermittent resolution. According to Robert Sherman and

Rodman Webb (2001), philosophical inquiry is the process through which we arrive at

resolution and, ultimately, growth. "[Inquiry] is a mediator between a disrupted and a

reconstructed life. Its function is to develop 'possibilities' for the conduct of life...Inquiry

mediates between a given experience and one's intent or aim" (p. 13).

The disorientation that leads to inquiry is initially felt within the individual as she

comes to question or doubt the existence of harmony between her actions and her aims,

values, and interests (Sherman & Webb, 2001, p. 12). By all means, it is important to start

with what we know and experience, but there is also a necessity and a responsibility to

eventually extend beyond oneself. That is, if we accept that habit and knowledge are socially

constructed, and that society is somewhat responsible for contributing to our becoming, then

we must acknowledge our obligation to reciprocally contribute to the socially-shared habits

and knowledge of the communities in which we exist (Dewey, 1922/2002; Dewey,

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1938/1997a). Randy Hewitt (2006) described the importance and purpose for engaging in the larger, social scope of philosophical inquiry in the following way:

> If social strife is to be resolved such that the human quest for the good life may continue, then it is necessary to examine the particular conflicting ideas and the concrete social practices that animate them. This examination into the broil of human affairs constitutes the essence of philosophizing. It is the practice of clarifying the discrepant assumptions of meaning underneath social ills and simplifying these assumptions into a unified vision for resolute action toward social improvement... (p. 37).

Dewey (1910/1997b), Foucault (2001), and West (2004) each articulated various ways in which philosophical inquiry, particularly in moving beyond the individual and into the social realm, can be quite fearful. The processes of questioning one's understanding, accepting uncertainty, and even the act of imagining possibilities can be tremendously frightening. It requires us to unhinge ourselves, our peers, and our students in the process of looking inward, outward, and to the past so we may perceive "what kind of individual and community *should* be in the making" (Hewitt, 2005, p.120, emphasis original).

Maxine Greene's (1995) thoughts on an essential driving force and motive for taking up the philosophical task, however, provides clarity and purpose for the sometimes unsettling process of growth and inquiry. She said,

> Many persons seem to have been provoked to engage on philosophical quests because they were so outraged by the thought of confinement, by the tamping down of energies, by living beings trapped and immobile in the dark. Not surprisingly, the themes of repression, confinement, or alienation have also

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intensely engaged writers and poets since almost the beginning of human

history (p. 63).

According to Greene, philosophy often emerges from a love for humanity or through one's

desire for human emancipation. This love is a key component to assuaging the painful and

disorienting apprehensions that can accompany both philosophical inquiry and acts of

parrhesia.

The ability to envision emancipation for oneself, for another, or for a whole human

group is certainly a motive for inquiry, but it is one that requires resourcefulness through

imagination. Fortunately, "Imagination supplements and deepens observation..." (Dewey,

1910/1997b, p. 224). This means it simultaneously strengthens one's sense of empathy and

one's willingness to perceive and "multiply perspectives rapidly" (Garrison, 1997, p. 15).

When the imaginative elements of empathy and perception grow and merge, they form an

awareness which allows one to keenly *see* and *feel* the pains of life clearer than ever before.

This growth in imaginative awareness, then, circles back around to only further fuel one's

desire for emancipation. But all the while, both the motive and the ability to philosophically

engage with this world exist simultaneously within the imagination and through the

contributed efforts to struggle to apply, test, and realize the imagined vision.[5]

The task of the philosopher, then, is to not only be aware of the pains of life, but to

use them. She must courageously and poetically conjure up the frustrations and angst from

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[5] "Philosophy is thinking what the known demands of us—what responsive attitude it exacts.
It is an idea of what is possible...Hence, it is hypothetical like all thinking. It presents an
assignment of something to be done—something to be tried" (Dewey, 1916, p. 381).

the discomforting experiences that have threatened to break her. By drawing upon her love for her fellow human beings, the philosopher comes to understand perplexing, contradictory, and inhumane action and thought. She utilizes history and reason to dislodge herself and others from the ways in which we contribute to our own oppression, to the harm our communities, and the ways we jeopardize a better or more hopeful future. In the end, philosophy is little more than the loving and persistently-spiteful refusal to accept that human beings are condemned to a world of oppression, hate, and static existence.

Organization

This first chapter has been dedicated to laying out the problem and clarifying the method of philosophical inquiry employed in this study. The following chapter focuses on defining and understanding what it actually means to be oppressed. The analysis blends Marilyn Frye's metaphor of the cage with Patricia Hill Collins' theory of intersecting oppressions in order to clarify how social structures, or institutions, and oppressive knowledges come to confine individuals. Chapter Three extends the theory of intersecting oppressions into the teaching profession to demonstrate the ways in which sexism, classism, and racism impact all educators via the bureaucratic structure. To assist in the endeavor of understanding the structural constraints that influence the teaching profession, the work draws upon Rodman Webb's analysis of schools as total institutions. Once the structural mechanisms are clarified, it is possible to examine and then include confining beliefs. Thus, Chapter Four turns toward the ways in which corporatic, bureaucratic, and technocratic mentalities construct an institutional cage that is morally oppressive. Forging the path between where we stand and where we hope to go requires an examination of what it means

to be moral. Thus, Chapter Five defines the meaning of morality as it was conceived in the philosophy of John Dewey. This provides the foundation for exploring emotion as a moral way knowing and teacher resistance as means of moral self-preservation.   The study resolves with an articulation of what it means to love in spite of one's awakening to the throes of such oppression. The final section offers suggestions to colleges of education, professors, aspiring teachers, teachers, and students on how to revitalize the health and well-being of the profession.

CHAPTER 2: THE MEANING OF OPPRESSION

The conceptualization of moral oppression requires an articulate answer to two equally important questions. What does it mean to be oppressed? What does it mean to be moral? The task of this chapter, then, is to come to a clear understanding for what it actually means to be oppressed. The claim of this thesis is that moral oppression takes place within the schooling institution, so it is assumed that the form of oppression experienced by educators is primarily psychological and not physical. In such a case, power is exercised through a negotiation of two mechanisms: the internal (psychological) component of the educator and the external (environmental) component of the schooling institution. The underlying focus of this analysis, therefore, is geared toward understanding how knowledge specifically comes to function in both the creation of and liberation from oppression. The metaphor of the cage will be utilized to assist in explaining the complexities and subtleties of what it actually means to be oppressed.

Inspecting the Cage

As the Western mind and society has progressed, scholars have grown to see that the means for oppressing are primarily psychological and, therefore, frequently imperceptible. This is not to say that psychological mechanisms of domination exist apart from the human interaction that is necessary for physical violence, for surely the psychological mechanisms only exist and persist *because* of the interactions among humankind. Some of the most enduring oppressive habits are continually created and reinforced on both the cultural and individual levels, and the fact that these mechanisms are so deeply and often unconsciously engrained into our existence means that they are insidiously persistent.

Oppression is varied and subtle, but always overlapping. Marilyn Frye (1983) used the analogy of the birdcage to describe its complexity.

> If you look very closely at just one wire in the cage, you cannot see the other wires. If your conception of what is before you is determined by this myopic focus, you could look at that one wire, up and down the length of it, and be unable to see why a bird would not just fly around the wire any time it wanted to go somewhere... It is only when you step back, stop looking at the wires one by one, microscopically, and take a macroscopic view of the whole cage, that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere; and then you will see it in a moment. It will require no great subtlety of mental powers. It is perfectly obvious that the bird is surrounded by a network of systematically related barriers, no one of which would be the least hindrance to its flight, but which, by their relations to each other, are as confining as the solid walls of a dungeon (p. 4).

Frye's imagery describes the perspective one might see if she were to inspect the perimeter of the cage. That is, in walking around the outside of a classic, dome-shaped bird cage, she would be able to see the repeating pattern of bars which confine the being within. However, if we extend our gaze as if to look down upon the cage from above, it becomes possible to see how all of these wires converge upon a single vertex at the center of the dome. Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) and Patricia Hill Collins (2000) might have described this vertex as the point of intersectionality.[6] It is the location where various types of oppression cross one

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[6] Hill Collins (2000) did not specifically use the cage metaphor, but her definition blends well with Frye's. "Intersectionality refers to particular forms of intersecting oppressions, for

another. This point is of particular interest because, architecturally speaking, it also happens

to be the very place on a dome where the greatest amount of compression amasses.

Therefore, one must also question what this vertex implies psychologically and existentially

for the person who is confined.

From this theoretical perspective, it becomes easy to see that one's placement in life

and within society will ultimately impact the number of wires that each person must negotiate

in their actions. For instance, the mechanisms of confinement around a Mexican American,

working-class, straight, single mother would look substantially different and arguably more

restrictive than the mechanisms constructed around a White, upper-middle class, gay man

who is monogamously committed to his partner. Each person in this example would clearly

come to suffer various limitations and agitations. The woman will surely confront the

struggles associated with single parenthood, but she will also have to maneuver around the

obstacles constructed by society's stereotypes and perception of her gender, class, race,

parenting status, and citizenship.[7] The man on the other hand may be free of those particular

constraints, but his sexuality will likely cause him to be confronted by different stereotypes,

restrictions, and defamation.

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example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation. Intersectional

paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that

oppressions work together in producing injustice" (p. 18).

[7] Hill-Collins (2000) outlined this particularly well in Part 2, Section 4. The stereotypes

associated with gender, class, and race "provides ideological justifications for intersecting

oppressions" (p. 79).

These two people may appear to have little in common regarding oppressive experience. However, suppose both of them exist in a society where the dominant culture encourages marriage for straight women while simultaneously denying marriage to same-sex couples. In such a setting, she may increase her chances of suffering social and long-term economic limitations by choosing not to conform to the social expectation of marriage for someone of her gender. Meanwhile, his refusal to give in to the dominant expectation regarding sexuality would prohibit him from partaking in the social recognition and the economic and legal benefits which accompany a state-recognized marriage.[8]

This example obviously demonstrates that one individual can experience multiple obstacles related to the constrictions of intersectionality. Most importantly, though, the example shows how two people can run up against the same institutional obstacle (marriage, in this case) even though they may not necessarily share the characteristics of gender, race, class, or sexuality. Undoubtedly, their unique characteristics play into the ways they each confront this institutional barrier, thus giving the barrier a quality that could be akin to experiential facets. But despite individual characteristics and ways the barrier is viewed, it ultimately remains shared by these two very different people. Its existence results from each person being pushed outside the dominant group which benefits from the maintenance of the given institutional practice.

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[8] Same-sex couples are currently restricted from the lower tax brackets tied to combined household income, which limits take home pay, the ability to save, and participation in some retirement plans like IRAs. Probate avoidance upon death also results in compounding economic and psychological harms.

People are constantly engaged in characterizing and being characterized by one another. Therefore, each human being simultaneously belongs to and transitions in and out of a multitude of voluntary and non-voluntary social groups.[9] These transitions are present in every interaction, and so one's position of power is also maintained in a constant state of flux. For instance, the power dynamic experienced by a principal in her school setting would differ significantly from that in her home or that of appearing before her district's school board. Furthermore, one's shifting position of privilege is also constantly influencing and being influenced by each given scenario or setting, each person with whom one connects, as well as one's memberships among various social groups.[10] So, the shifts in individual relations of power mean that the make-up of the dominant group can and will also consistently adjust as a result. It is through these interactions and transitions across the many scenarios of power that each person comes to exist, in varying degrees, as both the oppressor and the oppressed (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 246).

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[9] "A social group is a collection of persons who share (or would share under similar circumstances) a set of social constraints on action" (Cudd, 2006, p. 44). A voluntary social group has an air of choice about it, as in an occupational group. A non-voluntary social group is something outside the realm of choice, like an ethnic group.

[10] Foucault (1982) wrote about the constant presence of power relations; Bourdieu (2002) wrote about the transactions of social capital as a result; and Hill Collins (2000) described how power, intersectionality, and the matrix of domination become highlighted through situational transitions.

Collateral Oppression as an Indiscernible Barrier

If two seemingly different people can share a common barrier like the institutional concept of marriage, then the human transitioning among social groups and positions of privilege adds another layer of intricacy to the compounding potential of shared forms of oppression. In particular, the movement in and out of voluntary social groups makes it possible for individuals to experience what could be considered collateral oppression: an incidental, but shared mechanism of confinement that is experienced through one's membership in a voluntary social group. An explanation of collateral oppression can easily be drawn out of the predominantly female, education profession. To better explain this, though, it is first necessary to look briefly at the relations of power that currently exist over the field.

Of the nation's K-12 educators, 76% are female. While women are an overwhelming majority of the teaching profession, just less than 50% of school principals are female (Snyder & Dillow, 2011, p. 60). The gender demographic for principalships may initially appear balanced, but when this statistic is compared to the proportion of women in the teaching workforce it becomes obvious that the authoritative hierarchy is significantly disproportionate. This connection between gender and authority in education, of course, only worsens the farther up the chains of command and influence one travels. Approximately 24% of superintendents are women (Kowalski, McCord, Petersen, Young & Ellerson, 2011, p. 86). But, the hierarchy of power extends well beyond the borders of the school district because federal policies increasingly determine educators' work, and yet the feminine perspective is represented in less than17% of Congress (Manning, 2011, p. 6). Finally, there are even fewer women in the tier of influence which shapes the federal policies that direct the

work of the profession. In fact, one need only look at the nickname Diane Ravitch (2010) gave to one of the most coercive groups, the Billionaire Boys' Club, to get a demographic sense of those who have wielded power over the nation's educators.[11]

The relation between wealth and power over the politics of schooling, of course, brings to light issues related to class.[12] The broader social and economic perspective shows that class-related issues continue to impact the profession. Allegretto, Corcoran & Mishel, (2004) completed a salary comparison between teachers and professional equivalents that adjusted for weekly income. They found that teachers had "a wage disadvantage of 12.2%" each week. When they divided this by the average reported work hours for each profession, they concluded that "Because teachers worked more hours per week, the hourly wage disadvantage was an even larger 14.1%" (p. 2). This trend had been gradually worsening since 1979, and by 2007 the American Federation of Teachers claimed "teachers still earn 70 cents on the dollar" when compared to their professional equivalents (Di Carlo, Johnson, & Cochran; p. 3). The difference amounts to about $22,000 per year.

There are obviously many things at work here, and these numbers provide only brief examples of the authoritative hierarchy as it currently spans over the school institution via the

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[11] See Ravitch (2010, p. 195-222) on the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Walton Family Foundation, Eli & Edy Broad Foundation, Robertson Foundation, and Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. See also Klonsky & Klonsky (2008).

[12] Race certainly impacts the hierarchy and the profession, but it is not included in this particular section because the overall analysis isolates individual constructs of power as they relate to the profession's majority, which is White and female. It will be taken up at length in Chapter Three

political and economic arenas. However, the major point is that the intersectionality of gender and class and its relation to power in the profession not only are very distinct, but the patriarchal power dynamic has been deeply and historically entrenched within the bureaucracy and culture of the institution for well beyond a century.[13] Not only do women continue to be the overwhelming majority of the laborers in the educational field today, but they are currently enclosing upon the highest ratio seen since the early 1900's (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010; Rury, 1989). If history is to offer a lesson, it is that alienation from power, the sexual division of labor,[14] and swells of resistance[15] also increase the farther the institution spans and the more bureaucratic and centralized it becomes.

Now, imagine that someone lacks experience with or perception for the intensity of the gender and class power dynamic that exists in the schooling institution. This person could be either a woman or a man, but for the sake of argument, assume the person in this example is a man. In choosing to become a school teacher, he would enter a voluntary social group that is predominantly female, and in doing so, he and his craft would be governed by this large patriarchal institutional structure. His place of subordination within this power structure would subject him to an environment wherein he would experience oppressive barriers in ways that might be quite foreign to him. That is, when he steps into the

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[13] See Beecher (1977/1841, p. 21-33), Burch (2000), Hoffman (2003), Kaestle (1983, p. 75-103), Lortie (1975, p. 1-24), Mann (1841), Rury (1989), Tyack (1974), and Urban (1989) for historical information on the feminization of the teaching profession.

[14] See Au (2009, p. 81-104), Ferguson (1984), Joncich Clifford (1989, p.300); Tyack (1974, p. 28-77); Spring (2005, p. 134-165) for the connections between gender and bureaucracy.

[15] See Hoffman (2003, p. 227-320), Murphy (1990), and Urban (1989).

institutional setting, he may actually come to experience the infliction of power from the perspective of a woman.

His experience with power in this situation would be an example of collateral oppression. The type of power exerted over the social group of educators may not necessarily, or historically, be aimed at him or his gender in particular. However, as a member of a voluntary social group that is governed by an increasingly wealthy, patriarchal, and bureaucratic power structure, he would come to share aspects of the oppressive gender and class barriers and the expectations that often restrict women. This would happen despite his gender but because of his chosen affiliation with the profession. Kathy Ferguson (1984) got at this very point when she referred to "the bureaucrat as the second sex."

> ...members of a bureaucratic society are embedded within a political situation similar in many respects to that in which women traditionally find themselves, and are subject to a parallel set of forces and pressures through which subordination is created and maintained (p. 83).

The use of a male example here does not imply that a woman's understanding of power would make her more prepared for or less shocked by the patriarchal density of the schooling institution. My experience as a woman and my lifelong attempts at dodging gender stereotypes and their restrictions still left me sorely disoriented by the confrontations I made with the gender barrier inside the schooling institution. Hill Collins (2000) explained this situation by articulating the important influence that location has on one's perception of power: "Her gender may be more prominent when she becomes a mother, her race when she searches for housing, her social class when she applies for credit...In all these contexts, her position in relation to and within intersecting oppressions shifts" (p. 274).

One's transition into the schooling environment can easily enhance one's awareness for the interrelated complexity of sexism and classism by intensifying her or his exposure to this oppressive power dynamic. Whether the result of voluntary transitions is an intensification of oppressive mechanisms or the collateral acquisition of oppressive barriers, it stands to reason that an experience with the intersectionality of these barriers would be disorienting, and indiscernible even, to many of the individuals who enter the teaching profession.

Understanding the Structural Integrity of the Cage

With collateral oppression and the variability of social groups and positions of power in mind, it now seems appropriate to elaborate on Marilyn Frye's metaphor of the cage.[16] A wire is constructed over an individual each time she or he is classified as "Other" and pushed into one of the innumerable voluntary and non-voluntary social groups which stands outside the perpetually varying, dominant group (Beauvoir, 1949/2009). A collective intent fuels the creation of an oppressive structure, but the wire itself is forged out of privilege. Like a piece of rebar, it stands as the isolated frame onto which all else can be adhered, so that a slender wire can gradually expand into a larger barrier. The girth and, consequently, the structural weight of the barrier are gathered from the collective inaction of those who are apathetically and unknowingly afforded privilege by the subjection of the outlying social group. The

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[16] Frye (1983) described the cage as being constructed around an entire group of oppressed people, and not necessarily around one individual (p. 8). However, when the concept of intersectionality in incorporated, it makes more sense to say that exclusion from various groups is the very thing that constructs the so-called bars of each individual's cage.

greater the privilege that one group's oppression bestows upon the dominant group, the greater will be the girth and weight of that particular barrier; the wider that barrier, the more effort must be expended in an individual's attempts to maneuver around or simply see past that particular obstruction.

One barrier can obviously be a nuisance to an individual, but the cage which restricts one's mobility and human potential is constructed of many intersecting wires. Those intersecting oppressions are most frequently, or perhaps most obviously, related to the dominant assumptions surrounding non-voluntary characteristics like race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. However, when voluntary social groups are taken into account, the intersectionality of oppression becomes complicated by the very quality that defines the group as "voluntary:" the ability *to* transition.[17] So in essence, as voluntary social groups diversify through such transitions, not only does the possibility for collateral oppression increase; the obviousness of oppressive histories becomes more soluble and therefore dissolves more easily into the fluidity of that group's diversity. The result is that the source or type of power stands blurred and on the periphery of one's knowledge. And in the absence of historical, theoretical, or experiential knowledge through which to make sense of the

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[17] Ferguson hinted at this in describing the difficulty of changing bureaucratic institutions. "Poverty, unemployment, and underemployment...are conditions generated by the class structure of bureaucratic capitalism; they won't be changed by recruiting more women into the upper and middle levels of that class structure" (Ferguson, p. 195). The demographics of the people will change much easier than the power structures of the institution. The diversity of the people matters not near as much as diversity in the ways of thinking.

situation, the only discernable aspect for the exercise of power is the emotional disorientation that results from one's collision with the unrecognizable barrier.[18]

So, if power indeed exists in every interaction, then both intersectionality and the cage metaphor can feel all-encompassing and inescapable. The sense of hopelessness elicited by this metaphor, though, can be alleviated through a better understanding of the structural mechanics of the cage. Architecturally, the dome-shaped cage is nothing more than a series of independent arches constructed around one focal point: the individual. When a slender arch (like a wire) is set into place, its structural support is provided through the balance of its weight and its proportion. Thus, it can stand on its own. But as the barrier begins to expand around that wire, the structural weight of the entire arch will also begin increasing. And as the weight of privilege and dominance bears down upon that one tiny wire, a deepening tension will garner at the base of the arch. Too much of this particular type of tension will break the integrity of any arch. So, if the oppressive structure continues to grow in size and weight it will also require additional buttressing at the base and on the sides so it can avoid collapsing under its own weight (Klein, Levenson, & Munroe, 2004). This yields one question in particular: if the compounding weight of oppression is to avoid its own destruction, then from where does the structural reinforcement come?

Strangely enough, the support is provided by the individual who stands at the center of the cage.

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[18] Hill Collins (2000) referred to this as a lack of "oppositional knowledges" (p. 275).

Letting Go

Jim Garrison (1997) said, "Oppression often consists of being assigned false choices, that is, choices among alternatives specified by others that do not necessarily have our best interests at heart" (p. xvi). Not only does the individual come to accept false choices as legitimate, as Garrison said, but as a member of a multitude of outlying social groups, she or he can also come to internalize numerous forms of oppressive knowledge (Freire 1970/1997; Sharp, Bermudez, Watson, & Fitzpatrick, 2007).[19] This phenomenon of internalization means that the potential burden of any one oppressive structure is directly proportional to the strength of one's own clutch upon that particular form of oppressive knowledge. Accordingly, then, it is the individual who actually buttresses the many intersecting arches of dominance, and she or he does so by psychologically grasping onto the base of every single barrier. The stronger the person's hold, the more privilege each structure will come to bear *for someone else*.

The caged being may be completely unaware of the integral part she or he plays in providing strength for these oppressive structures. This is the very reason why learning to *see* each intuited barrier is key. That is, one must first see them so as to know that she is even holding onto them, and only once she learns to feel the barriers in her psychological grips, will she be enabled to open up her mind in order to release her grasp upon them. The solution for attaining relief from the cage of oppression is at least as old as Socrates. As

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[19] Some examples of "internalized oppression" offered by Sharp, Bermudez, Watson, & Fitzpatrick (2007) are beliefs in one's own inferiority; the act of privileging dominant perspectives over those of marginalized people; insecurity in self-confidence and self-worth; and avoiding self-validation until it comes from someone who is perceived to be dominant.

Kerry Burch (2000) explained, Diotima tempted Socrates with her wisdom and this solution when she told him that "he must somehow 'let go' of the conventional way of knowing" (p. 42).

So, freeing oneself from the oppressive burden of someone else's privilege comes down to releasing the assumptions, false choices, and the ways of knowing and acting that have been handed down through institutionalized ways of seeing the world.[20] By letting go, the person dismantles the most crucial support to the barrier so it can finally succumb to its own tension and give way under its own weight. "Thus we discover that we believe many things not because the things are so, but because we have been habituated through the weight of authority, by imitation, prestige, instruction, the unconscious effect of language, etc." (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 14). Once the arch crumbles, the person can then begin to relieve herself from the unconscious habit of accepting and burdening unjustified weight.

The reinforcing relationship between the oppressive burden and the psychological grip places the person in a rather precarious position, though, meaning that simply "letting go" is far easier said than done. This is primarily because the collapse of an oppressive structure brings with it collateral damage: the person at the center of the cage stands in direct line of all falling debris. In an effort to maintain the feeling of security or stability, it is easy to grasp tightly onto those things one thought she knew or thought she believed. This is often done out of a desire to avoid the vulnerability, uncertainty, and inevitable pain that coincides with the collapse (Van Overwalle & Jordens, 2002; Elliot & Devine, 1994). Unfortunately, this also means that both the grasp and the burden are most severe right before the release;

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[20] This type of education occurs via Freire's (1970/1997) "banking" concept of education and is very deeply rooted in what Dewey (1922/2002) called habit.

the tension is most intense in the moment that just precedes the fall; the feeling of insecurity is most unsettling in that first, unobstructed glimpse.

Intersecting oppressions, yet again, complicate this entire process. The individual must be willing, one structure at a time, to let go of the oppressive forms of knowledge that have been secured into place. This means that a person who is dedicated to life-long growth will have to commit to reliving the shocking and painful collapse many times over in order to truly step beyond the ways in which she was taught to see this world, her place in it, and perhaps most importantly, the way she was taught to see herself.[21] The willingness to face this potential rests in the learner's courage to acknowledge that growth beyond the deepest held beliefs may only rest upon her or his ability to acclimate to this self-inflicted dissonance, discomfort, and even pain. Commitment to growth also requires the rediscovery of life's longstanding wounds and the patience to finally tend properly to their healing. For better and worse, this healing process only comes from persistently sifting through, learning from, and then sweeping away the debris.

Standing amid the Remnants

The only thing left standing after the collapse of an oppressive structure of knowledge is but the slender wire to which all the destructive mass initially adhered. The social nature

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[21] David Hansen (2001) depicted the "image of a growing person" to include qualities of straightforwardness, simplicity, spontaneity, naiveté, open-mindedness, open-heartedness, integrity of purpose, responsibility, and seriousness. It is agreed that these qualities are both necessary and beautiful in a learner. However, this collection of attributes does not do full justice to what it means to struggle through the most difficult learning experiences (p. 41-60).

of humankind and the constant transitions in and out of scenarios of power make it difficult and perhaps unlikely for a person to shed the entirety of the cage. One might seek justification for how or why the wires can possibly remain even after a person has let go. Well, despite the refusal to no longer accept the belief in one's socially constructed inferiority, the reality remains that women continue to make less money than men for comparable work, Black men persistently suffer from disparities in labor and incarceration, and same-sex couples still cannot marry in a majority of the United States. Even though such unjust, social hindrances are difficult to circumnavigate entirely without mass collective movement, a diminution of oppressive knowledge might at least make it easier for a person to make one's way in the world.

Once a person has achieved this state of mind, the potential exists for her or him to begin learning how to maneuver with those few remaining wires and how to discover new environments where confinements are not so readily constructed.[22] Better yet, once an individual is equipped with the experience of burdening, recognizing, and releasing oppressive forms of knowledge, the hope exists that she or he can then begin experimenting with and bolstering democratic qualities in new environments. When the mind is no longer occupied with holding onto constructed ways of knowing, her hands are free to extend toward, connect to, and assist another human being. When the eyes are no longer blocked by the overlapping barriers and walls she once supported, she will be free to see another's humanity and possibility for what they truly may be.

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[22] Patricia Hill Collins (2000) referred to these mediums for growth, self-definition, and resistance as "safe spaces" (p. 110).

Summary

The cage metaphor and the theory of intersectionality explain how physical, social, and financial attributes affect the number and type of constraints an individual may have to negotiate throughout life. However, because human beings are always transitioning in and out of varying social environments, intersectionality also helps explain how power dynamics and the number of constraints can change based on the environment. As collateral oppression is incorporated, it becomes obvious that a voluntary transition (like a transition into the teaching profession) can bring with it the intensification of existing barriers or the acquisition of oppressive mechanisms that may be altogether foreign to the person who "voluntarily" experiences it. As can be imagined, the result must surely be disorienting particularly when those involved lack the theoretical or experiential knowledge for understanding and counteracting the oppressive dynamics that are working around them.

Oppression is not only the act of being forced outside the realm of privilege and social power; it is also the act of accepting that such a placement is where one actually belongs. The acceptance of one's own inferiority is actualized through the educational process. As time, experience, interaction, and the social environment continually work upon the individual, a person cannot help but take in some aspects of the patterns, tendencies, and habits of that environment. These work to teach a person who one is expected to be, how one stands in relation and comparison to others, and what one should come to expect from life as a result of her or his physical attributes, personal interests, and financial status. Oppression is the unquestioning acceptance of what one has been *taught*; it is a lack of faith in the tangibility of one's own experience and in the ability to *know* and *learn* from the hard-fought struggles and the connections made with fellow human beings.

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By clarifying what it means to be oppressed, it has been possible to understand not only how power and knowledge are interconnected, but how they function in ways that can be as restrictive as they can be liberatory. The upcoming chapter will return to and expand upon the complexities of oppression in order to demonstrate exactly how the concept of intersectionality applies to the teaching profession.

CHAPTER 3: THE WIRES ON THE INSTITUTIONAL CAGE

 Cudd (2006) defined oppression as "an institutionally structured, unjust harm perpetrated on groups by other groups through direct and indirect material and psychological forces" (p. 28). When the balance of power is compromised, social institutions become the medium through which the dominant culture, gender, race, sexuality, class, religion, or nationality expresses, spreads, and enforces its values and expectations onto the remaining social groups. Since knowledge plays a primary role in the oppression and liberation of individuals, it is not necessarily surprising that public schools and educational policies exist as major battlegrounds in the struggle for power. Regardless of whether it is the youth, parents, teachers, clergy, communities, philanthropists, unionists, or corporate reformers who engage in this brawl, the struggle unfolds time and again in the works of educational historians and through the efforts of today's communities and reformers.[23]

 As the struggles over schools intensify, and when policies are shaped in opposition to the just and democratic ideals of public education, the workplace becomes a significantly complicated and confining environment to educators. This is in part because, regardless of one's own perspective, job security often requires teachers to participate in someone else's ideological war. However, it is also because their students, peers, practices, buildings, and virtually every aspect of their workplace become factors to be shaped, threatened, or altogether lost in the fight over public space. That which is at stake and that which is being controlled is, needless to say, of a very personal nature. In order to begin working beyond the

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[23] See Anderson (1988), Bailyn (1960), Kaestle (1983), Ravitch (2010), Spring (2005), Tyack (1974)

constrictions that have been constructed around the schooling institution, though, it is first necessary to have a clearer understanding of what they are. So, what exactly are the oppressive arches that work to confine the teaching profession, and how do they apply to the entire profession?

<p style="text-align:center">Gender & Class</p>

When speaking about the power dynamics experienced in the teaching profession or the power wielded over the schools in general, it is not uncommon to receive a response similar to the following: "How can you say the teachers have to deal with sexist practices when so many teachers are men? Besides, people *choose* to become a teacher." The explication of the cage metaphor and collateral oppression in Chapter Two provided a response to such a question, and in doing so, it revealed two important points. First, intersectionality can obscure the perception of power that pulses through the institution. For example, a superficial glance would cause one to classify the teaching profession as a voluntary social group simply because it has shared practices, constraints, aims, tradition, and norms for behavior (Cudd, 2006, p. 51; Lortie, 1975). While it may be true that women and men do voluntarily become teachers, *choice* brings with it the inheritance of a tradition where power structures and socially constructed stereotypes of inferiority are rooted in the non-voluntary characteristics of gender and class. The obvious examples, as they were laid out in Chapter Two, are the salary difference between educators and their professional equivalents and the hierarchy of power throughout the entire institution.

In some respect, however, the voluntary aspect (choice of profession) comes to erase the obviousness of that which is non-voluntary (gender and class power structures), and it

becomes possible for the social group of educators to exist simultaneously as voluntary and non-voluntary. This obscurity is often overlooked in mainstream conversations about the profession, but collateral oppression demonstrates how the power dynamics of gender and class come to afflict the entire profession through either intensification or acquisition. This leads to the second point. As the theories of intersectionality and collateral oppression are applied to the teaching profession, it becomes obvious that the forms and mechanisms of power which afflict the teaching profession are significantly dense.

<div align="center">Race</div>

The analysis thus far has focused on how power over the social group of educators relates to the profession's majority and to its non-dominant characteristics of gender and social class. As intersecting forms of oppression, gender and class help to explain the lack of traction teachers contend with in the struggle for power in their profession. Gender and class certainly contribute to educators' outsider status, but race factors in somewhat differently. That is, the teaching profession is predominantly White, so that in terms of race most of the social group falls *inside* the sphere of dominance.[24] Even though this may be the case, it would be unrealistic to assume that this prevalence of whiteness would mean that educators are left unharmed and uncaged by the unjust racist practices that ripple throughout the schooling institution. The task in this section is to explain how racism exists as a wire on the cage of a social group that is predominantly White.

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[24] In 2003, 83% of educators were White; 8% Black; 6% Hispanic; and 3% were American Indian, Native Alaskan, Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. (Strizek et al, 2006, p. 4).

Perhaps the most obvious way to get a sense for the dynamics of race and power in the schooling institution is by looking at the racial demographics of the education profession and the student population. When the two social groups are compared to one another, the disparities become significantly apparent. For example, "in 2008, 34% of the nation's population was minority, and 41% of all elementary and secondary students were minority, but only 16.5% of all elementary and secondary teachers were minority" (Ingersoll & May, 2011, p. 41).[25] This racial expanse between students and teachers can undoubtedly pose difficulties at the classroom and community levels. These difficulties are extremely important, and they will be elaborated on later in this section. But in order to get to those issues, it is first necessary to examine some long-term adjustments to the institution's demographics.

Ingersoll & May's (2011) analysis showed that an increasing number of minority teachers have been hired over the last couple decades. Between 1988 and 2008 the percentage of teachers who were of minority status increased from 12.4% to 16.5% (p. 18). At first glance, this growth would seem to be a beneficial trend for both the teaching profession and the student population. However, the authors went on to report that the diversification of the profession was accompanied by a significant and disproportionate growth in the turnover rates for minority teachers. That is, they increased by 28% over twenty years, and in the last decade "minority turnover was, respectfully, 18% and 24% higher than White teacher turnover" (p. 23). It is particularly alarming that in 2003,

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[25] The demographics of the student population in 2003 was 60% White, 18% Hispanic, 17% Black, 4% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian or Native Alaskan (Strizek et al, 2006, p. 3).

approximately *one third* of the nation's minority teachers transitioned "into, between, or out of schools" altogether (p. 41).

A high transitory tendency that persists and increases among *only* minority teachers surely raises questions about (1) the prevalence of racist staffing practices and (2) the impacts that institutionalized racist practices have upon the human beings in the classrooms, the schools, and the communities. This trend and its suggestions are troubling, no doubt, but these numbers were also drawn from a broad national analysis.[26] As such, they lack the specificity of what racism can look like when it manifests at the community level. Some statistics from Chicago's public schools, however, can provide a more detailed picture of what racist practices can mean to a localized teaching force. "In 2011, African Americans represented 65% of teachers in schools tapped for closure and 40% of tenured teachers laid off. The percentage of less experienced white teachers hired has steadily increased" from 48% to 62% (Caref & Jankov, 2012, p. 24). Even more disheartening was the fact that African Americans made up 30% of the tenured workforce in Chicago, yet they comprised 40% of those who were laid off (Caref & Jankov, 2012, p. 23).

Chicago's statistics provide a blatant example of racist attacks: layoffs, school closures, turnarounds, and phase-outs around the city pushed a disproportionate amount of African Americans out of their teaching positions. Relative to this particular example, though, there are a few more points that are worth mentioning. First, it is important to note that these concerns are not unique to Chicago; they parallel similar allegations by many

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[26] Ingersoll & May's data is from educators' perspectives that were reported in the Schools & Staffing Survey and the Teacher Followup Survey. The two were compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics.

urban, black, and brown communities across the United States.[27] Second, these allegations

are not entirely unique in America's educational history either. Linda Tillman's (2004)

analysis on "the wholesale firing of Black educators" that occurred after *Brown v. Board of

Education* provides insight into the many ways racism affected the teaching profession during

desegregation efforts (p. 1). Her work is concerning and telling, primarily when this last

point is considered. That is, over the last two decades the nation's schools have steadily been

resegregating.   In fact, "In 2005 the majority of Black and Hispanic students attended

schools with high minority enrollment (75 percent or more)" (KewalRamani, Gilbertson, &

Fox; 2007; p. iv). Unfortunately, this is a process which scholars have largely attributed to

(1) the relaxation of federally-mandated desegregation laws and (2) the rise of charter schools

and education management organizations.[28]

　　　Much like the shifts in the student population, teachers have also been in the process

of resegregating. On the national scale "...minority teachers are overwhelmingly employed in

public schools serving high-poverty, high-minority, and urban communities. Minority

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[27] Individuals and localized organizations from Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, Newark, New York

City, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and Wichita also issued complaints to the Department

of Education's Office of Civil Rights. See Herold (2012), Rossi (2012), Strauss (2012),

Socolar (2013), Valencia (2011).

[28] See also Frankenberg & Lee (2002); Grant (2009); Kozol (1991; 2005); Orfield (2001);

Orfield & Lee (2004); Renzulli & Evans (2005); and Zhang (2008) for information on school

poverty, resegregation, and White flight. See Miron, Urschel, Mathis, &Tornquist (2010) for

information on the impacts educational management organizations have had on segregation

"by race, class, ability, and language" (p. 26).

teachers are two to three times more likely than White teachers to work in such hard-to-staff

schools" (Ingersoll & May, 2011, p. 41). The resegregation of the teaching force can

certainly help explain, and facilitate even, the firing of African American teachers in Chicago

and the attrition of minority teachers in general. But for the purposes of this analysis, the

perspectives of the teachers who were inside the resegregated schools are most relevant.

Ingersoll & May (2011) determined that student demographics factored into the choices

minority teachers made about where they taught, but that they had little influence on their

decisions to leave (p. 32). In other words, these teachers did not generally choose to leave

their schools because of the stereotypes that are often assigned to the students in "hard-to-

staff" schools. Instead, a significant deciding factor in minority teacher turnaround was the

working conditions in those schools.[29] That is, they were "more likely to cite career

advancement or job dissatisfaction than were White teachers," and when it came to the

specifics about their work, they voiced concerns over deficiencies in the "levels of collective

faculty decision-making influence in their school and the degree of individual instructional

autonomy held by teachers in their classrooms" (p. 43). In essence, these minority teachers

did not tend to leave due to the unjust realities of racial isolation, or the lack of funding their

schools received,[30] or the unsatisfactory resources they were given. The evidence strongly

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[29] "Fifty-eight percent of White teachers who left teaching reported that dissatisfaction with

some aspect of their school was behind their move…this was true for 64% of minority

teachers" (Ingersoll & May 2011, p. 30).

[30] "The vast majority of intensely segregated minority schools face conditions of concentrated

poverty, which are powerfully related to unequal educational opportunity. Students in

segregated minority schools face conditions that students in white schools seldom

suggests that when these educators chose to leave, they were frustrated by the lack of power they had inside their schools (p. 35).[31]

Despite the disproportionate attrition rates and the inequalities of resegregated schools, though, it is intriguing that when "compared to White teachers, minority teachers were less likely to turnover from high-poverty, high-minority, and urban schools" (p. 42). This says something about the teachers' dedication, of course, and it also reveals a tendency toward stability for minority teachers when they are permitted to *keep* their jobs. More importantly, perhaps, this example speaks to the important roles that cultural similarity, cultural knowledge, and the understanding of the dynamics of power can play in the classroom. The vital function, and dysfunction, of culture-power dynamics is illustrated further in the perspectives of student discipline rates and how those impacted teacher attrition. For example, "...in schools with higher levels of student discipline problems, turnover rates were distinctly higher for White teachers; the relationship was in the same direction for minority teachers, but not at a statistically significant level" (Ingersoll & May, 2011, p. 34).[32] The phenomena of attrition and the influences of discipline rates are surely

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experience" (Orfield, 2004, p. 3). Kozol (2005) laid out the financial, curricular, and organizational disparities common to segregated schools.

[31] Kozol (2005) wrote about the highly-structured, non-critical curricula in the poorest New York City schools. My teaching experience matched Kozol's claim that such curricula were given to teachers in low-income, high-minority schools.

[32] For sake of clarity, the point here is that reports of discipline issues are related to the predominantly White teaching profession's interactions with the diversifying student population, not that discipline levels are somehow related to the students' demographics.

complex, but recall that the national data show that a predominantly White teaching force and an increasingly diverse student population continue to meet in the nation's classrooms. The racial expanse, the persistent demographic flux, and the perceptions on discipline are important because they suggest something much deeper about culture, power, and perception. Namely, they all raise questions about how well educators understand their own cultures, those of their students, and the relationship between the two.

Cultural similarities and differences undoubtedly influence people's willingness to interact or participate; they shape the ease of communication between the student and teacher, the teacher and family, the community and administration, and so on. [33] This is evident in the stability of minority teachers in resegregated schools just as much as it is in the instability of White teachers among a diversifying school system. The two phenomena may seem unrelated. But as the latter example indicates, when cultural, racial, and linguistic differences function in hierarchies of power they become sources for many of the difficulties experienced by teachers. When culture-power dynamics are considered, it becomes apparent that many classroom struggles with interaction, communication, motivation, and morale have little to do with "discipline." Instead, they are more often expressions of students' needs: the need to communicate with adults who 'get' them or the need to resist blind, unnecessary, and/or intentional assertions of power by their teachers and the institution.

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[33] See Anderson (1988), Delpit (2006), hooks (1994), Tillman (2004), and Walker (2001, 1996) for personal, historical, and theoretical examples of the liberatory benefits that students gain when they share cultural similarities with their teachers.

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for teachers to misdiagnose, mischaracterize, and misinterpret their students' signals.[34] Such occurrences typically sound something like "I just don't know what else to do with her?" or "I've said that ten times already; why doesn't he get what I'm saying?" Lisa Delpit (2006/1995) might refer to such occurrences as cross-cultural confusions. She said,

> One of the most difficult tasks we face as human beings is trying to communicate across our individual differences, trying to make sure that what we say to someone is interpreted the way we intend. This becomes even more difficult when we attempt to communicate across social differences, gender, race, or class lines, or any situation of unequal power (p. 135).

Delpit's point is highly relevant: as the growing racial chasm between students and teachers increases, the tensions and the need for educators to better understand culture, power, and perception will as well.

Survival in an ever-changing and increasingly diverse society requires the ability to learn from both similarity and difference. If the tensions and propagation of racist practices in schools are to be diminished, educators must be willing to see their own expressions of power; they must imagine and perceive how those expressions influence interactions with

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[34] This is evident in White teachers' perceptions of discipline rates and the disparities of the national suspension rates: 17% of Black students were suspended compared to 5% White; students with disabilities were suspended at "approximately twice the rate of their non-disabled peers," and 25% of Black students with disabilities were suspended (Losen & Gillespie, 2012, p. 7). See also the introductions by hooks (1994) and Patricia Hill Collins (2009) for personal accounts of the harms caused by culturally insensitive teachers.

students. These explorations should occur in teacher education programs, but they must continue into one's collaborations with colleagues and community members as well.

As teachers bring their varied perspectives and experiences into the schools, the collective cultural knowledge grows in each school and in the profession as a whole. These variations form part of the tangible *human* resource that educators can then turn toward as they grow in their understandings of themselves, their students, and their teaching practices. Diversity, therefore, is vital to the growth of the teaching profession. When the schools and the profession are robbed of diversity and stability, the teachers, students, and families who remain in the institution become more and more isolated from the wealth of cultural perspectives. Thus, resegregation and minority attrition form the mechanism of a much broader problem; they function like a divide and conquer scenario that works to the detriment of everyone in the institution. Those in the minority lose access to the multitude of benefits that come from collaborating and learning through similarity,[35] and those in the majority lose access to the necessary benefits of learning about and through difference.

The isolated phenomena of resegregation and minority attrition touch on only a few of the many ways educators contend with the socially constructed inequalities, deprivations, and restrictions that result from racism. Of course, each injustice yields its own set of psychological and material side effects for those who experience it directly (racial isolation;

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[35] As Delpit (2006) explained, "the culture of power" plays out in the classroom setting, and as a result, has lasting effects on how well students come to navigate and contest society's dominant power structures (p. 24). Thus, she concluded that an "appropriate education for poor children and children of color can only be devised in consultation with adults who share their culture" (p. 45).

disparities in resources; the erosion of autonomy and power at the school level; financial, emotional, and psychological hardships for educators and their families). As damaging as all of these personal injustices are for teachers, the harms extend well beyond the direct impact left on the individuals who are nudged, pushed, and separated out of the schools. Regardless of race, and consciously or not, every educator assumes the oppressive wire of racism collaterally. The harms of racism are felt through the connections educators make with their colleagues, their students, their schools, and their communities.[36] The damage is wielded upon everyone when students, teachers, and entire schools are unfairly judged and then disproportionately punished. It is experienced when the profession is expected to attend to the systematic and racist practices of standardization and high-stakes testing. But racism is most detrimental to educators when the direct attacks against colleagues forge a gulf between the wealth of cultural knowledges that would facilitate *human* solidarity, growth in the craft, and the progression toward a more humane institution.

Bureaucracy

For educators, the intersecting constrictions of power are not limited to only gender, class, and race. Public schools exist as an appendage of district, state, and federal governments. So it is, needless to say, more than difficult for schools and educators to disassociate themselves from the governmental, legal, and ideological structures that give shape to the institutional cage. This is the reality of the public servant in the best and the worst of times.

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[36] See Berliner (2009; 2006) for analyses on trends in poverty, academic achievement, and out-of-school factors that disproportionately impact the well-being of impoverished children.

As many scholars have shown, education reform movements have frequently been accompanied by the theme of increased centralized control and bureaucratic growth (Kaestle, 1983; Spring, 2005; Tyack, 1974; Warren, 1974; Webb, 1981). The theme is probably best characterized by Tyack and Cuban's (1995) thoughts on the reform efforts since the 1980's:

> The remedy was *More*: more days and hours of schooling, more academic courses, more attention to "basics," more discriminating standards for evaluating and compensating teachers, more standardized testing of pupil achievement, more elaborate reporting of test results by local districts to state officials (p. 79, emphasis original).

By their account, the prescription is consistently about control: demands for more by the prescribers and less for the students and teachers who actually labor in the nation's classrooms. Throughout the evolution of NCLB into RTTT and with the expanding systems of standardization and high-stakes testing, the bureaucratic webs have continued to grow (Au, 2008). Bureaucratic growth is not surprising since mechanisms of this magnitude do require systems of people to feed, support, and enforce them (Ferguson, 1984). But, unfortunately, this evolution has amplified the theme of "more" to the point that it is being screamed into the ears of those inside the schools. Thus, bureaucracy exists as another one of the many intersecting wires on the educator's cage.[37]

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[37] Webb (1981) discussed both the good and the bad of the bureaucratic schooling structure (p. 197-216). "Organizational efficiency," diversity, standardized regulations, and the elimination of "discriminatory prejudices" are among the benefits he cited (p. 213). Ferguson (1984) described bureaucracies as "political arenas" with "oligarchical" hierarchies (p. 7). I maintain that the presence and effectiveness of the benefits outlined by Webb is only

But what is bureaucracy, and how does it function as a mechanism of oppression in the schooling institution? Rodman Webb (1981) defined six qualities that are inherent to bureaucracies: 1) they "are separate organizations run by full-time staffs;" 2) they are hierarchically structured; 3) they function "within [a fixed] jurisdiction of expertise;" 4) they use and/or are subjected to measures of competence and accountability; 5) their functioning relies heavily upon formal, written communication; and 6) they are supposed to be objective and rational forms of organization.[38] These six characteristics combine to function as an institutionalized form of mass-human management.

However, according to Kathy Ferguson (1984), bureaucratic management is made all the more complicated by the fact that it exists "as both a structure and a process" (p. 6). In terms of the cage metaphor, this means that bureaucracy is not only a wire that confines the individual; it is also the construction process itself. Because of the construction process, bureaucratic growth is a necessary function and side effect of the bureaucratic mechanism. As Webb (1981) put it, this happens because "The bureaucratic idea is to define and classify all conceivable problems and set out regulations regarding each eventuality…Thus bureaucracies have an ever-expanding system of regulations" (p. 207).[39] The mechanism's existence, unfortunately, tends to be accompanied by its simultaneous self-generation.

proportional to the extent which the bureaucratic structure is controlled by a democratically-engaged public.

[38] See Webb (1981, p. 205-209).

[39] See also Au (2008) and Ferguson (1984, p. 9).

Unlike corporate settings and other bureaucratic structures, though, schools are further complicated by their institutional density. That is, schooling[40] is an institution (or the act of engaging in shared practice)[41] that takes place within institutions (tangible buildings and systems)[42] that are all part of a larger institutional process (governing and creating order).[43] And each of these institutions, of course, has its own bureaucracy to oversee and control the one beneath it. As this suggests, the affliction of bureaucratic management is intense within institutions and particularly so in the places that Erving Goffman (1961) referred to as total institutions. He defined the total institution as "...a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life" (p. xiii). Orphanages, boarding schools, mental hospitals, prisons, and military camps make up some of the institutional examples provided by Goffman (p. 5).

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[40] The assumption here is that there is a distinct difference between the moral, liberatory function of human-guided learning and teaching and the deceptive and manipulative function of institutional schooling. See Dewey's (1938/1997a) distinction between education and mis-education (p. 25-32), and Illich (1971/2004, p. 52-64) for an explanation of the derogatory function of schooling.

[41] See Cudd (2006, p. 50), Lortie (1975), and Webb (1981, p. 198).

[42] See Ferguson (1984), Foucault (1975/1977) and Goffman (1961).

[43] "A social institution sets constraints that specify behavior in specific recurrent situations, that are tacitly known by some nontrivial subset of society, and that are either self-policed or policed by some external authority" (Cudd, 2006, p. 51). See also Webb (1981, p. 205).

The typical public school does not necessarily fit all of Goffman's criteria.[44] However, similarities would likely be recognized by the teachers who 'live' in their classrooms for twelve hours a day or by the students and teachers who must wait for the designated times to engage in the human activities of resting or playing, speaking to peers, eating, and using to the restroom. Goffman specified five types of total institutions, and the public schools are best classified as a hybridized version of two: "First, there are institutions established to care for persons felt to be both incapable and harmless...[and] there are institutions purportedly established the better to pursue some worklike task and justifying themselves only on these instrumental grounds" (p. 4-5). Neither of these functions allows for the democratic purposes and ideals to which public education should aspire, but the most prevalent rhetoric driving current school reform and policy do suggest that this is the present institutional intent and reality.[45]

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[44] The biggest difference, of course, being that students and teachers do not reside within the schooling institution full-time (Webb, 1981, 219).

[45] Evidence for the perceived incapability of students is present in the young age which children are expected to enter school, in the authoritarian school structures that exclude the student voice, and in the use of the "banking" methods of instruction (Freire (1970/1997). The broader training and "worklike" function of the schooling institution is also revealed in banking methods of instruction, but this purpose is most explicit in the rhetorical connections between schooling and a failed economy, and college-readiness as preparation for competition in the global economy (National Govenors Associations Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, introduction; U.S. Department of Education 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, Office

Webb (1981) incorporated Goffman's work into an analysis on "schools as total institutions."[46] He determined that total institutions consist of the following components: 1) a formally administered round of life; 2) coercive rule structures; 3) involuntary membership; 4) externally defined roles; 5) external support; 6) expert servicing. Webb applied the first two characteristics (formal administration and coercive rule structures) to schools so precisely that it warrants a lengthy quote:

> …within schools, students are typically managed in large groups. They are segregated by age and often by ability, attitude, behavior, and even social class. The activities of students are enclosed within schools walls and formally administered by institution officials. There is a tendency to treat all students alike, which, for school officials, is synonymous with saying that students are treated "fairly." Time is tightly scheduled and punctuated by official signals…And no matter how democratic the classroom, a part of a teacher's job is to guard the exits. Schools, like other total institutions, have their own set of rules that are different from the rules governing the outside world (p. 219)

Webb also emphasized the third characteristic (involuntary membership) as an institutional reality for both teachers and students: "Students do not usually have a choice about attending

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of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy, 2010; White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2010, 2011).

[46] See Webb (1981, p. 197-226) for the explication and framework used here on schools as total institutions.

school… and very probably cannot choose among teachers within a school. Similarly, teachers do not have much say about who will be in their class" (p. 220).[47]

Webb's work brings clarity to what may be some of the more apparent dynamics and long-standing constraints of the schooling institution, but much has also changed since *Schooling and Society* was written in 1981. Technological advancements and bureaucratic growth have persisted, and because of these changes, the differences between schools and total institutions have become more aligned.[48] However, these technological and bureaucratic changes have been enabled *because* of the realities and mentality that are inherent to the last three characteristics: externally defined roles, external support, and expert servicing. In order to understand Webb's parallel and the severity of the current context, it is necessary to supplement the remainder of his framework with contemporary institutional mechanisms.

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[47] Some might argue that school choice can free teachers and students from this constraint, but I do not see this as the case. The ability to choose is proportional to the social, cultural, political, and economic capital of the family which means only some can 'buy the right' to choose (Bourdieu, 2002; Kozol, 1991, 2005; Renzulli & Evans, 2005). Meanwhile, many parents who have chosen traditional public schools over private and charter have had their choice overridden by school closings, turnarounds, and phase-outs (Herold, 2012; Rossi, 2012; Strauss, 2012; Socolar, 2013; Valencia, 2011). Also, to prevent discrimination, good democratic practice should prevent teachers from choosing their students in most cases.

[48] See Saltman and Gabbard (2011) for analyses on institutional similarities between schools and the military.

First, as Webb pointed out, "Functions of schooling are not decided solely by educators;" neither are the institution's aims and purposes (p. 220). These roles, as well as the expectations of those on the inside, are predominantly defined by people, organizations, and agencies which stand outside the classrooms, schools, and communities. In fact, not only do educators have little part in defining the purpose of schooling, but the standardization of the institution and its processes has seriously bound educators' abilities to exercise personal aims inside their own classrooms even. For example, the developments in scripted curricula, national skills, and Common Core State Standards[49] have continued to close-in on the classroom space, suffocating democratic capacities and the organic human processes of teaching and learning.[50] Standardized tests, their scores, and the school grades based upon those scores have become the external means for surveilling the classroom space, the teachers' teachings, and the students' acceptance. These apparatuses are then used to label, sort, and manage the students, teachers, and schools (Au, 2011, 2009; Giroux, 2012, Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Sacks, 1999). By shackling teacher pay and student promotion to these mechanisms, the externally defined curricular and testing mechanisms actually become the coercive rule structures (Webb's second characteristic) which mis-shape the purpose of

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[49] National Govenors Associations Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010).

[50] I take the stance that learning is 1) personal growth via Deweyan inquiry, 2) catalyzed by a problem that rises from within the individual, and 3) for the purposes of understanding and democratic liberation (Dewey, 1896/1972, 1916, 1938/1997a).

schooling and the roles and actions of those within.[51] Of course, the stronger society's

reliance is on these external measures and those who create them, the tighter the stranglehold

will be on educators' and students' abilities to define their roles internally.

However, in order for *external* aims to fully solidify on the inside of the institution,

though, they must receive *external* support. According to Webb, taxes have typically given

"outside agencies and the public greater power over what goes on in schools" (p. 218).

There is no doubt that state and federal funding, varying forms of local and community

support, and philanthropy have allowed a multitude of people to shape schools throughout

history.[52] In the recent decades, however, the public schools have not only been enticed and

swayed by corporate funds and interests;[53] they increasingly have been consumed *by* the

interests of venture philanthropists.[54]

Venture philanthropy, according to Peter Frumkin (2003), is the offspring of three

distinct entities: 1) the practices of nineteenth- and twentieth-century philanthropy; 2) the

idea of the "social investment," or "business-like approach to public [problem solving]," that

emerged in the 1990's; and 3) the rapid technological advancements of the last two decades

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[51] This is synonymous with Campbell's law in Nichols & Berliner (2007) and evident in the

cheating scandals referred to in Chapter One of this thesis.

[52] See Anderson (1988), Hall (1994), and Hamer (1998) for philanthropic historical

examples.

[53] See Boyles (2000), Hewitt (2005/2009), Molnar (2005) for evidence of corporate and

consumerist seepages in the contemporary public school setting.

[54] See Chomsky (2011), Frumkin (2003), Klonsky & Klonsky (2008), Kovacs (2011),

Ravitch (2010)

(p. 8). Fueled by their quests "to turn their gifts and grants into something more concrete and scientific," venture philanthropists have enlisted the technological developments and methods of their time (p. 8). There is, however, an abhorrent irony to this alleged 'scientific' pursuit: venture philanthropists have yet to question either the quality of their 'science' or, more importantly, the ethics[55] of their experimentation. This is both the essence and the flaw of technocratic rationality.[56]

Again, schools characteristically rely upon external support. This factor can help democratize schools, but it is also the very thing that makes them particularly vulnerable to predacious swells. The rise of venture philanthropy has been most threatening; as Henry Giroux (2012) put it, "Money no longer simply controls elections; it also controls policies that shape public education" (2012, paragraph 4). Schools' reliance upon external support has allowed venture philanthropists to pile so much money into the political, structural, and technological supports of the institution that they have muffled, if not smothered, the voices of other citizens.

The characteristic of external support of schools (via venture philanthropy) blends well with Webb's final characteristic: expert servicing. In order to get to this, however, it is first necessary to return to Goffman's work. Goffman (1961) categorized the people in total institutions as either clients or servers, "…where some persons (clients) place themselves in the hands of other persons (servers)" (p. 326). He then made a distinction between two types of servers: "Perfunctory servers tend to have customers, "parties," or applicants; expert

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[55] See the data in the earlier part of this chapter regarding the growths in resegregation, teacher attrition, poverty, and public outcry over school closures.

[56] See Giroux (1981, p. 41) for the historical development of technocratic rationality.

servers tend to have clients…only experts are in a position to build [their] independence into a solemn and dignified role" (p. 325). The differences between the client-server dynamic, and the perfunctory-expert status are important to understanding the development of schools as total institutions. Webb (1981) referred to the student-teacher relationship as the "client-staff" dynamic, and from this point forward his distinction will be used (p. 221).

With the cycles of education reform and the 'crises' that have accompanied the more recent reform efforts,[57] it is quite probable that respect for and faith in the teaching profession has swayed in unison with the "curricular pendulum" (Gutek, 2000, p. 61-80). These shifts in respect and curriculum also make it probable that educators' institutional roles (in public perception and in reality) have fluctuated between expert and perfunctory staff. In fact, Giroux (2012) is among the many educators who have talked about the gradual "deskilling" of the teaching profession (paragraph 1). His point is well-taken; the description of deskilling certainly parallels Goffman's observation that perfunctory staff typically provide some sort of "technical service" to clients (p. 325). Educators as the perfunctory staff who administer the appropriate technology (test or curriculum) might seem like an appropriate (and unfortunate) observation of what those in power expect of educators in the current context. However, I do not think the perfunctory status accurately reflects the reality of what it means to teach in the institution. Given the rapid changes in 1) scripted and standardized teaching and learning, 2) testing as a means of student *and* teacher surveillance, and 3) the external support (i.e. financial persuasion and technological provisions) of venture philanthropists and 'educational' corporations, educators and students have now both been

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[57] See Berliner & Biddle (1997), Sacks (1999), Shor (1992), and Stone (2004) regarding the construction of 'crisis' in school reform efforts since *A Nation at Risk*.

shoved into the institutional compartment marked "client." The venture philanthropists, the tests, and the corporate and institutional bureaucracies which support and feed the testing industry have usurped the ranks of institutional 'expert.' Perhaps it could be attributed to their placement at the top of capitalistic hierarchy, but the venture philanthropists, in true paternalistic arrogance, perceive themselves as "those with an expertness that involves a rational, demonstrable competence that can be exercised as an end in itself and cannot reasonably be acquired by" the students, teachers, or communities who are frequently forced into receiving their services (Goffman, p. 325).

Summary

This chapter extended the cage metaphor and the theory of collateral oppression into a fuller analysis of the ways that intersecting oppressions apply to the entire teaching profession. This approach has made it possible to see that the forms and mechanisms of power which afflict the schooling institution are significantly dense. Gender, class, and race are extremely complicated oppressions when they stand in isolation; they are made even more problematic when their intersectionality becomes welded to the bureaucratic mechanism. The idea of total institutions, as a form of bureaucratic management and confinement, helps explain the complexities of what it feels like to be on the inside. It also becomes apparent that standardization, technological advancements, and the interference of venture philanthropists have hastened the schooling institution's evolution toward a more centralized system. As a result, teachers and students find themselves as the clients in a system that intends to assess, treat, and then 'cure' them of their human individuality.

The next chapter will take the complexities of the institutional cage and lay out the ways in which the corporatic, bureaucratic, and technocratic mentalities function as oppressive knowledges to create a system that is morally oppressive.

CHAPTER 4: INTERSECTING MENTALITIES OF FAITHLESSNESS

The corporatic, bureaucratic, and technocratic mentalities are as interconnected in American thinking as the intersecting oppressions are in American schooling. Just as it is difficult to separate race from class or gender from class, these ways of thinking and acting also overlap because they are very much one in the same. Thus, the process of understanding them is equally complex. But understanding these concepts in their isolation and at their intersections is necessary to making sense of how educators become confined and beat down not only by oppressive social systems and institutional mechanisms, but by corresponding ways of acting and oppressive ways of thinking.

Bureaucratic Obscurity

As individuals and schools continue to become part of the growing bureaucratic and centralized structure, community members and educators are nudged out of the localized governing process. This does several things. First, as decisions are increasingly placed into the hands of bureaucrats, policymakers, corporate reformers, venture philanthropists, and other "experts" the educator's power to influence change and decisions at the school level becomes diluted. The mandated use of scripted curricula and standardized testing only further confines autonomy in the classroom (see the perspectives of minority teachers in Chapter Three and their frustrations with the lack of power in resegregated schools). Second, as the chain of command ascends out of the reach of those in the schools, educators become distanced from the very people who make decisions about their profession. This allows the definition inherent in educators' voices, faces, and actions to absorb into the process and the

size of the sprawling institution. As this happens, the potential for individual recognition and any ease of democratic accessibility fades along with it.

But just as the human features of educators and students dissolve into the murk of bureaucratic mass, so too do the evident traces of power that would otherwise lead educators to those people who order the infliction of power. In this way, the obscuring quality of the bureaucratic abyss is bi-directional: those in power cannot see the inhumanity of their decisions, and those in the institution cannot easily see or access the humans who make the decisions. Furthermore, since bureaucracies and total institutions are presumed and perceived to be 'fair' or 'neutral,' it is easier for the histories of power (sexism, classism, racism, and bureaucratic management) to become incomprehensible. And because these oppressive histories and the direct sources of power are often indiscernible through the multitude of intersections and the bureaucratic obscurity, the classroom teacher can easily feel as though all power is just needlessly, illogically, and relentlessly cast down from above. In other words, this density disguises the intent; in the absence of an obvious intent, it can be replaced by a facade of 'neutrality.' Gender, class, and race slide into the background and bureaucracy appears at the forefront as the agitating (and more obvious) form of power. And for a teacher who has a minimal understanding of the power structures and their histories, it can be particularly difficult to make sense of *why* a supposedly 'neutral' system of procedures, protocols, and policies functions in such a way that it actually discourages justice and moral autonomy. Therefore, a conceptual and historical understanding of these forms of power is absolutely essential to an educator's well-being and her or his institutional survival.

<u>Corporate Obscurity & Mentality</u>

The blinding effect of bureaucracy is certainly not ameliorated by corporate influences. In fact, the location and source of power becomes even more distorted when corporate reformers, venture philanthropists, and others who are free from political and fiduciary responsibilities are allowed to exert power and influence over entire institutions. Gideon Sjoberg (1997) referred to this dynamic as "the informal economy...of the powerful corporate-state bureaucracy" in which power is exercised in the grey and undefined areas of "quasi-legal" interactions (p. 53). In much the same way that multi-national corporations avoid one country's strict regulations and high taxation by engaging in global migration, the financial elite can avoid personal consequences by influencing institutions and policy from outside political and bureaucratic constraints. The same can also be said of non-profit organizations and family foundations in particular. When the wealthiest groups are permitted to funnel disproportionate amounts of money into their own political causes, the democratic balance gets kicked off kilter. Not only do a few private interests easily outspend the majority of the public, but the tax structure actually provides private entities (foundations, venture philanthropists, and corporations) with exorbitant tax incentives for favoring their own interests and avoiding public accountability.[58] Of course, the ability of private entities

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[58] A prime example was the creation of Strong American Schools, an organization created by the Rockefeller Philanthropy Group and funded by The Broad Foundation and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The organizations were unable to financially back a political candidate, so they instead waged the Ed in '08 media campaign as a way to force education reform to the forefront of the presidential campaign (Herszenhorn, 2007; Kovacs & Christie, 2012; Saltman, 2012; Strong American Schools, 2008).

to avoid social and political accountability is particularly ironic when one considers the persistent push to make schools, teachers, and students more accountable to those private interests.

The political power play waged by corporate and philanthropic influences is most definitely undemocratic, and the manipulation that occurs out of the public's line of sight only causes further confusion. However, the meaning that rests within the assumptions of a corporatized view of thinking and acting is particularly detrimental to the schooling institution and the humanity of the people within. Chris Hedges' (2009) description of "the corporate state" and its accompanying characteristics articulates a particularly problematic assumption of the business 'logic' or corporate ideology. He said, "We kneel before a cult of the self, elaborately constructed by the architects of our consumer society, which dismisses compassion, sacrifice for the less fortunate, and honesty." Furthermore, he continued, "The methods used to obtain what we want, we are told... are irrelevant. Success, always defined in terms of money and power, is its own justification." At the heart of corporatism is the belief that things are only worthy of time, energy, and effort if they can be represented as or converted into financial value or the accumulation of power for oneself. The corporate mentality and this cost-benefit approach to 'values' undercuts the countless things and experiences (like the preciousness of childhood, for instance) that cannot be quantified in such terms. Worse yet, the corporate mentality rests upon the notion that human beings are worthless unless they possess a quality from which the corporatist can profit.

This belief that everything must equate to financial profit warrants a return to Tyack & Cuban's (1995) quotation from Chapter Three. Recall their summary on the most prevalent theme in recent school reform movements: "more days and hours of schooling,

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more academic courses, more attention to 'basics,' more discriminating standards for evaluating and compensating teachers, more standardized testing of pupil achievement, more elaborate reporting of test results by local districts to state officials" (p. 79, emphasis original). Of course, the authors' list could easily be updated with the developments of the last decade as well: more skills at an earlier age, more structured activities, more pre-tests to determine how students will do on the official tests, more gains, more scripted curricula to make sure more people are regurgitating more of the same information, more students in more virtual schools, more conformity, and more rigor.[59]

This incessant demand for *more,* as it is often used in terms of learning and standardized testing, also parallels the corporate model.[60] In particular it is tied to the severely unrealistic faith, or corporate fetish, of 'infinite growth.' In the business world, the notion of infinite growth is often applied to the size of a company, the company's stock price, or the value of a stock portfolio. At the classroom level, though, this absurd belief is revealed in the demand that this year's students must make gains in comparison to last year's students. It is also evident in the way that learning standards increase in number and

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[59] The word 'rigor' has become more popular in the speeches of reformers (U.S. Department of Education, Press Office, 2012). The use of the word is concerning because of its meaning: "1. Strictness or sterness, as in action, temperament, or judgment. 2. Hardship. 3. A cruel or severe act...5. *Physiol.* Rigidity in living tissues or organs that prevents response to stimuli" (*Webster's II: New Riverside New University Dictionary*, 1994, p. 1011).

[60] Boyles (2000) associated the corporate management model with the problems inherent to "consumer-materialist expectations: efficiency, authority, and good 'end products'" (p. 4, 41-60).

difficulty every couple years so that this year's second graders are expected to learn what last year's third graders learned. This notion pervades every aspect of high-stakes testing, test scores, and school grades. Unfortunately, the corporatized schooling model has no regard for the logic, ethics, and sustainability of its own processes. As such, the most vital questions regarding human growth and the emotional and cognitive appropriateness of corporatic demands get shut out of the dialogue by the "irrational exuberance" and the all-consuming quest for *more*.[61]

This faith, though, possesses the same tinge of irony that accountability does. That is, just as accountability fails to be applied to the corporate philanthropists who call for the greater accountability of educators, the mantra of infinite growth does not actually apply to the corporate world either (or to *the* world, for that matter). In business, the notion of infinite growth only further disguises and legitimizes the anti-democratic and inhumane aspects of competition and consumption. For example, consider a corporate 'growth' model that includes the intentional acquisition of other corporations. This is nothing more than a soft way of saying that the company intends to move toward monopolizing its sector by purchasing (devouring or consuming) their smaller or weaker competitors. [62] See,

[61] "Irrational exuberance" was used by Alan Greenspan in 1996 to describe the mentality of people, corporations, and organizations who engaged in the feeding frenzy of the 1990's technology bubble. This term has since been applied to the housing bubble and could easily be applied to the corporate and technocratic invasion of the public schools and what will likely be the student debt bubble of the current decade (Holt, p. 125).

[62] Saltman (2012) referred to this practice in the technology industry and by Bill Gates in particular as the knack for "commercializing and monopolizing the innovations of others" (p.

competitors and the notion of competition are absolutely *necessary* to maintaining the facade of the infinite growth model. Thus, the call for competition is little more than a tactic to lure the small into the feeding ground of the large and powerful.

Ferguson (1984) explained that much of the same happens within the bureaucratic institutions of a capitalist society: "...organizations must be viewed as resources for other organizations in an environment invaded by bureaucratic discourse... Those organizations that are surrounded by more powerful bureaucracies are, of course, more likely to *be* a resource..." (p. 40, original emphasis). In business and in bureaucracy, 'infinite growth' is little more than a gluttonous expansion that occurs via the consumption of others' ideas and resources. This belief is not only terribly detrimental; it is groundless. *Nothing* grows infinitely. And when unrealistic expectations for infinite growth are forced and imposed upon human beings, they work to shove those individuals closer to breakage, collapse, or death. One need only consider the damage that would be caused to the well-being of humanity if the infinite 'growth' model was forcibly applied to the expansion of the human population on this finite planet. Or in more particular terms, imagine the damage to one's health if the infinite growth model was applied to the human body or the waistline.

The profit-driven nature of business logic and the empty faith of infinite growth could not stand in greater contrast than they do against the organic processes of human growth and

14). An alternative to consumptive technological and business practices can be found in the democratic potential of open source systems, shareware, and crowd sourcing. Such technologies encourage cooperation, contribution, and shared purpose by creating an environment that fosters the constructions of shared knowledge and product. The benefits are extensive because personal growth and growth for the greater good are both fostered.

learning. This contrast is even more evident when the interpersonal culture of the teaching profession[63] is considered alongside the female predominance of the profession and the feminine tendency to "[operate] within a morality of responsibility and care" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule; 1986; p. 8). The corporate mentality, with its inhumane distortions of growth and value, is not only unsustainable; it is morally impotent. However, this approach to acting and valuing is colonizing the institution and its culture, and as a result, it has threatened to do the same to the profession's morality. There can be little surprise that educators would take on intense anxiety and psychological pains in this process.

<div align="center">Technocratic Rationality</div>

Some of the most confining mechanisms in the schools (standardization, surveillance, and high-stakes testing) are deeply rooted to what Henry Giroux (1981) called the "culture of positivism" and the "technocratic rationality." Like the forms of oppression that have been discussed in the previous chapters, these ways of thinking and acting overlap and they permeate society and the schooling institution. However, breaking the culture of positivism and the technocratic mentality down into individual components can highlight the pervasiveness of and strength behind the push for standardization and high-stakes testing.

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[63] Lortie (1975) analyzed the profession's perspective on purpose and found that "achievement" within the culture was associated with creating connections with students while fostering a love for learning: "The mastering of interpersonal processes, then, can be seen as close to the heart of the respondents' definitions of high performance in their craft" (p. 118-119).

Giroux explained that the culture of positivism is bound to a narrow and detrimental understanding of science. He said, "Based upon the logic of scientific methodology with its interest in explanation, prediction, and technical control, the principle of rationality in the natural sciences was seen as vastly superior to the hermeneutic principles underlying the speculative social sciences" (p. 42). Among the multitude of damaging side-effects to be yielded by the culture of positivism are the unrealistic beliefs that 1) 'truth' and knowledge can only be validated through scientific method and mathematical logic and 2) science and knowledge are 'objective' or value-neutral (p. 37-62). As Giroux pointed out, though, no form of research or knowledge is completely value-neutral because the human beings who engage in it are never fully capable of stepping outside of their own experiences and perspectives. Despite this fact, however, the belief that 'objectivity' can be achieved through scientific and mathematical methodologies results in an atmosphere where the knowledge created within the framework of hard science goes unquestioned. Meanwhile, the disproportionate value accorded to the hard sciences works to systematically delegitimize social science, philosophy, history, humanities, and all other forms of knowledge that depict or explain the inherently beautiful and unpredictable reality of human existence.

As other scholars have shown, the positivist culture has been part of American schooling for more than a century. Its existence has varied in intensity, of course, but its emergence is often associated with the implementation of Frederick Taylor's method of scientific management and the assumption of factory-style models in teaching and learning.[64] Giroux (1981) explained that from this perspective, "…[schools] were viewed as factories, students as raw material, and educational issues concerning knowledge, values, and social

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[64] See Au (2009, 2011), Spring (2005), Tyack (1974), Tyack & Cuban (1995).

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relationships were reduced to the language of neutrality, technique, and strict means-ends reasoning." It could certainly be argued that this historical depiction is not so very different from the current climate. As he further explained, the development of the culture of positivism may be most problematic because of its ideological manifestation: "As theory was replaced by methodology… questions regarding moral values and ethics were framed within a logic that celebrated 'scientific' knowledge and bureaucratic organization," (p. 10). Thus, the belief in the supremacy of 'science' and the belief in the supreme efficiency of bureaucratic management merged together. This merger of beliefs developed into both the essence and the problem of the technocratic rationality.

That the scientific faith meshed with the bureaucratic faith is not necessarily surprising. After all, the belief that each is 'fair' or value-neutral and the fact that each is also geared toward "control, prediction, and certainty" make them a likely yet harmful match (p. 9).[65] This combination is particularly troubling at the individual level (and, therefore, should be most concerning) because of where such modes of belief and management ascribe the location of knowledge, experience, and morality. First, at the very root of this way of thinking is the assumption that there is only one, supreme form of "monological knowledge" (p. 10). In other words, eminence is bestowed upon anything believed to be 'scientifically-' or 'mathematically'-based while all other ways of seeing and coming to understand the world are shoved aside. Second, as long as a belief in this hierarchy of knowledge is maintained, then scientific and mathematical representations will be treated as superior to and more valid than any individual's experience. This acceptance, of course, leads further to the formation of processes and beliefs that any person's experience, perception, or knowledge is valid *only*

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[65] See also Ferguson (1984), Foucault (1977), Goffman (1961), Webb (1981).

to the extent that it mimics the conclusions manufactured by metrics or 'science.' And on the most fundamental level, this specific assumption leads to the tragic belief that knowledge and meaning do not reside within oneself; they cannot be constructed by the human individual. Finally, as Giroux suggested, such privileging of 'scientific' methodology and 'knowledge' undercuts and devalues the importance of theoretical work.[66] And unfortunately this devaluation of theory yields a particularly damaging effect: it works to smother the necessary, humane, and theory-laden work of ethical critique and moral inquiry.

The positivist, bureaucratic, and technocratic reliance upon specialists and consultants means that the students and teachers who actually engage in the experience of growth and learning are persistently encouraged to look toward someone or something else (like the 'scientific' technology of standardized tests) to analyze and validate their experiences for them. Meanwhile, the bureaucratic system demands that individuals rely upon 'expertly'-devised manuals of protocol, procedure, and curricula to make classroom-, school-, and district-based decisions *for* them. Not every educator buys into such beliefs and mechanisms, of course, but they still must grapple with the systematic constraints that discourage thinking, experimentation, and reflection. More importantly, if these beliefs and mechanisms are grasped onto by an individual, they begin to encourage the loss of faith in oneself. In the worst cases, these systems combine and discipline the individual to accept that one cannot fully trust what she or he actually knows. Hanging in this perpetual state of personal distrust can cause one to feel and function like an experiential schizophrenic, so to

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[66] "Wrapped in the logic of fragmentation and specialization, positivist rationality divorces 'fact' from its social and historical context and ends up glorifying scientific methodology at the expense of a more rational mode of thinking" (Giroux, 1981, p. 45).

speak. The ensuing confusion is only further intensified and complicated, though, as the bureaucratic intersects with the corporatic. That is, the conversion of students and scores into school profit and performance-based pay places many teachers in a position where they quite literally cannot *afford* to trust their own experiences.

The intersection of the positivistic, corporatic, bureaucratic, and technocratic ways of thinking about and managing people is a critical component to the oppression of the teaching profession. This is because each of these mentalities converges at a common and detrimental vertex: the expectation that the construction and validation of an individual's knowledge, experience, and morality should be outsourced to someone or something else. That is, there is a persistent push to relegate these profoundly important and deeply intimate aspects of an individual's existence to apparatuses (high-stakes tests, scripted curricula), systems (technologies, databases, and bureaucratic protocols), people (venture philanthropists, policymakers, bureaucrats, and 'experts'), and organizations (corporations and philanthropic groups who make policies and technologies to validate educators' experiences) that stand far beyond the experiences and knowledges that reside in the human beings who toil away in the classrooms and schools. The most troubling aspect, of course, is that the assumption of this mentality equates to the outsourcing of control, power, and authority over oneself as well.

Again, neither the outsourcing of experiential validation nor the technocratic fixation in schools is necessarily surprising given the tendency (or preference) of total institutions to rely upon externally defined roles, external support, and expert servicing.[67] The process is less mysterious altogether when the following is considered of the corporations, individuals, and venture philanthropists who so willingly fund and then force their technocratic

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[67] See Chapter Three for the explanation of the six characteristics of total institutions.

realization on schools and policies. First, they profit in finance and power when the belief

system is propagated. And second, they are the very people who sit atop the scientific,

mathematical, technological, and financial hierarchies that are all worshipped by the

technocratic mentality, the culture of positivism, and the capitalistic society.[68]

The idea that a human being constructs knowledge, can discover and enact moral

agency, and can validate and make sense of personal experience does not exist within the

frames of bureaucratic and technocratic thinking. Likewise, the idea that intrinsic experience

and human individuality, growth, and value are incalculable and unquantifiable is absent

from the corporatic and bureaucratic mentalities. These intersecting mentalities are as

encompassing as they are burdensome for both the individual and society because their

crushing weight gradually works to strangle the faith in oneself, in others, and in humanity in

general. And in that respect, these intersecting mentalities are really just beliefs of

faithlessness. The system which ascribes to this type of faithlessness can only represent

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[68] The arrogance and self-infatuation of those who hold and propagate this faith were

apparent in a report by the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology

(2004): "We need only to look at the CEO's of the Fortune 100 companies, 55% of whom

have STEM backgrounds, to understand how much current success depends on technical

talent and training" (p. 2). Of course, the most influential organizations and foundations in

current education policy (Gates, Walton, Broad, Robertson, and Dell Foundations; the

Business Roundtable; Strong American Schools; and the Aspen Institute) abound with former

CEOs, board members, and leaders from scientific, technological, engineering, mathematics,

and financial sectors (Kovacs, 2012; Ravitch, 2010).

complete and constant contradiction for the person who spends her or his days in the presence of the genius and beautiful uniqueness of children.

Alienation from the Process & 'Product' of Growth

The cost-benefit method of appraising human value and the corporate and techno-bureaucratic method of management both work to alienate educators and communities from their governing processes. A prime example of this is the practice of executively-appointed positions of power like those for school board or superintendent.[69] First, this political selection process undermines the public's ability to elect leaders and to enact recourse against those leaders as necessary. A second problem is that the process restricts the ability of the public to attain positions within their own government. Ideological differences and social and cultural capital definitively influence who will be chosen as 'executive' and who that person will then appoint. In other words, executive appointments are not value-neutral, and this means that citizens with differing perspectives or those who lack access to the 'executive' have diminished chances of being appointed to political office. (For a parallel to this argument, one need only consider the miniscule number of educators who get 'appointed' to education-related positions within the government.) Finally, by allowing the practice of executive appointment to pervade school politics, the public actually outsources its own democracy: it hands off governmental appointments to someone else. This type of democratic outsourcing coincides with the assumption that votes and public engagement are not entirely necessary for public decisions. When this is accepted, citizens and executive

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[69] Ravitch (2010, p. 69-92, 195-197) and Tyack (1974, p. 126-176) detailed the problems and the effects of this type of district management model.

management alike can then assume the severely undemocratic and paternalistic belief that those in charge are best equipped to make decisions *for* the public. This type of political process and the ensuing alienation from power both are fundamentally tied to a distorted perspective on human value: the notion that the perspectives of some (experts, specialists, and those in a position of power) are more valuable or legitimate than the perspectives of the remainder.

The effects of languishing democratic practices on educators are only further complicated for educators because of the realities of their civil servant status. As state and district employees, alienation from the governing process *means* alienation from the labor process. Before proceeding with this theory of alienation, though, it is first necessary to revisit one point. It should be recalled that this analysis rests upon the personal belief that many people enter this profession with a desire to teach, to experience growth, to engage with and assist the youth, and to take part in a moral or civic obligation to the community. Clearly, the meanings for such occupational goals will vary from person to person. However, indications for the social and moral intentions of educators can be gleaned from the primary source of their satisfactions: the intrinsic rewards which are rooted in the interpersonal achievement of human connection (Lortie, 1975, p. 27). It can be assumed, then, that growth (both in oneself and in one's students) is the ideal process and product toward which loving and democratically-minded educators labor.[70]

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[70] The term "product" is used here as an extension of Karl Marx's (1986) theory of alienation; it does not imply the belief that growth actually is a tangible and quantifiable product (p. 29-78). The understanding of growth implied here is taken from Dewey (1938/1997): "...from the standpoint of growth as education and education as growth the question is whether growth

That being said, the external mechanisms of control[71] and the various societal[72] and institutional mentalities[73] interlock with the individual's oppressive knowledges. This multitude of beliefs gradually clamps down upon the educator's labor process. In doing so, they work to bind the malleability of her or his actions, an aspect which is particularly vital to the growth and work of an educator. This inevitably constricts the teacher's ability to experiment with and create environments well-suited for the cultivation of meaningful,

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in this direction promotes or retards growth in general" (p. 36). More specifically, he said physical, intellectual, and emotional growth could be qualified as educative or mis-educative based on how well experience shapes a flexibility and openness toward future learning experiences.

[71] See Chapters Two &Three for discussions on mechanisms like sexist, racist, and classist hierarchies of power; racist staffing practices; resegregation and school closures; disproportionate funding; standardization; high-stakes testing; scripted curricula; performance-based pay.

[72] The social mentalities that are both forced upon and held by the schooling institution, as discussed in this chapter, are the bureaucratic, corporatic, positivistic, and technocratic.

[73] See Chapter Three for the beliefs and expectations inherent to total institutions: they have externally defined roles and they rely upon external support and expert servicing. Schools, as total institutions, are expected to turn everywhere but inward for solutions and validation.

student growth.[74] Growth then becomes stunted for both teacher and student, and both

individuals become alienated from the products of their labor.

Summary

There are several conclusions to be drawn from the intersection of the bureaucratic,

corporatic, and technocratic mentalities. The primary intersecting flaw is that each aims to

quantify and then privilege some human beings or some forms of knowledge over others. It

is through this common but distorted view on value that each mentality is also able to adhere

by the notion that individuals should rely upon something or someone else (like an expert,

authority figure, or technological device) for the construction of knowledge, the

determination of moral action, and the validation of personal experience. Finally, there is the

belief that certainty can be obtained in an uncertain world. The technocratic and bureaucratic

mentalities both fixate on obtaining this via prediction and control. Meanwhile, the

bureaucratic structure (especially in the case of the total institution) attempts to eliminate

human error by creating systems of procedures, protocols, policies, and technologies that

force a paternalistic oversight upon the human beings within its scope.[75]

Most troubling to the human individual is that at the heart of the bureaucratic, the

corporatic, and the technocratic is a lack of faith in the uniqueness and beauty of human

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[74] From a Deweyan perspective, "It is the business of the educators to supply an environment

so that this reaching out of an experience may be fruitfully rewarded and kept continuously

active" (Dewey, 1916, p. 245). See also Hansen (2001).

[75] As was stated earlier in the chapter, this is also rooted to the culture of positivism (Giroux,

1981, p. 42).

individuality and growth. When this faithlessness permeates society and school policy, the bureaucratic schooling institution becomes the medium through which sexist, classist, racist, and bureaucratic forms of power are enacted; the educator exists as the locale upon which those power structures are actually constructed. If she or he becomes caged by this multitude of external and internal constraints, and if power is centralized into the hands of those who lack an expansive, democratic, and moral vision for the youth, then the educator becomes a mere handmaiden who exercises and reproduces someone else's inhumane form of power.

This outcome, of course, results in the pain and psychological harm of being severed from one's moral purpose, one's moral conception of self, and inevitably, one's moral growth. When Cudd's (2006) definition of oppression is revisited – "an institutionally structured, unjust harm perpetrated on groups by other groups through direct and indirect material and psychological forces" – it becomes apparent that the institutional climate is not only oppressive; it is morally oppressive (p. 28). But what exactly does it mean to say that a person is morally oppressed? What does it mean at the particular level, and what can be done about it? The concluding chapter turns to these questions, and perhaps the best way to begin doing so is with a concrete example by way of narrative.

CHAPTER 5: REPOSITIONING LOVE'S MORAL ROLE IN EDUCATION

Actual freedom lies in the realization of that end which actually satisfies. An end may be freely adopted and yet its actual working-out may result not in freedom, but slavery...Only that end which executed really effects greater energy and comprehensiveness of character makes for actual freedom (Dewey, 1891/1969, p. 343).

<u>A Sketch</u>

My colleagues and I were required to adhere to a "research-based" reading program called Success For All (SFA). At a cost of tens of thousands of dollars each year, SFA provided our school with structures for testing, labelling, and categorizing students so that they and the teachers could be filed "neatly" into daily reading blocks. Like many prefabricated curricular programs, it scripted nearly every one of the ninety minutes that I shared with my students. The one exception to this rule took place in a ten minute allotment called Listening Comprehension. This segment was the only unscripted part of the entire reading block, and in hindsight, it was often the only period that actually equated to any real learning. Teachers were "allowed" to choose any book to read to the kids during this time, and it was permissible even to allow curiosities and conversations to meander into unforeseen destinations. But, it was mandated that we stick to the schedule; any question or idea that threatened to expand beyond the specified allotment was expected to be pruned sharply at the ten minute mark.

This brief tease of autonomous bliss was, ironically, followed by ten minutes of mindless obedience to the Word Wall. SFA provided us with approximately ten words each week, and while one would assume that they were intended to challenge the children, they rarely did so. There was a ritual for the 'learning' (or saying) of these words: teacher points to the word, teacher says the word, children say the word, and repeat. After all words had been said four times, there was a brief discussion on the definition of each word. This monotony was repeated with the same set of words for five consecutive days.

It is not difficult to imagine that children would rapidly lose interest in this process, especially if they already knew each word on the list. My students were outspoken and quick-witted, and it became apparent by week two that they had reached the threshold of boredom. Our repeating voices had all the gusto of a call and response session in some Gregorian chant. As a way to entertain myself and them I attempted to speak the words with an exceedingly sarcastic enthusiasm, but their monotone responses were unmistakable: this was meaningless, it was degrading to each of us, and we all simply hated it. They knew all the words and their definitions, and they also knew that this was a complete waste of our time.

Assessing the situation and the abilities of my students, I decided that the best we could do was to 'one up' the vocabulary words SFA had rationed to us. I told each of the students to grab a thesaurus off the bookshelf. Most of them had no clue what the book was or how to use it, but they curiously dug in and toyed with the synonyms they found from their random explorations. They giggled at the sounds of newly-found words, they playfully constructed sentences around their discoveries, and they awed at one another's abilities to sound out the "really big words." After we surveyed the alphabetical layout of the book, I

asked them to look up the first word on the Word Wall. As they turned to the correct page,

they found delight in the abundance of descriptive and lengthy alternatives to the drab and

unanimated words that just stuck, lifelessly, to our wall.

We decided to adopt a new and seemingly innocent activity to fill this ten minute

segment each day: I would say the word on the wall, the students would look it up in the

thesaurus, and then they would each share a favorite or more extravagant synonym for SFA's

word. Their vocabularies were expanding, they were reading and decoding new words, they

were honing their abilities to alphabetize, and we were all finally content with and engaged in

that small portion of reading class. We had about three weeks of luck before the reading

coach's daily rounds brought her to our classroom. She was puzzled by what she saw: our

class had strayed from the SFA structure. It was well-known by every teacher that such a

move was forbidden. In fact, we were reminded numerous times each year by the principal,

"SFA is not going anywhere. If you don't like teaching it, I'll help you find another job."

Needless to say, I was not terribly surprised when I found myself being reprimanded

at the end of the school day. I defended myself and my students by detailing the educational

value of our activities, the rationale for my straying from the structure, and the hypocrisy of

SFA's claims regarding learning. I finally abandoned the conversation with the reading

coach in complete disgust. The absurdity was disorienting: how could she ignore the fact that

my students were not learning with the materials I had been required to use? Most disturbing

was that she refused to acknowledge that her adherence to the worthless structure was

sacrificing the growth of my students and me. My argument and my logic went to waste, and

I was ordered to return to the routine of stagnation.

Like many teachers who find themselves in a similar situation, I shared this story with only my closest colleagues and my family. Then I closed my classroom door, went about my work, and found other ways to silently resist the controlling system that was restraining my students' growth and the development of my craft.

Moral Oppression

This is one example of the many infuriating institutional contradictions that gnawed at me and my colleagues. Looking back now, it is much easier to isolate the problems and their ties to power and oppressive mentalities. Of course, expensive and hollow programs like SFA are reserved for the schools with low-income and high-minority student populations; they and their use are inherently racist and classist.[76] The ridiculousness of the technocratic and positivistic mentalities was underscored by the school's belief that the term "research-based" actually meant something of value. The flaw of the bureaucratic mentality was present in the dogmatic worship of structure, protocol, and hierarchy. And the wasteful and illogical reality of the consumerist and corporatic faiths existed in the school's belief that a corporation (like SFA) was best equipped to tell the teachers and students how to act, interact, and how to think. Each of these mentalities expresses the belief that anyone *but* the individuals engaged in the learning process should be guiding and validating it. And again, the underlayment for this belief is the inherent and problematic drive to outsource the construction of knowledge, experience, and morality to someone or something else.

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[76] This was the case across the school district, and it was a point well-made by Kozol (2005) also.

This example is clearly different from the blatant injustices of school closures, resegregation, and the disproportionate attrition that has been forced on minority teachers. In some respect, this problem may seem less harmful. But scenarios like this are prevalent in schools, and they are significant and problematic because of a common, defining quality: they occur *silently*. That is, because these types of contradictions and exchanges occur between individuals and within an extremely controlling public institution, those on the outside (the public) rarely hear about the illogical and detrimental restrictions like the one described above. And if one desired to speak about the epidemic of this problem in general terms, what language could one use? It is related to so many forms of power – class, race, gender, and the oppressive corporate and techno-bureaucratic mentalities – that it cannot necessarily be named sexism or racism or any other '-ism.' The intersectionality of this cage is so overwhelming that it is difficult for teachers to speak of this type of institutional oppression, to understand it, and to feel it as anything other than just plain *wrong*.

Altering the classroom environment to the benefits of one's students and to the best of one's abilities seems right and good. In fact, it seems morally obvious. But the story above details how easily a teacher's drive to do the right thing can be set in tension *by* the institutional structures and the reactions of those who reside in positions of power. These mechanisms, these ways of thinking about and running the schools, these ways of raising the nation's youth have all latched onto the institution in ways that are morally oppressive: they encourage one to ignore and suppress her morality, her moral impulses, and her moral way of knowing. In doing so, they make every attempt to invalidate the teacher's moral knowledge and her personal growth. And by restricting a teacher's growth, these mechanisms and

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mentalities inevitably restrict students' growth. This is the essence of moral oppression, but what does it actually mean to be moral? And how does one construct moral knowledge?

Perceiving Emotion as a Moral Way of Knowing

The reflective process transitions into a phase of deliberation when the individual must determine *what* to do (Dewey, 1932/1989, p. 273). According to John Dewey, deliberation typically focuses on choices which are primarily quantitative: "The value is technical, professional, economic, etc., as long as one thinks of it as something which one can aim at and attain by way of having" (p. 274). For instance, one might deliberate over alternative routes to work while she is sitting in rush hour traffic. She weighs the benefits of one alternative against another as she considers the meeting that cannot be missed and the impact her potential lateness could have upon her relations at work and upon her livelihood. The route of a person's daily commute may not say much about the individual; it could be said to lack moral value. However, the transportation the person chooses to utilize in getting to work might suggest something entirely different. It might hint at the inner workings of the agent, at the individual's emotional and intellectual disposition, or at the conscious and active concern for one's own health or one's impact on the earth's environment.

Deliberation ranges in complexity and import, of course, but the process acquires a moral property when the weighing of values related to the self is combined with concerns about quality. In other words, morality is qualitative; it deals with the *quality* of *oneself*. As such, moral deliberation is tethered to a question that seems both personal and simple: Who *am* I? The answer to such a question, though, is neither simple nor entirely personal, and an

understanding of the relationship between character, conduct, and consequence do play an integral part in such an inquiry.

In *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics* (1891/1969), Dewey stated that character is "an *attitude* of the agent toward conduct, as expressing the kind of motives which upon the whole moves him to action" (p. 246, original emphasis). He went on to explain that character and conduct are not just intimately connected, but that they are essentially one in the same. One's actions are merely the external expression of one's internal attitude, meaning that only conduct can provide evidence for the character that truly lies within. As an individual's character is born through conduct, it inevitably makes its way into the world in the form of consequence. The tendency in many situations is to judge consequence as good or bad, as either positive or negative, but the weight of one's actions is often revealed in ways which land on both ends of this spectrum. This factor undoubtedly lends toward the inherently unpredictable characteristic of consequence. It manifests differently throughout every environment, and it extends for distances and in ways that can certainly overwhelm the imagination of someone who attempts to envision its reach and impact.

A person seeking to answer the question "Who *am* I?" must take notice of consequence as it unfolds in and around her. Ultimately, she must examine whether her conduct and its resulting consequences align with her moral self-perception or the way *she* perceives her own sense of character. Through observation and attentiveness, through tweaks and adjustments, she comes to feel the ways her actions affect herself and her state of well-being. A teacher, for instance, might see herself as a loving person. She feels intrinsically gratified by her work and prides herself on the affection and concern she feels for her students. The qualities of pride, affection, and concern can be very beautiful to the one who

experiences them and attempts to express them. However, they are also very complicated ways of feeling. Without periodic reflection and attention, these expressions can evolve into ways of acting that can mean over-protective, restrictive, or paternalistic consequences for others. This potential is the very reason why it is not enough for an individual to only tend to the feelings as they are revealed within oneself. The teacher who desires to grow in the sense of love must check those feelings and her or his moral self-perception against the evidence that can be gleaned from those in the surrounding social environment.

By surveying the quality of human interaction as it occurs in, through, and around oneself a person can seek out the most basic moral element to character and conduct: emotional consequence. Mood, posture, facial expression, tone of voice, inflection, and even breathing patterns or sighs are the medium through which emotional consequence resonates. This resonance is influenced and shaped, of course, by the limitless variations of the people involved. Personal experience, selective attention, and conscious and unconscious judgements all blend and intertwine to create an infinite array of emotional timbres and connections: a unique kinship may develop between a student and a teacher, or an indescribable energy might congeal suddenly among the people who fill a classroom.

The emotional consequence that emerges from such relationships and interactions amass into patterns and tendencies, and they provide educators with what Jim Garrison (1997) called "sympathetic data" (p. 35). As such, emotion (as it is felt in oneself) and emotional consequence (as it is perceived in the responses of others) are tools which are crucial to learning and to honing the craft of teaching. As Dewey's (1910/1997b) work attests, emotion provides the foundation for learning: it provides the feeling that urges inquiry, and it is the fuel that sees learners to the resolutions of their quests. Thus, emotional

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consequence is vital to the learner, but it is equally important to the teacher as well. It can be interpreted by teachers to help them better understand their students, to meet their needs, to anticipate their developing questions, and to channel their energies toward productive and beneficial ends. In some respect, working with students and the act of 'conducting class' are really very similar to conducting a group of musicians: it is the art of reading, shaping, and working with the sounds and the emotions created by individuals.

Verbal and written communication can obviously aid in verifying the interpretations and conclusions that a teacher draws from the palette of sympathetic data. There are occasions when students are so emotionally and linguistically attuned that they articulate their thoughts and feelings with a bluntness that is both endearing and shocking. In cases like these where little is left to the imagination, a teacher's reliance upon emotional perception can relax somewhat. But the importance and function of one's emotional interpretation is very different when working with very young children, with students who are non-verbal, with students who have suffered abuse or trauma, or with anyone who struggles to effectively integrate their emotion and action in the form of body language or linguistic communication. In fact, one's emotional intuitiveness is quite often the greatest asset in relationships such as these. The persistent willingness to tinker with the emotional environment and to extract nuance out of it is often the only thing that allows a teacher to discover the aversions, sensitivities, needs, and desires that impact a student's comfort level and, thus, her or his ability to grow.

As a teacher cultivates an openness to sensing emotional consequence and the courage to interpret the sympathetic data that arise, however, the emotional timbre becomes much more than just an instrument for facilitating the growth of students. It becomes the resource

for testing and experimenting with the effectiveness of one's own conduct, and in this respect emotion contributes to a most basic human understanding. As Dewey (1932/1989) said, that is, "*Emotional* reactions form the chief materials of our knowledge of ourselves and of others" (p. 269, original emphasis). In other words, the emotions which flow from interactions *with others* come to provide some of the most fundamental evidence for gauging the quality of *oneself*. Thus, human interaction and emotional consequence are both essential to the development of an individual's moral self-perception and moral growth.

This does not imply, however, that a person becomes morally self-determined by seeking the answers *from* others. Morality simply cannot be outsourced because, ultimately, some aspect of one's individuality and personal will are responsible for such a determination. Instead, the existing understanding of who I am is made clearer; it is shaped or validated, and it is set into question through the connections one makes and the actions one carries out *with* others. Through those interactions the emotional consequences provide the glimpses that allow a person to see and feel the accuracy of her or his own moral self-perception as it is reflected back through the words, perceptions, expressions, and actions of others. This means that the teacher who tends to the social and emotional environment with some element of conscientiousness, sympathy, and passion cannot help but see and feel the ways her or his own conduct affects oneself and one's students. This is the case when the environment and interactions are healthy and thriving, as well as when they are toxic and damaging. It is unavoidable: "The admiration and resentment of others is the mirror in which one beholds the moral quality of his act reflected back to him" (Dewey, 1932/1989, p. 246). Therefore, a teacher's moral well-being, the understanding of who I am, is unequivocally tied to one's students and the status of *their* emotional and intellectual well-being. The system that

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expects teachers to suppress their moral and emotional understanding – the one that coerces them to persist with practices they know to be meaningless, "mis-educative," and harmful to their students – is actually asking them to engage in self-mutilation.[77] And sadly, there can be little doubt that such an environment also teaches children to do the same.

<div align="center">The Door of Resistance</div>

The works of Foucault (1977 & 1982), Ferguson (1984), Goffman (1961), and Webb (1981) all addressed the ways that bureaucratic organizations and total institutions wear away at one's identity and individuality. But as Foucault (1982) pointed out, much can be learned from the human responses elicited by these types of environments. He said even more can be learned, though, from the commonalities inherent to the power struggles in general: "These struggles are not exactly for or against the 'individual,' but rather they are struggles against the 'government of individualization'...[they] are struggles against the privileges of knowledge" (p. 212). Resistance, then, is not just a response to the oppressive contamination of one's environment; it is the expressed desire to salvage some portion of oneself and one's knowledge from the toxic seepage. Understanding a common tactic that teachers use to preserve their knowledge and morality is essential to learning how to let go of this moral oppression.

One of the most prevalent ways in which teachers seek to protect themselves, their students, and their craft is through a very simple and often silent act of resistance: they close their classroom doors. For better and worse, teachers are somewhat notorious in this way, but

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[77] "Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience" (Dewey, 1938/1997a, p. 25).

the function and symbolism in the action is most important. See, the poignant realities of life – from its heart-wrenching beauty to its disgustingly unwarranted social injustices – weigh upon the soul of the teacher. The school and the classroom often provide the teacher with a cross-section through which to gauge society's health; it is a reality that people in many other fields never have the privilege and the horror of seeing. In many ways it is haunting, and to say that teachers are merely skilled in taking on the burden of this reality would be a substantial understatement. In fact, the strongest and most dedicated teachers go about their work with a type of determined resilience that often mirrors the life of the single mother. They work endlessly; they care for everyone but themselves; they accept a meager salary because they prefer to spend time with "their" kids; their minds reel with concern for their students; they frequently go without in order to provide for the ones they love; and because they have so little, they draw on their resourcefulness to create fun and wonder out of complete simplicity (a paper bag, scraps of paper, egg cartons, or melted crayon bits). The most astounding aspect, though, also happens to be the one that runs most parallel to single motherhood: rarely is the struggle accompanied by a request for help. Yet the immensity of the teacher's work makes this a curious occurrence. So, why do they not ask for help?

The ability to juggle all these tasks and needs, and the willingness to overcome the difficulties of doing so, is a common source of pride among the people in the field. And while this is a noble and admirable quality, it needs to be said that their endurance, their self-reliance, and their resourcefulness have often been strengthened in response to a searing exhaustion: one that has come from persistently asking for help and then persistently *not* being heard. But to assume that the repetitious and unanswered call for help is that of some damsel in distress is to be completely misguided and, in fact, misogynistic. The best teachers

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desire to be "rescued" no more than the single mother desires to be "saved" from her own children. In reality, the call that the profession has relentlessly hollered at the face of American society is really just a request for *shared* responsibility: "Help me *care* for our children. After all, they are just as much *yours* as they are *mine*." But, a system that is rampant with childhood poverty and dilapidated school buildings hardly reflects a response to the profession's request for help with adequate health services, proper nourishment, and justly funded schools.

Unfortunately, though, deaf ears do eventually discipline a screaming individual into silence, and in doing so, teachers become effectively subordinated to the full weight of their burden. This means that in many ways, the teaching culture has been *taught* to close the door. They have been taught to do so by the many on the outside who have failed to genuinely listen to and then help address the needs of those on the inside. And at the same time, through the experience of burdening their silence, teachers have had to figure out how to best negotiate the weight of society's negligence. Many have done so to the best of their abilities, and thus, they have come to learn that independence and self-reliance are their most consistent means of survival. The practice of laboring silently under the burden is both taught by society and learned through individual experience. Pride simply becomes a way of coping with it, which is certainly a difficult justification with which to argue.

The silence, however, is more than just a burden and a sense of pride. It is a defense mechanism, particularly in the case of the corporate and techno-bureaucratic style of "help:" technological surveillance hastens the latching doors, while methods of control further intensify teachers' suspicions of "help" in general. Meanwhile, the institutional cage – which rests upon the foundation of faithlessness – systematically condemns anything related to the

individual. Autonomous agency; individualized needs, circumstances, and solutions; and trust in an individual's knowledge, experience, and self are all depreciated and discouraged by the institution. As a result, (and what many people likely fail to realize) this schooling climate has created an entire culture in which educators frequently feel compelled to 'break' the rules for the *good* of their students. As Garrison (1997) put it, the best teachers "violate the intent if not the letter of institutional laws, regulations, and rules of policy to actualize the values of their vocation" (p. 163). These actions and desires comprise a moral underworld, so to speak: 'moral' because teachers attempt to right injustice and 'underworld' because their methods are unacceptable inside the corporate and techno-bureaucratic cage. Behind the door, in the shadows, and under the radar, countless educators fight against the cogs of the massive social and economic system that seems hell-bent on subordinating, failing, and disposing of the human beings for whom teachers care. Thus, closing the door is a way to protect one's students, it is a way to shield oneself from retribution and the institutional disapproval of autonomy, and because a teacher's moral self-perception is tied to the well-being of one's students, 'breaking' the rules is often the only way to engage in moral self-preservation.

The driving force behind the actions in this moral underworld is what Alison Jaggar (1989) called "outlaw emotions," or the unconventional ways of feeling and perceiving the world. These are the feelings of smouldering outrage elicited by institutional policies that refuse to value children as unique individuals, or those policies that restrict student growth, reserve the worst curriculum for the neediest learners, and attempt to hold children accountable for society's neglect. However, as Jaggar pointed out, by acknowledging our "irritability, revulsion, anger, and fear," and then seeking the meaning behind these feelings,

we can "bring to consciousness our 'gut-level' awareness that we [and those we care for] are in a situation of coercion, cruelty, injustice, or danger." These nagging feelings beg us to acknowledge and question the existing state of things, and in doing so, they urge individuals to envision and create a more humane world.

Outlaw emotions *are* the fuel for change, but there is an emotive and moral need in these feelings that makes the act of closing the door (literally and metaphorically) problematic to the individual and the community. That is, when intense feelings of personal conflict are "experienced by isolated individuals, those concerned may be confused, unable to name their experience; they may even doubt their own sanity" (Jaggar, 1989, p. 160). Because of this, expression, inquiry, and validation are absolutely necessary to understanding and then resolving these feelings. But isolation and alienation, both of which are characteristic to institutionalization, equate to constrained and muted human interaction. Thus, the potential energy of outlaw emotions is easily rendered inert under such circumstances, and this allows the bound, intense feelings to begin working on and harming the individual. So, it may seem like closing the door is a silent and dignified act of resistance, it may seem safer and easier than open resistance, and in some cases it may seem like the only option. But in reality, resorting to this tactic means that we actually closet ourselves, and in doing so, we also shield the illogical and harmful realities of the institution from the outside world. Thus, by hiding in silence and isolation, we take an active part in the oppression of our own moral knowledge and our abilities: we suppress the power to help ourselves, to help others, and to allow others to help us transcend the existing state and its misery.

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Unifying Feeling and Action

We wish the fullest life possible to ourselves and to others. And the fullest life
means largely a complete and free development of capacities in knowledge
and production – production of beauty and use. Our interest in others is not
satisfied as long as their intelligence is cramped, their appreciation of truth
feeble, their emotions hard and uncomprehensive, their powers of production
compressed (Dewey, 1891/1969, p. 318).

As an educator comes to examine the work done by her own hands, one must hope
she finds the courage to ask of herself, *What* am I doing? Why am I *doing* this? Such
questions indicate that she has stumbled upon a most personal and deeply felt problem: What
have I *become*? This single question and the emotions that encompass it, while devastating in
the moment, are saturated with an amazing and beautiful potential. It reveals the birth of a
harrowing awareness that one has very nearly severed from herself the power and humanity
that extend from her very core. And this is a key phase in one's learning to let go of moral
oppression because it signifies the desire to trust and utilize one's innermost power: a type of
knowledge that finds its value and emergence in love, compassion, and the passionate
connection that comes with shared human growth. It is a loving and moral way of knowing
that yearns to be reunited with a loving and moral way of acting because one's soul can no
longer ignore the mass quantities of sympathetic data she has collected from students' tears,
groans, boredom, and restlessness.[78]

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[78] This was a defining argument in Dewey's *Soul and Body*: "The body is the organ of the
soul because by the body the soul expresses and realizes its own nature." Likewise, though,

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The teacher's ability to perceive such data is rooted to her or his ability to care, and there can be no denying that the act of caring is an important and necessary part of a teacher's work.[79] This way of seeing and acting rests upon what Hill Collins (2000) and many others have called an ethics of caring: a system of values that cherishes "individual uniqueness, personal expressiveness, and empathy" (p. 264). This ethical standard is clearly essential to a humane perspective on human value, but in the case of oppression, to "care" is just simply not enough.[80] Liberation commands love, and true love demands risk.[81]

The discontinuity between love and risk is the core of the profession's dilemma. The problem is rooted to a tragic misconception about feeling and knowledge, and as the poet and scholar Audre Lorde (1984) pointed out, this problem also happens to pervade a much larger

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"The soul is immanent in the body only because, and in so far as, it has realized itself in the body" (1886/1969, p. 112). Thus, the soul finds itself through meaningful action.

[79] See Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule (1986); Garrison (1997, p. 29-56).

[80] Care means: "1. A troubled, distressed state of mind: worry. 2. Mental suffering: grief. 3. A source of worry, attention, or solicitude. 4. Caution in avoiding harm or danger. 5. The function of watching, guarding, or overseeing: charge. 6. Attentiveness to detail: painstaking application…1. To be concerned or interested. 2. To object: mind. 3. To have a liking or attachment" (Webster's II: New Riverside University Dictionary, 1994, p. 230).

[81] Garrison (1997) argued, "People learn to grow in relationship with others, but only if they are vulnerable...The deeper and more intimate our relationships, the greater the potential risk and the greater the potential for growth" (p. 41-42). "Teachers need to be needed…Needing to be needed is a vulnerable condition, but in an ever-changing, vague, and uncertain world it is the wisest place to be" (p. 46.).

portion of society. "As women," she said, "we have come to distrust that power which rises from our deepest and nonrational knowledge" (p. 53). From within the corporate and techno-bureaucratic institution, teachers, students, and parents alike have been taught to avoid the "risk" of trusting themselves and one another. These oppressive ways of thinking have convinced many that they are broken while others have been scared into silence, defeat, and flight. The only way beyond the dilemma and the damage caused by the institution's encircling constraints and mentalities is love. This form of love requires the risk of being honest with oneself and with others about what we perceive inside the institution, from the unwarranted pains we sense in our students to the ways we are frequently coerced to go against our moral grain. Love also demands the risk of letting go of oppressive ways of knowing, which of course also means taking the risk of replacing those broken beliefs with a faith in our own experience, knowledge, and moral growth. And finally, as Ferguson (1984) so keenly stated, "Various forms of resistance persist in bureaucratic capitalism but they take place within a field of struggle in which *partial* and *wounded individuals* stand against the immensity of administrative absorption" (p. 91, emphasis added). In other words, building the bridge between a moral way of knowing and a moral way of acting involves the risk and vulnerability associated with seeking help in solidarity and shared struggle *with* others. In terms of moral oppression, to love is to find ways, wherever possible, to join others in stepping out from behind the door. Risk can unify feeling and action. Perhaps Mary Eve Thorson's last written words can light the path: "We must speak up about what's going on" (Schlikerman, 2012, p. 1).

<u>Suggestions for Mending the Profession</u>

To Colleges of Education

Power is an unavoidable aspect in American schooling. For hundreds of years, citizens, organizations, and corporations have engaged in battles over *who* has the power to control education policies, what children learn, what children become, and what the image of "a good education" looks like. Contrary to what many seem to believe, these shifts have nothing at all to do with the folklore of some cycle or pendulum; they have everything to do with a tug of war. And unfortunately, colleges of education are failing to prepare their students for the realities of what will become their inevitable power struggle.

While teaching methods are certainly an important aspect to a teacher's work, no amount of methods will decrease teacher attrition rates or the numbers of people left scarred or confused by the struggles that play out in the classroom, the institution, education politics, and the media even. Instead of emphasizing methods, colleges of education should provide students with courses that allow them to develop a foundational understanding of the complexities of the institution itself. These courses should examine the struggles over knowledge and power. They should also focus on sensitizing students to what these problems typically come to mean to the children and the teachers inside the institution. Programs should include courses on the philosophy of education, the history of education, and the sociology of education. In cases where colleges of education do not have such courses available, they should structure their programs so students can access other university departments for courses on women's studies, social theory, race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Struggles over schooling will persist, and the student population will continue to diversify. While it is impossible to entirely prepare students for the intensity of the work

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ahead, steps can be taken by colleges of education to ease the transition and raise awareness in future teachers. In order to help teachers and their students survive the institution, the concept of power should be given higher priority in the curriculum of teacher education programs.

To Professors

The philosophy, history, and sociology of education are essential to making sense of the deepest problems and the long-standing turmoil that surround public schooling. It is sad to say, but in the current educational and political climate, good courses in these vital areas have dwindled across the state of Florida. However, this climate, the increasingly diverse demographics of the K-12 student population, the homogenization of the teacher population, and the White patriarchy over schools should fuel the desire to keep these courses and their concepts alive wherever possible.

A majority of the students who enter college-level education courses are White, middle class, women who have had relatively decent experiences in the K-12 setting. Because of their standpoint, many are likely resist critiques of the institution or theories on race and class that counter their own perspectives. (I would argue, however, that encouraging students to question their perspectives is important; it will be essential to preserving their own humanity and that of their future students.) While a broad understanding of power dynamics may be a desirable aim for the professor and a necessity for the student, the prevalence of women in the field and the history of female school teachers should make gender a high priority on the syllabus. By helping students work through these concepts, professors can help equip their students with supports that can be vital to their professional, emotional, and

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psychological longevity. It may be helpful to begin a semester by looking at topics written from women's perspectives or by focusing on power and its relation to sexism in schooling and society. Some students may be able to draw upon their personal experiences with sexism as a way to identify with and then launch into inquiring about other forms of power that may be less familiar. Gender, therefore, is a necessary topic that should be explored often in education courses. And the benefit to beginning with the experiences of one's students, of course, is that it can often ease the resistance to new ideas and overflow into new concepts.

A second topic that should be addressed heavily in coursework is democracy. There is much reason to suspect that a large portion of society does not actually know *how* to take an active, democratic part in the running of their lives and their government. Professors can help ameliorate this problem by encouraging democratic engagement in students and through their course assignments. They should seek out environments, create experiences, and hinge classroom discussions on topics that can help students unearth the realities of power and the necessity for democracy. For instance, visits to a variety of schools can help students identify, compare, and contrast problems related to control or inequality. And those experiences can then provide a springboard into more expansive inquiries on the power dynamics of gender, race, class, and bureaucracy.

Perhaps the best place to turn for relevant curricular material, though, is in current events; philosophical, historical, and sociological issues abound in the news. Professors should bring these relevant and timely struggles into their classroom discussions, and they should strive to engage their students in the politics and events surrounding schooling and local education policy. There is a multitude of blogs, websites, internet radio shows, organizations, and social media groups that can make the social foundations of education and

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issues of power immediately relevant to students' lives. Future educators should have a sense

for the immediacy of power and their democratic responsibility before they enter the schools

full-time. They can do so by being encouraged to join student unions, teachers unions, or

local grassroots organizations. If the ideal for schooling is to prepare students for democratic

citizenship, then future teachers should be well-coached in the practice of *being* democratic.

Professors can certainly help in this respect.

To Aspiring Educators

One need only look toward the life of Socrates, one of the most well-known educators

of Western society, in order to get an idea of how truly risky it can be to teach. Teaching is

not meant to be easy; neither is moral or intellectual growth. And the frustrating truth is that

in each case, a job well-done rarely includes ease or obedience. Whether we choose to admit

it or not, teaching is a political job on both macroscopic and microscopic scales. Pay raises,

job security, school funding, how we teach, what we teach, and who runs our workplace all

comes down to politics. As such, aspiring educators should get in the habit of paying close

attention to local and national education politics. They should also find ways to become

informed and politically active in their own communities.

Grassroots organizations, political groups, and unions can serve as external support

systems for one's well-being, but the support of other teachers, students, and parents is also

essential to surviving within the institution. Fortunately, outlaw emotions are common within

the schools. Many parents, for instance, share teachers' frustrations with the corporate and

techno-bureaucratic mentalities that view their children as test scores and as financial assets

or liabilities. And, of course, students are also very much aware of the harms inflicted on

them by the institution. Even though this may be the case, many people will not have the language to articulate the frustrations they feel and observe. These moments are opportunities for solidarity and growth. For this reason, learning to identify the mechanisms inherent to the corporate and techno-bureaucratic mentalities will be primary to helping students, parents, and peers learn to let go of the mechanisms that cause moral oppression and restrict growth.

To the Student & the Teacher

It is easy to become alienated inside the institution. One can very simply fall into the habit of teaching and learning "through the motions" which, of course, only further alienates the student and the teacher from the meaningful aspects of their work. It is often somewhere in the strangeness of this circumstance, however, that the beauty of the student-teacher relationship emerges. In the ideal and most tender situation, the student and the teacher engage in a reciprocation of vision. The teacher is able to see her student's potential in a way that is uncluttered by the two extremes of familiarity. That is, the teacher finds a perfect space somewhere in-between a complete lack of familiarity and the overly-familiar. To one extreme there is the realm of unfamiliarity: that end of the social spectrum where expectations and stereotypes are defined *for us* by a society that is too large and too distant to perceive our individuality. On the opposite end of the spectrum lies the realm of the overly-familiar. This area is made up of the expectations that are obscured by prolonged closeness to those who have known us longest. In many ways, this is the place on the spectrum where familial expectations often reside.

What is interesting about these two extremes, though, is that both the unfamiliar and the overly-familiar are limiting. For instance, the societal (or the unfamiliar) wants us to be who *it* thinks we should be, and the familial tends to think it already knows who we *are*. In truth, though, clarity is lost when there is either too much distance or too much closeness. The best teacher, however, refuses to see the student through the limitations of either lens. And in this way, somewhere in-between, she is poised to see the clearest picture of all. Mostly, it is the one that her student projects to her: the one that details who *he* wants to be. From this position, she can run his projection through her own perception and then project his desired image back for him to see, examine, and actualize.

The reciprocation offered by the student works in much the same way. Like the student, the teacher toils away in a system that attempts to wear away at her humanity. The tactics she employs in order to avoid this erosion must always evolve, and so resistance quickly becomes exhaustive. Again, like the student, she also is constantly being coerced to fit within the institutional confines. But distance and closeness function in much the same way for the student; his gaze, however, is aided and clarified by his naiveté. That is, the student's perspective is different from the teacher's, but still somewhere in-between. Because of this, he also is able to see her through the confining bars that the institution has built around her. He is able to catch glimpses of who she was, and he can begin to uncover traces of who she actually is. And as he begins to reflect her desired image back to her, she is able to rediscover some part of who she wanted to be. If she is willing to look, he can help her recover certain aspects of her idealism and enthusiasm that have gradually been hidden under dust and dander of the institution.

In the most precious and fortunate situations, both people help one another in just this way. The student and the teacher humanize one another, and this humanization quite literally spares their souls - the essence of *who* they are - from being absorbed by the dehumanizing nature of the institution. They spare each other, mutually and simultaneously so that each is able to pick up and push on a little more intact and with a little more dignity. Relationships and connections such as these form the aesthetic moments of teaching, learning, and growth. They are the most beautiful sources of gratification, they replenish us, and they become the junctions that propel us toward lifelong change.

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