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**EDUCATION AFTER MODERNITY: DEWEY, DAVIDSON, AND
THE PROSPECTS FOR OVERCOMING DIREMPTION**

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by

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ABSTRACT

Five central claims guide this dissertation. The first is that John Dewey's philosophy of education can best be understood as a response to the *diremption* instantiated in Modernity's image of the self. Secondly, the practical implications of Donald Davidson's work in the philosophy of mind and philosophy of language deepen and extend in important ways John Dewey's philosophy of education; and to this extent, help, by developing certain analytical *tools*, advance Dewey's attempt to overcome the *diremption* of Modern life through his vision of educational practice. As such, Dewey and Davidson conceive education to be a form of cultural criticism that is normative at its root. Hence, any worthwhile and edifying educational practice will have cultural criticism at its center. Thirdly, despite Dewey's valiant and formidable attempt to overcome *diremption* through a conception of education as cultural criticism, it is, at the end of the day, insufficient. It's insufficient because Dewey is still wedded to the notion that in complex society, education means formal education. Fourth, if Dewey's goal is to be realized, then he will have to expand the possibilities and parameters of what education looks like in practice. And finally, only an education rooted in *love* can realize Dewey's goal of overcoming *diremption*. This is something the reifying, depersonalizing, and commodifying institutions of Modernity (including formal schooling) can't accomplish.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
The Posterity of Ivan.....	1
Diremption and Modernity	6
Dewey, Davidson, and the Philosophy of Education.....	10
CHAPTER 1. MODERNITY CONTRA HISTORY	21
Objectivity or Solidarity?.....	22
The Two Starting Points of Modernity	24
Dewey’s Critique of the Modern Self.....	33
Davidson on Thought and Rationality	41
CHAPTER 2. RECASTING THE MODERN SELF: DEWEY AND DAVIDSON ON THE RELATIONAL SELF	48
Intrinsicity, Extrinsicity, and the Relational Self	51
Dewey’s Emergent Self	58
Davidson and Triangulation.....	72
The Normativity of the Self	75
CHAPTER 3. HISTORICIZING THE ‘EXAMINED LIFE’: DEWEY AND DAVIDSON ON EDUCATION AS CULTURAL CRITICISM.....	82
Dedicated and Deliberative Forms of Historicity	89
Dewey and the Philosophy of Education.....	96
Education and Training.....	97
Education as Cultural Criticism.....	103
Donald Davidson’s Deweyan Philosophy of Education.....	111
CHAPTER 4. THE PERSISTENCE OF THE OLD REGIME	118
The Homelessness of Modernity	118
Dewey’s Criticism’s of Traditional and Progressive Education.....	124
Formal Education and Diremption.....	128
The Non-Relational Self as Homo Oeconomicus.....	130
Homo Oeconomicus as Homo Educandus.....	141
Modernity and the Practice of Education.....	146
CHAPTER 5. OVERCOMING DIREMPTION: EDUCATION AS LOVE	148
Wisdom and Knowledge.....	148

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONT.)

	Page No.
Depersonalization as a Way of Life.....	150
Challenging Education.....	153
Love and Education	157
What is Love?	158
Taking our Poetry from the Future	163
Critical Mass	169
CONCLUSION.....	173
REFERENCES	181

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INTRODUCTION

The Posterity of Ivan

Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brother's Karamazov* presents a critique of Western Modernity and its promulgation of a conception of the self that leads, so the novel unveils, to a paralyzing detachment of self from world and from other human beings (Guignon, 1993, p. xxv).

Ultimately, this detachment leads to the loss of oneself as well—to madness as in the case of Ivan. The mysterious visitor in Book 6 describes the situation to a young Father Zossima in the following manner:

Why the isolation that prevails everywhere, above all in our age—it has not fully developed, it has not reached its limit yet. For everyone strives to keep his individuality as apart as possible, wishes to secure the greatest fullness of life for himself; but meantime his efforts result not in attaining fullness of life but in self-destruction, for instead of self-realization, he ends by arriving at complete solitude. All mankind in our age is split up into units; they keep apart, each in his own groove; each one holds aloof, hides himself and hides what he has, from the rest, and he ends by being repelled by others and repelling them. . . . For he is accustomed to rely on himself alone and to cut himself off from the whole; he has trained himself not to believe in the help of others, in men and humanity. . . . But this terrible individualism must inevitably end, and all will suddenly understand how unnaturally they are separated from one another (Dostoevsky, 2004, pp. 279-280).

Alone and isolated from others, one becomes indifferent to the world. This indifference leads Ivan, proudly insolent and the character charged with defending and advancing the ideals of Modernity, to confess to Alyosha that:

One can love one's neighbors in the abstract, or even at a distance, but at close quarters it's almost impossible. If it were as on the stage, in the ballet, where if beggars come in, they wear silken rags and tattered lace, and beg for alms dancing gracefully, then one might like looking at them. But even then we should not love them. (Dostoevsky, 2004, p. 220)

The distance between individuals is such that one's fundamental moral obligations become represented to oneself only in the abstract. The result is an inability to immerse in and identify oneself with the suffering of others. Capturing the solipsistic conclusion one must draw from Modernity's self-conception, Ivan tells Alyosha, "Suppose I, for instance, suffer intensely. Another can never know how much I suffer, because he is another and not I" (Dostoevsky, 2004, 220). Ivan's objectified view of one's relation to the world leads one to become an "ethical tomb," enclosed forever in one's interiority (Dostoevsky, 2004).

If we turn from the imaginative world of Dostoevsky's novel and cull examples drawn from our society, we can see similarly reflected this Ivanic comportment to the world. For instance, consider the case of Stanley Simmons, an unemployed cement worker and father of two children who was crushed to death as he fell between the boarding platform and an oncoming train in Chicago on October 7, 1980 (Hazelrigg, 1989, p. 8). Among the dozens of bystanders, none of whom did anything to help the falling man, some "laughed and jeered as this man with

one arm in a sling tried to frantically climb out of path of the roaring subway train” (Hazelrigg, 1989, p. 8).

These Ivanic tendencies can also be witnessed if we peer into the selling and marketing of SUV’s. After researching the marketing and selling of SUV’s, Easterbrook (2003) concludes that “a cynic would say that SUV drivers do not care if they kill others in crashes, so long as they survive themselves....” (page #). Of course, if the cynics are right, this seems more like the attitude one would take towards things or other reified objects, not fellow persons. Yet, as Easterbrook goes on to explain, this misanthropic attitude is encouraged by marketing specialists who counsel SUV salespeople to use on their customers the following sale line: “If there is a crash, I want the other guy to die” (Easterbrook, 2003).

Or consider the following response to an interviewer’s question made by a scientist working on the production of technology that, if administered, would result in the death of millions:

What I’m designing may one day be used to kill millions of people. I don’t care. That’s not my responsibility. I’m given an interesting technological problem and I get enjoyment out of solving it. (as quoted in Hazelrigg, 1989, p. 56)

The sentiment of our scientist makes explicit physicist Edwin Schrodinger’s comment that “the material world has only been constructed at the price of taking the self, that is, mind, out of it, removing it...” (Schrodinger, 1958). Schrodinger goes on to say that in this disembodied stance towards the world, “we step back with our own person back into the part of an onlooker who does not belong to the world...” (Schrodinger, 1958) Nineteenth-century statistician Karl Pearson makes Schrodinger’s sentiment explicit when he instructs his fellow inquirers to “above

all things to aim at self-elimination” in their judgments (Daston, 2007, p. 196). Since one doesn’t “belong to the world” one has no necessary obligations to it. The world becomes something alien. The impact of my actions become at best externalities to be worried about by others. While Schrodinger and Pearson don’t draw this conclusion, our scientist who receives “enjoyment” from the construction of artifacts but bears no responsibility for their eventual use, does. Certainly the work of our scientist requires an enormous amount of skill and technique, mathematical and scientific techniques so valued in our culture that they have “become the all-purpose shorthand” for what we mean by “intelligence” (Slouka, 2009, p. 39). Yet, would we want to call our scientist “educated?” Would we want to call her intelligent?

Still others have drawn our attention to how this detachment and indifference engendered by this bifurcation between self and world are implicated in some of the most pressing ecological and social traumas of contemporary life (Orr, 1992, p. 149). For instance, David Orr points out the following:

If today is a typical day on planet Earth, humans will add fifteen million tons of carbon to the atmosphere, destroy 1115 square miles of tropical rainforest, create seventy-two square miles of desert, eliminate between forty to one-hundred species, erode seventy-one million tons of topsoil, add twenty-seven hundred tons of CFC’s to the stratosphere, and increase their population by 263,000. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. By year’s end the total numbers will be staggering: an area the size of the state of Kansas lost; seven to ten billion tons of carbon added to the atmosphere; a total population increase of ninety million (Orr, 1992, p. 3).

We've gotten to this point, Orr continues, not through ignorance, but in large part from the class who have been putatively "educated," those with the "BAs, BSs, LLBs, MBAs, and PhDs" who have been "schooled" to see the environment as what Martin Heidegger called a standing-reserve (*Gestell*), something alien and other¹ that is to be dominated and exploited (Orr, 1992, p. 149).²

Where Orr draws our attention to how this Ivanic self-image is complicit in the destruction of our biosphere, former managing director at Goldman Sachs, Nomi Prins, forces us to confront how this self-image contributed to the events that resulted in the collapse of the world financial system in 2008. In her book, *It Takes a Pillage*, Prins (2009) describes the culture of high finance and the kind of self that is privileged in this environment. In words that echo the worldview of Ivan throughout the *Brothers Karamazov*, Prins writes the following:

When you are living, competing and winning in an environment where it is all about the money and the power, it creates a dividing line between you and the rest of the world.

You do not bother to look over the dividing line. Your world is on your side of it and the rest of the world is on their side of it. You are not looking at people being kicked out of their homes and being foreclosed. You do not see the crying, the anger and the children in the street because [those in government] decided to give money to bail out Wall Street firms as opposed to renegotiate mortgage principals so people can continue to live their lives. You can be callous about it because it does not impact you. It is not something you

¹Charles Taylor remarks that "one of the deep motivations of Heidegger's thought is to take us beyond the adversary stance of domination and objectification towards nature, which he sees implicit in our metaphysical tradition and its off-shoot, technological civilization, and inaugurate (recover) a mode of existence in which the highest awareness is a way of 'letting things be,' of disclosure" (Taylor, 1975, p. 570).

²This dissertation will argue that there is no *nature* in itself as we imply when we speak of a *natural disaster*. All so-called natural disasters are *social disasters*, and if this is the case, then the domination of the so-called natural world is simultaneously a form of social domination.

notice. You might read about it. But you don't feel it, watch it or go through it. You are detached. (Prins, 2009, p. 45)

The dividing line that stands between the internal workings of the firm and the world outside leads to a detachment that results in the inability to see the anger and pain brought about by the actions of the firm. Prins points out that this behaviour is not an aberration from the norm but is the norm itself, only in this case it led to a global catastrophe (Prins, year, p. 130). The social theorist Georg Simmel in *Philosophy of Money* notes that the money culture described by Prins (1971) inevitably leads to the corrosion of relationships that require and “depend on duration and integrity” and which are requisite for the establishment of the moral point of view (p. 121). If Kant’s contention is correct that the moral point of view is engaged only when we treat all persons as ends in themselves and never as a means, then the money culture, Simmel concludes, reduces all parties to the “status of mere means” (Simmel, 1971, p. 122). The money culture, in short, objectifies persons, turns them into things, and reduces relationships between people into instruments for individual gain.

Diremption and Modernity

What Dostoevsky points to in the *Brothers Karamazov* through his depiction of the character Ivan and what these examples culled from contemporary society point to is an internal tension and crisis inherent in Modernity. On the one hand, Modernity advances a narrative that presents an image of the self that is emancipated from the past. Emancipated from what came before, modernity becomes “the epoch that lives for the future, that opens itself up to the novelty of the future” (Habermas, 1987, p. 5). In this sense, modernity defines itself in direct opposition

to tradition, history, and culture. In doing so, the expectations are that the future will look different from the present to the extent that the present is able to extricate itself from the past. In the preface to his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), Friedrich Hegel captures this aspect of modernity when he writes:

Besides, it's not difficult to see that ours is a birth-time and a period of transition to a new era. Spirit has broken with the world it has hitherto inhabited and imagined, and is of a mind to submerge it in the past, and in the labour of its own transformation. Spirit is indeed never at rest but always moving forward. But just as the first breath drawn by a child after its long, quiet nourishment breaks the gradualness of merely quantitative growth—there is a qualitative leap, and the child is born—so likewise the Spirit in its formation matures slowly and quietly into its new shape, dissolving bit by bit the structure of the previous world. . . . (Hegel, 1952, p. 6)

Hegel's idea of Modernity turns on the belief that Modernity's qualitative leap opens up the space for it to establish its identity out of itself and thus "will no longer borrow criteria by which it takes its orientation from the models supplied by another epoch" (Habermas, 1987, p. 7).

Bereft of a foundation linked and grounded in the past, the modern age creates "its normativity out of itself" (Habermas 1987, p. 7). This radical break and diremption from what came before by disrobing what in the present is tethered to the past, becomes the signature of the Modern age.

These norms, moreover, express themselves out of what Hegel calls the *principle of subjectivity*. The *principle of subjectivity*, according to Hegel, is a self-image founded on the idea that individuals hold the freedom to ground and justify the norms of culture. On this account, nothing external to the individual, be it God, pre-existing law, or tradition can or should serve as

the standard for justifying social practices. As Hegel (1896) puts it, “The greatness of our time rests in the fact that freedom, the peculiar possession of mind whereby it is at home with itself in itself, is recognized” (p. 423). Therefore, Modernity itself, our time, embodied in the religious life, ethical practices, artistic expression, as well as the civic and juridical elements of the state, flows, for Hegel, directly from subjectivity (Habermas, 1987, p.18).

Yet the principle of human subjectivity, the prized possession of Modernity that emancipates the individual from prior epochs also leads, as Hegel argues, to the diremption (*Entweigung*) of everyday life, to the detachment of self from world and self from others (Bieser, 2005). Hegel was not alone in his diagnosis of this internal tension of the Modern age. For instance, Schiller (2004), one of Hegel’s contemporaries, notes in his *Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794) that “man set free, instead of hastening upward toward organic life, collapses into its elements” (p. 10). Instead of the emancipation of human subjectivity being the invitation to make more rich and intimate connections *within* society and the world, it results instead in separation and detachment.

For Schiller, this detachment and division manifested itself in everyday life in three ways. First, the privileging of Benthamite utility characteristic of modern industrial society led to the “dissociation of the labor process from the skills of the worker,” mind from body (Braverman, 1974, p. 113). What results, Schiller argues, is that:

Man eternally chained down to a little fragment of the whole, only forms a kind of fragment; having nothing in his ears but the monotonous sound of the perpetually revolving wheel, he never develops the harmony of his being; and instead of imprinting the seal of humanity on his being, he ends being nothing more than the living impress of

the craft to which he devotes his life, of the science that cultivates it. (Schiller, 2004, pp. 13-14)

Under these conditions, human beings become alienated from themselves. For Schiller (2004), like “the stunted growth of plants”, the self-image of the modern age leaves dormant those parts of the self that don’t contribute to the “perpetually revolving wheel” (p. 13). The result, Schiller concludes, are people whose lives are in disharmony. Secondly, the Modern age is an age where human beings become detached from society, and in so doing, became alienated from one another. Citizens become “strangers” to society and society treats and knows its citizens only as “second hand” objects to be classified and enumerated (Schiller, 2004, p.14). Thirdly, we are not, Schiller continues, just strangers to society and one another. The Modern scientific image of the world which lead to what Weber (1946) described as the “disenchantment” of nature results in human beings becoming “strangers to the world of sense,” a natural world now objectified in the same manner society objectifies and reifies its citizens and citizens objectify and reify one another (Schiller, 2004, p. 15). In sum, the Modern age manifests itself in a threefold rupture: a division within oneself, between self and others, and between self and world. Or as Taylor (1975) puts it, “in this civilization, social relations and practices, as well as nature, are progressively objectified” (p. 540).

Both Schiller and Hegel then saw Modernity as an age rife with internal conflict, a promissory note on the one hand, for the emancipation of subjectivity, but on the other, a reality populated with diremption. Yet, both recognized that there was no turning back to the unity they perceived in the Ancient world. For both of them, the question became how to achieve unity and reconciliation given the new realities of Modernity. For Hegel, in particular, the issue of how to

realize unity and reconciliation and overcome diremption became the guiding theme of his entire philosophical project from his early to his later work (Bernstein, 1992).

Despite being separated by over two centuries from the work of Hegel and Schiller, the acute crisis and internal tension of Modernity they unveiled persists. The diremption and fragmentation in contemporary society, as illustrated by the examples that begin this dissertation, have not abated. In fact, it could be argued that these divisions have only grown more problematic, more consequential, with potentially more dangerous possibilities. In other words, the fundamental question brought up in the work of Schiller and more profoundly in the work of Hegel still confronts us: how can we achieve unity and reconciliation (understanding) given the diremption of life that Modern social conditions elicit? In short, how can what Hegel calls the principle of subjectivity, a self-image that on the one hand emancipates the self from the past, but on the other, results in the fragmentation and division of everyday life, be overcome?

Dewey, Davidson, and the Philosophy of Education

Every philosophy of education presupposes some understanding of just what it is that's being educated. Therefore, as Garrison (1998) puts it, "knowing the essence of the self is crucial for any theory of education" (p. 111). And the essence of the self that Modernity bequeathed to us leads, as Hegel and Schiller argued, to the diremption of self from world. It's against this backdrop and in light of the problem of subjectivity, the self-image of Modernity, that this dissertation will consider John Dewey's philosophy of education and what will be called Donald Davidson's *Deweyan* philosophy of education. Five primary contentions will guide the following chapters. The first is that John Dewey's philosophy of education can best be understood as a

response to the diremption instantiated in Modernity's image of the self.³ And secondly, that the practical implications of Donald Davidson's work in the philosophy of mind and philosophy of language deepen and extend in important ways John Dewey's philosophy of education; and thus, helping to advance Dewey's attempt to overcome the diremption of Modern life through his vision of educational practice. Thirdly, despite Dewey's valiant attempt to overcome diremption, it is, at the end of the day, insufficient. It's insufficient because Dewey was still wedded to the notion that in complex society's education means formal education. Fourth, if Dewey's goal is to be realized, then he will have to expand the possibilities of what education looks like in practice. And finally, only an education rooted *love* can realize Dewey's goal of overcoming diremption, something the reifying, depersonalizing, and commodifying institutions of Modernity (including formal schooling) can't accomplish.

In the case of Dewey, this first contention should not surprise us. After all, Dewey (1930) writes the following in his autobiographical essay "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" about what it was that initially attracted him to the thought of Hegel:

There were, however, also "subjective" reasons for the appeal that Hegel's thought made to me; it supplied a demand for unification that was doubtless an intense emotional craving, and yet was a hunger only an intellectualized subject matter could satisfy. It is more difficult, it is impossible, to recover this early mood. But the sense of divisions and separation that were, I suppose, borne in upon me as a consequence of a heritage of New England culture, divisions by way of isolation of self from the world, soul from body, of

³This is not to say that Dewey's metaphysics or his epistemology aren't also attempts to overcome the diremption of Modern life. However, in important respects, Dewey's philosophy of education replaces epistemology and metaphysics as first philosophy.

nature from God, brought painful oppression—or, rather, they were an inward laceration.

(Dewey, 1960, p. 10)

Throughout his career, Dewey never steps away from his attempt to overcome the inward laceration brought on by his sense of division and fragmentation. It's his philosophy of education, and its implications for educational practice (schooling), moreover, that are central to the process of overcoming the painful oppression brought about by the "division and isolation" he experienced as part of his New England upbringing. Yet Dewey, along with Davidson, recast Hegel's quest for unity. Hegel for all his insight, Bernstein (1992) points out, "fails to do justice to human plurality and singularity; that there is at times a powerful tendency in Hegel to repress and suppress otherness and difference" (p. 308). "These tendencies," Bernstein continues, "push Hegel in a direction where he is unable to appreciate the ruptures and contingencies of life that can't be subsumed into his conception of unity (*das absolute*), something Dewey and Davidson avoid" (Bernstein, 1992, p.308). Reflecting on the tendency in the history of Western philosophy to privilege unity over contingency of which Hegel is an exemplar, Dewey (1925) writes that:

If classic philosophy says so much about unity and so little about unreconciled diversity, so much about the eternal and permanent and so little about change (save as something to be resolved into combinations of the permanent), so much about necessity and so little about contingency, so much about the comprehending universal and so little about the recalcitrant particular, it may well be because the ambiguousness and ambivalence of reality is so pervasive. (p. 46)

As such, Hegel's quest for unity, unlike what will be shown to be the case in the work of Dewey and Davidson, fails to treat even-handedly the dynamic tension between the search for unity and

reconciliation (or understanding), on the one hand, and the creative space opened up by contingency, on the other.

Yet, both Davidson and Dewey in important ways *are* saying something Hegelian. They are in the sense that their philosophies of education can also be read as attempts to rethink and recast the principle of subjectivity. But they do so in such a way that it allows for the edification of the self through the process of self-creation, or growth in Dewey's terms, without the self becoming alienated from others and the world. To borrow a phrase from Dewey, the world is best thought of as a mixture of the precarious and the stable. For Dewey and Davidson, there is no problem of how the self connects up with the world, nor is there a problem of other minds. These aren't problems for Dewey and Davidson because the world and others (or other minds), and hence, culture and tradition, are constitutive of the self. What is rather a remarkable accomplishment from their lights, as we shall see, isn't the Cartesian quest to build a bridge from self to world, but in the very potential to partially extricate ourselves from our embodiment in culture in the first place.

A few words should be said at the outset for my inclusion of Donald Davidson as a Deweyan philosopher of education, the second contention and theme of this dissertation. Along with Willard Quine and Wilfred Sellars, Donald Davidson is considered by many to be one of the most important analytical philosophers of the second half of the twentieth century (Rorty, 1991). His contributions to the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language, while they mainly took the form of highly technical essays written in his consistently crisp and dense style, have nonetheless received a warm reception in the world of English-speaking philosophy. In this sense, Davidson is the quintessential analytical philosopher. Yet Davidson wrote nothing directly

that would be nominally classified as part of the philosophy of education. Were one to make a list of the important 20th century philosophers of education one might quickly mention the likes of Paul Goodman, Hannah Arendt, Pablo Friere, Ivan Illich, Michael Oakeshott, Allan Bloom and, of course, John Dewey. However, the inclusion of Donald Davidson as a philosopher of education would seem to most out of place, including perhaps to Donald Davidson himself. In his five volumes of collected essays, Davidson (2004) rarely if ever mentions education and when he does, only in the context of an interview where he is being asked about the particularities of his own intellectual development. Not surprisingly, there are few references and even fewer discussions of his work in either the philosophical or educational literature as it might bear on issues related to education and schooling.⁴ I believe this is a mistake that this dissertation hopes to rectify. Both philosophers of education along with professional educators (not to mention educational psychologists along with others in the field of education) would benefit from being exposed to Davidson's philosophical investigations; in particular, so this dissertation will argue, those whose work takes its bearings from the philosopher John Dewey. Davidson's work in the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language, I hope to show, develop important conceptual and analytical *tools* that help to deepen, sharpen, and in some cases extend in new directions our understanding of John Dewey's philosophy of education.

Davidson's work isn't traditionally seen as having any relevance to education, nor is it commonly associated with the American pragmatist tradition that extends backwards to the thought of Emerson and forward to the work of Rorty and Quine. The following essays also hope to challenge this assumption. It's telling that West (1989), in his richly argued work entitled *The*

⁴One exception that I found in my research is Kevin Porter's illuminating essay on how Davidson's communication theory has important implications for the teaching and structuring of the college composition classroom (Porter, 2001).

American Evasion of Philosophy, only gives a glancing nod to Davidson in his genealogy of American pragmatism. By reading Dewey's philosophy of education alongside Davidson's work, this dissertation hopes to show and suggest that Davidson fits comfortably within the American pragmatist tradition.⁵

To this end, Chapter 1 will take its bearings from Dewey and Davidson's critique of Modernity in order to historically reconstruct their description of the Modern self. In doing so, we will be able to see how Dewey and Davidson cast the problem of subjectivity and in what ways they find the self-image of Modernity problematic. What will be found is a self-image that ontologically splits off the self from the world. This division or diremption between subject and object, self and world, is a result of defining the mind in epistemic terms, where our *intrinsic* selfhood is characterized by a mind whose locus is a de-contextualized *interiority* that is best known by us but is screened off ontologically from others and the world at large. In this sense, to have a mind is to be able to literally stand outside or swing-free from the context or environment in which one is apart (Rorty, 1998, p. 111-112). With this self-image, one can be *in* an environment but one is not constituted *by* it. Still further, that feature of ourselves that we know best—our mind—is precisely what defines our personhood, just what it is that distinguishes us ontologically from other things in the world, and which calls forth to whom we have reciprocal obligations. In sum, our minds⁶ are the mark of our personhood and our personhood is defined by indubitable access to mental states that are interior to our minds (Rorty, 1979, pp.37-38).

⁵On this issue, I've taken my lead from the work of Richard Rorty. Rorty reads Davidson as a Deweyan pragmatist. See Volume I of his philosophical papers entitled, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, especially the essays that encompass Part II of this collection. Also, Part I, "Contingency of Language," in his work *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity*, also points us towards seeing the link between Davidson and pragmatism.

⁶I will use consciousness as synonymous to rationality, mind, or the mental.

What follows from Dewey and Davidson's critique of Modernity's image of the self is that it results in what this dissertation will call the *problem of communication*. If the mind is defined in terms of its knowledge of intrinsic properties, properties and states that are non-relational and *interior* to the subject thinking them,⁷ then it's unclear how one mind can communicate with another. In other words, given this architecture of the mind how can my mental states, whose career is exclusively private, hook up with other minds, whose mental states also supposedly have a private career? In epistemology this problem came to be known as the problem of other minds and in sociology as the problem of inter-subjectivity. Moreover, unless society is structured to produce an image of the mind that lends itself to robust communication, then, as Dewey (1916) argues, it seems as if "the most civilized group will relapse into barbarism,"⁸ (pp. 2-3) as illustrated (in the examples that open this dissertation) perhaps most strikingly in the response of our Ph.D. student working on weapons of mass destruction or Naomi Prins' description of the culture of finance.

Chapter 2 will begin where the first chapter left off by looking at how Dewey and Davidson develop a notion of the self that overcomes the diremption that they argue is at the root of Modern subjectivity. Where Modern subjectivity privileges a non-relational self-image, Dewey and Davidson articulate an image of the self that is relational all the way down. In articulating a relational image of the self, moreover, both Dewey and Davidson in important respects reverse the starting point for thinking about the relationship between self and world and

⁷Daniel Dennett (1991) memorably refers to this as the "Cartesian theater" (p. 107).

⁸Looking at this quote from the perspective of Chapter 21 of *Democracy and Education* entitled "The Individual and the World" brings Dewey's reference to "barbarism" close to Aristotle's pronouncement in his *Politics* that, and I paraphrase, to live as an isolated self is either to be a God or a beast. In sum, we become beast-like when we cease to be in communion with others, in part because we lose contact with ourselves: since our personhood, as we shall see, is defined by and caught up with our transactions with others and the world.

self and other. We aren't minds that antecedently show up confronted with an external world that a bridge has to be built to; rather, our minds become minds only in connection with the world and others. Without the complete triangle, if you will, between self, other, and a shared world, there is no self. Cut off any one point of the triangle and you're left with diremption.

Part of the upshot of Davidson's and Dewey's relational notion of the self is that it gets rid of the idea that there is a core-self with intrinsic properties that are *in* but not *of* society/history/culture (Hazelrigg, 1989). What follows for Davidson and Dewey is that the self isn't something that *has* beliefs and desires (and other intentional states), but rather, the self is nothing else but a network *of* beliefs and desires (Rorty, 1989, p.10). Simply put, beliefs and desires are not held by a self that is somehow distinct from the holding of beliefs and desires. This relational conception of the self will be the foundation of the discussion in Chapter 3 of Dewey and Davidson's philosophy of education.

For Dewey, it will be argued, the aim of education is growth, and since "life is development and that developing, growing, is life," education has no end other than more education (Dewey, 1916, p. 49). But what does growth mean in this context, and how is it realized? This is where Dewey and Davidson's relational notion of the self is cashed out and why the diremption that results from the modern notion of subjectivity makes the realization of this conception of education problematic. The relational self that is growing and developing through the educative process necessarily stretches backwards into the past and forward into a future that is yet to be realized. So to know where one wants to develop or grow, one has to know where one *is*; but to know where one *is*, one has to gain some understanding and insight into how and in what ways the past shapes the present. Where modern subjectivity splits off ontologically the

past, present, and future, Dewey and Davidson see them as functional distinctions that are necessarily tied to one another so that any action in the present is in part shaped by the past even as it in-forms the future. In important respects, Dewey, and as we will see Davidson, historicize Socrates' dictum found in Plato's *Apology of Knowing Thyself*. To the extent then that culture/society/history has us before we have it, education becomes the process of knowing thyself through the interrogation of the cultural scripts we've been habituated by. Being educated becomes, on this account, engaging in *cultural criticism*. In short, education is a form of cultural criticism whose goal is growth. Cultural criticism then lies at the heart of Dewey's conception of the philosophy of education and thus at the heart of the educative process. The third chapter will conclude by looking at an important essay by Donald Davidson entitled, "The Paradox of Irrationality." This essay can help us to illuminate from a different frame of reference, Dewey's understanding of what cultural criticism amounts to and why it's a crucially normative enterprise.

On Dewey and Davidson's account, meaningful educational practice can only take place when the self is tethered to a shared world, a common world that roots and situates the vistas of significance that constitutes the community one emerges from. Without this relational self-image, education understood as cultural criticism can't be joined. In the last two chapters, we will turn specifically to the work of Dewey, as it's in Dewey's work where we can find counsel on how education as cultural criticism can be realized. Given Dewey's claim that the relational self is requisite for meaningful education, why is it, Chapter 4 will ask, is Dewey still committed to the belief that formal schooling is the space and place where this can be realized? In creating a wedge between education and schooling, this chapter will attempt to push Dewey in directions

he was reticent to move towards. By tracing how education is historically linked to the diremptive self-image of Modernity, this chapter will suggest that Dewey's philosophy of education can only come to fruition if he widens his purview of what education looks like well beyond that of school. In fact, this chapter questions, if *both* education and schooling are caught up in precisely the modernization processes that lead to the diremptive self, then perhaps Dewey would do well to give up both education and schooling.

The final chapter will suggest, however, that *if* we are still going to talk about education as Dewey does, then we will have to do so on different ground—a new ground that doesn't take formal schooling as the standard for what education looks like, and as such, think about education outside of the context of the modernization process that bequeathed to us the diremptive self-image in the first place. If we think of the diremptive self-image as we do in the first chapter as a homeless, place-less self, scrubbed of any contextual identity, we should also think of it as a *love-less* one. Education without love, it will be argued, undermines communities of practice that sustain and incorporate people into a meaningful life. This chapter will conclude that education that places love at the center, on the other hand, will privilege a kind of learning that doesn't objectify and reify fellow human beings and the natural world. And it's only when educational practice take its bearings from love that the diremptive self can be overcome.

The thread that ties together the following essays then is the claim that Modernity's conception of the self continues to be trafficked through our institutions of education and that the kind of troubling vignettes that open this dissertation are a result of a commitment to this self-image. Furthermore, to the extent that our educational practices, including but not limited to formal schooling, are the primary sites for the re-production of culture and society, then this

commitment leads to the diremption of self and world, self and other (Dewey, 1916). By proffering up an alternative self-image, Dewey and Davidson help us to better realize our educational aspirations to grow through the process of cultural criticism. In so doing, Dewey and Davidson's work help to create a context so that educational practices can enter into their Hegelian phase. By Hegelian phase, this dissertation simply means a phase whereby educational practices reflect an understanding of reason, self, mind, action, and intentional states, as historically situated all the way through.

It's important as well to make clear at the outset that this dissertation will not attempt to replace one self-image with another in the belief that somehow the idea of education that Dewey and Davidson argue for *needs* a philosophical foundation. Rather, this alternative self-image that will be sketched and argued for should be seen as allowing us "to flesh out our self-image as citizens of such a democracy with a philosophical view of the self" (Rorty, 1990, p. 179). This fleshing out will be done in the hopes that by re-describing our self-image, new vistas will be opened up in our educational practices, both formal and informal, which will permit us to find the requisite creativity, moral bearings, and intelligence that will be needed to deal with the ecological, moral, political, and social crisis our culture confronts, and which can be confronted only to the extent we are able to overcome the diremption elicited by the Modern self-image.

CHAPTER 1

MODERNITY CONTRA HISTORY

You ask me, which of the philosopher's traits are idiosyncrasies? For example: their lack of historical sense, their hatred of becoming, their Egypticism. They think they show their respect for a subject when they dehistoricize it--when they turn it into a mummy.

(Nietzsche, 1968, p. 45)

This chapter begins by exploring John Dewey and Donald Davidson's critique of the Modern self and how this self-image ultimately results in the diremption of the self from the world. Prior to unearthing Dewey's and Davidson's critiques, however, this chapter will attempt to couch their work in a larger context by looking at two primary ways in which human beings orient themselves in the world and give significance and meaning to their lives. In doing so, this will allow us to compare the rhetorical strategies of two intellectual movements that were vying for dominance at the onset of the Modern age. This brief historical reconstruction is not meant simply to be understood as a piece of history, but also in terms of the conceptual issues raised in how one orients oneself (and one's culture) in the world. These two vastly different rhetorical strategies very much set the appropriate backdrop for coming to terms with Dewey's and Davidson's critiques. It should also pointed out that this dissertation is not taking a stand on whether or not there is an isomorphism between Dewey's and Davidson's critiques⁹ of the image

⁹Davidson was not an historian of philosophy since his work was primarily done in the form of technical essays that were conceptual in nature. His essays raise a philosophical problem, and the rest of the essay is built around trying to solve it. Since this is the case, Richard Rorty counsels, "It falls to his admirers to attempt a synoptic view of his work" (1991, p. 113). By drawing Davidson closer to Dewey's critique of the modern self, this dissertation attempts to do as much.

of the Modern self. Yet what we find in Davidson's and Dewey's critique is a common concern that the image of the Modern self is one that leads to diremption.

Objectivity or Solidarity?

Rorty (1991) in his essay entitled "Solidarity or Objectivity?" claims the following:

There are two principal ways in which reflective human beings try, by placing their lives in a larger context, give sense to those lives. The first is by telling the story of their contribution to a community. . . The second way is to describe themselves as standing in immediate relation to a nonhuman reality . . . I shall say that the stories of the former kind exemplify the desire for solidarity, and that the stories of the latter kind exemplify the desire for objectivity. (p.21)

The first group hurtles off in a direction that doesn't worry about whether or not the kinds of beliefs held by a culture are in accord with the nature of things, since they reject what they feel is a dubious distinction founded in Greek philosophy between *nomos* (culture) and *phusis* (nature) (Rorty, 1991). They don't look to something beyond the community or culture they are a part of in order to justify their beliefs (Rorty, 1991). In this sense, no attempt is made "to escape the limitations of one's community, but simply the desire for as much intersubjective agreement as possible" or what Rorty calls solidarity (Rorty, 1991, p. 23). In contrast, the latter group, what we will call the *champions of objectivity*, argue that any social practice that is not based on beliefs and goals that are in accord with the nature of things is a social practice that is doomed to fail, since what is by nature is invariant, and what is invariant is superior to what is not (culture).

As such, for the champions of objectivity, the distinction between nature and culture is a normative contrast. What is an intrinsic or natural property or condition of something shouldn't be interfered with by what is conventional simply because it's natural.¹⁰ Only when one's culture takes its bearings from a non-cultural or non-historical standard from which beliefs and desires can be sifted through in order to determine their veracity, can the beliefs and goals of that culture be judged to be rational.¹¹ The partisans of the second group then worry a great deal about whether or not the beliefs and desires held in their culture, and the social practices that instantiate them, have their origin in something that transcends culture. That worry is mollified, they conclude, only when that chunk of ourselves that is not historically and culturally conditioned, our intrinsic human nature or core-self, is able to latch on to that part of non-human nature which is intrinsic and invariant (Rorty, 1991). In other words, the champions of objectivity contend that part of us, our intrinsic core-self, stands in a non-relational way to the rest of the world, and must, if we want to become truly human, and must if our culture is to avoid descent into barbarism. This is as true of Ancient philosophy as it is of Modern philosophy, but with crucial

¹⁰The most obvious example of this contrast being played out in contemporary culture is found in the rhetoric of those who are pejoratively referred to as "market fundamentalists." The subtext and sometimes the text of their argument against government intervention in the economy is that the market is natural and government conventional. Given the premise that what is natural is superior to what is conventional because it's rational, then government regulation of the market should be nonexistent, or at the very least minimized. This commitment is made explicit in a law and economics textbooks like the one Daniel Fischel and Judge Easterbrook wrote where they argue that fraud is impossible in securities markets because such markets are "efficient;" that is, they are natural and whatever is natural must be for the best (Black, 2010).

¹¹Lawrence Hazelrigg illustrates how the conceptual needs of the champions of objectivity are played out in ordinary language with the following ingenious example from his book *Claims to Knowledge*: the modern self, this dissertation attempts to do as much.

Zeke: Did you know that Jack and Jill are divorcing?

Teke: No! What happened?

Zeke: Well, Jack said that. . . But Jill said that . . .

Teke: So what really happened?

He concludes from Teke's latter question that "What is called for in the question, then, is the possibility of a neutral third, a standpointless and impartial representation, a faithful (unmediated) representation, of "what really happened," that is, "what really happened in fact," and not from Jack's or Jill's point of view on/of "what happened." That which is called for is often described as objective knowledge of the "what happened"--(as if) a knowledge from the standpoint of the event or object "in-itself," the not-yet-interpreted--object-while the representations/interpretations given by two antagonists are "subjective" because they are interested by subjective standpoint" (Hazelrigg, p.174)

differences in their accounts of the nature of intrinsicity and how the goal of intrinsicity is realized, as we shall see. Yet, what we find as a consistent skein that runs through the entire gamut of the Western philosophical tradition, both Ancient and Modern, is the contrastive force between nature and culture. It's this tradition that looks and finds the ahistorical, telic, and permanent context of the human condition in a transcendent reality, and in finding this reality the normative guidance, the clue "informing us what we really are, what we really are compelled to be . . ." (Rorty, 1989, p.26).

The Two Starting Points of Modernity

These two principal ways in which people find meaning and normative guidance for figuring out what to do with their lives have perhaps their most important legacy in a skirmish that took place at the onset of Modernity. Stephen Toulmin, in his work *Cosmopolis*, helps us to see what form this skirmish took. Toulmin argues that we should think of Modernity as having two starting points rather than one. Rather than philosophical Modernity beginning simply with the work of Rene Descartes, as it often does, Toulmin suggests that we see the quattrocento Renaissance as a second starting point—one that had a very different agenda than the one initiated by Descartes, and one that slowly but surely became marginalized throughout the course of the Modern age. Whether or not Toulmin's thesis is correct historically, we can employ his historical construct to emphasize a theme that is essential for illuminating Dewey's and Davidson's critiques of the image of the Modern self, the subject of Chapter 1. That theme is concentrated around the very different kind of rhetorical strategies employed to understand one's relationship to the past, to the world, and to others that we find as we move from the one starting

point of Modernity, roughly the quattrocento Renaissance, to the other, roughly the kind of philosophical project initiated by Rene Descartes.¹² In a sense, as we shall see, Dewey's and Davidson's work can be read as an attempt at retrieval. It involves retrieving the pan-relationalism of the former in a post-Darwinian context. This will be the subject of discussion of Dewey and Davidson's development of their idea of the relational self in Chapter 2. In the former, the Modernity of the Renaissance, we find the warm embrace of others, one's past, and a world they see as being necessarily interrelated. The latter, the Modernity of Descartes, disengages the past, sees the world and others in it as a hindrance and burden that must be disposed of if one wants to stake out a secure foundation for intellectual certainty. And only then, after this certainty is founded, can the world and others be re-admitted into one's purview, but as Dewey's and Davidson's critiques suggest, at the cost of diremption.

Before moving on to a discussion of Dewey's and Davidson's critiques of the Modern self-image, then, we can flush out these very different rhetorical strategies by first looking at the Modernity of the Renaissance and then contrasting it with the rhetorical strategies of the Modernity of Descartes. We can begin by briefly discussing the artist Raphael's painting "The School in Athens" (1511). Raphael produced "The School in Athens" during a period in European history that saw the renewed interest in Ancient philosophy and form, the Modernity of the Renaissance. At the center of the painting are Plato and Aristotle, with the former pointing up towards the world of forms and the latter gesturing downwards towards the earth, indicating to the viewer the manner in which the student departed philosophically from his teacher. Cast around them are important philosophical, artistic, and theological figures drawn in part from the

¹²I'm treating Toulmin's two starting points of Modernity, the Renaissance and Descartes' philosophy, not as temporal designations, although they are in part just that, but as two alternative ways of understanding one's relationship to the world.

past. The painting suggests that Raphael saw the ancient past as a fertile period upon which they themselves were benefactors. Although we tend to idealize the Renaissance as uniquely innovative¹³, the Renaissance writers and artists saw themselves as standing on the shoulders of giants, as the popular metaphor of the time declared. The connection with a shared world that linked the present to the past was the ground for the present to make any contribution to the future, as exemplified by Raphael's painting. Blaise Pascal expresses this sentiment well when he writes that:

It is in this manner that we may at the present day adopt different sentiments and new opinions, without despising the ancients and without ingratitude, since the first knowledge which they have given us served as a stepping stone to our own, and since in these advantages we are indebted to them for our ascendancy over them (As cited in Calinescu' 1987, p. 18).

Although they could see farther than the Ancients, they could do so only because much of the important work had been accomplished by their more innovative forbearers. The essayist Montaigne goes even farther than Pascal, scolding the few contemporaries who would be so impudent as to question the observations and judgments made by those in past. To this, he writes:

For the authority of these witnesses is perhaps not high enough to keep us in hand. But then, if Plutarch, after several examples that he cites from antiquity, says that he knows with certain knowledge that in the time of Domitian, the news of the battle lost by Antonius in Germany was published in Rome, several days' journey from there, and

¹³See Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.

dispersed throughout the whole world, on the same day it was lost; and if Caesar maintains that it has often happened that the report has preceded the event—shall we say that these simple men let themselves be hoaxed like the common herd, because they were not clear-sighted like ourselves? Is there anything more delicate, clearer and more alert than Pliny's judgment, when he sees fit to bring it into play, or anything farther from inanity? Leaving aside the excellence of his knowledge, which I count for less, in which of these qualities do we surpass him? (Montaigne, 1943, p.52)

For Montaigne, the Ancients were superior in judgment (phronesis) and just as alert and clear-sighted. Only hubris would keep one from seeing this obvious truth.

Montaigne, Raphael, and Pascal all echo and play on the notion that human beings are necessarily part of a great chain of being,¹⁴ a unity held together by God, a pan-relationalism whereby all living things are linked together and gain their significance and meaning as part of a universal order. In his *Polychronicon* (1344), Ranulf Higden describes this pan-relationalism in the following terms:

In the universal order of things the top of an inferior class touches the bottom of a superior; as for instance oysters, which, occupying as it were the lowest position in the class of animals, scarcely rise above the life of plants, because they cling to the earth without motion and possess the sense of touch alone. The upper surface of the earth is in contact with the lower surface of water; the highest part of the waters touches the lowest part of the air, and so by a ladder of ascent to the outermost sphere of the universe. So also the noblest entity in the category of bodies, the human body, when its humours are

¹⁴See Arthur Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* for a detailed account of how this motif is played out in Western Civilization.

evenly balanced, touches the fringes of the next class above it, namely the human soul, which occupies the lowest rank in the spiritual order (as cited in Tillyard, 1959, pp.28-29).

Each thing has its identity determined by its relative place within the interlocking chains of creation. There is nothing, if you will, that has an identity unchained from this universal order. Nothing is able to swing free from the chain. Alexander Pope in his *Essay on Man* (1732-33) makes this point explicitly as such:

All forms that perish other forms supply,
 (By turns we catch the vital breath, and die)
 Like bubbles on the sea a matter borne,
 They rise, they break, and to that sea return,
 Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole (Pope, 1732-33).

So on Pope's account, each ontological kind or form is related to the whole; nothing that exists escapes its embeddedness in the cosmic order. What Pascal, Montaigne, and Raphael add to this picture of the great chain of being described by Higden and Pope is their emphasis that human culture, not just the natural order, is also characterized by this pan-relationalism. The cultural present is necessarily tied to the past and future. It's not something, if you will, one can opt out of. There are no cultural exiles.¹⁵ Rather, the idea of the great chain of being applied to culture situates one within the continuum of history with no remainder.

Rene Descartes, in contrast, rebels against the belief in a shared past and the notion of a great chain that links the cosmos into a meaning order. Descartes, traditionally understood as the

¹⁵This is a play on W.V. Quine's phrase "Cosmic exiles."

first philosopher of Modernity, ridicules and attempts to distance himself as much as possible from both his contemporaries, like Vieta, and the Ancients, like Plato and Aristotle. As Descartes uncompromisingly states in a fragment preserved in the archives in Stockholm, “Let the Gods cruelly destroy the Ancients, who snatched my things away from me beforehand” (As cited in Lachterman, 1989, p. 128). Elsewhere, this Cartesian project of radical novelty is expressed concisely by Christian Huygens, a contemporary of Descartes, when he writes that Descartes wanted to become through his work, “New-Born, not re-born” as the thinkers of the Modernity of the Renaissance saw themselves (As cited in Lachterman, 1989, p. 130).

If we look closely at the rhetoric of his *Discourse on the Method* (1637) we can see a more systematic approach on the part of Descartes towards why he thought it was necessary to attempt to withdraw from culture. Indeed, this work sees Descartes take on the role of a cultural exile, a necessary role by his light, if one wishes to establish a secure anchor from which to know oneself and the world. In order to secure this foundation for knowledge, one must embrace the past skeptically, withholding judgment on the veracity of its ideas until they pass the scrutiny of a rigorous methodically cleansing. Descartes describes the necessary stance one must take towards the ideas of the past in the following terms:

Regarding philosophy, I shall say only this: seeing that it has been cultivated for many centuries by the most excellent minds and yet there is still no point in it which is not disputed and hence doubtful, I was not so presumptuous as to hope to achieve any more in it than others had done. And, considering how many diverse opinions learned men may maintain on a single question-- even though it is impossible for more than one to be true-- I held as well-nigh false everything that was merely probable. (Descartes, 1985, pp. 114-

115)

In Descartes' (1619) *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, he expresses a similar sentiment, when he writes concerning Plato and Aristotle that:

And even though we have read all the arguments of Plato and Aristotle, we shall never become philosophers if we are unable to make a sound judgment on matters which come up for discussion; in this case what we would seem to have learnt would not be science but history. (Descartes, 1985, p. 13)

One could argue that the stance taken here by Descartes is nothing less than prudent advice to any potential inquirer. If one doesn't take Descartes' counsel here, the argument may go, one might risk collapsing the distinction between the *context of discovery*, where the ideas come from that we are currently seeing, and the *context of justification*, the actual logical procedures used to justify a claim. And while this distinction isn't an absolute one, the mere fact that a series of ideas are received from the past doesn't make those ideas themselves veridical without properly sifting through them. If this is all Descartes wanted to say then his position really couldn't be conceived as a radical departure from what anyone with good sense might hold.

However, this is not all Descartes wants to say. In Part II of the *Discourses* Descartes moves from the prudent counsel outlined above to a full-blown rejection of the past. As Descartes puts it:

But regarding the opinions to which I hitherto given credence, I thought I could do no better than undertake to get rid of them, all at one go,¹⁶ in order to replace them afterwards with better ones . . . (Descartes, 1985, p, 117)

Only after completely scrubbing oneself of one's received habits and beliefs about the world can one begin the process of edification. For Descartes, one's received culture must be jettisoned completely. The cultural house one's been born into, including its foundation, must be torn down and built anew.¹⁷ Concerned about the consequences of becoming homeless, of becoming a cultural and historical exile, Descartes (1985) interestingly counsels the following:

Now, before starting to rebuild your house, it is not enough simply to pull it down, to make provisions for materials and architects (or else train yourself in architecture), and to have carefully drawn up plans; you must also provide yourself with some other place where you can live comfortably while building is in progress. (p. 122)

He goes on to develop a "provisional moral code" that is to be followed while this new intellectual and cultural edifice is being constructed (Descartes, 1985, p.122). In this code Descartes outlines, it becomes requisite that one follow the "laws and customs" of one's country (Descartes, 1985, p.122). One should follow the cultural givens one is born into, not because they are true or impose any kind of normative constraint, but simply for purely practical reasons.

¹⁶Sir Moberly makes a distinction between open and closed minds in the following manner: Education and intellectual inquiry involves the avoidance of two extremes, the closed mind and the empty mind. It is possible to hold preconceptions in such a way that one's mind is not really open to entertain fresh evidence that seems to contradict it. This is the notorious fault of the dogmatist; and for one open and avowed dogmatist there are half a dozen who are dogmatists unconsciously but quite effectually. The great advances in intellectual inquiry have generally been made by people who were ready to take interest in, and to concentrate attention on, the unexpected, and, if need be, to jettison all presuppositions. On the other hand simply to jettison all presuppositions is not only impossible but absurd. What is required is, to integrate the new and the old, and not to ignore either (cited in Lipkin, 1994). Given Moberly's distinction, Descartes seems to exemplify a dogmatic open mind.

¹⁷Pressing his argument further, Descartes (1985) points out that "Among the first things that occurred to me was the thought that there is not usually so much perfection in works composed of several parts and produced by various craftsmen as in the works of one man. Thus we see buildings undertaken and completed by a single architect are usually more attractive and better planned than those which several have tried to patch up by adopting old walls built for different purposes" (p.116).

The temporary cost of being a cultural exile who wants to rebuild the fabric of that culture on a new foundation forces one to at least feign obedience to its beliefs and social practices.

What we find when we exit the Modernity of the Renaissance and enter the philosophical Modernity of Descartes is two contrasting rhetorical strategies towards the past and ones cultural and historical embeddedness. Where the Modernity of the Renaissance described a world where things that exist gain their significance and meaning in their relationship to other things within the cosmos, the subtext of Descartes' rhetorical strategies points in a direction that leads to the belief that part of human nature is able to stand in a non-relational way to the rest of the world. Where the Modernity of the Renaissance saw the possibility of being a human or cultural exile as an impossibility, Descartes celebrates this possibility and argues that this is a necessary path we all must take if our beliefs are to be founded on certainty. In this sense, then, the Modernity of the Renaissance anticipates the orientation taken by the "champions of solidarity" while the Modernity of Descartes reflects the position taken up by the "champions of objectivity." Of course the Modernity of the Renaissance is still wedded to the notion that the cultural pan-relationalism suggested by Pope, Pascal, and Raphael is overseen by a benevolent deity charged with determining the exact nature of the relationality of the cosmos, where and in what position things exist on the great chain. Nonetheless, this cultural pan-relationalism as contrasted with the diremptive philosophical stance taken by Descartes is important thematically for coming to terms with Dewey's and Davidson's critiques of Modernity's image of the self.

This reconstruction of the Modernity of the Renaissance and the philosophical Modernity of Descartes then was not meant to be read simply as a curious piece of history. Instead, it was the first step in raising a conceptual issue about the nature of the self-image that emerges out of the philosophical work of the Modernity of Rene Descartes that Dewey's and Davidson's critiques of Modernity focus on. Still further, it should be emphasized that this section only looked briefly at the *rhetorical strategies* of Descartes' philosophy and not his epistemology or ontology. Nonetheless, Descartes' epistemological and ontological commitments, as we shall see, are themselves built on and reflective of his rhetorical strategies. Descartes' epistemology and ontology is what motivates Dewey's and Davidson's analyses of the Modern self. In this sense, this discussion of the contrasting rhetorical strategies of the Modernity of the renaissance and the Modernity of Descartes should serve as the background or context from which Dewey's and Davidson's critiques should be understood. To their critique of Modernity we now turn.

Dewey's Critique of the Modern Self

This section will begin by looking at John Dewey's comparison between Ancient and Modern notions of the self and how and why, for Dewey, the Modern notion of the self results in diremption. The goal here is again not simply historical but conceptual, although stylistically Dewey's critique takes the form of a historical reconstruction. After looking at how Dewey contrasts the Ancient and Modern image of the self, the focus will turn in more detail to Dewey's critique of the Modern self and why its notion of mind

leads to the fragmentation of the self from world and self from other.

Dewey (1981) begins his excavation of the Ancient and Modern conceptions of the self by noting that, “In regard to the nature of the individual, as in so many respects, classic and modern philosophies have pursued opposite paths” (p. 162). For the Ancients, the protean and unstable character of everyday life was such that particular individuals, or what Moderns would call individuals, were not true individuals. In other words, for the Ancients, particular individuals or particular selves merely participated in and belonged to the qualitatively distinct *kind or family* human being, which for them was the true individual. As Dewey points out, while this might sound odd to Modern ears, in a world anchored around the family who saw the world in qualitative terms, individuals come to be identified and knowable only through their identification within the family and community kind. Therefore, to speak about particular individual minds or individual selves was incoherent to the Ancients. Rather, “a mind was an organized system in which ideal form unites varying particulars into a genuine whole” (Dewey, 1981, p. 163). Failure to appreciate this situation, moreover, was the result of those particular individuals who had no family, or who had become outcasts or wanderers. For Dewey then, the Modern notion of the individual from the eyes of the Ancients:

. . . marks an anomaly; a failure of realization of objective forms on the part of the indwelling family to impress itself adequately, owing to stubborn resisting material constitution. What is prized and exalted by moderns as individual was just the defect which is the source of ignorance, opinion, and error. (Dewey, 1981, p. 163)

Private beliefs were acts of deviation that were rigorously kept in check through education that was primarily about the reproduction of the extant structures of society. Dewey notes, however, that even in a cultural system where the goal was to reproduce the past into the future, there was still innovation and creativity. However, individual creativity was attributed at first to the gods, and later, when Greek religious symbols were reconceptualized in Greek philosophy, into analytical categories like substance, essence, and form. Thus, the artist or artisan was conceived to be engaged in a process that was directed or governed (arche) by antecedent models or patterns that were part of the constitution of the world. For the Ancients, then, the arts “were pursued upon the basis of a fund of realized, objective, impersonal designs and plans, which were prior to individual devising and execution rather than products of individual purpose and invention” (Dewey, 1981, p. 79-80).

Where the ancients subsumed the individual into family kinds, objects, and ends that were pre-established, the Moderns saw the ends and objects of experience to be the result of individual and private mental processes. The result of this revolution was that:

The conception of the individual changed completely. No longer was the individual something complete, perfect, finished, an organized whole of parts united by the impress of a comprehensive form. What was prized as individuality was now something moving, changing, discrete, and above all initiating instead of final. (Dewey, 1981, p. 167)

This self-assertion of the modern individual is no longer a particular without a home, without being part of a family kind, but now is characterized as “a subject, self, a

distinctive center of desire, thinking and aspiration” (Dewey, 1981, p. 168). And in this sense, predicates that once were attributed to the species or family kind, are now uniquely related to the particular individual in their own right. This characteristic Modern attempt to construct one’s identity *ex nihilo* is clearly seen in the rhetorical strategies employed by Descartes.

Moreover, this Modern individual or self becomes quickly identified with mind, which when coupled with the Modern defense of mind against tradition, led to its isolation from the world. This private space or inner realm carved out by philosophers like Descartes resulted in a rigid dualism between a self-enclosed and self-sufficient individual and a self-sufficient and self-enclosed world of objects standing against the self (Dewey, 1981, pp. 23-24). Perhaps, the most powerful expression of this line of thought can be found in Descartes’ argument for the saliency of the cogito. In his *Meditations*, Descartes (1641) employs a methodological skepticism in the service of liberating human beings from culture so that they may remake culture on indubitable foundations (Gellner, 1992, p. 13). This methodological skepticism can be thought of as the epistemological correlate to the rhetorical strategies discussed in the last section. Descartes concludes through his methodological jettisoning of culture that the only thing he can be certain of is the very fact that he is doubting, and, thus, that the one thing in the world that exists is the activity of his mind; that his mind is an ontological feature of the world, in that he is sure. As he puts it in part four of his *Discourses*:

I saw on the contrary that from mere fact that I thought of doubting the truth of other things, it followed quite evidently and certainly that I existed; whereas if I

had merely ceased thinking, even if everything else I had ever imagined had been true, I should have no reason to believe that I existed. From this I knew I was a substance whose whole essence or nature is simply to think, and which does not require any place or depend on any material thing, in order to exist. Accordingly this “I”—that is, the soul by which I am what I am—is entirely distinct from the body, and indeed is easier to know than the body . . . (Descartes, 1985, p. 127).

From the certainty that he is doubting Descartes concludes that his existence is primarily mental. The career of the mind, Descartes contends, is to think and to reason, properties internal to the individual, who now is defined by the fact that he/she/it exists as a thinking and reasoning thing. Since it’s not dependent on anything material, a body/others/or the world at large, the mind is place-less, and hence, is able to think and reason outside of history and culture. Since the mind has no place, the mind isn’t French or Parisian or American or any other cultural identity. This place-less, home-less mind¹⁸ allows one to become a cognitive Robinson Crusoe¹⁹ that is able to wander the world as a spectator bereft of a culture or history, a cultural and historical exile born-again from the recesses of the light of one’s reason through the process of one’s “self-instruction” (Descartes, 1985, p. 124).

This line of argument leads to the conclusion that, for Descartes, the mind and its capacity for thinking and reasoning is what distinguishes persons from things, to whom we have responsibilities. To be a person is to have a mind and to have a mind is to be able to entertain intentional and other propositional states. In fact, for Descartes, what

¹⁸The title of Thomas Nagel’s book, *The View from Nowhere*, captures this sense.

¹⁹See Ernest Gellner’s *Reason and Culture*, p. 14.

distinguishes human beings from animals is the fact that animals lack a mind and are simply like machines—exactly what human beings would be like if they weren't thinking and reasoning. More importantly for Descartes, the mind/body dualism is caught up with the person/thing distinction. In this context, the mind and its attendant mental states are determinate of what counts as being a person. Yet, the result of Descartes' image of the self was the problem of how to figure out how mind and culture, mind and world, subject and object get in touch and relate to one another. In Dewey's (1916) words:

This isolation is reflected in the great development of that branch of philosophy known as epistemology--the theory of knowledge. The identification of mind with self, and the setting up of the self as something independent and self-sufficient, created such a gulf between the knowing mind and the world that it became a question how knowledge was possible at all. Given a subject—the knower—and an object—the thing to be known—wholly separate from one another, it is necessary to frame a theory to explain how they get into connection with each other so that valid knowledge may result. (p. 293)

This epistemological turn, where the self is defined as a knowing mind standing against a world to be known, leads to the rupture between mind and culture. The underlying assumption behind this self-image is, according to Dewey (1916):

. . . the supposition there is an inner world of conscious states and processes, independent of any relationship to nature or society, an inner world more truly and immediately known than anything else, is evidence of the same fact. (p. 293)

In other words, if as Descartes presumes, mind is founded through a process of

introspection—and through this introspection is founded the source of our primary access to the world and others—then it seems that the only thing we can be confident of concluding about the world are our own mental states: one’s pain reports, pleasure reports, desires, beliefs, etc. The only part of the world or culture I can know is the inner world of my consciousness. In this context, communication between people becomes problematic. How can I even know if someone else is actually experiencing pain or feeling happy, or even has a mind and is a person, when the only thing I’m certain of are my own internal propositional states? The world for Descartes’ cognitive Robinson Crusoe, on this account, is simply a manifold of objects forever screened off from ones’ internal life of the mind. The result being that “when knowledge is regarded as originating and developing within the individual, the ties which bind the mental life of one to that of his fellows are ignored and denied” (Dewey, 1916, p. 297).

“All of this becomes problematic in the first place,” Dewey (1981) contends, “in part because of the Modern conception of language. Language, for the Moderns, is seen as a tube that is a conductor of antecedent inner states of the individual into outer expressions” (p. 134). Thoughts, ideas, and knowledge, then, pre-exist the transfer of them through language. In short, there is no shared system of related significances, or historical or cultural background that serves as the condition for the possibility of having an idea, or having a thought about something in the first place. From this *problem of other minds* comes, Dewey believes, the problem of how to establish moral and political relations between people. In short, given Descartes’ self-image, how can we see others as persons with moral and political obligations instead of seeing them simply as reified

objects for manipulation? Dewey (1916) puts it this way in *Democracy and Education*:

When the social quality of individualized mental operations is denied, it becomes a problem to find connections which will unite an individual with his fellows.

Moral individualism is set up by the conscious separation of different centers of life. It has its roots in the notion that the consciousness of the person is wholly private, a self-enclosed continent, intrinsically independent of the ideas, wishes, purposes of everybody else. But when men act, they act in a common and public world. This is the problem to which the theory of isolated and independent conscious minds gave rise: Given feeling, ideas, desires, which have nothing to do with one another . . . how can action which has regard for other take place. (p. 297)²⁰

The Modernity of Descartes then proffers up a conception of the self that is identified with the mind, and the individual mind is characterized by private propositional states that are the product of reasoning and thinking, properties themselves of the individual mind but separate and distinct from the world (including one's own body). Rationality, the intrinsic property of the ontologically distinct mind, moreover, is defined in terms of its "power of judging well and of distinguishing the true from the false" (Descartes, 1985,

²⁰Politically, this new conception of the self led to the replacement of the Aristotelian state that existed by nature to a conception of the state that exists through a compact between individuals who come to together so they can maximize their individual self-interest. In this sense, these early social contract theorists, despite the many differences between them, assumed an interactionist view of human agency. The interactionist view, in contrast to the transactional view (a view Dewey will argue for), assumes that separate independent particles (self-enclosed) operate upon one another in such a way that results in some end. We can see this, for example, when Hobbes (1651) writes in *De Cive* that in order to fully understand the "social compound," one must understand the cause of the social compound which lies in "men as if but even now sprung out of the earth, and suddenly, like mushrooms, come to full maturity, without all kinds of engagement with one another" (cited in Lukes, 1973). Before entering into collaboration, or before entering into the social compound, the separate particles are complete within themselves. Dewey will ultimately reject the interactionist view found in Hobbes, but applauds the social contract theorists for arguing for the possibility of creatively transforming institutions for the better.

p. 111). That is, rationality is understood in terms of its epistemological or knowing relation to what is known. In sum, Modernity, in Dewey's view, reduces the self to a spectatorial mind that is, first and foremost, a knower standing against a world to be known. The result, besides placing the Modernity of Descartes comfortably inside the charmed circle of the champions of objectivity, is the melting of the person-thing distinction (those we have reciprocal responsibilities to) into the mind-body distinction. In doing so, the self takes on a diremptive stance towards the world and others (and has its own embodiment in the world), it lives essentially outside of history and culture, and does so in a non-relational manner. Diremption is the outcome since our essential or intrinsic personhood, for the Modernity of Descartes, is a spectatorial substance (mind) that lies detached from the world of social practices that would naturally tie people together through practical commitments to one another.

Davidson on Thought and Rationality

Donald Davidson's work can help us to see in more detail how Dewey's account of Descartes' notion of the thinking and reasoning mind ultimately results in the diremption of the self and world. In his essay entitled "The Problem of Objectivity,"²¹ Davidson attempts to explain what is presupposed in having thought in the first place. He begins this essay by suggesting that there are two fundamental problems entailed if one wants to come to terms with what it means to be, as Descartes (1985) described, a

²¹This essay could just as easily have been named "The Problem of the World" or/and "The Problem of Other Minds" because for Davidson, as we shall see, a shared world and other minds are the precondition for a person to have a thought in the first place.

thinking substance (p. 127). The first is an epistemological problem related to “how we can justify our belief in a world independent of our minds, a world containing other people with thoughts of their own, and endless things besides” (Davidson, 1995, p. 127). This is the problem that fascinated Descartes and which led to him taking up the stance of a cultural and historical exile and led to the diremption described by Dewey. The second problem, which was ignored by Descartes and his progeny prior to the first, is the question of how we came to have the “concept of objective truth” in the first place (Davidson, 2004, p.17). That is, “it is one thing to ask how we can tell if our beliefs are true; it is another to ask what makes belief, whether true or false, possible” (Davidson, 2004, p.3). In other words, this latter problem asks fundamentally what it is that makes thought possible. It is because he never addressed this latter problem, Davidson suggests, that Descartes believed it was possible and necessary to cut the self off from the world (and others/culture/history) and become a cognitive Robinson Crusoe in order to realize the task of finding indubitable beliefs about oneself and the world.

Davidson (2004) proceeds by observing that “all thought, whether in the form of beliefs or intentions, desires, fears, or expectations, has propositional content, the kind of content that is paradigmatically expressed in sentences” (p. 3). As such, every belief we have has truth conditions or error conditions; that is, to have a thought is to entertain the possibility that a belief we hold could be true or false: what I desire or hope for or expect may or may not come to pass (Davidson, 2004). To be a thinking thing is to hold sentences that we know can be in error. Davidson points out, however, that thinking and reasoning should and must be distinguished from the ability to discriminate features of

our environment, an ability we share with non-human animals. Take, for instance, a dog chasing a cat up the tree. Does the dog staring up at the tree believe that the cat went up the tree? In other words, is the dog entertaining a proposition that states something like: it believes the cat went up the tree? Davidson wants to say that the dog (along with other non-human animals) cannot entertain a proposition because it doesn't have a crucial ingredient that comes with beliefs and other propositional states, which is that each belief we have could be wrong. Is the dog able "to discriminate, to act differentially in the face of clues to the presence of food, danger, or safety" (Davidson, 2004, p.7)? Yes, but discrimination, on Davidson's account, is not thought and does not require reason. In Davidson's (2004) words:

A thought is defined, at least in part, by the fact that it has content that can be true or false. The most basic form of thought is belief. But one cannot have a belief without understanding that beliefs may be false—their truth is not guaranteed by anything in us. Someone who believes there is a dragon in the closet opens the door and sees there is no dragon. He is surprised; this is not what he expected. Awareness of the possibility of surprise, the entertainment of expectations—these are essential concomitants of beliefs (p. 7).

In a sense, Descartes was right to the extent that beliefs and other propositional states are indeed personal or subjective and that whether or not those beliefs are true is objective. Yet, Descartes makes a grave misstep, according to Davidson, by not investigating where the concept of a world outside of our minds comes from. Simply invoking the fact that we can be surprised on an occasion that our beliefs are false is not

enough, “because we cannot be surprised, or have an expectation, unless we already command the concept” (Davidson, year, p. 2004).

But what does Davidson mean when he argues that to have thinking in the first place it is requisite that one already has an understanding of the concept of a world outside of our minds? First, Davidson (2004) defines a concept “for cases where it makes clear sense to speak of a mistake” (p. 8). If, for instance, the dog eats something that makes it sick, it has not made a mistake, but has rather “done what it’s programmed to do” (Davidson, 2004, p. 8). In his words:

To apply a concept is to make a judgment, to classify or characterize an object or event or situation in a certain way, and this requires application of the concept of truth, since it always possible to classify or characterize something wrongly (Davidson, 2004, p. 9).

Therefore, an organism has thought only when it is able to wield a concept “in the context of judgment” (Davidson, 2004, p. 9). To employ any concept such as *the cat went up the tree* one must have the concept of truth. But in order to have the concept of truth, Davidson continues, one must also have the concept of objectivity. That is, “the notion of a proposition being true or false independent of one’s beliefs or interests” (Davidson, 2004, p. 10). All beliefs held are either true or false, but in order to hold a belief one must *know* that their belief can be true or false; which is to say, one must have the concept of a world independent of one’s beliefs and other propositional states.

For Davidson, the concept of objectivity is built into the possibility of thinking. But why is this the case? In his essay “Three Varieties of Knowledge,” Davidson (1991)

provides an answer. The source for the concept of objectivity, Davidson (1991) contends, is intersubjective communication (p. 219). To be able to think is to be in communication with others. This is the case once one accepts Wittgenstein's argument against the idea of private languages. As Davidson (1991) points out, Wittgenstein's basic argument is that unless language is shared, there is nothing to provide the proper check on people's proper or improper use of language. Or in Davidsonian terms, unless there is a check for determining whether or not our beliefs are true or false, something that can only be provided by those we are communicating with, then we couldn't entertain propositional states at all. Without this check, in other words, there is no thought. There is no thought because thought requires, in Davidson's (1991) account, the concept of objectivity and the concept of a world independent of our beliefs entails a world shared with other minds.²² Davidson (1991) concludes this line of argument by putting it this way:

Until a base line has been established by communication with someone else, there is no point in saying one's own thoughts or words have a propositional content. If this is so, then it is clear that knowledge of another mind is essential to all thought and all knowledge. Knowledge of another mind is possible, however, only if one has knowledge of the world, for the triangulation which is essential to thought requires that those in communication recognize that they occupy a positions in a shared world. So knowledge of other minds and knowledge of the world are

²²Davidson is, in an important sense, a Hegelian thinking despite the fact that the analytical tradition (which Davidson is a member) eschewed and to a large degree still eschews the thought of Hegel. Jurgen Habermas' description of Hegel's thought has Davidsonian overtones. As he says, "Hegel's dialectic of self-consciousness passes over the relation of solitary reflection in favor of the complementary relationship between individuals who know each other. The experience of self-consciousness is no longer considered the original one. Rather, for Hegel it results from the experience of interaction, in which I learn to see myself through the eyes of others subjects. The consciousness of myself is the derivation of the intersection [*verschränkung*] of perspectives (Haberman, 1973, pp. 144-145).

mutually dependent; neither is possible without the other. (p.213)

Without the triangulated process of self, other, and a shared world there is no such thing as thinking. So thought must presuppose others and a shared world to get started in the first place. Descartes' belief that one must separate oneself from the world and others in order to properly access what is outside in the world gets things backwards. Rather, for the mind to emerge, as we will see in more detail in the next chapter, we already have to be involved in the world and in social interaction with others.

Furthermore, Davidson's account of thinking shows us in more detail why the fragmentation of both self and world and self and other, characteristic of the self-image of the Modernity of Descartes, is a result of Descartes' combing over and collapsing the person/thing distinction into the mind/body or mind/world distinction. This is another way of saying that Descartes confuses and blurs two senses of rationality, two ways we are thinking things: rationality in its descriptive sense and rationality in its normative sense (Brandt, 2000). In the former, rationality, a property interior to singular minds, is optimized when it's able to accurately predict the world outside of the mind. Rationality in this first sense realizes itself when it gets things right, when it follows procedures²³ that allow for the proper representations of a world seen as a "neutral domain of mechanical movement" (Taylor, 1992, p. 98). This first sense of rationality is employed by a self (or person) that, as Dewey points out, is primarily seen as an epistemological spectator standing back from a world outside of itself that is to be known. But if Davidson's

²³Given the title of some of Descartes' most famous works, such as *Rules for the Direction of Mind* and his *Discourse on Method*, this emphasize on procedural reason should come as no surprise. See Charles Taylor's essay, "Inwardness and the Culture of Modernity," for a more sustained discussion of these issues.

argument is correct then, that position can never be our *primary* mode of being in the world and with others.²⁴ Rather, we are first actors in a shared world with others that we are already involved with in any number of ways in the practice of everyday life. In this way, our practical obligations and responsibilities to others, the “taken-for-granted-background of purposive-and hence normatively describable-behavior on the part of the communicators involved,” is always the context out of which any theoretical engagement with the world has meaning and significance (Brandom, 2000, p. 362). In Davidson’s account, by not asking the question about just what it is that makes thought possible, the Modernity of Descartes proffers up a self-image that is detached from the world and others—but not just the world and others. If Davidson is right, then we also become alienated from ourselves to the extent that our own personhood emerges only as a product of communication with others.

Both Dewey and Davidson then see the Modernity of Descartes bequeathing to us an image of the self that leads to diremption, leads to the detachment of self from world and to the troubling vignettes that open this dissertation. By defining the self in non-relational terms, in terms that describe a self that is able to swing-free from culture/history/society, they leave us with the problem of how the non-relational aspect of ourselves (mind) links up with the rest of the world. Doing so leads the Modernity of Descartes to define the self and our intrinsic personhood in purely epistemological terms—as a knower standing against a world to be known.

²⁴Lawrence Hazelrigg (1989) points out that within this tradition that hails from the modernity of Descartes “privacy is prior to, and valorized over, publicness: ‘the private sector’ is superior to ‘the public sector’, because the former is originary....” (p. 266). He continues, “to be public is to be outside of oneself, other, estranged from the homeland of property and self-possession” (Hazelrigg, year, p. 267). In this sense, to be of culture/history/society is to lose oneself, is to be torn away from one’s intrinsic nature.

CHAPTER 2
RECASTING THE MODERN SELF: DEWEY AND DAVIDSON
ON THE RELATIONAL SELF

But again, when I am active scientifically, etc.—when I am engaged in activity which I can seldom perform in direct community with others—then I am *social*, because I am active as a *man*. Not only is the material of my activity given to me as a social product (as is even the language in which the thinker is active): my own existence is social activity, and therefore that which I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness of myself as a social being.

(Marx, 1978, p.86)

In 1992, the body of twenty-three year old Christopher McCandless was found by a hunter on an abandoned bus in the wilderness of Alaska (Brown, 1993). A native of Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, McCandless weighed sixty-seven pounds at the time of his autopsy, seventy pounds less than he did a few years earlier when he received his Virginia driver's license (Brown, 1993). McCandless wasn't the first to die in what many today see as the last bastion of the American frontier, a frontier that is such a critical element to the self-definition of the United States.²⁵ Many others preceded him, and many have died in their quest for this particular kind of excitement and adventure.

Concluding that he died of starvation, the question still remains as to why he went into

²⁵Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis" argues that the frontier played a critical role in the advancement and deepening of democratic traditions in the United States.

the Alaskan wilderness in the first place. What was it that drew him to these isolated parts of North America? Was it indeed simply a case of a young man looking for adventure?

Chip Brown, the author of a *New Yorker* expose on McCandless, argues that Christopher “was waging a spiritual revolution” to “kill the false being within” (Brown, 1993). Eschewing the counsel of teachers, parents, and friends alike, McCandless tried to “pare away whatever was false and superficial” (Brown, 1993). This led him eventually to pare away the culture he was born into. As Brown writes:

He discarded his given name, his social security number. ‘EXEMPT EXEMPT EXEMPT’ he scrawled across a W-4 form. At one point, he set fire to the last of his money. He pared away contact with his friends, with his mother and father and his sister, Carine. In the end, whether by tragic miscalculation or unknowable design, he pared away himself (Brown, 1993).²⁶

In addition, in a tattered copy of Tolstoy’s short story “The Death of Ivan Illich,” recovered not far from his body, was scrawled on the margins: “Civilization-Falsity-A Big Lie” (Brown, 1993). It’s the cultural scripts we are born into—those embodied in our social practices—that are lies. What is the truth, it seems, are just those things that lie outside of culture. Culture is “superficial” and inauthentic or so McCandless’ writings seem to suggest. Sahlins (2008) points out that *nomos* or what we today would call culture or civilization early on in Western thought “acquired the sense of something false

²⁶What McCandless put into action in many ways is the kind of advice for finding oneself one finds in the counsel of self-help gurus like Dr. Phil McGraw. Consider the description of the authentic self which Dr. Phil McGraw argues is at the core of who we really are: The authentic self is the you that can be found at your absolute core. It is the part of you that is not defined by your job, or your function, or your role. It is the composite of all your unique gifts, skills, abilities, interests, talents, insights, and wisdom. It is the you that wants to require you to be more than you are, that doesn’t even know what it is to settle to sell out...” (McGraw, 2003, pg. 30)

in comparison to the authenticity and reality of nature” (p. 38).²⁷ In a fatally ironic twist, however, McCandless’ tragic story suggests that to pare away culture is to pare away oneself.

This attempt to detach and isolate oneself from others, including even one’s own family, is a legacy of the non-relational diremptive self-image bequeathed to us from the Modernity of Descartes. Where Descartes attempts to take on the stance of a “cognitive Robinson Crusoe” in order to reconstruct the world on a newly minted foundation, McCandless’ extreme measures remind us of the extraordinary dangers, in practice, of a non-relational diremptive self-image. The story of Christopher McCandless compels us, then, to ask just what a relational self-image looks like. This chapter will take up this charge. In Chapter 1 we looked at Dewey and Davidson’s critiques of the modern self-image. In this chapter, we will look at how both of these philosophers develop a self-image that is relational through and through. As will be shown in Chapter 3, this relational self-image is the foundation for fully understanding the transformative potential of Dewey and Davidson’s philosophies of education. Accordingly, Chapter 2 will proceed as follows. First, a brief formal sketch will be drawn of relational and non-relational understandings of the self. This will allow us to answer the question of just what it is that distinguishes a relational from a non-relational self-image. After this formal sketch, we will look at the content of the kind of relational self that Dewey argues

²⁷The distinction between culture and nature in this context should not be understood as a distinction between good and bad. Rather, nature is what is real or in-itself as opposed to culture, which is by convention, artifice, and illusion. Thus, both Rousseau and Hobbes, to take two familiar examples, both agree that our fundamental human nature is what we really are deep down inside, but they disagree on whether or not that nature is something to be admired or something we should take a negative stance towards. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Discourse on Inequality* and Thomas Hobbes’ *De Cive* for examples of both approaches to human nature.

for. The radicalness of Dewey's position will then be brought out by distinguishing between two ways of conceiving the relationality of the self: what will be called the *interactionalist relational self* and the *trans-actionalist relational self*. This distinction is critically important to Dewey and for distinguishing his position from others that have a family resemblance. The final section of this chapter will turn to Davidson's work on the self. Davidson, like Dewey, emphasizes the normative or practical dimension to the relational self, which is played out in his concept of *triangulation*. Davidson's concept of triangulation, as will be illustrated, has interesting parallels to Dewey's description of the relational self. Yet his approach is different. Where Dewey takes up the question of the self from a more general account of the relationship between self and world, Davidson's work grows out of and is a response to the questions and problems raised in 20th century analytical philosophy of mind and language. For Davidson, this means that the focus on the relational self is investigated at the level of language. Davidson's approach, in the end, allows us to deepen many of Dewey insights. This will become even more apparent in Chapter 4 when Dewey's *Experience and Education* is read from a Davidsonian perspective.

Intrinsicity, Extrinsicity and the Relational Self

In his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke (1689) makes the following distinction between two qualities of objects:

First, such as are utterly inseparable from the body, in what estate so ever it be; and such as in all the alterations and changes it suffers, and all the force can be

used upon it, it constantly keeps...take a grain of wheat, divide it into two parts: each part has still solidity, extension, figure, and mobility; divide it again, and it retains the same qualities...These I call *original* or *primary qualities* of body...Secondly, such qualities which in truth are nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities, i.e. by the bulk, figure, texture, and motion of their insensible parts, as colours, sounds, tastes, &c. These I call *secondary qualities*. (p. 112)

Galileo (1623) makes a parallel contrast when he writes in *The Assayer*:

Suppose I pass my hand, first over a marble statue, then over a living man. So far as the hand, considered in itself, is concerned, it will act in an identical way upon each of these objects; that is, the primary qualities of motion and contact will similarly affect the two objects, and we would use identical language to describe this in each case. But the living body, which I subject to this experiment, will feel itself affected in various ways, depending upon the part of the body I happen to touch; for example, should it be touched on the sole of the foot or the kneecap, or under the armpit, it will react, in addition to simple contact, a further affection to which we have a special name: we call it “tickling”. This latter affection is altogether our own, and is not a property of the hand itself. (p. 57)

Both Locke and Galileo distinguish between those parts of an object that stand independently of anything else in the world (primary qualities) and those aspects of an object that gain their identity by their relationship to other objects and things in the world (secondary qualities). In this sense, the distinction between primary and secondary

qualities is another way of distinguishing between an objects' essence and those aspects of an object that are accidental to it, between what an object is "in-itself" and those parts of it that are peripheral. Or more simply, Galileo and Locke's distinction can be understood to be distinguishing between what is *intrinsic* to an object from what is *extrinsic* (Rorty, 1999).

Suppose, for instance, we want to understand and get to know object X. If we employed Locke and Galileo's distinction between primary and secondary qualities, we would first have to distinguish between X's core essence, those *intrinsic* properties of X without which it would cease to be X, from those *extrinsic* properties of X without which it would continue to be X. It should come as no surprise that to have commitments to the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction is to be a partisan of the "champions of objectivity" that we came to know in the last chapter. The intrinsic/extrinsic distinction simply reintroduces at the level of properties the culture/nature distinction. *Intrinsic* properties are precisely those properties that lie outside of culture/history. What object X really is *intrinsically*, is precisely defined by what isn't tainted by the marks of culture, history, and current social practice. In contrast, what is extrinsic isn't necessary to what object X is intrinsically precisely because it stands in some sort of relation within the world.

This distinction, between intrinsic and extrinsic properties of objects, is a skein that runs throughout the entire gamut of Western intellectual history. It's most powerful expression in Ancient philosophy can be found in the *Physics* of Aristotle (1941), where he argues for a teleological conception of the natural world. In *Physics B*, he describes "nature" (*phusis*) in the following manner:

. . . which seems to indicate that nature is a source or cause of being moved and of being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily, in virtue of itself and not in virtue of a concomitant attribute (Aristotle, 1941, p. 236).

That “source or cause” (*aitia*)²⁸ propels the natural kind towards its final purpose (*telos*) or goal as the kind of thing it is in-itself or intrinsically.²⁹

Dewey (1910) notes that within the protean mix of everyday life, nature, according to Aristotle,

. . . operates throughout a series of changes and holds them to a single course; which subordinates their aimless flux to its own perfect manifestation; which, leaping the boundaries of space and time, keep individuals distant in space and remote in time to a uniform type of structure and function... (p. 5).

Each part of the natural world, including human beings, has a built-in intrinsicality that expresses itself through the life of the natural kind.

By the nascent stages of Modernity, Aristotle’s conception of nature and intrinsicality slowly came to be undermined, at least in part. No longer was “nature” conceived of as directing the various kinds of things in the world towards their qualitative distinct goal or purpose. The world was “drained of final causes” and jettisoned of the idea of intrinsicality—but not all of the world (Rorty, 1998, p. 111). As Dewey (1925) points out in *Experience and Nature*:

²⁸*Aitia* translated into English means “to govern.”

²⁹This teleological reading of the world is also seen in the nineteenth century in some readings on evolution. Herbert Spencer (1899), perhaps the most influential progenitor of an Aristotelean reading of evolution, is famous for his understanding of it as making the implicit laws of the natural world explicit.

Greek metaphysics and logic are dominated by the idea of inherent belonging and exclusion . . . Modern science has liberated physical events from the domination of the notions of intrinsic belonging and exclusion, but it retained the idea with exacerbated vigor in the case of psychological events. (pp. 180-181)

Modern science has jettisoned final causes in favor of understanding the world in terms of its relationality. For instance, “the law of gravitation...states a relation which holds between bodies with respect to distance and mass” (Dewey, 1940, p. 252). As Dewey argues, while the relationality of the physical world was gaining momentum, the commitment to intrinsic/extrinsic distinction was still maintained in the case of human beings. Rorty (1998) pushes this point home when he writes:

In the days when corpuscularians were busy draining plants and rocks and animals of their intrinsic natures, busy driving out formal and final causes, Cartesian philosophers has to work fairly hard (in the face of incredulous stares from people like Hobbes and Gassendi) to create ‘consciousness’ as a refuge for Aristotelian notions of substance, essence, and intrinsicity. But they succeeded. Thanks to their efforts, even after the colorfully diverse contents of Aristotelian nature were smeared together into one big swirl of corpuscles—one big substance called ‘matter’—there remained, here below, one other substance: the mind. The mind that philosophers invented was its own place . . . (p. 111)

This reluctance among the champions of objectivity to fully include human beings into the relationality of the natural world led them to posit a self-image that is defined by an internal space called “mind” or “consciousness” that results in the self being cut-off from

the world and others, something Davidson and Dewey argued for in different ways in Chapter 1.

For Dewey and Davidson, diremption is a result of the steadfast commitment to the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction, which both authors will try to break down. In its stead they will, in their own ways, argue for a pan-relationalism. But what do we mean by pan-relationalism? And how does it contrast with the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction? Recall that those who have commitments to the intrinsic/extrinsic are motivated by the idea that to know any object, including human beings, we have to distinguish between a description of X's essential core, its intrinsic nature, and what is simply an extrinsic feature of the object. But for pan-relationalists like Dewey and Davidson, there is no distinction to be drawn between intrinsic and non-intrinsic (extrinsic) features of a thing (Rorty, 1998). All things, including our self-image, gain significance and meaning as part of a vast web of relations. Rorty (1999) nicely draws out the implications of this position when he writes: "once the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic goes, so does the distinction between reality and appearance, and so do worries about whether there are barriers between us and the world" (p. 50). In other words, once the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction goes, so does the search for a bedrock human nature that stands in a non-relational way to the outside world and to others. Using the example of Abraham Lincoln, Dewey (1940) points out in his neglected article "Time and Individuality" that "Lincoln as an individual is a history" (p. 230). In other words, Lincoln does not have an intrinsic property "given once for all at the beginning which then proceeds to unroll as a ball of yarn may be unwound" (Dewey, 1940, p. 230). Take away a decade of his life, and it

would be difficult for a biographer to capture Lincoln’s life. Lincoln, and every human being, doesn’t exist somehow *in* time, or *in* the historical context she is born into, but rather, “temporal seriality” *is* her existence (Dewey, 1940, p. 230). For pan-relationalists, then “relations go all the way down” (Rorty, 1999, p. 53). That is, we are without remainder “in/as/from historically determinate relations” (Hazelrigg, 1995, p. 125). As Hazelrigg (1995) reminds us:

Thus, a consciousness that flatters itself as being consciousness of something other than, outside of, prior to, (logically or genetically), existing practice—for instance, as consciousness of nature’s own thing—is abstract thought taking itself to be the point of departure in a journey to the concrete, and forgetting that it is relationally constituted in and from existing practice (p. 125).³⁰

The intrinsic/extrinsic distinction, then, is itself a product of existing practice. Dewey and Davidson will argue it’s a practice we best change or drop because the costs are too high.

We will now go on to address their work on the relational self.

Dewey’s Emergent Self

³⁰This flight to a consciousness that lies outside of/behind the back of, and untethered to social practice has been an ideal that has had troubling implications for social sciences like anthropology as well as those interested in advancing meaningfully democratic social organization. Anthropologist David Graeber puts it this way:

More than anything else, the “Western individual” in Levy-Bruhl, or for that matter most contemporary anthropologists, is more than anything else, precisely that featureless, rational observer, a disembodied eye, carefully scrubbed of any individual or social content, that we are supposed to pretend to be when writing in certain genres of prose. It has little relation to any human being who ever existed, grown up, had loves and hatreds and commitments. It’s pure abstraction. ...It seems to me though, it creates an even worse problem for anyone who wishes to see this figure as the bearer of democracy, as well. If democracy is communal self-governance, the Western individual is an actor already purged of any ties to a community. While it is possible to imagine this relatively featureless, rational observer as the protagonist of certain forms of market economics, to make him (and he is, unless otherwise specified, presumed to be a male) a democrat seems possible only if one defines democracy as itself a kind of market that actors enter into with little more than a set of economic interests to pursue. (Graeber, 2007, pp. 338-339)

In the last chapter we sketched Dewey's description of the Ancient and Modern conceptions of the self, and have pointed to the problems Dewey feels are associated with these positions. But how then does Dewey reconstruct the self? How does it differ from the Ancients and Moderns? What is Dewey's articulation of the relational self? As mentioned previously, for Dewey, the Greeks subordinated the individual to a family kind or universal form, of which particular individuals participated. In contrast, the Moderns prized the individual as an independent source of creativity (Dewey, 1988, p.168). Neither, for Dewey, correctly explains the nature of the self. Rather, the self "is an agency of novel reconstruction of a pre-existing order" (Dewey, 1988, p.168). But what is Dewey getting at here? For Dewey, the manner in which the Moderns identify the self with mind leaves open the possibility that the mind "is open to entertain any thought or belief whatever" (Dewey, 1988, p.169). In this sense, there is no problem divorcing oneself from the past in this configuration. Descartes' (1641) *Meditations* serves as a clear exemplar of this attempt to break free from the past. But this attempt at radical novelty, Dewey (1925) suggests, was misconceived (p. 294). In Dewey's (1988) words:

But the whole history of science, art, and morals proves that the mind that appears *in* individuals is not as such individual mind. The former is in itself a system of belief, recognitions, and ignorances, of acceptances and rejections, of expectancies and appraisals of meanings which have been instituted under the influence of custom and tradition (p. 170).³¹

³¹ The belief that the individual is the primary locus of meaningful action in the world also has gained enormous traction in how we understand individual initiative in the political economy; and in particular, how economic wealth in society is created. Political economists Gar Alperovitz and Lew Daly write the following concerning this issue:

Expressing a similar sentiment in a different context Dewey (1938) writes in his *Logic: A Theory of Inquiry*,

An organism does not live *in* an environment; it lives by means of an environment . . . The process of living are enacted by the environment as truly as by the organism; for they are integration. It follows that with every differentiation of structure the environment expands . . . The difference is not just that a fish lives *in* the water and the bird *in* the air, but that the characteristic functions of these animals are what they are because of the special way in which water and air enter into their respective domains. (pp. 25-26)

Similarly, human beings aren't just *in* the world. Rather, we are first *thrown*³² into a world that provides the conditions for the possibility of coming to know who we are in the first place. In other words, the “conserving force of habit”, as James (1950, p. 121)

“Recent estimates suggest that U.S. economic output per capita has increased more than twenty-fold since 1800. Output per hour worked has increased an estimated fifteen-fold since 1870 alone. Yet the average modern person likely works with no greater commitment, risk, or intelligence than his or her counterpart from the past. What is the primary cause of such vast gains if individuals do not really “improve”? Clearly, it is largely that the scientific, technical, and cultural knowledge available to us, and the efficiency of our means of storing and retrieving this knowledge, have grown at a scale and pace that far outstrip any other factor in the nation’s economic development. A half century ago, in 1957, economist Robert Solow calculated that nearly 90% of productivity growth in the first half of the 20th century (from 1909 to 1949) could only be attributed to “technical change in the broadest sense.” The supply of labor and capital—what workers and employers contribute—appeared almost incidental to this massive technological “residual.” Subsequent research inspired by Solow and others continued to point to “advances in knowledge” as the main source of growth. Economist William Baumol calculates that “nearly 90 percent . . . of current GDP was contributed by innovation carried out since 1870.” Baumol judges that his estimate, in fact, understates the cumulative influence of past advances: Even “the steam engine, the railroad, and many other inventions of an earlier era, still add to today’s GDP. Related research on the sources of invention bolsters the new view, posing a powerful challenge to conventional, heroic views of technology that characterize progress as a sequence of extraordinary contributions by “Great Men” (occasionally “Great Women”) and their “Great Inventions.” In contrast to this popular view, historians of technology have carefully delineated the incremental and cumulative way most technologies actually develop. In general, a specific field of knowledge builds up slowly through diverse contributions over time until—at a particular moment when enough has been established—the next so-called “breakthrough” becomes all but inevitable.

Less important than who gets the credit is the simple fact that most breakthroughs occur not so much thanks to one “genius,” but because of the longer historical unfolding of knowledge. All of this knowledge—the overwhelming source of all modern wealth—comes to us today through no effort of our own. It is the generous and unearned gift of the past. In the words of Northwestern economist Joel Mokyr, it is a “free lunch.” (Alperovitz & Daly, 2010)

³²This sense of “thrownness” links Dewey’s thought with Martin Heidegger’s, especially in the latter’s *Sein und Zeit*,

put it in *Principles of Psychology* (1890), is crucial for creating a stable platform out of which novelty in the world can occur. These habits, moreover, have their origin in our biological and cultural pasts. The self then emerges out of our transaction with our environment. It does not show up with historical properties, nor does it have a nature that is antecedent to its encounter with the world. Therefore, for Dewey, the Moderns' attempt to escape from the past was misconceived to the extent that what they really were trying to do was gain "greater freedom *in* nature and society," not from the world and one another, since that is an impossibility (Dewey, 1916, p. 294). So thinkers like Descartes "little noted how much of tradition they repeated and perpetuated in their very protests and reforms" (Dewey, 1916, p. 174). In this sense, then, the individual is a social/historical/cultural being all the way down. The mind doesn't and can't swing free from the world, but is intimately tethered to and emergent from existing social practices. Ryle (1949) puts it this way:

The statement 'the mind is its own place' as theorists might construe it, is not true, for the mind is not even a metaphorical 'place'. On the contrary, the chessboard, the platform, the scholar's desk, the judge's bench, the lorry-driver's seat, the studio and the football field are among its places. These are where people work and play stupidly or intelligently. 'Mind' is not the name of another person, working or frolicking behind an impenetrable screen . . . (p. 51)

For Dewey, moreover, our understanding of the world and the situation should not be understood as a self standing against a world or a situation. Rather, Dewey emphasizes the fact that the self is entangled in a web of other selves, nature, and social practices. If

the self is emergent socially, then our encounter with the world is one that is played out at the interstice of our cultural and biological pasts that in-form what is possible in the present as we act towards some future we would like to see actualized. However, if we are educated or develop intelligent habits we can, Dewey suggests, shape new meanings within our cultural field. The social-historical matrix that provides the “home” from which individuals come to know themselves does not then rule out the possibility of novelty in the world. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. To repeat, while human beings, in one sense, are the “ensemble of their social relations” they can, through an education that fosters intelligent habits, reconstruct experience towards some future state of affairs they would like see come to fruition (Marx, 1978, p. 145).

Yet, for Dewey, it should be emphasized again, we aren’t just *in* a socio-historical matrix. We can bring this point home if we think back to the vignettes that open this dissertation. Those with commitments to the modern self-image might concede that these examples of moral and social debasement are troubling, but that they are not illustrative necessarily of the wider historical context in which we live. Each one of us decides whether or not we will care for others and in what ways we will do so; our cultural matrix doesn’t decide. While my neighbor may be a miscreant, while my neighbor may be indifferent to her responsibilities as a citizen, her actions are not necessarily a reflection of me or the society and culture *in* which both us are apart. This position, for Dewey, is only tenable if one is already committed to an ideal of the self that is cut-off from others: the Modern self. If we think of our self-image “as something complete within itself” (Dewey, 1920, p.196), as something whose core-self is “somehow in but not of

society/culture/history” (Hazelrigg, 1989, p. 172), then we likely would draw the conclusion that the only thing needed to reverse these acts of social degradation would be the *internal* transformation of the guilty party. We may live at a certain historical juncture, but history is made up of individual acts. Our Ivanic tendencies can be mollified, in other words, through a continuous process of moral introspection and searching that leads eventually, if enough of us do so, to the reshaping of society. Culture, history, and society are extraneous to what we become and where we want to go.

What naturally follows from this position, according to Dewey, is a separation between politics and morals. But to hold on to this position is to imagine that, as Dewey (1930) put it, “flowers can be raised in a desert or motor cars can run in a jungle” (p. 22). In other words, only when we conceive selfhood as an active process that embodies in its conduct what the objective forces of a society privileged by way of moral goods, can we begin to realize that dispositions to behave with “courage, triviality, industry, irresponsibility are not private possessions of a person” (Dewey, 1930. p. 16). Instead, we can see that any moral change wrought in the individual will be intimately connected to the “educative effect” of institutional arrangements (Dewey, 1920. p. 196). Overcoming nihilism and diremption and the social interest in the objective reform of economic and political power are joined. In short, how we structure our cultural and social environments, the job of politics, are directly implicated in the kind of people who will inhabit that culture and society.

Following Dewey, but with a more sophisticated phrasing of the relational self, Mead (1934) argues, in *Mind, Self and Society*, that the mind and self are social

emergents and relational, “and that language in the form of the vocal gesture, provides the mechanism for their emergence” (p. xiv). Understanding this mechanism, Mead continues, will allow us to see that the self is not an atomistic, isolated entity. Rather, the individual self becomes thoroughly individualized only within society. It would be an absurdity to look at the individual organism as complete within itself (Mead, 1934, p. 133).

These claims about the social emergent or social relational quality of mind and self revolve around Mead’s contention that the development and advancement of society is dependent on language and communication; specifically, the vocal gesture. Gestures, Mead makes clear, are not unique to human beings. Dogs, for instance, approaching each other in a hostile manner, engage in a conversation of gestures. The one dog reacts to the actions that are called out by the other. The one dog may be barking and walking in a manner that calls out in the other the response of fleeing. The responses back and forth between the dogs, however, are always external. While animals can exchange gestures, something different occurs when human beings do so. For Mead, because of our vocal capacity, human beings have the ability to answer one’s own stimulus as another would. Take, for instance, the case of a teacher asking a student to move his chair to the back of the room for reading class. In this case, according to Mead (1934), “you arouse the tendency to get the chair in the other (student), but if he is slow to act you can get the chair yourself” (p. 67). In other words, language allows human beings to carry on a conversation with others, but also with oneself, and in so doing, allows us to respond to our own stimuli as other people would. Through the vocal gesture, then, we continually

arouse in ourselves the attitudes or appropriate responses that call out those very attitudes and responses in the other. It is this uniquely human relationship between self and other, brought about through the vocal gesture, that Mead terms significant symbols.

Significant symbols arise out of the social nature of language. Language is required, Mead argues, for this reflective move to take place when we engage in their use. These symbols are socially constituted. Mead follows Dewey by arguing that we are not just in the world, as if we could opt out the web of socially constituted meanings and symbols, but also constituted by the world. Mead (1934) describes the situation as follows:

The significant gesture or symbol always presupposes for its significance the social process of experience and behavior in which it arises...a universe of discourse is always implied as the context in terms of which, or as the field within which significant gestures and symbols do in fact have significance. (p. 89)

In this sense, and contrary to the stance taken by Descartes and other champions of objectivity, there is no absolute turning away from the world and the social practices we are wedded to. We have no propositional states and, hence, no mind without the other. Without the web of related significances we call culture, what Mead calls significant symbols, we are bereft of the capacity to think at all. Dewey (1925) nicely sums up Mead's position as follows:

When the introspectionist thinks he has withdrawn into a wholly private realm of events disparate in kind from other events, made out of mental stuff, he is only turning his attention to his own soliloquy. If we have not talked to others and they

with us, we should never talk to and with ourselves . . . Through speech a person dramatically identifies himself with potential acts and deeds; he plays many roles, not in successive stages of life but in a contemporaneously enacted drama. Thus mind emerges. (p. 170)

To take one further example, consider what Geertz (1973), borrowing a story from Gilbert Ryle, has to say about the significant symbol of a wink:

. . . two boys rapidly contracting the eyelids of their right eyes. In one, this is an involuntary twitch; in the other, a conspiratorial signal to a friend. The two movements are, as movements, identical; from an I-am-camera, ‘phenomenalistic’ observation of them alone, one could not tell which was the twitch and which was the wink, or indeed whether or both or either was twitch or wink. Yet the difference, however unphotographable, between a twitch and a wink is vast. The winker is communicating and indeed communicating in a quite precise and special way: (1) deliberately, (2) to someone in particular, (3) to impart a particular message, (4) according to a socially established code, and (5) without the cognizance of the rest of the company. As Ryle points out, the winker has not done two things, contracted his eyelids and winked, while the twitcher has done only one, contracted his eyelids. Contracting your eyelids on purpose exists when there exists a public code in which doing so counts as a conspiratorial signal *is* winking. That’s all there is to it: a speck of behavior, a fleck of culture, and *voilà*—a gesture. (pp. 6-7)

Significant symbols are socially constituted all the way down. Initially, Mead continues, the meaning of significant symbols within a social matrix will be acquired in a non-reflective manner. So the difference between a twitch and a wink is not something learned in a lesson plan at school, but is rather something appropriated by us as we become habituated into the cultural context into which we are born.³³

If it is the case that our mind and self only emerge when and until we have fully internalized the cultural scripts we've been handed, then is Mead arguing that the self is reducible to the social without remainder? Mead, like Dewey, will disagree. To answer this query, Mead introduces the distinction between the I and the Me. For Mead, the self is not imminent in the sense that Descartes, for instance, argued that it was. Rather, the self is disclosed as an individual cognitive object; in other words, the self must become an object for the self. The functional relationship between the I and the Me is such that the I must be grasped from the standpoint of the Me. The Me, Mead points out, is that part of the self that has internalized the rules and habits of the social and cultural matrix. The I, on the other hand, is that part of the self that reacts to attitudes of the Me. In Mead's (1934) words, "the 'I' is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others, the 'me' is the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes" (p. 175). This functional, not ontological, distinction is important to Mead because it allows him to introduce the possibility of novelty into the world, the possibility that the future can look different than the present. Without this distinction, it would seem as if the self would be entirely determined by the prescriptions of the cultural matrix. The distinction

between the I and the Me is significant on another account. If the actions of the self can be looked upon from at least two perspectives, then Mead is explicitly breaking with and rejecting the Cartesian and Kantian tradition that posits a stable *cogito* or *transcendental ego* that lies behind all cognitive acts. More importantly, for Mead, like Dewey, the self becomes a self only in its *relationality* to others and to the world. If there is no shared world from which the play of vocal gestures is engaged, then there won't be any minds that emerge.

Dewey's (and Mead's) relational self is one that is already attuned to and involved in the world in any number of multifarious ways. Gadamer (1975) describes the situation as such:

In fact history does not belong to us, but we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. That is why the prejudices (prejudgments) of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being. (as quoted in Hazelrigg, 1989, p. 193)

The Cartesian spectatorial stance is a position that we rarely if ever are in. We never have to worry about bridging the chasm between mind and world, between being-for-itself and being-in-itself, as Descartes and the champions of objectivity had to, because we are always saturated with the cultural matrix that is our setting for thinking and self-reflection in the first place. There is no self-reflection, in Dewey's account, that doesn't

presuppose the culture/history that constitutes us. Once again, Hans Gadamer speaks to this issue in the context of education:

That which has been sanctioned by tradition and custom has an authority that is nameless, and our finite historical being is marked by the fact that always the authority of what has been transmitted—and not only what is clearly grounded—has power over our attitudes and behavior. [But we must remember that while such authority may be nameless, it is never disembodied!] All education depends on this, and even though, in the case of education, the educator loses his function when his charge comes of age and sets his own insight and decisions in the place of the authority of the educator, this movement into maturity in his own life does not mean that a person becomes his own master in the sense of becoming free of all tradition (as quoted in Hazelrigg, 1989, 191).

Tradition, culture, and our historical heritage, are not abstractions to be thought about (at least at first), but are embodied by us in the social practices of the society for which we are a part. So, for instance, the problem of other minds, a problem that results from the kind of philosophical stance developed by Descartes and others committed to a self-image that is cut-off from the world, rarely, if ever, arises. That is, “our commitment to the consciousness of others is, rather, a presupposition of the kind of life we live together” (Noe, 2009, p. 33). Describing the relationship between parent and baby, Noe (2009) writes:

In this respect, the young child, in her relation to her caretaker, is the paradigm.

As I have suggested, the child has no theoretical distance from her closest

caretaker. The child does not wonder whether Mommy is animate. Mommy's living consciousness is simply present, for the child, like her warmth or the air; it is, in part, what animates their relationship. Mommy's mind and Baby's mind come to be in the cooing-cooing directedness that each sustains toward the other. If one wants to speak of a commitment to the alive consciousness of others here, one should speak not of a cognitive commitment but, rather, of a practical commitment. (p. 33)

If we are first engaged in the world as normative/practical, embodied participants in social practices, and not as detached spectators, then the theoretical standpoint of the champions of objectivity would seem to be a position "we do not and cannot occupy . . . at least as long as we want to carry on together in cooperation" (Noe, 2009, p. 133). Of course, a culture or society that is no longer interested in any collective goal that it seeks to realize can indeed foster a self-image that encourages detachment and diremption. But if that's the case, then is there anything left to be called a society?

To bring out the radicalness of Dewey's conception of the relational self it becomes imperative to distinguish between two senses of the relational self: the *interactionalist relational self* and the *trans-actionalist relational self*. We can do this by looking at an important criticism that has been made of Dewey's work on the self. Dewey's distinction, it seems, between the transactional and the interactional is problematic on at least one account. The problem lies in the potential capacity to turn any interaction into a transaction. Consider first how Dewey (1949) explicitly draws out the distinction between the two:

If inter-action assumes the organism and its environmental objects to be present as substantially separated existences or forms of existence, prior to their entry into joint investigation, then transaction assumes no pre-knowledge of either organism or environment alone as adequate, not even as respects the basic nature of the current conventional distinctions between them, but requires their primary acceptance in *common system*, with full freedom reserved for their developing examination. (as cited in Bentley, 1989, p. 123)

But what is meant here by a “common system”? Isn’t it possible to turn any interactional conception of the self into a transactional one by deepening and widening what constitutes a “common system”? And if so, wouldn’t any action of significance be both interactional *and* transactional? Take, for instance, the following case where a child loses her toy:

A 6 year old child lost a toy and asks her father for help. The father asks where she last saw the toy; the child says ‘I can’t remember.’ He asks a series of questions—did you have it in your room? Outside? Next door? To each question, the child answers ‘no.’ When he says ‘in the car’, she says ‘I think so’ and goes to retrieve the toy. (Wertsch, 1991, p. 27)

The question the transactionalist wants to ask is “who did the remembering?” For Dewey and Mead, as well as others inclined to view action in transactionalist terms, one can’t point to either the father or the child in order to answer this question. Rather, it’s the situation in which both are implicated that does the remembering. Transaction, on this account, stresses the system in order to deal “with aspects and phases of action, without

final attribution to ‘elements’ or other presumptively detachable or independent ‘entities’, ‘essences’, or ‘realities’, and without isolation of presumptively detachable ‘relations’ from such detachable ‘elements’” (Dewey, 1949 as cited in Bentley, 1989, p. 133). However, it’s unclear why this situation can’t be interactional as well.

This argument against Dewey’s distinction between the interactional and transactional conception of the self, however, seems to be misplaced. For Dewey, the interactional is *not* to be understood in opposition to the transactional. Rather, the interactional conception of selfhood (as exemplified in the work of Hobbes and the classical liberal tradition that includes Locke and Mill among others) is derivative or grows out of a more fundamental relationship between self and world. The interactional is a legitimate way of understanding the self in the world, but it’s a conceptual distinction that grows out of a more inclusive or “comprehensive activity, in which organism and environment are included” (Dewey, 1925, p. 19). Furthermore, Dewey’s attempt at reconstructing the Ancient and Modern conceptions of the self was made in order to overcome the philosophical traditions’ proclivity for taking one element in experience as primary and assuming everything else to be irrelevant. In Dewey’s (1925) words:

Reflective analysis of one element in actual experience is undertaken; its result is then taken to be primary; as a consequence the subject-matter of actual experience from which the analytic result was derived is rendered dubious and problematic, although it was assumed at every step of the analysis. (p. 25)

And for Dewey the interactionalist’s view of the self engages in such a mistake. So it’s not that they are wrong, to the extent that one *can* discriminate elements within a cultural

field, but that they have left out a large part of the story, a part that is crucially important for having a conception of the self that is robust enough for dealing with the problematic situations of contemporary life.

Davidson and Triangulation

Chapter 1 sketched Davidson's critique of the Modern self. In doing so, we saw that Descartes (and the champions of objectivity) failed to give an adequate account of the emergence of thinking and cognition. And in so doing, failed to realize that to entertain thoughts or propositional states of any kind, presupposes a shared world and others. It is in Davidson's notion of *triangulation* where we see a more concentrated development of what becomes his idea of the relational self-image. Davidson (2001) writes:

For until the triangle is completed connecting two creatures, and each creature with common features of the world, there can be no answer to the question whether a creature, in discriminating between stimuli, is discriminating between stimuli at the sensory surfaces or somewhat further out, or further in. Without this sharing of reactions to common stimuli, thought and speech would have no particular content—that is, no content at all. It takes two points of view to give location to the cause of a thought and thus to define its content. (pp. 212-213)

Unlike the intellectualist tradition that comes out of the work of Descartes, thinking and cognition for Davidson are always something that goes on inter-subjectively. Perhaps, however, inter-subjective is the wrong word simply because it

seems to imply that two independent minds somehow come together to think, when that is not Davidson's argument. Rather, we can't think at all, or entertain propositional states of any kind, without the other, and without a shared world with shared stimuli. In this sense, Davidson's approach is close to the way Mead describes the emergence of mind and self. And both, along with Dewey, follow in the footsteps of Friedrich Hegel in that Hegel develops a similar line of argument within his Idealism. Davidson (2001) goes on to explicitly define triangulation as follows:

We may think of it as a form of triangulation: each of two people is reacting differentially to sensory stimuli streaming in from a certain direction. Projecting the incoming lines outward, the common cause is at their intersection. If the two people now note each other reactions (in the case of language, verbal reactions), each can correlate these observed reactions with his or her stimuli from the world. A common cause has been determined. The triangle which gives content to thought and speech is complete. But it takes two to triangulate. (p. 213)

One has knowledge of another mind only when one has knowledge of the world or a shared world with shared stimuli. This is the case because the triangulation "which is essential to thought requires that those in communication recognize they occupy positions in a shared world" (Davidson, 2001, p. 213). For instance, suppose a learning situation where a teacher is teaching a student the word *table*. The teacher points to and reacts to the causal stimulus of the table by saying the word *table*. The teacher and student walk into another classroom whereby the student points to and reacts to the causal stimulus and says, "table". This learning situation reveals three "similarity patterns" (Davidson, 2001,

p. 119). They include the facts that “the child finds tables similar; we find tables similar; and we find the child responses to tables in the presence of tables similar” (Davidson, 2001, p. 119). If this is the case, then “it now makes sense to call the responses of the child responses to tables” (Davidson, 2001, p. 119). Davidson concludes that:

The relevant stimuli are the objects and events we naturally find similar (tables) which are correlated with responses of the child we find similar. It is a form of triangulation: one line goes from the child in the direction of the table, one line goes from us in the direction of the table, and the third line goes between us and the child. Where the lines from the child to table and us converge, ‘the’ stimulus is located. . . It is the common cause of our response and the child’s response (p. 119).

The recognition of the other in a shared world is the foundation then for a self to have a mind. In Davidson’s account, to have knowledge of the world is to have knowledge of other minds, and to have knowledge of other minds is to have knowledge of a shared world. Dewey and Mead, as we have seen, interestingly, argue for a position very similar to Davidson’s. What follows from a different corner of the triangle is that to have self-knowledge, to know thyself, to live a life of self-examination, is dependent on others and the world that is shared. As Davidson (2001) remarks, “knowledge of our own minds and knowledge of others are thus mutually dependent” (p. 213).

For Davidson, then, there is no problem about how the mind hooks up with the world or others. How could there be? There is no mind without the other and there is no communication between people without a shared world; if any one of the lines of the

triangle is absent, then there is no world and there are no minds, and no self to entertain propositional states of any kind. Davidson (2001) summarizes his position as follows:

If I did not know what others think, I would have no thoughts of my own and so would not know what I think. If I did not know what I think, I would lack the ability to gauge the thoughts of others. Granting the thoughts of others requires that I live in the same world with them, sharing many reactions to its major features, including its values. (p. 220).

The Normativity of the Self

Davidson, like Dewey, presupposes a thorough-going naturalism. Both agree with Ryle that when we are talking about the mind, we are not talking about an extra, added ingredient that marks off human beings from the rest of nature and from other creatures. Rather, human beings lie within the natural world without remainder. As such, mentalistic ascriptions “are no more mysterious than physical or biological descriptions” (Rorty, 2000, p. 371). They are not of a different kind and are no more able to swing free from the world than our bodies are able to. Given this description of the mind, cognition and reason are just as apt to be described in physicalist terms as electricity or anything else in the natural world. While this description places the entire human being within the relationality of the natural setting, leaving a self-image connected to the world and others, it also opens the possibility that human conduct could be understood “simply in terms of vocabularies of prediction and control” (Ramberg, 2000, p. 366-367). Ironically, however, this predicative vocabulary, useful for coming to terms with certain aspects of

our encounter with the world, also leads to the danger that whatever it is that is trying to be understood becomes reified, turned into an object, leaving both knower and what is to be known in a situation of diremption. Dostoevsky's (1972) underground man expresses this concern in the following way:

As a matter of fact, though, if the formula for all our desires and whims is some day discovered—I mean what they depend on, what laws they result from, how they are disseminated, what sort of good they aspire to in a particular instance, and so on—a real mathematical formula, that is, then it is possible that man will at once cease to exist. Well, what's the point of wishing by numbers? Furthermore, he will at once turn from a man into a barrel-organ sprig or something of the sort; for what is man without desires, without will, without volition, but a sprig on the cylinder of a barrel organ? (p. 34)

The underground man's concern reminds us of a similar view voiced by Socrates in the *Phaedo*. In this dialogue, *Phaedo* gives an account of the last hours of Socrates' life. At one point, Socrates recounts to Cebes how his intellectual interests had changed as he grew from a young man to an adult. As a youth, he was fascinated by the natural sciences, which at the time, seemed to provide the most robust account of the world. But as he got older, he noticed that these same sciences seemed to be bereft of any advice or counsel about the normative questions that arise out of everyday life. Instead of giving an account for why in fact he was sitting in prison, Socrates argues, they would instead

say, first, that I am sitting here now, because my body is composed of bones and muscles, and that the bones are hard and separated by joints, while the muscles

can be tightened and loosened, and together with the flesh and the skin which holds them together, cover the bones . . . (p. 137).

Summarizing why Socrates found it imperative to turn away from the natural sciences and towards philosophy, Rosen (1993) writes the following:

He turns away from *ta onta*³⁴ in the following precise sense: the study of the alterations, changes, and motions of natural beings does not explain human life. Attribution of the *aitia*³⁵ of generation and destruction to *phusis*³⁶ in this sense forces us to jettison our understanding of ourselves as beings who act in accord with what they think best. Natural motions, considered in themselves, are neither good nor bad, better nor worse; they merely are. (p. 65)

This tendency to reduce our self-image to a mathematical formula, to read the world and ourselves as reducible to a natural or biological reality (selfish genes?) that is really in charge of who we are and where we are going, has many progenitors in contemporary culture. These physical reductionists strip human beings of their irreducibly normative dimension, and in doing so, place that normativity outside of culture and history: much as Descartes *preserved* human normativity by defining the self outside of culture and history such that it led to diremption. In fact, for physicalists with reductionist tendencies, culture and history are “reduced to the superstructural effects of a more fundamental biological reality” (McKinnon, 2005, p. 15). We witnessed this in the last chapter in our discussion of intelligence.

³⁴ Translated as “things.”

³⁵ Translated as “cause.”

³⁶ Translated as “nature.”

Of course, Davidson and Dewey are not trying to say that human beings are a *tabular rosa*. It's hard to imagine anyone willing to claim that genetic and physical factors play no role in what the human organism is like, or that someday we will find the genetic factors that distinguishes one person from another in any number of ways. Yet, what Davidson and Dewey want to argue is that, no matter how detailed a description of the human being we may or may not have, the normative component of our self-image is not reducible to the biological or physical. Rather, in Davidson's words, we are a *community* of minds, not a community of *minds* (Davidson, 2001; Ramberg, 2000).

Ramberg (2000) describes Davidson's position in the following manner:

The basis of knowledge, any form of knowledge, whether of self, others, or the shared world. Is not a community of *minds*, in the sense of mutual knowledge of neighboring belief-systems, . . . Rather, it is a *community* of minds; that is, a plurality of creatures engaged in the project of describing their world and interpreting each others descriptions of it. (pp. 361-362)

In other words, describing anything presupposes the process of triangulation. But in order to triangulate, we already have to be treating our fellow triangulators as persons, underwritten by the norms of the social practices that guide human agency in the culture we are born into. John Dewey (1925) makes Davidson's point explicit when he writes:

I say individual minds, not just individuals with minds. The difference between the two ideas is radical. There is an easy way by which thinkers avoid the necessity of facing a genuine problem. It starts with a self, whether bodily or spiritual being immaterial for present purposes, and then endows or identifies that

self with mind, a formal capacity of apprehension, devising and belief. On the basis of this assumption, any mind is open to entertain any thought or belief whatever. There is here no problem involved of breaking loose from the weight of tradition and custom . . . But the whole history of science, art and morals proves that the mind that appears *in* individuals is not as such individual mind. The former is in itself a system of belief, recognitions, and ignorances, of acceptances and rejections, of expectancies and appraisals of meanings which have been instituted under the influence of custom and tradition. (pp. 169-170)

As individuals *with* minds rather than individual minds, who we are is best thought of as a web or system of beliefs, desires, and intentions that are rooted in and tethered to the social practices from which we emerge. There is not some additional entity called the “self” that stands outside of or above this web of beliefs that emerges through the process of triangulation. Rather, “the relations that make any thing what it is (natural object[s] included) are inherently, inescapably social/cultural/historical relations . . . of an existing practice” (Hazelrigg, 1989, p. 125).

Does that mean that, for Davidson and Dewey, electrons, quarks, the planet Mars, along with a host of important biological findings, simply are the effects of human social practices, so that without these social practices they would cease to exist? Yes and no. Yes, to the extent that the *concept* or *justification* for our description of Mars or our account of some underlying biological condition of the human being, for instance, are indeed the outcome of the norms inherent in our social practices. On the other hand, Dewey and Davidson would say no in this respect. Davidson’s whole idea of

triangulation assumes that the norms of our social practices hang over the whole triangle and not just the two points between self and other. In this sense, social constructionists of a certain type get it wrong by arguing that the world “is” whatever our culture, history, and social practices say it is. Rather, for Davidson and Dewey, the shared world out of which our minds emerge certainly plays a *causal* role in what our social practices will end up letting us say; however, the world does not play a justificatory or normative role (Brandom, 2000). The implications for practice of this pan-relational self-image that is inescapably normative and which will be flushed out in the next chapter when we discuss Dewey and Davidson’s philosophies of education, is perhaps best summed up by Dewey (1934) on the last page of his *A Common Faith*, where he writes:

The considerations put forward in the present chapter may be summed up in what they imply. The ideal ends to which we attach our faith are not shadowy and wavering. They assume concrete form in our understanding of our relations to one another and the values contained in these relations. We who live now are parts of humanity that extends into the remote past, a humanity that has interacted with nature. The things in civilization we most prize are not of ourselves. They exist by grace of the doings and sufferings of the continuous human community in which we are a link. Ours is the responsibility of conserving, transmitting, rectifying, and expanding the heritage of values we have received that those who come after us may receive it more solid and secure, more widely accessible and more generously shared than we have received it. Here are all the elements for a religious faith that is not to be confined to sect, class, or race. Such a faith has

always been implicitly the common faith of mankind. It remains to make it explicit and militant. (p. 87)

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICIZING THE *EXAMINED LIFE*:

DEWEY AND DAVIDSON ON EDUCATION AS CULTURAL CRITICISM

In Bertell Ollman's (2001) *How to Take an Exam...and Change the World*, a cartoon depicts the following dialogue:

Teacher pointing at student: Pass the Exam! Your Future is at Stake!

Student pointing back at teacher: Examine the Past! Your Present is at Stake.³⁷

(p. vi).

Bemoaning the decline of university education in the United States, the historian Giltrude Himmelfarb writes the following about what she believes universities once did so well:

It was considered the function of the university to encourage students to rise above the material circumstances of their lives, to liberate them intellectually and spiritually by exposing them, as the English poet Matthew Arnold put it, to 'the best which has been thought and said in the world' (Gless & Smith, 1992, p. 163).³⁸

³⁷Taken from a cartoon found in Bertell Ollman's *How to take an Exam...and Change the World* (Black Rose Books, April 1, 2000)

³⁸Alexander Nehamas (1992) points out that Himmelfarb misquotes Matthew Arnold. What he actually says in "Culture and Anarchy," is that the charge of cultural criticism is "to know the best that is known and thought in the world" (p. 163).

Himmelfarb's mawkishness towards the past disconnects it from the present. One can become "liberated" from the materiality of one's "circumstances", as Himmelfarb puts it, only by pointing one's gaze towards a past that once was but is no more. Accordingly, for Himmelfarb, education is mostly unconcerned about the present, since the present is seen as a waning away from what once was an edifying golden age (Gless & Smith, 1992).

Conversely, the teacher's counsel to the student that she must "pass the exam!" or her future will be in jeopardy takes a much different approach. The teacher here is bereft of Himmelfarb's sentimentality and takes seriously what the future entails, yet is equally quick to discount the legitimacy of the present. Where Himmelfarb turns away from the present to a past that once was, our teacher turns away from both the past and present towards a future that is yet to be. In the headlong rush to arrive at some future destination that is yet to be realized, the teacher cuts the present off from the future and the past.

Put in a slightly different light, both Himmelfarb and the teacher disaggregate the past and future from the present, leaving us strapped to a destructive *presentism*. For instance, "Education for the future" is the slogan used to advertise the services of a local technical college. The "future," of course, is left undefined. And therefore, so is the present. Barber (1992) puts it this way:

An awareness of time—memory and anticipation—is one crucial mark of being human. To live only in the present is to live as impulsive animals, with memories extending backward only days or occasionally weeks, and wants and needs extending forward by minutes or sometimes hours. Most of the large issues faced by government are issues meaningful only in the context of extended temporal

horizons. Ecology and environmentalism are temporally situated concepts that compel thinking about extended periods, decades if not centuries. (p. 33)

In other words, if we fail to recognize that the constitution of who we are lies at the interstice between past *and* future, we fail to realize ourselves as human beings with any normative commitments to others and to the culture at large. In turn, neither can we know ourselves. To be a self, as it was argued for in Chapter 2, is necessarily to be connected to others, society, and culture, since it is from these factors that we as individuals emerge in the first place. To know who we are, to take the Delphic imperative of knowing thyself seriously, is to know the historical basis of our emergence. Like the crest of a wave in a vast ocean, we *can* come to appreciate the larger context of which we are a part and from which we first emerge, yet always realizing that we are that historical contexts' expression.³⁹ The result of ignoring the *historicity*⁴⁰ of our selfhood, however, leaves us as individuals “without strings, without givens, without parents, without responsibilities”

³⁹Baruch Spinoza's distinction, in his *Ethics*, between *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*, between naturing nature and natured nature, can be helpful for unpacking this claim. Spinoza makes this distinction in the context of discussing the difference between substance (nature) and its modes. One interpretation of this relation argues that substance should be identified exclusively with *Natura naturans*, the active causal foundation of which *Natura naturata* is the effect but is distinct (Nadler, 2006, p. 86). A second view argues that substance (nature) is both *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*; that is to say, substance is identical with both the eternal aspects of nature and those things that are caused by it (Nadler, 2006, p. 87). If we employ the latter interpretation for our purposes and distinguish between *history-ing history* and *historied history*, then we should see that the human self, even when it becomes distinct, is and always will be irreducibly an expression of the historical context from which it's apart.

⁴⁰ While more will be said about it shortly, the term *historicity* is borrowed from the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, although John Dewey expresses a similar line of thinking when he writes in *Time and Individuality* that a human life is a kind of “serial temporality”. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1962) points out that *Dasein* (human being) in its factual existence:

...is as it already was, and it is 'what' it already was. It *is* its past, whether explicitly or not. And this is so not only in that its past is, as it were, pushing itself along 'behind' it, and that *Dasein* possesses what is past as a property which is still present-at-hand and which sometimes has after-effects upon it: *Dasein* “is” its past in the way of its own being, which, to put it roughly, 'historizes' out of its future on each occasion. Whatever the way of being it may have at the time, and thus with whatever understanding of Being it may possess, *Dasein* grows up both into and in a traditional way of interpreting itself: in terms of this it understands itself proximally and, within certain range, constantly. By this understanding, the possibilities of its Being are disclosed and regulated. Its own past--and this always means the past of its 'generation'--is not something which *follows along after* *Dasein*, but something which already goes ahead of it. (p. 41)

(Barber, 1992, p. 36).⁴¹ We become, in short, a culture of *diremption* and its attendant social practices characterized by human beings with a misanthropic comportment to the world.

In contrast, the position reflected by the student in response to the teacher, is the position both Davidson and Dewey reflect in their philosophies of education, the theme of this chapter. The student points out to the teacher that where one wants to go in the future necessarily entails knowing where one currently “is.” However, to know where one “is,” is to have a robust and responsible account of where one has been. Dewey (1916) puts it this way:

The segregation which kills vitality of history is divorce from present modes and concerns of social life. The past just as past is no longer our affair. If it were wholly gone and done with, there would be only one reasonable attitude toward it.

Let the dead bury the dead. But knowledge of the past is the key to understanding

⁴¹ The ideas put forth here should not be seen to be suggesting that all that needs to be done to fix our educational practices and the *diremptive* culture of which it contributes, is to teach a little more history, although that certainly would be an admirable goal in itself. Rather, the point argued for in Chapter 2 is that in order to come to terms with Davidson and Dewey philosophies of education, it’s requisite to see that human beings are historical in their very being. A simple example can illustrate this point. At the battlefields of Gettysburg each year, history buffs from around the country come to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to reenact a critical battle from the American Civil War that took place here. Meticulous care is taken to make sure that the battle in all its facets is reenacted with as much realism as possible. In that, they do a wonderful job. Yet, it seems that their understanding of history is impoverished. Or should I say, derivative from a more fundamental attunement human beings have to the world? That is to say, we have no need to dress up to reenact the past, since the past plays itself out in the present. In a sense, we, as members of the cultural present, are literally wearing the past at the level of categories (or at least that part of the past that has been privileged). The American Civil War, in a derivative sense, did indeed take place 150 years ago. On the other hand, who we are in the present is in-formed by our historical memory that is stabilized and concretized in the social practices of our cultural present and embodied by its members. In other words, we are able to be historical in this derivative sense only because, as Heidegger remarks, “Dasein ‘is’ its past in the way of *its* own being” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 41). This is what I take the student above to be pointing out to the teacher. The 20th century playwright Bertold Brecht similarly reflects on this issue in the following manner: “We need to develop the historical sense . . . into a real sensual delight. When our theatres perform plays of other periods they like to annihilate distance, fill in the gap, gloss over the differences. But what comes then of our delight in comparisons, in distance, in dissimilarity--which is at the same time a delight in what is close and proper to ourselves.” (cited in Eagleton, 1976, p. 13).

the present. History deals with the past, but this past is the history of the present
(pp. 213-214)

In other words, from the student's perspective, both Himmelfarb and the teacher have an impoverished account of the relationship between the past, present, and future. As we become aware of how and in what ways the past and future saturate the present, the more responsible we become, because the more capable we are of *examining* who we are as individuals and where we have been and where we might want to go in the future, both individually and collectively. The self-examined life, then, can only come about responsibly when the examiner realizes they are implicated in this interlocking dynamic between past, present, and future.

The idea of the "examined" life, of course, is nothing new. It's first articulated explicitly in the work of Plato. In Plato's (1942) *Apology*, Socrates, after being convicted of the charges put forth against him by the city of Athens, famously suggests that a life of self-examination and cultural criticism "is the greatest good of man and that the unexamined life is not worth living . . ." (p. 56). Yet, Plato was led, by the time of the *Phaedo and Meno*, to argue that criticism of culture can gain traction only if one had knowledge of what he argued were pre-existent forms (*eidos*): a kind of *a priori* knowledge that the process of dialectic was meant to draw out of the person. The normative guidance, then, for figuring out what kind of life is worth living and what kind of culture is worth preserving, leads us to something (what Plato refers to as the world of forms) that transcends culture. In this sense, Plato's answer to the students' riposte resembles the position of Descartes outlined in Chapter 1, only Plato looks to transcend

culture by going outside of the self (to the world of forms) and Descartes (1641) thinks cultural criticism can be joined as he states in his *Meditations*, only when “. . . I converse with myself alone and look more deeply into myself . . .” (p. 47).⁴² As we saw in Chapter 1, the examined life in both cases leads to the philosophical commitments that both Dewey and Davidson argue against because they result in a culture of *diremption*.⁴³

Yet, Socrates’ emphasis on the significance of the self-examined life as a form of cultural criticism is suggestive of a way of thinking about education, one this chapter will argue is at the centerpiece of John Dewey’s and Donald Davidson’s philosophies of education. For Dewey and Davidson, education can best be thought of as a form of cultural criticism, a form of cultural criticism that can come about in its most realized form if the self engaged in this edifying project is understood to be relational all the way down; a self conceived as being stretched out between past, present, and future. The goal of rooting their understanding of education as a form of cultural criticism in this relational self-image, moreover, allows both Dewey and Davidson to overcome the *diremption* characteristic of the self-image of the champions of objectivity.

⁴²Interestingly, there is a way of re-describing Plato’s identification of a priori knowledge, the world of forms, and the self-examined life, especially as found in *Phaedo*, that doesn’t lead to *diremption*. Curiously enough, Charles Darwin leads the way. Darwin gives us a hint at what this alternative reading of the *Phaedo* would entail in *Notebook M* of his collected works when he writes, “Plato Erasmus says in *Phaedo* that our ‘necessary ideas’ arise from the preexistence of the soul, are not derivable from experience— read monkeys for preexistence” (p. 161). Rather than contending that the basis of our ability to engage in criticism of culture as being the product of something *a priori* in Plato’s sense, we should, Darwin counsels, think of it as being the product of our evolutionary history as a species. Darwin’s emphasis on the natural historical ground for knowing thyself is crucially important for naturalizing the process of cultural criticism.

⁴³Modernity, as anthropologist Jacques Godbout (1998) reminds us; was founded on a fundamental rupture between producers and users, a rupture that in the long run transforms every social bond into a relationship between strangers governed by the market or the state, we now see that an even more crucial split is appearing: a rupture with the universe, which cuts the human bring off from tradition (the past) and from transcendence. . . . This dual rupture, with the cosmos on the one hand and with the past and future on the other, makes modernity punctual, narrow, and anxious, and makes a feeling of oneness no longer possible. (pp. 218-219)

Before embarking on a discussion of Dewey and Davidson's philosophies of education, this chapter will begin by first distinguishing between deliberative and dedicated historicity,⁴⁴ a distinction that allows us to make clear two ways the relational self-image interprets its relationship to the past and future—two approaches that self or culture can take towards their historicity. Davidson and Dewey, it will be suggested, argue only for the former. We will next proceed to sketch John Dewey's philosophy of education, arguing that Dewey's claim in *Democracy and Education* (1916) that the value of education is judged by the "extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth" is nothing less than the actualization of the process of cultural criticism (p. 53). In other words, if, as Dewey (1916) argues, education "is all one with growing," that education *is* growth, then education, on the account proffered here, is best thought of as cultural criticism (p. 53). We next turn to a discussion of what this dissertation will call Donald Davidson's Deweyan philosophy of education. In his essay, "The Paradox of Irrationality," Davidson outlines an interpretation of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory that ends with a salutary note on how human beings can engage in the process of *individual* self-examination. If we think about Davidson's claim here in light of his commitment to the relational self, however, then individual self-examination, it will be argued, really is best understood as cultural examination or cultural criticism. As Davidson (2004) puts it, "knowledge of one's mind and knowledge of others are mutually dependent" (p. 256). Dewey and Davidson's similar commitment to the relational self

⁴⁴ This distinction is embroidered on top of Robert Lipkin's distinction between deliberative and dedicated cultures. See his "Liberalism and the Possibility of Multi-Cultural Constitutionalism: The distinction between Dedicated and Deliberative Cultures," *University of Richmond Law Review* 1263 (1995).

ends in a similar commitment to what the examined life entails. And while Davidson never formally developed a theory of education, his work gestures in the direction of Dewey's. In this sense, Davidson's work, like Dewey's, helps us to see how education can liberate us from, as Dewey (1930) puts it in *From Absolutism to Experimentalism*, the "hard-and-fast dividing walls," the *diremption*, characteristic of Modernity (p. 11). In other words, a theory of education that elicits a conception of the self that is relational⁴⁵ through and through, will ultimately participate in producing a culture of diremption.

Dedicated and Deliberative Forms of Historicity

Before distinguishing between deliberative and dedicated forms of historicity, it's important to first describe what is meant by historicity and the various forms it takes. The concept of historicity is found in its most powerful expression in the work of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger (1962), in *Being and Time*, writes the following about the condition the human being (Dasein) finds itself:

In analyzing the historicity of Dasein we shall try to show that this entity is not 'temporal' because it 'stands in history,' but that, on the contrary, it exists historically and can so exist only because it is temporal in the very basis of its Being. (p. 428)

Thematically, Heidegger points to something we've seen already in our discussion of the relational self. The self isn't in the world, as if it could opt out of the extant web of intersecting social relations in which it is implicated, but is rather "stretched along and

⁴⁵ This will be qualified in the first section of this chapter. Only a conception of the relational self-image committed to a form of deliberative historicity will be able to overcome the diremption of the culture of Modernity.

stretches itself along” between a past that once was as it acts in the present towards as of yet undefined future (Heidegger, 1962, p. 427).⁴⁶ This, for Heidegger, is the essence of the historicity of the human being.

The self that is stretched out between the past, present, and future, moreover, is a self that is for the most part “lost” and captured by the interpretations of the world, which are privileged by the culture it was born into. It knows itself simply “in terms of those possibilities of existence which ‘circulate’ in the ‘average’ public way of interpreting Dasein today” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 435). The self, as such, is constituted so that it likely “falls prey to the tradition of which it has more or less explicitly taken hold” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 42). Yet, Heidegger warns that tradition or our historical embeddedness can become so powerful that it can block our capacity to see how the present is tethered to the past and future. Heidegger (1962) puts it this way:

When tradition thus becomes master, it does so in such a way that what it ‘transmits’ is made inaccessible, proximally and for the most part, that it rather becomes concealed. Tradition takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence; it blocks our access to those primordial sources from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn (p. 43)⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Heidegger (1962) adds:

Factual Dasein exists as born; and, as born, it is already dying, in the sense of Being-towards-death. As long as Dasein factually exists, both the ‘ends’ and their ‘between’ are, and they are in the only way which is possible on the basis of Dasein’s Being as care . . . in this unity birth and death are ‘connected’ . . . (p. 426-427)

⁴⁷ This point is made in a different context by the media theorist Marshall McLuhan who points out that whoever discovered water, it certainly wasn’t a fish, making clear that it’s difficult to perceive one’s environment when one is caught up in it. See his *Gutenberg Galaxy*.

While making clear the difficulty in perceiving how and in what ways the background of tradition informs the categories and concepts played out in the cultural foreground, it is only proximally and for the most part so. While we are constituted by tradition, and in this sense can never entirely escape its clutches, we can take up and appropriate this background in ways that allows us to realize its possibilities.

Along these lines, Heidegger distinguishes between authentic and inauthentic modes of taking up and interpreting one's past. In the inauthentic mode, the person "in awaiting the next new thing...has already forgotten the old one" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 443). As a result, when "one's existence is inauthentically historical, it is loaded down with the legacy of a 'past' which has become unrecognizable" (Heidegger, 1962 p. 444). The inauthentic mode results ultimately in forgetfulness in how the present is rooted in the past. The present, if you will, becomes naturalized, and as such, seems as if it could not be otherwise. That is, to the extent that the past is even recognized in the inauthentic mode, it is seen simply as a series of necessitated events that always were going to end in what is now the present.⁴⁸ The past then is stripped of its distinction, folded and dissolved into the present, such that the past becomes of interest only for the antiquarian (Guignon, 1983, p. 140).

⁴⁸ On this point, Heidegger's thought converges with that of Georg Lukacs, albeit within a different philosophical and sociological tradition. Lukacs (1989), commenting on Marx, writes the following:

This is a dogma whose most important spokesmen can be found in the political theory of classical German philosophy and in the economic theory of Adam Smith, and Ricardo. Marx opposes to them a critical philosophy, a theory of theory and a consciousness of consciousness. This critical philosophy implies above all historical criticism. It dissolves the rigid, unhistorical, natural appearance of social institutions. It reveals their historical origins and shows therefore that they are subject to history in every respect including historical decline. ...Nor are these institutions the *goal* to which all history aspires, such that when they are realized history will have fulfilled her mission and will then be at an end. (p. 56)

In contrast, the authentic stance “*deprives* the ‘today’ of its character *as present*, and weans one from the conventionalities of the ‘they’” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 444). The authentic stance towards one’s historicity results in a view of the past as a reservoir of potentialities. In other words, the authentic stance overcomes the forgetfulness of the present by problematizing the concepts and categories that anchor and ultimately in-form the social practices and cultural field that are privileged by society, but which remain hidden from view. The authentic stance sees tradition, not as simply an unchanging precondition or background for present action, but as something that is itself produced and shaped by human action. Gadamer (1989) describes it this way: “Tradition is not simply a permanent precondition; rather, we produce it ourselves inasmuch as we understand, participate in the evolution of tradition, and hence further determine it ourselves” (p. 293). Where the inauthentic comportment to the past splits off the present from the past, the authentic mode attempts to foreground the unseen background of categories and concepts, to show, as Heidegger (1962) playfully puts it, their “birth certificate” (p. 44). Only in this way, he concludes, can the past be taken up in an edifying manner.

Heidegger’s distinction between authentic and inauthentic modes describes two ways cultures can comport themselves to the past and the future. They can do so blindly, as in the inauthentic mode, or pro-actively, as in the authentic mode. Within the authentic mode, however, we can distinguish further, something Heidegger does not do, between what we will call deliberative and dedicated forms of historicity. This distinction will allow us to make the connection between the relational self-image, now more formally

characterized by its historicity, and Dewey and Davidson's understanding of education as cultural criticism. In other words, Dewey and Davidson's philosophies of education turn on the idea that education can only be realized in the authentic mode. But that's not all. Education, in its most robust and edifying sense, can only be realized if culture is committed to a deliberative form of historicity.

In this regard, Robert Lipkin's distinction between deliberative and dedicated cultures can help to illuminate what deliberative historicity might entail. Lipkin (1993) writes the following concerning the "attitude" taken by deliberative cultures:

The deliberative attitude incorporates deliberative rationality and deliberative autonomy. Deliberative rationality is a critical process of giving the best reasons for and against substantive cultural judgments. ... This deliberative process recognizes the importance of fallibility and inclination to revise the culture's substantive commitments when the evidence dictates. (p. 220)

A deliberative culture's commitment to the critical assessment of truth claims lies at the heart of its normative commitments. All normative claims, in this context, are infinitely revisable. In this sense, a robust fallibilism is built into the very self-image of a deliberative culture. When new conditions present themselves in such a way as to put into question traditional norms, a deliberative culture openly seeks out ways to reconcile the old and the new, even if that means jettisoning commitments⁴⁹ that in the past were

⁴⁹ W.V. Quine, Donald Davidson, and other holists would add, however, that no culture could completely revise all of their norms and beliefs about how the world works all at the same time. Rather, the beliefs held by a culture are best thought of as a spider's web, with some beliefs more stable and firm and unlikely to be revised, while others more precarious, less firm, and more prone to change and revision. See Quine's "Web of Beliefs" for a discussion of his linguistic holism.

central to the self-definition of that society.

On the other hand, according to Lipkin, a dedicated culture takes a very different approach to the normative commitments held by its society. He writes that:

Dedicated cultures understand their values as representing the final truth about the value and meaning of life. Serious reevaluation of cultural norms or values occurs rarely, and when it does occur, it is limited by dedicated constraints. ...though reasoning occurs in dedicated cultures in dedicated cultures, the depth and breadth of the reasoning is severely limited. (Lipkin, 1994, p. 220)

Where a deliberative culture is “always open to the criticism and correction of cultural and personal values,” a dedicated culture revises their normative commitments, if they do at all, only in light of a set of pre-established, unchanging ends that society is structured around (Lipkin, 1994, p. 221). Take, for example, the case of the Amish, a clear case of a dedicated culture. The Amish eschew technology, although not entirely. Rather, their approach to the handling of technology has a subtlety to it that allows us to see how change can take place in a dedicated culture, but does so in such a way that only second-order norms are reevaluated but not first-order dedicated ones. For instance, it’s not uncommon to find the Amish owning tractors, but not using them in the fields (Kraybill, 1989, p. 171). Throughout the 20th century, Amish communities have debated the merits of whether or not tractors should be permitted to replace horses in their agricultural practices. Many argued, and still do, that allowing tractors to replace horses would begin a slippery slope that would end with the introduction of automobiles, perhaps the most widely known taboo enforced by Amish communities (Kraybill, 1989, p.175).

Ultimately, the Amish decided that a strict line should be made between “barn power and field power”, and in doing so, permitted the use of tractors in the agricultural operations that took place in and around the barn, such that “silos could be filled, grain ground, and wheat threshed as always” (Kraybill, 1989, p. 176). Dedicated cultures, like the Amish, aren’t totally averse to change then, but any change that does take place, is done so in a way that doesn’t undermine the dedicated ends of the culture.

At this point, we can extend and refine the distinction between dedicated and deliberative cultures in light of our discussion of historicity. Recall that authentic historicity posited a self or culture that comported itself towards the past in a very specific manner. An authentic way of being in the world avoids the forgetfulness of the inauthentic mode, and as such, sees the self as being stretched out between the past, present, and future in such a way that it’s able to understand itself as the embodiment of the past even as it slouches towards the future. In doing so, the authentic mode seeks out ways to make explicit how past habits inform present attention, both individually and at a collective level.

Furthermore, authentic historicity can further be broken down and seen as embodying two attitudes: deliberative and dedicated. A culture that orients itself around some form of *deliberative historicity* is one that attempts to foreground the privileged background network of beliefs and normative commitments that are embodied in the present by that society, and does so critically, understanding the fallibility and the possible need for reform of those beliefs and normative commitments. A culture committed to *dedicated historicity*, on the other hand, is equally not blind to how the past

shapes and informs the present and future, but is less inclined to engage in any kind of deliberation that results in the reformation of their first-order normative commitments. If they do so, as the Amish case illustrates, change will not be of dedicated ends, but only of second-order normative means. For both dedicated and deliberative forms of historicity the self-examined life can only be joined when the culture engaged in this practice realizes that the present is not ontologically cut-off from the past and future. The difference between the two forms of historicity then turns on their different approaches to the implications of this practice. Moreover, both Davidson and Dewey's philosophies of education gain traction from a commitment to a form of deliberative historicity that will make clear the relationship between the relational self-image and their educational philosophies. We will now examine Dewey's philosophy of education.

Dewey and the Philosophy of Education

One could be forgiven if upon reading John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1916) one came away without a clear understanding of how Dewey understands education. Or if one thought one did, came away thinking that Dewey's book essentially provided a series of singular and conceivably even incongruous ideas that might be useful in the classroom. Ideas worth giving a try, perhaps, but no different than recommendations one might receive from a seasoned classroom teacher, albeit a very famous one. Still others, who have given this work a serious and considered read, might still have questions about what chapters like "Education as Growth" have to do with chapters like "The Individual and the World," which lie seemingly furtively at the end of

the book. These questions and others like it are understandable and, it could be argued, a product of the way Dewey organized the book. In other words, because Dewey left for the end of this work his discussion of crucial philosophical issues he was seeking to reinterpret and reconstruct, much of the text that comes before could be read as a scattershot of singular recommendations.

Hence, any robust account of Dewey's philosophy of education requires connecting his philosophical commitments to his ideas about education. The first two chapters of this dissertation attempted to clarify the former. This chapter seeks to connect those insights to Dewey's (and Davidson's) ideas about education because it seems to me that Dewey's (and Davidson's) reconstruction of Modernity's idea of the self is the foundation for properly understanding his motivation to develop the ideas about education that he does. From this it follows that Dewey's ideas about education form one of the ways he conceives how social practices might change so that the *diremptive* self of the modern age might be overcome.

Education and Training

One entrance into Dewey's philosophy of education is to see the way he distinguishes education from training. Too often these terms are confounded due to education being synonymous with training and training being used as a synonym for education. Dewey, on the other hand, sees an important difference between these two concepts, a difference, if you will, that makes a difference in practice. Early on in

Democracy and Education Dewey begins to point in the direction of how we might begin to parse the difference between the two. He writes the following:

By operating steadily to call out certain acts, habits are formed which function with the same uniformity as the original stimuli. If the rat is put in the maze and finds food only by making a given number of turns in a given sequence, his activity is gradually modified till he habitually takes the course rather than another when he is hungry. Human actions are modified in a like fashion. A burnt child dreads fire; if a parent arranged conditions so that every time a child touched a certain toy he got burned, the child would learn to avoid that toy as automatically as he avoids touching fire. (Dewey, 1916, pp. 12-13)

In such cases, the human being reacts to external stimuli and responds and adapts through the inculcation of habits in a passive manner in order to attain some end: such as not getting burned, etc. Dewey (1916) is quick to point out, however, that “the environment at most can supply stimuli to call out responses,” but that these responses come from “tendencies already possessed by the individual” (p.25). In other words, human beings are already involved in the world. They already embody habits of action and habits of mind. There are no blank slates. The self, as it was argued for in Chapter 2, is found at the nexus of a set of interlocking social practices stabilized through the adoption of habits, not something that first lies outside of those practices and only later embodies them. As such, an external stimulus never simply elicits direction, but is always about “re-direction” (Dewey, 1916, p. 26). Eyes don’t see if you will; human beings see. Ears don’t hear, human beings hear, and just what and how we hear what we hear is the

product of how past habits in-form present attention. This is an important issue we will revisit and extend later in our discussion of Dewey's philosophy of education.

Human action, for Dewey, can be more fully specified. Dewey (year) writes:

The difference between an adjustment to a physical stimulus and a *mental* act is that the latter involves responses to a thing in its *meaning*; the former does not. A noise may make jump without my mind being implicated. When I hear a noise and run and get water and put out the blaze, I respond intelligently; the sound meant fire, and the fire meant need of being extinguished . . . When things have a meaning for us, we mean (intend, propose) what we do: when they do not, we act blindly, unconsciously, unintelligently. (p. 29)

Human action performed in a blind, non-deliberative way must, for Dewey, be distinguished from human action done in a deliberative fashion. In the latter kind of action, the stimulus that elicits our response is invested with meaning, while in the former, the directive ends for which the action seeks to realize are bereft of meaning. We learn division and multiplication tables, but they are not invested with meaning for us; they are simply school-like tasks one performs at the developmentally appropriate time. When action is invested with significance, on the other hand, we embody habits of mind whose embodiment we are aware of as part of a cultural practice. That is, we, in a sense, de-naturalize our habits. We take them for what they are: contingent adaptations embodied as cultural practices stabilized through habits. We come to see that what *is* could have been otherwise. The taken for granted, non-cognitive background of culture becomes part of the cognitive foreground (at least that part of culture that is being

examined) thereby opening the space for questioning the boundary conditions of the society of which one is a part. This being the case, Dewey (1916) concludes, in non-deliberative, “blind” action, “there may be training, but there is no education” (p. 29). Hence, for Dewey (1916), any habit of action or habit of mind that emerges blindly from a repeated response to a given stimulus, “whose import we are quite unaware” can be classified as training (p. 29).

What follows is that those habits of action that reflect training are characterized as training because they are habits which “possess us, rather than we them” (Dewey, 1916, p. 29). Training then, in contradistinction to education, puts an end to the possibility of growth simply because training never questions or challenges the extant practices of a culture. But this isn’t quite right. To the extent that training is done blindly, training never even comes to the point to decide whether or not to question or challenge the boundary conditions of culture in the first place. In a sense, a culture that only trains its citizens would be in the situation not unlike a computer trying to make sense of an input that asked it what it thought about what it was doing. Dewey (1916) makes this point in the following important passage:

Education is not infrequently defined as consisting in the acquisition of those habits (socialization) that effect an adjustment of an individual and his environment (culture, society). The definition expresses an essential phase of growth. But it is essential that adjustment be understood in its *active* sense of control of means for achieving ends. If we think of a habit simply as a change wrought in the organism, ignoring the fact that this change consists in ability to

effect subsequent changes in the environment, we shall be led to think of 'adjustment' as a conformity to environment as wax conforms to the seal which impresses it. The environment is thought of as something fixed, providing in its fixity the end and standard of change taking place in the organism; adjustment is just fitting ourselves to this fixity of external conditions. (pp. 46-47)

Habits of action done in this active sense are precisely active because the ends for which the action is seeking to realize are invested with meaning. This is another way of saying that actions are performed within a cultural matrix that is itself understood as not something fixed, but open to revision and reconstruction. If culture is defined as a system of related significances, then habits of actions done in their active sense always are done with the awareness of the potential for redistributing significances across culture such that new relations emerge. In *Experience and Nature*, Dewey (1925) uses the following example to illustrate this point:

There is a difference in kind between thought which manipulates received objects and essences to derive new ones from their relations and implications, and the thought which generates a new method of observing and classifying them. It is like the difference between readjusting the parts of a wagon to make it more efficient, and the invention of the steam engine. One is formal and additive; the other is qualitative and transformative. (p. 222)

One can be thinking within the context of a given system, be it a school system, transportation system, etc., and be making novel adjustments without ever questioning the boundary conditions of that practice. But as Dewey's quote above suggests, there are

novel problems in life that require novel solutions which require the questioning, sometimes radically, of the boundary conditions of those practices. It's in these creative qualitative leaps where we are able to see the same objects in new ways, or develop an entire new system of classification that sees new relations between objects that spawn new systems and hence new cultural practices. Education, in this sense, is an irreducibly normative enterprise. All education is moral education, fostering the attitudes, dispositions, and critical spirit that takes their bearings from what can be from what is. For Dewey, in questioning and problematizing the boundaries of a given system within culture, one necessarily takes a stand on what part of the present should be identified as needing remedy; and thus, takes a stand on what the future should or ought to look like. Commenting on the difference between habits of actions done in the blind manner of simple training and habits done from the educational stance, Dewey (1916) writes:

Habit as habituation is indeed something relatively passive; we get used to our surroundings--to our clothing, our shoes, and gloves; to the atmosphere, to our daily associates, etc. Conformity to the environment . . . is a marked trait of such habituations. . . . Habituation is thus our adjustment to an environment which at the time we are not concerned with modifying . . . A savage tribe manages to live in a desert plain. It adapts itself. But its adaptation involves accepting, tolerating, putting up with things as they are, a maximum of passive acquiescence, and a minimum of active control. A civilized people enters upon the scene. It also adapts itself. It introduces irrigation; it searches the world for plants and animals

that will flourish under such conditions;⁵⁰ it improves, by careful selection, those which are growing there. As a consequence, the wilderness blossoms like a rose. The savage is merely habituated; the civilized man trans-forms the environment . . . habits which possess us instead of our possessing them, are habits that put an end to plasticity, or our ability to trans-form and reconstruct our environment when it's advantageous to do so. (pp. 47-49)

Therefore, what emerges in the educational stance is a way of comporting oneself in the world such that one becomes aware of one's cultural embeddedness, one's historicity, and realizes the plasticity of experience (culture). As Dewey (1920) states, the end of education is growth and growing is "the continuous reconstruction of experience" the continuous, ongoing engagement in cultural criticism (p.184).

Education as Cultural Criticism

The educative process is joined when one becomes aware of how and in what ways the past informs the cultural present to which one is habituated, such that one can begin to make a judgment on what the future should look like. The process of self-examination, then, becomes cultural examination. Knowing thyself becomes knowing oneself as a historical and cultural production. Individual growth is necessarily tethered to the possibility of cultural growth, since "the heart of sociality...is in education" (Dewey, 1957, p. 185). Or to put it in slightly different language, the heart of our historicity is in education. And since, for Dewey, the criticism of culture is not an end in

itself, but simply a vehicle for more growth, then the heart of *deliberative historicity* is in education. Having given up on teleological concepts of the cultural/natural world, Dewey rejects the idea that education as cultural criticism should be aiming at some pre-established fixed end towards which our educational practices should be anchored. Dewey, in short, eschews any attempt to center a culture on what we called *dedicated historicity*.

If education is understood as a form of cultural criticism, then what does Dewey mean by cultural criticism? And how does Dewey's notion of the relational self connect up with this philosophy of education? We get a first approximation of what Dewey (1956) means by cultural criticism when he tells us that:

Criticism is discriminating judgment, careful appraisal, and judgment is appropriately termed criticism whenever the subject-matter of discrimination concerns goods or values. (p. 398)

Cultural criticism is a kind of judgment. It's a kind of judgment concerned with distinguishing goods and values and between ends in view. As such, education as a form of cultural criticism is at root a normative endeavor. We can deepen Dewey's insight into the normative nature of education as cultural criticism by seeing it in light of Hannah Arendt's distinction between thinking (reason) and intellect (cognition). According to Arendt (1971), "the intellect (*verstand*) desires to grasp what is given to the senses, but reason (*vernunft*) wishes to understand its meaning" (p. 57). The intellect, Arendt continues, propels itself forward through the enterprise of scientific investigation in the

quest for what is, while thinking asks the question of the significance of what is. Dewey (1916) arrives at a similar distinction when he writes:

Knowledge, grounded knowledge, is science; it represents objects which have been settled, ordered, disposed of rationally. Thinking, on the other hand, is prospective in reference. It is occasioned by an unsettlement and it aims at overcoming a disturbance. (p. 326)

Thinking then is a prospective and prescriptive engagement with the world. Accordingly, education as a comportment to the world that fosters thinking is, as a prescriptive enterprise, always looking to what can be from what is. This is the case because education as a form of cultural criticism emerges at the point when extant values, goods, and ends in view become calcified and no longer have the smooth gradient they once did. At such times, cultural criticism can potentially open up vistas for thinking about new values, goods, and ends in view that lead to growth. Growth can only occur then through the process of criticism. Dewey (1958) emphasizes this point when he writes that education is joined:

. . . whenever a moment is devoted to looking to see what sort of value is present; whenever instead of accepting a value-object wholeheartedly, being rapt by it, we raise even a shadow of a question about its worth, or modify our sense of it by even a passing estimate of its probably future. (p. 400)

The precarious and complex nature of everyday life is such that inevitably old values and goods, once the novel remedy to a past problematic, no longer form the basis for habits of action that allow for the continuation of growth. Hence, for Dewey (1916), education as

cultural criticism fosters a kind of thinking that leads to nothing less than the “explicit formulation of the problems of the formation of right mental and moral habitudes in respect to the difficulties of contemporary social life” (p. 331).

At this point, we can make explicit the connection between education understood as cultural criticism and the relational self-image Dewey believes requisite for growth. Why is, as Dewey believes, sociality at the heart of the educational process? Why, for Dewey, is education an irreducibly social activity and not solely an individual accomplishment? Why does it necessarily follow that self-examination is cultural criticism or historical examination understood as a kind of deliberative historicity?

To answer these questions it would be helpful to take a closer look at how Dewey conceives the activity of thought. Recall that, for Dewey, education cultivates thinking because thinking, as Dewey understands it, is prescriptive. As a fundamentally prescriptive/normative enterprise, thought always takes place in a historical context. But thought is not simply something that takes place *in* a historical context, but is itself informed by that context. In other words, any activity of thought is *in* and *of/by* the historical matrix in which it occurs. This being the case, the argument runs, education at its best becomes a process whereby one becomes aware of how and in what ways one has become constituted by the culture one is born into. The degree to which this takes place is the extent to which one can follow the injunction of the student (that begins this chapter) and ask the prescriptive questions that education fosters. Education, in a sense, helps the individual emerge as a self by helping her de-naturalize the present in such a way that she begins to see how she is stretched out relationally between the past, present, and future.

Dewey's too often neglected essay "Context and Thought" (1960) can help us to see what this understanding of education looks like in practice. In "Context and Thought," Dewey attempts to demonstrate how the historical context is crucial for the direction, content, and nature of thought. That is, Dewey wants to argue that human beings are implicated in a web of intersecting relations that serve as a platform out of which thinking emerges in the first place. Only a fully accounted for understanding of the relationship between context and thought will, Dewey suggests, allow us to move beyond the wrongheaded epistemological concerns of those philosophies prone to ignore context. In so much as these epistemological concerns have influenced the nature of educational practice, it becomes an imperative, if we want to rethink what education entails, to reconceive the relationship between thinking and historical context.

Dewey begins this essay by arguing that the category of meaning in any language is intimately and relationally tied to context. "We grasp the meaning of what is said in our own language not because appreciation of context is unnecessary but because context is so inescapably present" (Dewey, 1960, p. 4). While we aren't usually aware of the background context that conditions the significances and meanings "of what we say and hear," it provides a crucial stabilizing platform that is the condition for the possibility for communication to occur in the first place (Dewey, 1960, p. 4). Language, moreover, is often connected with speech, and if so, Dewey believes, you could have thought without speech. However, Dewey wants to conceive of language in much broader terms; that is, for Dewey (1960), "if language is used to signify all kinds of signs and symbols, then

assuredly there is no thought without language . . .” (p. 4). And since thought works through symbols, it too “depends for meaning upon context” (Dewey, 1960, p. 5).

Having established the connection between context and thought, the question arises as to what Dewey means by context. The structure of context, Dewey begins, has at least two fundamental features: background and selective interest. Background, Dewey (1960) states:

.... is implicit in some form and to some degree in all thinking, although as background it does not come into explicit purview; that is, it does not form a portion of the subject matter which is consciously attended to, thought of, examined, inspected, turned over. (p. 11)

Thinking, for Dewey, is always thinking *of* something or other. Or to put it in the idiom contemporary philosophy of mind, thinking always has the primary property of intentionality. What we are thinking *of* in the cognitive foreground implements and utilizes the categories that emerge out of the largely non-cognitive background. This non-cognitive stable background “is taken for granted with respect to the particular question that is occupying the field of thinking” (Dewey, 1960, p. 12). While the background is stable, and in this sense doesn’t become a theme of cognition explicitly during problematic situations the relationship between background and foreground, and how the former animates the later, becomes a focus. It does so because unraveling the nested set of assumptions that are privileged in the foreground, and that have led to the problematic situation in the first place, can only be reconstructed through a robust understanding of the relationship between background and foreground.

This distinction between background and foreground, Dewey cautions, should be more fully focused on the “temporal background of thinking” or the cognitive foreground, is rooted in tradition or the historical past (Dewey, 1960, p. 12). However, tradition should not be understood as blind custom. Rather, “tradition has an intellectual quality that differentiates it from blind custom” (Dewey, 1960, p. 12). Tradition, in Dewey’s (1960) words: “. . . are ways of interpretation and of observation, of valuation, of everything explicitly thought of. They are the circumambient atmosphere which thought must breathe; no one ever had an idea except as he inhaled some of this atmosphere” (p. 12). These regulative cultural matrices condition the very possibilities for thinking *of* by the scientist or cultural producer of any given era. And in this sense, even background has cognitive components.

Of course, for Dewey, human beings lie at the interstice of background and foreground, and to this extent interact with the environment (culture) in such a way as to privilege certain standpoints in the foreground over others. Selective interest, the second constituent of context, then, “is a unique manner of entering into interaction with other things” (Dewey, 1960, p.15). In every instance of thinking, for Dewey, selectivity is found. For instance, if I were sitting in a room listening to music and I heard a close relative call my name through the screen door in the back of my apartment, my hearing isn’t broken if I cannot recall what song was playing on the stereo the moment my name was called. Rather my relatives’ voice is privileged out of all the other potential sounds in the room because I learned or became habituated to pay attention to it. In other words, my ears don’t hear my relative call me; I hear my relative call me because of how the

circulating background of habits has shaped present interest. Ears don't hear—human beings who are conditioned and habituated by the cultural storehouse they were born into, hear. Eyes don't see; human beings see. Brains don't think, human beings think. To repeat, what I see, hear, and think about in the cultural foreground is a product of how past habits (cultural and historical background) shape present attention. In short, what and how I attend to what I attend to is not an individual matter, at least at first. Rather, what I'm attentive to and what I see, and how and in what ways I think about what I think about, is shaped by those habits that have been privileged and instantiated in the social practices of the culture I've been thrown into.

So when Dewey speaks about selective interest and background as being fundamental constituents of a context, this is another way of conceptualizing culture as the transaction between self (interest) and world (background). Culture itself, in other words, is the most inclusive context of thinking. If this is the case, and if education is a form of cultural examination or cultural criticism, then it seems as if Dewey is suggesting that education is precisely the process of coming to see how and in what ways past habits in-form present attention. If I am to know who I am, then I must engage in cultural criticism, since it's the cultural context from which I emerge in the first place. If I am to grow, then my growth is necessarily caught up with the growth of the culture in which I have been constituted. The essence of educational practice becomes, for Dewey, the realization of how my self is relationally constituted in this way, and is, thus, the crucial step for overcoming the diremption, division, and fragmentation of the modern self-image and the social practices it's wedded to.

Donald Davidson's Deweyan Philosophy of Education

We have already noted that Davidson wrote nothing formally about the philosophy of education. Consequently, he would not normally be a proper figure in discussions pertaining to issues surrounding education practice or educational theory. Yet, Davidson's philosophy of mind is quite suggestive for a way of thinking about education that, it will be argued, overlaps with Dewey's understanding of education as a form of cultural criticism. As such, Davidson's Deweyan philosophy of education similarly initiates a way of conceiving educational practice such that it contributes, perhaps only in a small way, to the overcoming of our culture of diremption.

In the first two chapters, we sketched Davidson's philosophy of mind. Recall that Davidson (2004) argues that "all thought, whether in the form of beliefs or intentions, desires, fears, or expectations, has propositional content, the kind of content that is paradigmatically expressed in sentences" (p. 3). Every belief we have has truth conditions or if you will error conditions; that is, to have a thought is to entertain the possibility that a belief we hold could be true or false, what I desire or hope for or expect may or may not come to pass (Davidson, 2004, pp. 3-4). To be a thinking thing is to hold sentences that we know can be in error. Moreover, to have thoughts, and hence to be in the position of being in error in the first place, presupposes another person and a shared world (culture). We can't think at all, Davidson continues, or entertain propositional states of any kind, without the other, and without a shared world with shared stimuli. Hence, Davidson concludes, one has knowledge of another mind only when one has knowledge of the

world or a shared world with shared stimuli. This is Davidson's idea of triangulation. On Davidsonian grounds, to be a self is necessarily to be connected to others and the world.

But what happens, Davidson asks in his essay on Freud entitled "The Paradox of Irrationality," when someone holds beliefs and desires that inform their conduct, but do not fit into the dominant or privileged scheme which they understand themselves (Rorty, 1991, p. 14)? In other words, what happens when we have beliefs and desires that are seemingly irreconcilable with the beliefs and desires that normally form the basis of one's practical action? These questions that are raised in "The Paradox of Irrationality" move Davidson to develop a position that is amenable to an understanding of education as cultural criticism. Just as Dewey's philosophy of education leads from self-examination to cultural examination or cultural criticism, so too will Davidson's. Just as Dewey's philosophy of education leads from individual growth to cultural growth, so too will Davidson's.

Yet, Davidson's interest in this essay is exclusively at the individual level. So we will have to see how his position lends itself to a different reading such that individual self-improvement and self-criticism entail cultural criticism and cultural improvement. Davidson (2004) attempts in this essay to make sense of the following claims he sees as the foundation of Freud's project: first, the idea that "the mind contains a number of semi-independent structures, these structures being characterized by mental attributes like thoughts, desires, and memories;" second, different parts of the mind "are in important respects like people, not only in having (or consisting of) beliefs, wants, and other psychological traits, but in that these factors can combine, as in intentional action, to

cause further events in the minds or outside it” (pp.170-171). From this starting point, Davidson (2004) argues that in order to make sense of irrationality, or the holding of beliefs and desires that don’t reasonably fit into one’s own self-image, we must see that it’s possible for an action to be described as having a cause but no reason (p.179). As Davidson further explains, “many desires and emotions are shown to be irrational if they are explained by mental causes that are not reasons for them” (p. 179).

This all can be made sense of, Davidson believes, with the help of psychoanalytic theory. If Davidson is right that beliefs and desires can have a cause but can’t be given a reasonable explanation based on the beliefs and desires that are determinant of one’s self-image, then where does this cause emerge from? It is here that Freud can be of help. The semi-autonomous zones of the mind, which are a fundamental feature of Freudian theory, Davidson (2004) argues, are “necessary to account for mental causes that are not reasons for the mental state they cause” (p. 184). He adds that, it is “only by portioning the mind does it seem possible to explain how a thought or impulse can cause another to which it bears no rational relation” (pp. 184-185). Furthermore, these semi-distinct mental zones are themselves implicitly semi-autonomous persons in that they have intentional states (beliefs, desires, intentions, etc.) characteristic of persons. It is the interaction between these semi-autonomous regions of the mind that ultimately, Davidson concludes, make it possible to give an account for beliefs and desires that don’t reasonably seem to fit in the dominant scheme of how we perceive ourselves.

Davidson concludes his essay on an edifying note. He suggests that the account of irrationality laid out in this essay also allows us to make sense of “a form of self-criticism

and reform that we tend to hold in high esteem” (Davidson, 2004, p. 186). This kind of self-criticism occurs, for instance, when someone attempts to change a desire, but “from the point of view of the changed desire, there is no reason for the change--the reason comes from an independent source” (Davidson, 2004, p. 187). The result being that:

The agent has reasons for changing his own habits and character, but those reasons come from a domain of values necessarily extrinsic to the contents of the views or values to undergo change. The cause of the change, if it comes, can therefore not be a reason for what it causes (Davidson, 2004, p. 187).

Without a theory of irrationality, Davidson concludes, we would have no way of explaining our “salutary efforts” at self-criticism and self-improvement (Davidson, 2004, p. 187).

Rorty (1991) suggests that we read this essay in the following manner when he writes:

Davidson’s insistence in that paper on the importance of “mental causality that transcends reason” is focused on self-criticism and self-improvement in individual human beings, but I think his point is even more striking and plausible for the self-criticism of culture. The “irrational” intrusions of beliefs which “make no sense, (cannot be justified by exhibiting their coherence with the rest of what we believe) are just those events which intellectual historians look back upon as conceptual revolutions. (p. 15)

I think Rorty is right here. However, I wonder if it’s equally plausible to arrive at Rorty’s position without extending Davidson’s theory. In other words, is it possible that

Davidson's philosophy of mind necessarily entails Rorty's extension of Davidson's theory? Davidson's emphasis on self-criticism and self-improvement automatically becomes cultural criticism and cultural improvement.

Recall that Davidson sets out in the "Paradox of Irrationality" to explain how we can have beliefs, desires, and intentions that don't fit into the dominant or privileged scheme which one understands oneself. However, let's rewrite this problematic in the following manner and ask, what happens when we have beliefs, desires, and intentions that are irreconcilable with the beliefs, desires, and intentions that we share with others in our shared world? This *cultural/historical* approach to Davidson's philosophy of mind seems justifiable. After all, when asked about his philosophy of mind, Davidson (as cited in Kent, 2006) states the following:

The internalist says that the contents of our thoughts—our beliefs, our desires, our intentions, and what we mean by what we say—are determined wholly by what is in the head. Generally speaking, this is a Cartesian position, and there are lots of internalists around. The externalist, however, maintains that there are factors external to the person which are determinants of the contents of our thoughts, and not just causal determinants...So externalism has to do with your history and things that exist outside of you that make a difference to what you can think or what you are thinking at a given time moment (cited in Kent, 2006)

Davidson's philosophy of mind then has commitments to externalism. As he says, "I am an all-out externalist" (cited in Kent, 2006). For Davidson, externalism "applies universally; there are connections everywhere between the world and the contents of our

thoughts” (cited in Kent, 2006). If, as Davidson claims, our beliefs, desires, and intentions are set by what is outside the mind, and that what is outside the mind has a “history,” then it seems as if his account of the semi-autonomous zones of the mind which forms the basis of his account of irrationality has be recast. It seems to me that these semi-autonomous zones of the mind are distributed, if you will, in historical space. From this it follows, the mind and its partitions aren’t inside us, but are, like Dewey argues, contextual and historical all the way down.

Accordingly, we can draw a parallel between Davidson’s contrast between the irrational and the rational and Dewey’s distinction between background and foreground. If this is correct, then Davidson’s discussion of self-criticism converges with Dewey’s. Given Davidson’s commitment to an all-out externalism, self-criticism necessarily entails cultural/historical criticism, since our beliefs, desires, and intentions (and thought, in general) emerge out of and are set by our historical embeddedness. As such, Davidson’s Deweyan philosophy of education consists of examining how and in what ways the irrational (or non-cognitive background in Dewey’s language) bleeds into the rational (or foreground in Dewey’s terms), or what is privileged as rationally coherent at a given moment in history. Rationality and irrationality, on Davidsonian terms, are not unchanging verities or intrinsic properties of the self, but tools that help us to make sense of the world; and to the extent that they help us make sense of the world and ourselves, what counts as rational and what counts as irrational, at a given time, is apt to change. It is only by conceiving this relationship between the rational and the irrational in this way that one can figure out where one wants to go from where one is.

Both Dewey and Davidson then advocate for a philosophy of education that is a form of cultural criticism. Both also conceive this process of cultural criticism as one that is deliberative and which takes its bearings from a commitment to the historicity of mind and self. In doing so, both philosophies of education allow us to conceive what a theory of education would look like that would overcome the diremptive self-image rooted in our extant educational practices and our culture as a whole.

CHAPTER 4

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE OLD REGIME

The commonplace I sing;
 How cheap is health! How cheap is nobility!
 Abstinence, no falsehood, no gluttony, lust;
 The open air I sing, freedom, toleration,
 (Take here the mainest lesson-less from books-less from the schools,)
 The common day and night--the common earth and waters,
 Your farm--your work, trade, occupation,
 The democratic wisdom underneath, like solid ground for all.
 (Whitman, 1892, p. 438)

The Homelessness of Modernity

1 In 1885, Frank B. Linderman moved to Montana and became a close associate of the Crow Nation. Reflecting back on his longstanding relationship with the Crow Nation, he noted that Plenty Coups, the last chief of the Crow Nation, refused to speak to him about anything that took place before they became interred on the reservation (Lear, 2006, p. 2). He wrote:

Plenty Coups refused to speak of his life after the passing of the Buffalo, so that his story seems to have broken off, leaving many years unaccounted for. 'I have not told you half of what happened when I was young,' he said, when urged to go on. "I can think back and tell you much more of war and horse-stealing. But when

the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground, and they could not lift them up again. After this, nothing happened. There was little singing anywhere. ‘Besides,’ he added sorrowfully, ‘you know that part of my life as well as I do. You saw what happened to us when the Buffalo went away’ (Lear, 2006, p. 2).

In his book *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*, Jonathan Lear asks the question of what Plenty Coups meant when he said, “after this, nothing happened.” How could there be a point in time after which nothing happens? Some *thing* must have happened? No? If not, what would this look like from within the point of view of a subject or a self that perceives this rupture?

Lear (2006) argues that what Plenty Coups means when he says “after this, nothing happened” is that when the United States government began the process of destroying the independence of Crow culture, they “crushed the space in which traditional Crow meanings might survive unchallenged” (p. 31). And in doing so, many of the related significances that constituted Crow culture began to “evaporate” (Lear, 2006, p. 31). In this context:

...the Crow have lost concepts with which they would construct a narrative. This is a *real loss*, not just one that is described from a certain point of view. It is the *real loss of a point of view* (Lear, 2006, p. 32).

By losing the concepts out of which meaning-making within the Crow Nation took place, nothing could happen; Crow temporality and Crow history ceased to exist as it once had. “Crow temporality had fitted within these categories—everything that happened could be

understood in these terms—and, thus, it seems fair to say that the Crow ran out of time” (Lear, 2006, p. 43). Of course, as Lear points out, the Crow Nation carried on the best they could, given the cultural forces preying on their way of life. But what did happen is that the Crow self and its attendant mental states no longer had the cultural space to articulate the significance of their practices (Lear, 2006). In such a state, the Crow self collapsed (Lear, 2006). Meaningful practices that once linked the Crow self to the world and to the wider culture, temporally and historically, were torn apart.

Here then is a case of a culture in a state of *diremption*. The self that emerges from that culture became fragmented, as the meaningful ground in which that self dwells was pulled out from underneath it. The cultural space held in common by the Crow became colonized by an outside force that led to the disruption of meaning-making within the culture. Things that once had meaning no longer did, or if they did, didn’t have relevance in their new context. The temporal flow between past, present, and future no longer was to be negotiated solely on their terms, but became shaped and directed by the United States. Without a shared world of their own, the Crow Nation became exiles, homeless, their vistas of significance buried beneath the violence of their internment on the reservation. Exiled from his homeland because of the rise of the Third Reich, Amery (1980) describes the wretchedness of homelessness in the following terms:

...I did suffer and still suffer homesickness, a nasty, gnawing sickness, which does not have a folk-song like, homey quality, not at all one sanctioned by emotional conventions...I felt it piercingly for the first time when I stood at the exchange counter in Antwerp with fifteen marks, fifty, and it has left me as little

as the memory of Auschwitz, or of torture, or of my return from the concentration camp, when once again I was back in the world...(p. 43).

Amery speaks to the fact that when one loses ones place in the world, one becomes alienated from oneself, even as the storehouse of memories that links the past to present becomes obstructed in the radically alien context. Amery, like Plenty Coups, experienced the cultural and individual diremption that is the product of a culture or society that has become homeless.

Similarly, Wendell Berry reminds us of the intimate connection between self, community, and place, without which one becomes a stranger to oneself. He points out that:

A human community, too, must collect leaves and stories, and turn them to account. It must build soil, and build memory of itself—in lore and story and song—that will be its culture. These two kinds of accumulation, of local soil and local culture, are intimately related (Berry, 1990, p. 154).

A healthy, vibrant community, then, is one that establishes harmony between place and history, between the memories and narratives stabilized in practice and the proper treatment of one's local soil (Berry, 1990). "Practically speaking, human society has no work more important than this" (Berry, 1990, p. 155). It follows that the elevation of the one is simultaneously an elevation of the other. And conversely, the diminution of the one is, in Berry's account, a diminution of the other. In this sense, both place and history are two necessary expressions of the cultural home of a community.

The previous chapters have argued that John Dewey's and Donald Davidson's philosophies of education should be understood primarily as a response and challenge to the dominant image of the self that emerges from Modernity and which results in cultural diremption. They argued, as related to what we have outlined above, that Modernity has bequeathed to us a self-image that is homeless, without place, and is nowhere in particular. If Heidegger's naming and identification of the human being as *Dasein* (there-being) is correct, then the self of Modernity is literally a *sein* without a *da*. And this is precisely the formulation of the self conceived by the champions of objectivity, as witnessed more particularly in Descartes' *cogito*. In turn, Dewey and Davidson argued for a relational self-image that is the foundation of their understanding of education as cultural criticism. In this account, meaningful educational practice can only take place when the self is rooted to a shared world, a common dwelling that connects and situates the vistas of significance that constitutes the community one emerges from. Without such a self-image, the self becomes fractured and alienated from community, with the result being that history and place cease to anchor any meaningful educational practice.

Yet, given Dewey's sensitivity to the vital importance that historicity and place play in the emergence and education of the self, it's curious why he still is committed to the belief that self and community, self and world, can be reconstituted through our schools. Aren't our schools themselves the space and place where Modernity funds precisely the self-image Dewey wants to overcome? Aren't the schools where people tacitly learn to become agents (even if unwillingly) of diremption? If so, isn't formal education itself in part responsible for undermining the latent potential to foster the

requisite kinds of authentic associations and *respons-able* communities of practice that will realize Dewey and Davidson's ideal of education? As Zoel Weil points out, even if every student in the United States was educated according to the standards outlined in No Child Left Behind, schooling would still have failed miserably:

. . . because were we to actually succeed at graduating a generation that all passed their No Child Left Behind tests and were all employed, we would find that most of them would perpetuate, and perhaps even escalate, the systemic problems we face (Weil, 2011).

In other words, formal education legitimizes and reproduces the extant conditions that have led to cultural diremption, and that have led to the ecological, political, and economic morass that threaten the self from realizing itself in meaningful communities of practice that are non-alienating. While Dewey's belief that a new way of conceiving the self was requisite for realizing anything worthy of the label "educational," any reconceptualization of the relationship between knower and known, self and world, subject and object, turns on whether or not these new ways of conceiving the self are fostered by the social and cultural practices from which one emerges. But it's hard to see, as Weil points out, how formal schooling does anything more than see the future as simply the extension of the present.

Therefore, this chapter and the next will try to push Dewey's philosophy of education in directions that he himself was not inclined to go, but which are necessary for overcoming the diremption characteristic of Modernity. In short, if Dewey's (and Davidson's) argument for the relational self is to take root in practice, then Dewey will

have to expand the parameters and possibilities of what education looks like on the ground. If the homeless, placeless self of Modernity is to be re-placed by the home-ful and hopeful self Dewey describes, then this admirable and necessary goal will not be realized through the medium of formal schooling.

This chapter, then, will begin by looking at Dewey's criticisms of traditional and progressive philosophies of education as found in his work *Experience and Education* (1938). Employing Davidson's epistemological thesis of triangulation to frame these criticisms, we will first discuss just what it is that Dewey found lacking in progressive and traditional approaches to educational practice. Next, we will argue that Dewey's criticisms of both approaches should have led him, given his important distinction between *educative* and *mis-educative* experiences, to a full-scale critique of formal schooling rather than arguing as he does for the dissolution of the extremes that both philosophies of education represent. Drawing from the work of Ivan Illich as a foundation, this section will conclude by discussing why this is the case.

Dewey's Criticisms of Traditional and Progressive Education

Davidson, as we've seen, provides us with an epistemological thesis he calls triangulation about how we come to understand and know the world around us. This thesis attempts to recast the relationship between knower and known, self and world, and self and other in such a way that the self can only know itself if it's already connected to others in a shared world. What follows, in addition, is that one can only know the world if one is already in communication and communion with others, and one can only know

others if one is already in a commonly shared world. One's own self-image, in other words, is one that is in part shared by others in a common world. As Mikhail Bakhtin argued, all the words we use individually are partially someone else's. From this Davidsonian standpoint, the champions of objectivity who argued that self can become individualized only if it breaks free from our connections to others in a shared world, lose one of the corners of the triangle. As such, one loses the capacity to know oneself as well as the ability to communicate with others. One also loses the world. We become, in a sense, homeless, without place and history.

It is here that Davidson's epistemological thesis of triangulation can be employed in a different context to help illuminate just what it is that Dewey finds troubling about traditional and progressive forms of educational practice. *Experience and Education* (1938), written over twenty years after *Democracy and Education* (1916), was written in part as a response to what Dewey perceived was a too frequent misreading of the latter. What then are Dewey's criticisms? And how can the idea of triangulation help us make sense of them?

Key to understanding the shortcomings of traditional and progressive philosophies of education is how each, for Dewey, misconstrues what experience entails. Dewey (1939) puts it this way:

The trouble with traditional education was not that it emphasized external conditions that into the control of the experiences but that it paid so little attention to the internal factors which also decide what kind of experience is had. It

violated the principle of interaction from one side. But this violation is no reason why the new education should violate the principle from the other side . . . (p. 42)

A more robust conception of what is meant by experience is needed, Dewey believes, if both variants are to be overcome. As was shown in Chapter 2 and developed in Chapter 3, in light of his conception of education as a form of cultural criticism, Dewey's reconstruction of experience is really a reconstruction or a recasting of our understanding of the way the self relates to the world and others. In general, the progressive movement overemphasized subjectivity to the point where it became cut off from the world and others. To the extent that it did so, they cut off the possibility of the self coming to know itself; and thus, they undermined the possibility of the self becoming educated. Rather, as Dewey (1938) points out, "equal right" needs to be given to both subjective and objective elements of experience (p. 42). This, for Dewey (1938), is not a question of practicality, which it is in one sense, but rather is necessary because "any normal experience is an interplay of these two sets of conditions" (p. 42). Similarly, traditional education was fallacious, not because they were interested in what Dewey (following Hegel) calls the objective conditions that enter into experience, but because they denied what animates the individual learner's interest from the subjective side. On the other hand, certain variants of progressive philosophies of education assumed that any and all objective factors got in the way of the child's capacity to have a robust experience. But this is a thin reading of experience. Rather, "experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes her

environment,” and the objective conditions implicated in the situation at hand (Dewey, 1938, p. 43).

Dewey sees, then, adherents of both progressive as well as traditional forms of educational practice presupposing the same kind of either/or metaphysics. Both violate the transactional nature of experience; the traditionalist cut the self off from the world from the vantage point of the world, while the progressives cut the self off from the world from the standpoint of the self. It is here that Davidson’s idea of triangulation can make explicit Dewey’s complaint against progressive and traditional philosophies of education. For Davidson, the self can only have an “experience,” to use Dewey’s term, if it’s already tethered to others in a shared world. No common world, no self. And if there is no self, there is no self in communication and communion with others. In other words, what results if any point of the triangle is missing is diremption, a context in which the elements are disaggregated. This allows us to more clearly see why the Crow Nation was beset by diremption in the example that opens this chapter. Self, other, and the shared world were torn apart once the common space out of Crow identity came under assault. Dewey’s critique can now be understood in light of this Davidsonian context. Dewey’s complaint against traditional and progressive philosophies of education is really a complaint that each one in its own way leaves out one of the corners of Davidson’s triangle. By overemphasizing the self, progressive philosophies of education neglect others and the shared world, whereas traditional philosophies of education overemphasize the world and neglect the self and others.

Formal Education and Diremption

Dewey and Davidson share a triangulated vision of the way human beings comport themselves in the world. Dewey's philosophy of education reflects this. To the extent that formal schooling is underwritten by this philosophy of education, Dewey argues, it too must reflect this triangulated vision. Dewey (1916) writes that:

In the first place, the school must itself be a community life in all which that implies. Social perceptions and interests can be developed only in a genuinely social medium--one where there is give and take in the building up of a common experience (p. 358).

Or again, consider the following passage where Dewey (1938) discusses the necessary conditions for cultural transmission of which formal schooling is an expression:

Society not only continues to exist by transmission, by communication, but it may fairly be said to exist in transmission, in communication. There is more than verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. Men live in community in virtue of things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common. (p. 4)

But should we expect schools to be organized to foster this triangulated vision necessary for human beings to grow, to become educated, and become participants in communities of practice that integrate self and world? Is Dewey's optimism misplaced? Is it possible, asks Schubert (2009), that philosophers of education like Dewey:

. . . mistakenly hold to an ideal that because schools on some parts of Earth (e.g., America), are supposedly open to all, that they can be a seedbed for democracy?

Has this ever been the case? Is this faith in democracy through state sponsored schools warranted? We must remember that most of these schools are highly segregated (by class, race, ability, ethnicity, and more) as are their social contexts. Could it be that bastions of power value schools as spaces to exert propaganda to support their imperial quests? Could it be that rulers want to use schools to imprison cultural and social imagination of later generations to secure their regime? (p. 36)

And we can add to this list of questions the following: Is formal schooling the appropriate medium to spearhead the reconstruction of society necessary for overcoming the diremptive self-image of modernity? There is good reason to think not. In fact, there is good reason to believe that formal schooling actually exacerbates and perpetuates the diremption between self and other, self and world. Ivan Illich (1970) puts it this way:

We cannot begin a reform of education unless we first understand that neither individual learning nor social equality can be enhanced by the ritual of schooling. We cannot go beyond the consumer society unless we first understand that obligatory public schools inevitably reproduce such a society, no matter what is taught in them. (p. 38)

But how could this be? Isn't formal schooling one of the *stations of the cross* that Modernity's children follow on their way to a life of social mobility, easy consumption, and the other delights of the commodified culture schooling makes possible? And wouldn't our Jeffersonian inclinations counsel us that schooling, if not a sufficient condition, is certainly a necessary one for the advancement and deepening of democratic

practice? What would become of these cherished goods if schooling as we know it ceased to exist? To these questions we now turn.

The Non-Relational Self as Homo Oeconomicus

The work of Ivan Illich can help make sense of the counterintuitive claim (for many of us) that we would be better off without formal schooling, better off without an institution (among others) that actually fosters the diremption between self and other, self and world. In his essay, “Silence is a Commons,” Illich (1992) distinguishes between the environment as commons from the environment as resource (p. 48). This distinction should be thought of as both an historical/sociological one and a conceptual/philosophical one. It is a distinction that will begin to allow us to see how the institution of schooling perpetuates cultural diremption.

As a sociological/historical claim, Illich points to the great transformation that takes place during the initial phase of the modernity of the 17th century, as the spatial/geographic and communicative commons became enclosed and turned into resources, inputs and outputs in the ever-growing chains of industrial production. The elegant purposive natural world of Aristotle became understood simply as “dead and manipulable matter” (Sachs, 1992, p. 206). Nature became a natural resource. This Baconian drive for mastery led to an altered relationship between human beings and the natural world, “from one based on responsibility, restraint, and reciprocity to one based on unrestrained exploitation” and domination (Sachs, 1992, p. 207). Perhaps no clearer

articulation of this new ethic can be found than in a letter sent in 1855 from Chief Seattle of the Duwanich people to President Charles Pierce:

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. How can you buy or sell the sky—the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. Yet we do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water. How can you buy them from us? Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Every shiny pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. We know that the white man does not understand our ways, one portion of the land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes at night and takes away from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother but his enemy, and when he has conquered it he moves on. He leaves his father's grave, and his children's birthplace is forgotten. (cited in Hazelrigg, 1989, pp. 9-10)

The enclosure and destruction of the commons then went hand in hand with this transformed relationship between self and world. One, in a sense, became homeless. No longer were human beings part of an interlocking dynamic unity of which the natural world was a part. One's particular place in the world became part of a homogenous landscape of lifeless matter, all quantifiable, and only distinguishable, one from the other, on that basis. While discussing the fate of ecology after the Second World War, what Wolfgang Sachs suggests the following is applicable to the forces at work during this incipient period of Modernity. He writes:

The search for general laws, however, implies concentrating attention on a minimum of elements which are common to the overwhelming variety of settings. The appreciation of a particular place with a particular community loses importance. Moreover, these elements and their relationships have to be measurable; the quantitative analysis of mass, volume, temperature, and the like replaced the qualitative interpretation of an ensemble's unity and order. (Sachs, 1992, p. 31)

This drive to quantify the world that was the product of the Baconian search for mastery, led to the homogenization and disruption of one's *lifeworld*; and hence, to the loss of place. Once the commons were enclosed, in other words, people lost the capacity to dwell—they became homeless. Heidegger (1977) points out that “to be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell” (p. 325). He goes on to discuss the etymology of the German verb for to build, *bauen*:

The old word *bauen*, which says that man is insofar as he *dwells*, this word *bauen*, however, *also* means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine. Such building only takes care—it tends the growth that ripens into its fruit of its own accord. Building in the sense of preserving and nurturing is not making anything. Shipbuilding and temple-building, on the other hand, do in a certain way make their own works. Here building, in contrast with cultivating, is a construction. Both modes of building--building as cultivating...and building as the raising up of edifices...are comprised within genuine building, that is, dwelling. (Heidegger, 1997, p. 325)

To dwell in both modes means to live, at least in part, in a way that doesn't disrupt the intimate way communities and peoples are tethered to the natural spaces from which they subsist and out of which local cultures become places of meaning-making. But when building is conceived exclusively in terms of the application of tools to the production of resources, then what results is the destruction of place and culture and the forgetfulness of dwelling. In addition, "to detach man from the soil meant the dissolution of the body economic into its elements so that each element could fit into that part of the system where it was most useful" (Polanyi, 1944, p. 179). Once this was achieved, "all claims on the part of neighborhood or kinship organization....claims, which exempted land from commerce or mortgage" were similarly abolished" (Polanyi, 1944, p. 179). Accordingly, the self and the community and culture of which the individual was a part, became defined in opposition to the natural world, and the natural world became reduced to a resource for exploitation. As culture became disaggregated from the natural world, the conditions necessary for human beings to be at home in the world became compromised (Berry, 1992, p. 111).

The enclosure of the commons which led to the diremption between self and the natural world also uprooted the cultural ground out of which human societies flourished. Once the shared world between members of a culture became commodified and turned into a resource, the economic relations ceased to be "embedded in social relations;" instead, this shared world became "embedded in the economic system" (Polanyi, 1944, p. 57). As we have seen throughout the course of Modernity, and especially during the 20th century, culture became an adjunct to market relations. What follows is that the self is led

into a state of diremption, not simply because the self becomes commodified, but more importantly, because of the usurpation of the cultural life of which the person is dependent for understanding oneself. Polanyi (1944) writes:

Not economic exploitation, as often assumed, but the disintegration of the cultural environment of the victim is then the cause of the degradation. The economic process may, naturally, supply the vehicle of the destruction, and almost invariable economic inferiority will make the weaker yield, but the immediate cause of his undoing is not for that reason economic; it lies in the lethal injury to the institution in which his social existence is embodied. The result is loss of self-respect and standards, whether the unit is a people or a class . . . (p. 157)

The “cultural debasement” of cultures and peoples who have been colonized and violated by the logic of market relations uproots and leads to the “liquidation of every and any cultural institution in an organic society” (Polanyi, 1944, p. 159). Nor should this surprise us. When the natural world is turned into a resource, it doesn’t take long to turn culture into a resource as well. Consider, for instance, the indifference to the unique cultural traditions and landscape of Indonesia expressed by president of Coca-Cola, Donald R. Keough, when he rhapsodized the following: “When I think of Indonesia--a country on the equator with 180 million people, a median age of 18, and with a Moslem ban on alcohol--I feel I know what heaven looks like” (As cited in Suzuki, 2003, p. 124). What remains after the logic of the market gains ascendancy in a culture, is “not the progressive liberation of individuals, but increasing insecurity and alienation, the breakdown of traditional associations and group ties” (Bramson, 1961, p. 14). What

remains are the pieces of a culture and a society, and the social practices which they once embodied become torn asunder. Take, for example, the impact market forces have had on black culture in the United States, and how it has resulted in cultural diremption. West (2001) describes it in the following terms:

The impact of the market culture on black life has been devastating. As Stanley Crouch rightly has noted, fifty years ago black communities were the most civilized and humane in America--highly nurturing, caring, loving, and self-respecting behind the walls of American apartheid. The market invasion, including the ugly drug invasion, has transformed too many black neighborhoods into hoods, black civic communities into black uncivil combat zones. (p. ix)

Inevitably, the ramifications of the transformation of the environment as commons to the environment as a resource is perverse, leaving behind a cultural decay and a cultural nihilism that leaves the self in a state of what Durkheim called *anomie*. Ripped apart from communities of practice that sustain meaningful action, people fall prey to forces of diremption, forces that “externalize” anything that doesn’t maximize utility and doesn’t lead to the increase of growth in society measured as GDP. Consider the following story that nicely illustrates how this market logic destroys meaningful community and family life and leads to diremption:

Joe and Mary own a small farm. They are self-reliant, growing as much of their food as possible, and providing for most of their needs. Their two children chip in and the family has a rich home life. Their family contributes to the health of their community and the nation . . . but they are not good for the nation’s business

because they consume so little. Joe and Mary can't make ends meet, so Joe finds a job in the city. He borrows \$13,000 to buy a Toyota and drives 50 miles to work every day. The \$13,000 and his yearly gas bill added to the nation's Gross National Product (GNP). Then Mary divorces Joe because she can't handle his bad city moods anymore. The \$11,000 lawyer's fee for dividing up the farm and assets is added to the nation's GNP. The people who buy the farm develop it into townhouses at \$200,000 a pop. This results in a spectacular jump in the GNP. A year later Joe and Mary accidentally meet in a pub and decide to give it another go. They give up their city apartments, sell one of their cars and renovate a barn in the back of Mary's father's farm. They live frugally, watch their pennies and grow together as a family again. Guess what? The nation's GNP registers a fall and the economists tell us we are worse off. (Suzuki, 2003, pp. 102-103)

This story illustrates and suggests that there is an inverse ratio between the health of the commons (and community) and economic health measured in terms of development. When the shareholders are doing well, the ecological and social fabric and health of the culture is not.

Take as another example, the development of full-strength suburbia in North America after the Second World War, resulting from the combination of market forces and government action. In Manheim Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 1957, historian David Schuyler (2002) notes, "builders were completing one new house every third day, a figure that might seem small when compared with a Levittown, but which accommodated a 40 percent increase in population between 1950 and 1958" (p. 226). The

colonization of Manheim Township by the suburban urban structure was a particular manifestation of a national trend that was part of the enormous “growth” experienced by the United States after the war. Yet, it had very severe consequences. Scuyler (2002) goes on to add that:

One individual who was born in the township shortly after the war recalls driving along one of the principal roads leading north from Lancaster city. The countryside he observed as a youth was pastoral, the neat farmsteads and massive barns testifying to fertile soils and generations of skilled agriculturalists. . . . Over the course of his life most of those centuries-old farms have been lost. As Amish and Mennonite farm families moved away, a unique cultural landscape, a place of remarkable beauty and historical significance, was transformed into shopping centers, subdivisions, and single-family houses that epitomized all that was wrong with suburban growth. (p. 226)

What replaced the singularity and distinctiveness of a cultural landscape that integrated place and memory (historical significance), was a slow process of homogenization and standardization that sociologist George Ritzer aptly calls the process of “McDonaldization.”

As meaningful community became uprooted and people moved out into the suburbs into a landscape that had no history or place, there were important political consequences as well. In the United States, civic participation in the public sphere, the mediating link between governmental representatives of the people and one’s own private interests (Habermas, 1991), once flourished in the form of voluntary associations

(Putnam, 2000). Citizens engaged in civic communion in the form of these voluntary associations were thought to be a prerequisite for the proper functioning of a healthy democracy. As Westbrook (1991) quoting John Dewey puts it, “only in local, face-to-face associations, could members of a public participate in dialogues with their fellows, and such dialogues were crucial to the formation and organization of the public” (p.314). Yet, over the course of the 20th century, and in particular during the post-war period, we have seen the gradual decline in civic participation (Putnam, 2000). Today people are, to quote the title of Putnam’s (2000) important study on civic participation, literally “bowling alone”. The public sphere has become depopulated as private interests and the logic of the market has slowly colonized what were formerly public spaces and the sites of meaningful community, exemplified in our vignette of Manheim Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Consumers, in short, have replaced citizens. Democracy bereft of a vital public sphere becomes reduced, Putnam (2000) concludes, to “politics at a distance.... “disembodied voices neither engaging one another nor offering much guidance to the leaders” (p.341).

This “great transformation” that led to the enclosure of the commons “redefines community” because it “undermines the local autonomy of community” (Illich, 1992, p. 51). What are left are the pieces or elements of a community, but not a community itself. What is left is a society redefined in terms of a Hobbesian scarcity, whereby individuals are left adrift to compete with one another for resources requisite for realizing the good life. Illich summarizes this process as follows:

The transformation occurred over a couple of centuries. During this time the root certainty was change, sometimes called progress, sometimes development, sometimes growth. In the secular process, men claimed to have discovered “resources” in culture and nature--in what has been their commons--and turned them into economic values. (as cited in Sachs, 1992, p.88)

This new self-image, *homo oeconomicus*, the economic correlate to Descartes' placeless, homeless *cogito*, has *needs*. The individual, the culture, the society, under this new regime and re-definition of the self, simply becomes the space and place whereby *needs* are produced and satisfied. Illich (1992) goes on to argue:

Society is now organized on the utilitarian assumption that man is born needy, and needed values are interpreted as the supreme value. *Homo oeconomicus* becomes the referent for ethical reflection. Living is equated with a struggle for survival or, more radically, with a competition for life. (p.229)

Not surprisingly, those individuals or cultures unable to gain access to these *needs*, or who refuse to understand themselves in terms of scarcity and refuse to compete, somehow are lacking or bereft of the proper tools necessary for realizing the good life. As such, “This ‘evolution’ has transmogrified peoples and cultures so profoundly that previous virtues are now reduced to vices, and traditional vices have been elevated to virtues” (Esteva & Prakash, 2008, p. 22). This inverted world that redefined society in terms of the maximization of utility was and still is justified in terms of progress or development, as the embodiment of an intrinsic superiority in knowledge and technique that is requisite for human flourishing. But as Graeber (2004) suggests:

It seems to me that it is far more insulting to suggest anyone would ever have behaved like Europeans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—e.g., depopulating large portions of the Andes or central Mexico by working millions to death in the mines, or kidnapping a significant chunk of the population of Africa to work to death on sugar plantations—unless one has some actual evidence to suggest they were so genocidal inclined. In fact, there appear to have been plenty of examples of people in a position to wreak similar havoc on a world scale--say, the Ming dynasty in the fifteenth century—but who didn't, not so much because they scrupled to--so much as because it would never have occurred to them to act this way to begin with. (p. 49)

Yet, if Graeber (2004) is correct, perhaps it's best not to see *homo oeconomicus* as a moral advancement from what came before, but as “a strange perversion of normal commercial logic which happened to take hold in one, previously rather barbarous, corner of the world and encouraged the inhabitants to engage in what might otherwise have been unspeakable forms of behavior” (p. 50). Illich (1992) states something similar when he argues that traditional societies were structured precisely to repress scarcity, structured to repress the emergence of a *homo oeconomicus*, when he writes:

All known traditional cultures can be conceived as meaningful configurations that have as their principal purpose the repression of those conditions under which scarcity could become dominant in social relations. Such cultures enforce rules of behavior that obviate the appearance of scarcity, and therefore undercut envy and the fear of it. (p. 117)

Homo Oeconomicus as Homo Educandus

What we find then in this new self-image that resulted from the enclosure of the commons, is one that is in a state of diremption. Un-tethered from traditional forms of associations, this new conception of the self is hurled forward towards the realization of *needs* in a society defined in terms of scarcity. But how is one to go about realizing these needs? How can one have the knowledge and proper information requisite for doing so? It is here that we find a connection between *homo oeconomicus* and what Illich calls *homo educandus*. In other words, “*homo educandus* is necessarily *homo oeconomicus*” (Prakash & Esteva, 2008, p.17). As Prakash and Esteva (2008) point out: “*Homo educandus* represents the historical emergence of a new kind of human being: who *needs* education in order to learn and live well” (p. 17). In a society defined in terms of scarce resources used to produce and create scarce needs, education becomes one of the ritual processes necessary for joining in the competition for access to them. To realize the good life, one must become educated. To become a thriving and competitive *homo oeconomicus*, one must also become *homo educandus*. Illich (1992) summarizes this connection as such:

. . . *homo educandus* and of the societal context within which his learning constitutes a process of personal enrichment with values that are assumed to be scarce. The organization of society in view of a human being in need of information and programming must be understood as a neglected aspect in the history of *homo oeconomicus*. (p.113)

But there is nothing natural about this process, neither in the emergence of *homo economicus* nor *homo educandus*. Just as Marcel Mauss (and Marshall Sahlins) showed that cultures that engaged in bartering were not pre-capitalist, but gift economies in that they refused to calculate, Illich shows that education and its attendant concepts are distinctively linked to a very specific social formation that emerged in the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe. They are both “a modern social construction” (Illich, 1992, p. 116). As Illich (1977) notes:

[T]he word “education” is of recent coinage. It was unknown before the Reformation. The education of children is first mentioned in French in a document of 1498. This was the year when Erasmus settled in Oxford, when Savonarola was burned at the stake in Florence, and when Durer etched the *Apocalypse*, which speaks to us powerfully about the sense of doom hanging over the end of the Middle Ages. In the English language the word “education” first appeared in 1530--the year Henry VIII divorced Catherine of Aragon and when the Lutheran Church separated from Rome at the Diet of Augsburg. (p. 75)

Education then is distinctively linked to the emergence of a society defined in terms of scarcity. Wedded to a notion of the self (*homo-oeconomicus*) that is place-less, homeless, and as such, a-historical, education is the crucial modern institution charged with preparing people for the acquisitive society. In doing so, however, it encourages and fosters *diremption*; it ruptures the delicate balance requisite for sustaining the relational self and for meaningful communities of practice. In short, schools play a starring role in undermining communities of practice responsible for integrating the self. It loosens the

bonds of triangulation, the foundation of community, and in its stead turns integrated persons into beings who are fragmented from the world; precisely what Dewey was so concerned about in his philosophy of education. This process, of course, begins early on in our educative careers. Consider the following exchange between two students and anthropologist Jan Nesor (1997) that took place in a 6th grade classroom in Thurber elementary school in Roanoke Virginia:

Jan: Let me ask you though, Lucy, do you think you all learn stuff about immigrants or slaves from writing about them?

Lucy: No!

Neal: The only reason we write about stuff like that is just for samples. For the next grade.

Jan: Samples?

Lucy: I know. For the teachers.

Jan: Is that what she [their teacher] said?

Neal: Yeah. Well, they're mostly for samples, but there are a couple of them that are for grades. But all the others we just write for samples. So basically we're almost writing for nothing! But then everybody else can see how we used to write. So really we're writing kind of for a purpose; it serves a purpose.

Jan: Is that what [your teacher] told you?

Lucy: Yeah...[Picking up her portfolio] This is gonna go to sixth grade, all this stuff right here. (pp. 66-67)

As Nesor (1997) points out, this exchange is an example of what Marx called *commodity fetishism*, whereby a relation between human beings (Lucy, Neal, and their teacher) is turned into a relation between things, and between subjects that stand against objects (p. 67). The work of Neal and Lucy gained meaning only to the extent that it had an exchange value. They produced the portfolios that were products that were exchanged for grades (Nesor, 1997, p. 67). Anything outside of this reified social relation had no significance, simply because it had no utility. Those activities that emerged from the cultural, community, and home life of the students were relegated to the periphery or excluded altogether from school (Nesor, 1997, p. 68). Nor should this surprise us. As Berry (1990) suggests:

According to the new norm, the child's destiny is not to succeed the parents, but to outmode them; succession has given way to supersession. And this norm is institutionalized not in great communal stories, but in the education system. The schools are no longer oriented to a cultural inheritance that it is their duty to pass on unimpaired, but to the career, which is to say the future of the child. . . . The child is not educated to return home and be of use to the place and community; he or she is educated to leave home and earn money in a provisional future that has nothing to do with the place or community. (pp. 162-163)

In Berry's account, schooling attempts to educate children out of their *historicity*. In a society that turns its commons and culture into a resource, its children also become a resource for the production of more resources. Illich (1970) describes this process in the following terms:

Now young people are prealienated by schools that isolate them while they pretend to be both producers and consumers of their own knowledge, which is conceived of as a commodity put on markets in school. (pp. 46-47)

The world they will be educated into will be a world where value and meaning are determined by the market, and where they themselves, as *homo oeconomicus*, will be valued only to the extent that they have utility. And they will have utility only to the extent that they are participants in the production of scarce resources. Those not sufficiently educated will not be able to compete, and those not educated at all will be deemed under-developed and their unique cultural spaces seen as potential resources to be exploited. Anything that falls outside of this commodified world has no significance. What counts as knowledge in this world is simply that which adds to the capacity to produce resources. This criterion for knowledge, what Lyotard termed *performativity*, marginalizes both local and craft knowledge and the social practices they inform. A plurality of cultural vistas, spaces, and horizons are compressed into a monoculture, a monoculture whose temporal and spatial recognition is equivalent to the half-life of the commodities (needs) that are produced. Debord (1967) summarizes this fact as such:

Capitalist production has unified space, which is no longer bounded by external societies. This unification is at the same time an extensive and intensive process of *banalization*. The accumulation of commodities produced in mass for the abstract space of the market, which had to break down all regional and legal barriers and all the corporative restrictions of the Middle Ages that preserved the *quality* of craft production, also had to destroy the autonomy and quality of

places. This power of homogenization is the heavy artillery which brought down the Chinese walls. (p. 165)

At the conceptual level, the link that Illich draws is that between the enclosure of the commons and the emergence of education as a social practice constructed to prepare people for a life of reification, a life where the natural world, others, and ones own self-image is thought of as a resource. The triangulated process of self, another self, and a shared world that Dewey and Davidson argued was at the root of the relational self, is transformed into a contentious, antagonistic relationship between reified objects, not fellow human beings in communion with one another.

Modernity and the Practice of Education

If Illich, Shubert, Berry, and others are correct, then it seems as if Dewey's optimism about the possibility of reconstructing schools based upon his idea of the relational self, was misplaced. However, merely saying that we should, therefore, *de-school* or *unschool* perhaps misses the subtext of what Illich is ultimately pointing to. It certainly could be argued that Dewey's philosophy of education is flexible enough to admit the possibility that de-schooling might be a necessary position to hold if the relational self is to be realized. But Illich's point, it seems to me, is a Weberian point. That is, the whole idea of education is caught in the very trajectory and shape that modernization has taken since the 17th century. His point is a *structural* one, and educational institutions are one of the bedrock structures responsible for the destruction

of the commons; and hence, creating the conditions for the emergence of the diremptive self.

Perhaps, as Prakash suggests, we should distinguish between education and common sense, something that was lost or not conceived of as having any significance once the commons became enclosed. As such, education is tethered to precisely the processes of modernization that has created the conditions for diremption. If this is correct, then the distinction that is often made between schooling and education is perhaps a distinction without a difference. However, if we are still going to talk about education, as Dewey does, then we will have to do so on different ground, a new ground that doesn't take formal schooling as the standard for what education looks like, and thinks about education outside of the context of the modernization process. What will be argued in the last chapter is that Dewey and Davidson's philosophy of education as cultural criticism can only be realized if love is placed at the center. Not the romantic love of Abelard and Heloise, but the love that is understood as a kind of reconciliation and recognition: the kind of love that is at the root of the relational self. If we think of a diremptive culture, as we have, as a home-less, place-less culture, we should also think of it as a love-less one. Education without love, on this account, undermines communities of practice that sustain and incorporate people into a meaningful life. Education that places love at the center, on the other hand, will privilege a kind of learning that does not objectify and reify fellow human beings and the natural world.

CHAPTER 5

OVERCOMING DIREMPTION: EDUCATION AS LOVE

Karamazov, we love you!” a voice, probably Kartashov's, cried impulsively. “We love you, we love you!” they all caught it up. There were tears in the eyes of many of them. “Hurrah for Karamazov!” Kolya shouted ecstatically. “And may the dead boy's memory live for ever!” Alyosha added again with feeling. “For ever!” the boys chimed in again. “Karamazov,” cried Kolya, “can it be true what's taught us in religion, that we shall all rise again from the dead and shall live and see each other again, all, Ilusha too?” “Certainly we shall all rise again, certainly we shall see each other and shall tell each other with joy and gladness all that has happened!” Alyosha answered, half laughing, half enthusiastic. “Ah, how splendid it will be!” broke from Kolya. “Well, now we will finish talking and go to his funeral dinner. Don't be put out at our eating pancakes—it's a very old custom and there's something nice in that!” laughed Alyosha. “Well, let us go! And now we go hand in hand.” “And always so, all our lives hand in hand! Hurrah for Karamazov!” Kolya cried once more rapturously, and once more the boys took up his exclamation: “Hurrah for Karamazov!” (Dostoevsky, 1879, pp. 701-702)

Wisdom and Knowledge

In 1750, the University of Dijon held an essay contest that raised the question of whether or not the Modernization process had improved the overall moral health of Europe. Rousseau (1750), who wrote the first prize-winning essay known today as the “Discourse of the Sciences and the Arts,” concluded that it had not. The core of his argument is contained in the following extended excerpt:

If our sciences are vain in the objects they set for themselves, they are even more dangerous in the effects they produce. Born in idleness, they nourish it in their turn. And the irreparable loss of time is the first damage they necessarily inflict on society. In politics, as in morality, it is a great evil not to do good. And we

could perhaps look on every useless citizen as a pernicious man. So answer me, illustrious philosophers, those of you thanks to whom we know in what proportions bodies attract each other in a vacuum, what are, in the planetary orbits, the ratios of the areas gone through in equal times, what curves have conjugate points, points of inflection and cusps, how man sees everything in God, how the soul and the body work together without communication, just as two clocks do, what stars could be inhabited, which insects reproduce in an extraordinary way, answer me, I say, you from whom we have received so much sublime knowledge, if you had never taught us anything about these things, would we have been less numerous, less well governed, less formidable, less thriving, or more perverse? So go back over the importance of what you have produced, and if the work of our most enlightened scholars and of our best citizens brings us so little of any use, tell us what we should think of that crowd of obscure writers and idle men of letters who are uselessly eating up the substance of the state. Did I say idle? Would to God they really were! Our morality would be healthier and society more peaceful. But these vain and futile declaimers move around in all directions armed with their fatal paradoxes, undermining the foundations of faith, and annihilating virtue. They smile with disdain at those old words fatherland and religion and dedicate their talents and their philosophy to the destruction and degradation of everything which is sacred among men. (Rousseau, 1987, pp.12-13)

To believe that the modernization process is an unqualified good is to mistake the increase in scientific and technological knowledge with wisdom. For Rousseau, Modernity had replaced the questioning of the good (wisdom) with the technological imperative generated by new science. While the consensus of Rousseau's time was that enlightenment progress, under the auspices of the new scientist, was an obvious good, science itself couldn't tell whether or not what it was doing was good. The new science can, as Rousseau in a rather petulant manner puts it, tell us things like "in what proportions bodies attract each other in a vacuum" or "what are, in the planetary orbits, the ratios of the areas gone through in equal times," but it cannot tell us what is worth striving for and what the good life entails. In fact, to the extent that Modernization had taken such powerful root, Rousseau concludes, it had undermined our capacity to ask such vital questions in the first place. As such, enlightenment (Modernization) has undermined our capacity to flourish. It has made us more perverse than we otherwise would have been and has left a civilization no longer in good fettle.

Depersonalization as a Way of Life

While the questioning of the Modernization process was first raised in the middle of the 18th century, this question is more relevant, it could be argued, to those of us born in the 20th century. The perversities of the late 19th and 20th centuries have been unequalled in the annals of the past. Czech politician Thomas Masaryk, for instance, described the Europe he saw at the end of the First World War as "a laboratory atop a vast graveyard" (As cited in Mazower, 1998, pp. ix-x). One could equally point, amongst

a vast universe of examples, to the Armenian genocide, King Leopold's reign of terror in the Congo, the persistence of Jim Crow in the United States, along with the disastrous effects of globalization on the ecological balance of the planet, if one wanted to draw up a fuller list.

But this dissertation will focus in on just one example of this perversity: the German concentration camp. Richard Rubenstein (1975) argues that the logical embodiment and most disturbing expression of this process of Modernization can be found in the German concentration camp. It is here where we find the employment and application of the tools of Modernity put to their most pernicious end. The diremption between self and the natural world that turned nature into a resource pointed to by Illich, becomes in the concentration camp applied to fellow human beings. Human beings are turned into things. Human beings are literally turned into commodities. Nor should this very possibility surprise us or be seen as an aberration. As Rubenstein (1975) observes, "The new form of human order created by the Germans, the society of total domination, was not entirely novel. It was the end product of a long process of political and cultural development" (p. 36). Indeed, this new order of total domination of people over people was anticipated in the slavocracies of North and South America (Rubenstein, 1975, p. 36). However, Rubenstein continues, what these former societies lacked that the Germans perfected, was their inability "to eliminate all human involvement between ruler and ruled" (Rubenstein, 1975, p. 36). The Germans erected a society based on the "complete depersonalization of human relationships" (Rubenstein, 1975, p. 36). Only because there was complete and total diremption between self and other were the Germans able to

realize the murderous goals of their concentration camp system. Amery (1980) was an inmate at Auschwitz who was tortured by the SS, puts it this way:

. . . no matter how terrible Communism may at times appear, it still symbolizes an idea of man, whereas Hitler-Fascism was not an idea at all, but depravity. Finally, it is undeniable that Communism could de-Stalinize itself. . . . But who is really able to imagine a de-Hitlerized National Socialism. . . . No one can imagine it. For National Socialism—which, to be sure, could not claim a single idea, but did possess a whole arsenal of confused, crackbrained notions—was the only political system of this century that up to this point had not only practiced the rule of the antiman, as had other Red and White terror regimes also, but expressly established it as a principle. It hated the word “humanity” like the pious man hates sin . . . (p. 31)

The society of the “antiman” is a society of complete diremption. It’s a society that is loveless, where persons are turned into things, reified to the point where it can be justified to exterminate them. Not surprisingly, when I watched hour after hour of German propaganda films in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, that the one consistent theme was the portrayal of Jews as rats. Of course, not all diremptive societies end up practicing mass murder. Rather, it’s a continuum. What form diremption takes depends a great deal on the traditions and the kind of countervailing forces that carved out within the society; whether or not there are communities of practice that bring back together self and world. Yet, what the concentration camp illustrates is a kind of latent feature, still with us, that is at the core of Modernity: the tendency to depersonalize and reify relations between

human beings and human beings and the natural world. It is this feature that allows corporations like Monsanto to develop self-destructive killer seeds that they know will displace and undermine communities far away from their boardrooms, all in the name of maximizing shareholder value. It is this feature that allowed IBM to sell their punch card system to the Nazi regime so the Nazis would be able to efficiently run their concentration camp system, all in the name of maximizing shareholder value. Weber (1946) describes this tendency in Modernity as follows:

The more complicated and specialized modern culture becomes, the more its external supporting apparatus demands the personally detached and strictly 'objective' *expert*, in lieu of the master of older social structures, who was moved by personal sympathy and favor, by grace and gratitude. (p. 216)

The technical superiority of Modernity is a product of the capacity to de-personalize relations between people (Weber, 1946, p. 214). In the name of efficiency, we must, according to this *ethos*, objectify the world and ourselves. To this extent, the non-relational self of the champions of objectivity is embodied in the 20th century bureaucrat: the place-less, home-less, administrator of rules.

Challenging Education

The previous chapters have tried to argue that at the center of this Modernization process is this latent tendency to depersonalize and reify our relations with others and the natural world. At the conceptual level, this can be seen in what we have termed the champions of objectivity, expressed in the home-less, place-less *cogito* of Descartes. At

the level of practice, this was witnessed in the destruction of community: the loss of history and place. It is this diremption or fragmentation of the world, so it's been argued, that motivates Dewey and Davidson's philosophies of education as cultural criticism. And their philosophies of education can only be realized if and only if the diremptive self of Modernity can be overcome. In addition, Chapter 4 argued that in practice the diremptive self of the champions of objectivity is best understood in Illichian terms such as *homo oeconomicus*. But as Illich suggests, tethered to the notion of *homo oeconomicus* is *homo educandus*. The society redefined in terms of scarcity and its attendant *needs* can only come to fruition if there are institutions that properly program people with the requisite skills for this societal competition. Educational practices, in the context of Modernity, are just those clusters of institutions developed to service people for a life of struggle for scarce resources.

Illich's ideas challenge us and put forth a challenge to Dewey's philosophy of education, in that they question whether Dewey's admirable and necessary goal of overcoming diremption can be actualized through formal schooling. Dewey, it should be emphasized again, was quite adamant that formal schooling in advanced societies (i.e., developed) was one of the necessary conditions for the transmission of the requisite skills that would enable the young to thrive. In the opening pages of *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916) writes the following:

Without formal education, it is not possible to transmit all the resources and achievements of a complex society. It also opens a way to a kind of experience which would not be accessible to the young, if they were left to pick up their

training in informal associations with others, since books and the symbols of knowledge are mastered (p. 8).

But if Illich's challenge to Dewey only turned on the viability of formal education as the pathway to a notion of what an educated person entails, then we would be left with a common, albeit an important, distinction between education and schooling (formal education). One, certainly, that Dewey was aware of. Yet, Illich challenges us to think more deeply still. He challenges us, through his historical reconstructions, to consider the possibility that education itself, so connected as it is to the modernization process, might *not* be the source of redemption, reconciliation, and the overcoming of fragmentation that Dewey thought it must be. Prakash (2011) nicely states this possibility in the following way:

Is there a difference between having common sense and "being educated"? What are these differences that distinguish having "common sense" from "being educated"? Does our "educational system" cultivate "common sense"? How? Alternatively, does our system sharpen our intellects while simultaneously eroding "common sense"? (pp. 44-45).

In many ways, the questions raised by Prakash are the questions raised by Rousseau in the excerpts from his first Discourse that opens this chapter. In other words, have our educational institutions educated us out of our ability to thrive in communion with others and the natural world? Can one be educated without becoming parasitic on the natural world and others? Does being educated mean giving up on practices that are shared and cared for in common (thus, common sense) with others in a way that doesn't

objectify and reify? Does being educated potentially threaten to turn us into moral monsters? Prakash, like Illich, will argue that education is so interwoven with the kinds of practices that motivate and are a catalyst for a kind of development and progress that undermine the commons and common sense, that *if* the goal is to overcome diremption, then educational practices will not be the medium through which this goal will be realized. Prakash (2011) writes:

Commons sense cannot be cultivated in classrooms that are walled off by professional experts, hell bent on protecting their expertise from the communities they are supposed to be serving. Nor can common sense be understood or cultivated in the absence of communities that have learned to regenerate and strengthen themselves--despite all the enclosures of the commons and the violence imposed upon commoners' native good sense by the military industrial complex. (p. 47)

If Prakash is correct, which I think she is, then at the very least, we must rethink what education *is* and what it *can be*, something Dewey certainly attempted to do in his own time. But it's something that must be reconsidered again in our own unique context. In her own journey, Prakash (2011) notes that as she has moved further "off the educational highways," the more she has become convinced that the "global institutions of education" actually make us less wise, less capable of living in a non-diremptive manner (pp. 46-47). Since education undermines the commons and underwrites the acquisitive society, what needs to be cultivated is not education but common sense.

Can we imagine a future that we have only visited in our imagination where education no longer is attached to schooling? Can we imagine a future where education no longer underwrites the acquisitive society? Can we imagine a future where learning takes place in a non-reified manner? Or, as Prakash and Illich argue, is education so intertwined with the extant conditions of society and their diremptive social practices that its usefulness (if it ever was useful) has perhaps come to end? The rest of this chapter will take up this challenge.

Love and Education

The capital of the United States is Washington, DC. It could also be argued that, since 1945, it has been the capital of the acquisitive societies. But one thing you won't find much of in the corridors of power is the expression of emotion. Nor will you find much expression or statements that link the power they hold to love, beyond the platitude of "loving my country." What one finds are the stolid faces of the systems managers, who, in their institutional role, are the place-less, home-less, embodiment of diremption.

Schubert (2009) points out that something similar can be said about the world of academia (p. 217). "Why," he asks, "is love so neglected in academic work . . . even in their pronouncements on education" (Schubert, 2009, p. 217)? Why don't educational theorists take account of this fundamental aspect of the human condition (Schubert, 2009, p. 217)? This section and the next will take up Schubert's invitation to explore the relationship between education and love. After sketching just what we mean by love in this context, we will go on to argue that only when love is placed at the center of learning

and education, can we realize Dewey and Davidson's understanding of education as cultural criticism. This is the case because "love repels acquisitive mindsets, and enables progress towards a non-acquisitive society of world-wide social justice" (Schubert, 2009, p. 217). And this, it should be said, can be realized in practice only outside of formal education (schooling), simply because the schools are "affixed to the corporate state" (Schubert, 2009, p. 21). In other words, they are at the very core of how the corporate state legitimates its practices. The last section of this chapter will take a look at examples of what education looks like once love is placed at the center. These examples allow us to see in practice what a society might look like that has overcome diremption. It allows us to see what learning looks like when human beings and the natural world are no longer looked upon as resources.

What is Love?

Perhaps, the most popular understanding of what love entails is the sentimentality associated with romantic love. Martin Luther King, however, gives us a different sense of love when he writes:

When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response, I am speaking of that force which all the great religions have seen as the ultimate unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality Let us hope that this spirit will become the order of the day. (As cited in Schubert, 2009, p. 218)

Love is what unifies people and brings them together. In addition, love is that force that overcomes what separates one person from another, even those we have disagreements with or those who are thought to be our enemies. King continues:

We have before us the glorious opportunity to inject a new dimension of love into the veins of our civilization. There is still a voice crying out in terms that echo across generations, saying, “love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.” . . . This love might well be the salvation of our civilization. (As cited in Schubert, 2009, p. 218)

Love might well be the salvation of our civilization because, if our civilization infused this sense of love into its social practices, then it would be able to overcome diremption.

But let’s take a closer look at what happens when we emerge from a condition of diremption to a condition of love. Friedrich Hegel’s early essay on love can help us do so. According to Hegel (1948), in the state of diremption, an individual exists and understands itself in a state of opposition to an objective world or “dead matter” that is distinct from itself (p. 304). Still, however, ones own identity is itself caught up in there being an objective world in opposition (Hegel, 1948, p. 304). “Thus his thought of self must transcend his own consciousness, for there is no determinant without something determined, and vice-versa” (Hegel, 1948, p. 304). Nothing, if you will, stands alone. Everything gains its identity through the other. “Nowhere is any independent existence to be found except in an alien being . . .” (Hegel, 1948, p. 304). But in the state of diremption, Hegel continues, there is an imbalance in power between one side of the

relation and the other. When this happens, one part of the relation is objectified and turned into dead matter. Hence, any exploitative relationship is one not based in love.

True love, on the other hand, can only occur “between living beings who are alike in power and thus in one another’s eyes living beings from every point of view; in no respect is either dead for the other” (Hegel, 1948, p. 304). Hegel (1948) concludes, therefore, that in love:

Life is present as a duplicate of itself and as a single and unified self. Here life has run through the circle of development from an immature to a completely mature unity: when the unity was immature, there stood over against it the world and the possibility of a cleavage between itself and the world. . . . finally, love completely destroys objectivity and thereby annuls and transcends reflection, deprives man’s opposite of its foreign character. . . . In love the separate does still remain, but as something united and no longer as something separate. (p. 305)

Life, for Hegel, was always a unity, always in relation, even at the stage of immaturity (diremption), when it was not in love. Love is realized when the self no longer sees the world as an alien other than it turns into an object. No longer, in the state of love, is the other person or nature seen as a threat or a competitor who could possibly weaken me by acquiring what I have that they want or what it has that I want. Rather, the world is seen in reciprocal terms. “The lover who takes is not thereby made richer than the others; he is enriched indeed, but only so much as the other is” (Hegel, 1948, p. 307). In this sense, the relationship between a young child and her mother or caretaker is paradigmatic of a love relation, not the relation between self and world that one finds in

the self-image of Modernity that is scrubbed of all contextual features in its attempts to gain proper theoretical distance. Noe (2009) nicely describes it this way:

As I have suggested, the child has no theoretical distance from her closest caretaker. The child does not wonder whether Mommy is animate. Mommy's living consciousness is simply present, for the child, like her warmth or the air: it is, in part, what animates their relationship. . . . Like the baby in relation to her mother, we are involved with each other. It is our joint cohabitation that secures our living consciousness for each other. We live and work together. (p. 33)

In addition, the more I look into myself, the more I find the other and the world. And conversely, the more I see the world the more I see myself. Relations based on love, for Hegel, are never detached or impersonal ones. Nor can they be commodified, since to commodify the world or another person, is to turn oneself into a thing. Similarly, to turn another person or the natural world into a resource is to turn oneself into a resource. As such, in relationships based on love there is no attempt to control or dominate the other.

Hegel's conception of love, then, puts Dewey and Davidson's relational self, argued for in Chapter 2, in a new light. The relational self is a self-image whose foundation is in love. If the self is to gain its identity as a person, it must understand its personhood to be emergent from other persons and the world. This spawns a *gratitude, appreciation, and responsibility* one has for oneself (self-love) and for the other, be it in another person or the natural world. The gratitude and appreciation for our interconnectedness, then, is expressed in a relation based on love. And in as much as it is a relation based in love, it seeks no control over the other. Without love, there is

diremption. Of course, even a self in a state of diremption is still *related* to the world, but it's related in such a way that the world is seen as standing in opposition to it. And to the extent that it is, the diremptive self seeks to remove those barriers. But in the process of attempting to dominate and remove what is seen to be in opposition, the self loses itself and becomes alienated from itself. "Life without meaning, hope, and love breeds a coldhearted, mean-spirited outlook that destroys both the individual and others" (West, 2001, pp.14-15). Only when the self comes to realize that the perceived separation and opposition between self and world is illusory, will it be able to overcome this alienation.

At the core of Dewey and Davidson's philosophy of education is the relational self, and the foundation of the relational self is in love, so this dissertation has argued. From this new frame of reference, we can think anew about what it means to say, as Dewey and Davidson do, that education is *cultural criticism*. In popular parlance, to criticize is a negative activity. It is one that seeks to tear or put down the other from a seat of greater authority or expertise or from the perceived lack of authority or expertise. Yet, if education is an irreducibly normative enterprise that asks questions about the good, the true, and the beautiful, questions about where we want to go from where we currently are, then education as cultural criticism will necessarily be contextual, collaborative, and participatory. The good life can't be realized alone. On this account, where I want to go, given the relational self's foundation in love, necessarily entails participating with others in communion, in a world that is shaped and nurtured without reification and without the depersonalization characteristic of the way of living of *homo oeconomicus*. Only

educational practices rooted in love then are educational practices that overcome diremption.

Taking our Poetry from the Future

Not long after the economic collapse in 2008, I was watching a report on PBS about the moral vacuum that supposedly invaded, like a virus, the individuals who make up the large financial institutions on Wall Street and which led to the Great Recession. After thinking to myself how fatuous it was to frame once again the great issues of the day completely in terms of the failure of a few moral miscreants, I turned my attention to the last part of this report where they were interviewing an economist from Harvard. A reporter asked the economist what he thought about the malfeasance of these powerful institutions. After answering this question, he went on to bemoan the fact that such a large percentage of Harvard undergraduates each year decided to take jobs on Wall Street rather than jobs in more upstanding professions. I was waiting for the reporter to ask the obvious follow-up question that was never asked: What exactly is going on at Harvard and other elite institutions that ends up turning out undergraduates who seek employment in these professions in the first place?

Perhaps, part of the answer is that higher education, especially at elite institutions, trains undergraduates in the ways of the stolid systems manager, the home-less and love-less utility maximizer that is *homo oeconomicus*. Chris Hedges agrees. For Hedges (2009), the elite institutions of higher education don't foster "the very qualities and intellectual inquiries that sustain an open society," but instead foster and underwrite the

diremptive and acquisitive society (p. 106). But in order to do so, the right kind of character building must be privileged. John Ralston Saul describes this character building with more specificity, when he writes that elite institutions of higher education actively look for:

. . . students who suffer from the appropriate imbalance and then sets out to exaggerate it. Imagination, creativity, moral balance, knowledge, common sense, a social view—all these things wither. Competitiveness, having an ever-ready answer, a talent for manipulating situations—all these things are encouraged to grow. As a result amorality also grows; as does extreme aggressivity when they are questioned by outsiders; as does a confusion between the nature of good versus having a ready answer to all questions. Above all, what is encouraged is the growth of an undisciplined form of self-interest, in which winning is what counts. (As quoted in Hedges, 2009, p. 106)

This “undisciplined form of self-interest” elicits the talent to depersonalize oneself from the world and others. It is the result of confusing technical knowledge with wisdom, education with training, thinking hard about what the good life entails in communion with others with the echo chamber of self-righteousness. Sealed away into this de-contextualized vacuum, a creeping amorality becomes the *modus operandi*, one that is rewarded by the larger culture that expects the same from its other winners of this societal competition for scarce resources. It is this morality that leads the rapacious appetites of financial wizards to find business opportunities in ecological and cultural devastation, even if it means destroying the fabric of life lived by people for thousands of

years, and even if it means leaving for future generations a less healthy, more toxic ecology. Ultimately, Hedges concludes, a culture or society that permits and celebrates this type of diremptive stance will eventually be its undoing. In his words:

For Socrates, all virtues were forms of knowledge. To train someone to manage an account for Goldman Sachs is to educate him or her in a skill. To train them to debate stoic, existential, theological, and humanist ways of grappling with reality is to educate them in values and morals. A culture that does not grasp the vital interplay between morality and power, which mistakes management techniques for wisdom, which fails to understand that the measure of a civilization is its compassion, not its speed or ability to consume, condemns itself to death (Hedges, 2009, p. 103).

Yet, if Hedges is correct that the world that is presently being shaped and sustained is being done so in such a destructive manner, what realistic hope do we have that something different can prevail? What hope do we have that new vistas can be born that develop educational practices that are rooted in love and which permits the relational self to be at home in the world? Isn't this idealistic thinking at its worst? Are these fanciful dreams of the quiescent that might be worth considering if the momentum of the present circumstances weren't so seemingly set in stone?

Perhaps the fictional world found in the novel by the Portuguese writer Jose Saramajo (2004) entitled "Seeing" will compel us to step back momentarily from these lachrymose sentiments, and be inspired to believe that there may be cause for optimism. The story begins on Election Day in a city that is the capital of an unnamed country.

Torrential rains filled the streets of the city during the morning of the election, and thus kept voters from initially going out to cast their ballots. But when the afternoon arrives the sun comes out, and to the satisfaction of Election Day officials, voters begin to turn out in vast numbers. Yet, when the votes are counted 70% of the ballots are blank.

Concerned about the implications and legitimacy of the election, the government decides to hold a second election. After the votes of the second election are counted, 83% of the ballots are found to be blank. Fearing the loss of legitimacy, the government begins to take draconian measures against the population of the city in order to punish them for their actions during the election. The people of the city, however, don't rebel. There is no armed insurrection or any other known use of violence against the government. Rather, life carries on as before. The government, frustrated with their efforts to get the population to bestow legitimacy on them, evacuate the city and decide to move the capital elsewhere in the hope that the population will realize how helpless they are without them. But nothing of the sort materializes. The people of the city were fine without them.

Saramajo seems to suggest that the citizens of the city began to realize that they no longer lived in a meaningful democracy where they were participants in shaping what the future would look like, and that by casting blank ballots they were sending the message that the institutions of the state no longer had legitimacy in their eyes. In addition, and perhaps more importantly for our purposes, the withdrawal of the government described by Saramajo very much mirrors what has been happening on the ground in many parts of the world. In these situations, like in the novel, peoples have

been able to carry on and organize themselves in non-alienating and non-diremptive ways in what have been called temporary autonomous zones or TAZ for short (Graeber, 2007, p. 172). The idea behind TAZ, Graeber (2007) writes, is that:

while there may no longer be any place on earth entirely uncolonized by State and Capital, power is not completely monolithic: there are always temporary cracks and fissures, ephemeral spaces in which self-organized communities can and do continually emerge ...if nothing else, they provide constant testimony to the fact that alternatives are still conceivable, that human possibilities are never fixed.

(p.172)

Graeber has researched and lived in rural Imerina, Madagascar in communities that have been able to carve out a TAZ. While he concedes that the communities of Imerina are *not* totally outside of the clutches of the State/Capital nexus, what they have done, he argues, is a “remarkable accomplishment” (Graeber, 2007, p. 173). Given the coercive apparatus of state power expressed in the institutions of rule like schools and churches, how were they able to do it? Graeber (2007) contends that they were able to carve out a non-commodified zone because of the “active maintenance of traditions of self-governance,” that we might add, would be labeled as a form of direct democracy by Westerners, whereby decisions are made by consensus (p.173).

Points of light like the Malagasy should encourage a Gramscian optimism of the will that seeks a world that is no longer objectified, commodified, and depersonalized. A world where learning and education are part of a vast web of social practices built on a foundation of love, will be a world where people live in communion with one another as

relational selves. Hedges (2009) expresses the necessity to build to a future lived in common with others outside of the reifying structures of the market, when he writes that:

Hope exists. It will always exist. It will. It will not come through structures or institutions, nor will it come through nation-states, but it will prevail, even if we as distinct individuals and civilizations vanish. The power of love is greater than the power of death. It cannot be controlled. It is about sacrifice for the other—rather than exploitation. It is about honoring the sacred. And power elites have for a millennia tried and failed to crush the force of love. Blind and dumb, indifferent to the siren calls of celebrity, unable to bow before illusions, defying the lust for power, love constantly rises up to remind a wayward society of what is real and what is illusion. (p. 193)

Hedges' sentiments are echoed similarly by Prakash (2011), who challenges us to take up this optimism and recognize that throughout the world, expressed in a multitude of ways, that “what we are doing today is learning and teaching for commonism; celebrating our realization that it is not as individual atoms but as enjoyers of membership in our diverse commons—local or even cyber—we come to cultivate conviviality” (p. 56). This chapter will close by taking up this flag of hope and optimism by looking at one expression of how Dewey and Davidson's understanding of education as cultural criticism is being actualized in practice, outside of formal schooling, and in direct opposition to the diremption of the wider culture. This will allow us to see what education and learning can potentially look like that is based in love.

Critical Mass

Four years ago when I participated in my first Critical Mass ride in New York City I had little idea, beyond a few generalities, what the history, goals, potential, and cultural significance of this movement was. What is it? That's hard to say as we will shortly see. But what does happen is that, during the last Friday of every month, throughout most of the major metropolitan cities in the United States and elsewhere in the industrialized world, bicyclists meet and proceed to bike through the city. Of course, Critical Mass rides inconvenience and often frustrates motorists who are used to and assume that roads are just for cars.

Critical Mass rides began “from the collaborative efforts of cyclists in the San Francisco Bay area who were involved with the San Francisco bicycle coalition, social movement activism, and the largely underground bike messenger culture that flourished throughout the 1980's and early 1990's (Furness, 2010, p. 79). As such, the movement emerged in order to challenge the presuppositions of the automobile society. Furness (2010) describes the philosophical impulse of Critical Mass in the following way: “Critical Mass is a cultural practice that, for better or worse, sparks a necessary dialogue about car culture and reframes the politics of public space around and through the bicycle” (p. 79). Critical Mass can be thought of, Furness (2010) continues, as “a direct action, anarchic event in that riders are unsanctioned by city officials and riders are motivated by self-determination, self-rule, and non-hierarchical organization” (p. 80). This decentralized, non-hierarchical form of social practice often leads to funny exchanges

between the police and those whom the police want to arrest. Consider the following report by a participant who was part of a Critical Mass ride in Sydney, Australia:

The cop says, 'Who organized this? Who's in charge here?' The guy they're hassling says, 'I don't know.' He asks the guy next to him in a bike helmet, 'Who's in charge?' The guy in the helmet doesn't know either. Picture a police paddy wagon parked across three lanes, surrounded by 100 people on bikes, all shouting 'Who's in charge? Who's in charge?' (Furness, 2010, p. 81).

There is no hierarchy in Critical Mass. The participants shape the rides through ongoing dialogue and collaboration with one another. There isn't a force outside the community of riders charged with telling them what route to take or telling them what rules will be followed. Genuine democratic participation needs no coercion. To state what the necessary and sufficient conditions of what Critical Mass is then is difficult precisely because of its decentralized character (Furness, 2010, p. 82). Some call it a bike ride, others a revolutionary act, and still others, a form of street theatre (Furness, 2010, p. 82). Whatever it is, it is part of a larger attempt to fight back against the commodification of space and place (Furness, 2010, p. 83). In this regard, Critical Mass should be seen as a form of cultural criticism (education). The rides themselves simultaneously bring attention to the "prescribed function" (utility) of space under the regime of capital, but also, through the spectacle of the ride itself, open up new vistas of possibilities for thinking about how spatial arrangements might in-form a different way human beings situate themselves in society (Furness, 2010, p. 83).

By drawing attention to the reified and homogenized employment of space under capitalism, Critical Mass seeks to demonstrate what non-reified, non-alienating space and place looks like in practice. Still further, Critical Mass illuminates how certain employments of space engender diremption between self and world and self and other. Joshua Switzky notes how the automobile society is part of a larger trend of being isolated and fragmented from one another:

In the age of private content-controlled, enclosed malls and sidewalk-less, single-use, subdivision pods, the only public space we know in common is that which we transverse by car. But in our cars we are usually alone, even if together on a “crowded” road. (As cited in Furness, 2010, p. 87)

Similarly, Illich (1992) notes that, “streets are no longer for people” (p. 51). What was once a commons shared by the people of the community have been turned into resources for vehicular traffic. Describing the situation in Mexico City, Illich (1992) writes about what could be equally applied to any of the major (and less major ones too) cities in the United States:

In the new sections of Mexico City, streets are no longer for people. They are now roadways for automobiles, for buses, for taxis, cars, and trucks. People are barely tolerated on the streets unless they are on their way to a bus stop. . . .The road has been degraded from a commons to a simple resource for the circulation of vehicles. People can circulate no more on their own. (p. 51)

Unlike the “alienation of automobility,” bicycling slows the world down such that “interpersonal communication” through physical proximity becomes more likely

(Burness, 2010, p. 88). To be in communion with others while you're driving in an automobile seems fatuous in contrast. Rather, the driver "experiences the city "not unlike a "tourist" (Burness, 2010, p. 88). The city becomes something abstract and distanced from the driver, a radical other that the driver has no intimate relation to except for the ongoing competition for asphalt she has with other drivers. As the city becomes seen as simply an abstraction through the privatized space of the driver, this leads to a process that "objectifies" and "depersonalizes" the world, such that other cars and other people become reified (Furness, 2010, p. 88). In this sense, the self-image cultivated by the automobile society is the diremptive self-image known as *homo oeconomicus*. From this vantage point, the world is not seen as a common world of people participating in communion with one another. Rather, the commons is seen as a series of privatized capsules in competition with one another.

Critical Mass as a form of cultural criticism (education) attempts to embody a world that is no longer disaggregated, that is no longer in a state of diremption. By breaking down the perceived barriers between self and other, subject and object, self and world that is a product of the car culture, it fosters a relational self-image. But that's not all. In doing so, it makes explicit the relationship between education (cultural criticism), the relational self, and the unity of life that holds together the shared world that people participate together in what Hegel called love.

CONCLUSION

At the center of what motivates this dissertation has been the claim that many of the perversities witnessed in the contemporary world can be traced back to their cause in a conception of the self that emerges at the onset of Modernity. Embodied in practice, this conception of the self has led to the radical rupture between self and other and self and world. Throughout this dissertation, this rupturing has been expressed in three primary ways that are all related to one another: reification, depersonalization, and commodification. On the one hand, the process of reification leads to a way of comporting oneself to the world such that other persons and the world at large (including the natural world) are seen as *objects*, or as Illich puts it, as resources to be exploited. These resources, moreover, are defined in terms of their scarcity. As such, scarce resources must be exploited efficiently. To the extent that society is defined in terms of resources to be administered efficiently according to prescribed rules, this leads to relationships between human beings that become completely *depersonalized* and a world that slowly becomes *homogenized*. Stripped of its anchor in the distinctiveness of history and place from which it emerges, the self becomes home-less, without place. In this context, a kind of solipsistic chamber of mirrors guides the self through the world. In addition, a world defined in terms of resources, is not only one that reifies and depersonalizes, but also one that turns people and the natural world into *commodities*, such that what is valued about the world and other human beings is simply that which can be commodified.

Taken together, these three expressions constitute what this dissertation has called *diremption*. At this point, perhaps we can recast these instances of detachment, rootlessness, and solipsistic amorality by placing them into a larger context. We can do so by seeing them as an expression of what this dissertation will call *experiential nihilism*. West (2001) describes what this *experiential nihilism* comes to in the following way:

Nihilism is to be understood here not as a philosophical doctrine that there are no rational grounds or legitimate standards or authority; it is, far more, the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and (most importantly) lovelessness. The frightening result is a numbing detachment from others and a self-destructive disposition towards the world. (p. 14)

What once kept the threat of nihilism at bay, West continues, were social practices that integrated people into places that allowed them to be meaningful participants in shaping the goals and ideals their communities aspired to realize. These “cultural structures of meaning and feeling that sustained communities and which gave meaning and purpose to agency and selfhood, however, have seen their slow dissolution and eradication” (West, 2010, p. 15). These communities which were so crucial for creating a platform out of which emerges the meaning and extension of one’s selfhood and agency, has become torn asunder due to the ascendancy of “private interests and market moralities” (West, 2010, pp. 16-17). The resulting condition, as we learned from Wendell Berry, is the loss of place. Consumers, in short, have replaced people. Resources have replaced nature.

It is in light of this nihilistic threat or diremption, that this dissertation argued John Dewey's philosophy of education should be understood. While Dewey doesn't speak about nihilism in his major works on education, it is clear that Dewey believes that a reconstruction of educational practices turns on whether or not a new conception of the self can be conceived such that it overcomes diremption. In so much as Dewey develops a notion of the relational self that would address this problem, we found new vistas opened up for framing these issues through the work of Donald Davidson. While not formally a philosopher of education, his work provided an additional way of conceiving and imagining what a non-diremptive relationship to the world might look like.

Yet, we wondered if perhaps Dewey's philosophy of education had a blind spot. We wondered if his work was sensitive enough to the very factors that led to the diremption he was seeking to address in the first place. Weren't schools precisely the place where the forces of nihilism and diremption were being carried forth and codified? If so, why did Dewey still imagine that schools could spearhead the reconstruction of society that would overcome diremption? We concluded, contra Dewey, that the function of the school is primarily about the reproduction of extant structures and practices. But we didn't stop there. Taking our cue from Ivan Illich's claim that *homo oeconomicus* is also *homo educandus*, we asked whether or not education itself could be uncoiled from the diremptive forces of Modernity. While this dissertation took a stance that an education based in love could indeed transform our notion of education such that it could overcome the reifying, depersonalising, and commodifying forces of the present, it still

remains open to the positions found in the work of Illich, Prakash, and others who are more dubious about this possibility.

In the remainder of the conclusion, I would like briefly to take a look at an essay by Theodore Adorno (1967) entitled “Education after Auschwitz.” In doing so, this will afford me the opportunity to illuminate certain aspects of this dissertation I feel need to be emphasized further. I should mention at the outset that I was asked part way through the process of writing this dissertation why I was writing about the topic of diremption and I didn’t feel that I had an adequate answer at that time. However, after reading Adorno’s essay, which I read about two-thirds of the way through the writing of this dissertation, my original motivation became much clearer to me.

As one of the founding members of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, Adorno is best known for his work with Horkheimer (1994) entitled “Dialectic of Enlightenment”, one of the first and most important expositions of what is known to a wider audience as critical theory. After reading his essay on education, however, I was somewhat stunned to realize how much of what I had written overlaps with his ideas. While Adorno’s orientation is rooted in a different *lingua franca*, his positions being generated from a stew of Freudian psychoanalysis, Marxist theory, and Nietzschean cultural critique, his conclusions settle at a place close to mine, as we shall see.

The first line of this essay claims that the fundamental “demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again” (Adorno, 1967, p. 191). In fact, Adorno continues, “every debate about the ideals of education is trivial and inconsequential compared to this single idea” (Adorno, 1967, p. 191). Of course, on one level, Adorno

means literally that whatever form education takes, it must ultimately prevent a relapse into the barbarism of the German concentration camp. However, another way of reading what Adorno means by claiming that the “demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again,” is to say that we must rethink education beyond diremption, beyond Modernity. “Education after Auschwitz,” on this reading, could equally be entitled “Education after Modernity,” since it is some of the most disturbing aspects of Modernity that coalesce in Auschwitz and other extermination camps.

This rethinking must be done, despite “the fact that the fundamental structures...are the same today as twenty-five years ago” (Adorno, 1967, p. 192). The persistence of these structures of Modernity leads, as has been discussed throughout this dissertation, to the detachment of self from world and self from other. This detachment as embodied by *homo oeconomicus*, Adorno notes, leads to an “educational ideal of hardness” that is the result of the redefinition of society as a competition for scarce resources. This ideal of hardness, whereby people get used to and comfortable (and perhaps indifferent) with one’s own pains or struggles in the midst a society defined in terms of “scarcity,” eventually “earns him the right to be hard with others” (Adorno, 1967, p. 198). In a society that elevates advertising slogans like “no pain, no gain” or “pain is just weakness leaving the body” to elemental truths, is a society, Adorno cautions, that will express itself in a coldness to the world and others. The result will be the reifying, depersonalising, and commodifying self of the champions of objectivity. If people were not educated into this coldness, “then Auschwitz would not have been possible” because “people would not have accepted it” (Adorno, 1967, p. 201).

Ultimately, Auschwitz is made possible because the world lacks love. Adorno (1967) puts it this way:

Every person today, without exception, feels too little loved, because every person cannot love enough. The inability to identify with others was unquestionably the most important psychological condition for the fact that something like Auschwitz could have occurred in the midst of more or less civilized and innocent people. (p. 201)

No amount of BAs and PhDs kept Germany from descending into barbarism. Orr (1992) similarly notes that Elie Wiesel has argued, “The designers and perpetrators of Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and Dachau, the heirs and kin of Kant and Goethe, also possessed quite substantial academic credentials” (p. 149).

The social order that *homo oeconomicus* is educated into is a social order without love. People are educated into a “coldness” requisite for the fierce competition for resources. “The coldness of the societal monad, the isolated competitor, was the precondition, as indifference to the fate of others, for the fact that only very few people reacted” (Adorno, 1967, p. 201). Nor, Adorno (1967) argues, should we expect formal institutions of education to remedy this situation, since these institutional designs are always mediated and love is always immediate (p. 202). For Adorno, like what has been argued for in Chapter 5, education not rooted in love can only produce and re-produce a society of “coldness” and “hardness:” a society in diremption.

In the midst of communities of practice rooted in love, Adorno (1967) concludes, “the only education that makes sense at all is an education towards critical self-

reflection” (p. 193). Only when people know where they are can they figure out where they want to go. But the diremptive self of Modernity makes this difficult. It does so, as was argued in the first chapter, because it produces a kind of consciousness “blinded to all historical past” and “all insight into one’s own conditionedness” (Adorno, 1967, p. 200). In short, Modernity’s diremptive self leaves one home-less, without history or place. Not surprisingly, the result is the splintering off of the self from world or what Adorno (1967) calls a “reified consciousness” (p. 199).

At the very end of this essay, Adorno describes an exchange he had with the literary theorist Walter Benjamin. He writes, “Walter Benjamin asked me once in Paris during his emigration, when I was still returning to Germany sporadically, whether there were really enough torturers back there to carry out the orders of the Nazis. There were enough” (Adorno, 1967, pp. 203-204). It strikes me that there are still enough. The forces of diremption are still with us. The reification, depersonalisation, and commodification, which culminated in the Nazi concentration camp, are the same forces that, during the era of development, have undermined ways of living that have subsisted long before Modernity. They are the same forces that continue to destroy the delicate ecology on which all life systems depend. They are the same forces that have continued to colonize the cultural field in which meaning-making takes place, and as such, have pushed to the margins communities of practice that integrate the self and world into a unity. In its stead, they have left vistas of homogenization littered with *isolated competitors* who see the other as a potential threat to the satisfaction of their individual desires.

It is the social forces of reification, depersonalisation, and commodification, collectively named in this dissertation as diremption (which culminated in the concentration camp system) that spawned my interest in thinking about how Dewey's philosophy of education might play a role in their eventual dismantling. Furthermore, by thinking about Dewey and Davidson's philosophy of education in light of these unique features of Modernity, I wanted to explore whether or not they were sufficient for overcoming them. And if not, why not? And if not, what would education have to look like after Modernity, after diremption?

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