SLAYING THE ROUGH BEAST: AN IRONIST ONTOLOGY OF
EDUCATION

by

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Abstract

This thesis is written within the field of philosophy of education, with a particular interest in poststructuralist and postmodern philosophy, largely from the Rortyan ironist perspective. This perspective holds a consciously ironic comportment to the use of final vocabulary and thus seeks to challenge, destabilise and deconstruct this finality. Such philosophy also incurs an engagement with postmodern ontologies, thus asks the question of 'what is education?' through a number of bifurcating perspectives.

Generally, this thesis explores education's ontology through an interrogation of the language, specifically the vocabulary or metaphor, that pervades educational discourse. A range of seminal texts in the field of educational literature are thus explored through the ironist perspective to consider how they contribute to education at an ontological level – notably Plato's *Republic,* Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Rousseau's *Émile*. Ironic techniques such as Derridean deconstruction and fictional redescription are employed to inquire about the nature of the vocabulary at play in these texts, and the vocabulary explored is broken down into three key metaphors that are further deconstructed – *darkness and light, the shepherd and the flock* and *Nature.* Engagement with these metaphors is shown to have a large bearing on the way education is understood in dominant ontologies, or 'ontotheologies'.

Furthermore, in the course of this thesis it is uncovered that all philosophical exploration of any kind is only a matter of *redescription,* and as such holds no privileged place in broader educational discourse. Secondly, as this thesis recognises itself as such, it must admit that it too is open to further redescription. Consequently, this thesis practises an under-utilised technique in

academia through an intentionally fictional narrative and vocabulary being intertwined with the archetypically philosophical investigation. It is in this element that the eponymous 'rough beast' is explored, as it stands as a potentially horrifying yet illuminating way of understanding the ontology of education. The Yeatsean allusion to the rough beast implies this being is massive, spreading, horrifying, and yet worshipped as humanity's redemption; the metaphors deconstructed also contribute to the shape of this rough beast.

The conclusions of this thesis are thus important and generally under-recognised in educational research. I contend that such an ontological question is not only neglected by most of the educational field, but perhaps overlooked due to the unsettling, even terrifying, possibilities of what this being might be. A second important conclusion of this thesis is the way in which it claims education cannot be grasped in its wholeness and presence as many educationalists claim to do. In part, the destabilising of education as a being of presence shakes the bedrock of educational study in general; the conclusions drawn in such studies are destabilised in themselves. Thirdly, the being that I present education to be, even if it is one that lacks firm presence, challenges the dominant educational narrative that it is a force for good or societal betterment. Finally, due to the ironic comportment held towards education more broadly, this thesis recognises concerns in the educational structure of a thesis itself, thus the thesis genre is challenged throughout in terms of structure, style and method.

for Sarah

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Contents

I. The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

William Butler Yeats, 1920 [2000]

This thesis is not about Yeats nor the context of his poem. Nor is it really about poetry, although

poetry will certainly play a role. Rather, it is about Education, written from the perspective of a

literature teacher with no small hint of irony. What you will begin to see as this thesis progresses

is that the vocabulary Yeats used in his infamous verse is useful for *talking* about Education. In

particular, his depiction of a particular sort of monster, the rough beast, is valuable for talking

about Education in a way that you may not have done before.

Yeats' poem begins with an image of chaos. The whirl of the 'gyre', the repetition of 'turning',

the deafness of 'the falcon', and the blunt statement 'things fall apart' implicate the

disequilibrium that the world is in. Indeed, 'the gyre is *widening*... The resulting image is thus a metaphor of decentering, of loss of control' (Deane, 1995, p.637). A common reading of Yeats would highlight such chaos as a loss of faith, but we can transpose this image onto multiple aspects of the contemporary landscape: perhaps the loss of control of meaning or identity, or the destabilising of the economy or of traditional culture. For my reading, the embodiment of chaos that Yeats intended is less important than chaos more *broadly*, and as with any conventional narrative structure, something must come to restore order and balance (Todorov and Weinstein, 1969, p.75). In this thesis, that restoration will take the form of Education.[1]

Yeats indeed goes on to recognise this inherent drive for restoration or revelation, with the persona's declaration of 'Surely some revelation is at hand; /Surely the Second Coming is at hand'. The chaos of the first stanza is to be remedied in the second by the Second Coming of Christ. But will this Second Coming be what we expected? Is it 'coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him' (Revelations 1:7)? Or is it something more sinister? This signifies other important aspects of the narrative too: those who need saving are inherently *faithful* in their salvation, and the repetition of the adverb 'surely' indicates that they *believe* this restoration of chaos is owed to them. It also places them in a position of servitude towards the greater being of the narrative – to God. However, Yeats subverts the expectations of both the reader and the persona in the poem. The sardonic reference to the Spiritus Mundi proposes that the Second Coming is to appear from our shared minds, not from above. He hence poses the question: what form does this Second Coming take? From my perspective in this thesis, I will develop the claim

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[1] The capitalisation of Education is deliberate; it will become clear why this has been done over the course of the thesis.

that it has come in the form of Education.[2] After all, it is an institution of supposed betterment, often given redemptive, salvific or revelatory qualities (Stock, 2019; Peim and Stock, 2021).

Another subversive element arises in the poem through the form the Second Coming takes. Its birthplace – 'the sands of the desert' – make it seem as if it has come from desolation or 'the periphery' (Deane, 1995, p.639). The Second Coming has not been born from progress or visions of a better future, but rather some desolate desire; therefore, Yeats depicts it as a monstrous abomination. The hybrid of animal and man, coupled with its blank gaze, establishes an image of horror, some sort of *ontological mistake.* It is a powerful picture of a rough beast[3], something 'slow' and casting of 'shadows'. Certainly, this is not what the persona had hoped would rescue them from chaos. The horror intensifies as 'Twenty centuries of stony sleep' seems to imply something ancient, even Lovecraftian, about this beast. Finally, as it 'slouches towards Bethlehem to be born', it is given the chilling name of the 'rough beast'. We are left with the lingering thought that it is advancing towards us to be born again – to multiply and spread. Indeed, this tale invokes Derrida's concept of Plato's *pharmakon,* where something 'acts as both remedy and poison' (Derrida, 1981, p.70). Yeats' rough beast is both adored and repulsive, both a saviour and a destroyer.

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[2] As will be seen in the following chapter, this structure of the return of the redemptive is not exclusive to Yeats' poem, though it is embodied by it neatly. Baudrillard (2014) in particular posits a similar argument in different terms that will be explored; Rorty (1989) too makes similar claims.

[3] Much of this thesis will be exploring, often subtly, what *is* a beast? The word monster is often used synonymously with beast, and indeed bestial or monstrous properties are explored: massive size, ancientness, ravenous appetite (often for flesh), organics, growth, agency, dominance, terror, and so forth. Though what should be immediately noted is that the signifiers beast or monster do not always pertain to something stereotypically bestial or monstrous. You will see how gods, angels, ghosts, men and objects may all be found in the chain of signification following beasts and monsters.

The thesis you are about to read is a redescription, or a reontologisation, of Education that draws from the vocabulary of *The Second Coming*. Yeats' image of a belief in divine redemption manifesting in the human mind as no more than a *rough beast* is, says this author, the same as the story of Education. By invoking the mode of ironism, an approach that uses 'old words in new senses' so to 'no longer ask questions phrased in the old words' (Rorty, 19189, p.78) – here the words of Yeats – this thesis considers that Education may not only be a force of benevolence, progress, or philanthropy. It is the Second Coming in its most monstrous form – worshipped, huge, even organic, yet out of our control. This thesis will therefore present Education to you through this vocabulary so you can look at it in a way beyond the dominant modes of thought, and thus perhaps allow you to reconsider what Education is. You will see that an ironist ontology can be achieved through a very close reading of texts that exist as part of educational discourse, texts that I contend are pivotal in the very structure and formation of Education (though this implies a form of discourse analysis, this thesis moves beyond that method), notably Plato's *Republic,* Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Rousseau's *Émile.* Rorty and Heidegger provide the criteria used for selecting these texts of interest to the ironist, notably the Plato-Kant canon (Rorty, 1989), an ontohistory (Heidegger, 2010a), and fiction as philosophy (Rorty, 1989) influence the texts being chosen. I also employ a fictional redescription throughout the thesis, a vignette that will be found in the footnotes of various chapters, so to ensure the thesis remains ironist in form. This approach will be elucidated in the next four chapters.

II. Irony and Beasts

II.i. Nothing is as it Appears

Education is full of irony. Informing students they have failed in the name of results, narrowing a curriculum in the name of progress, firing teachers in the name of standards; such things drip with irony. Even more caustic examples about the irony of Education have been uttered before:

> Today, in academic theories of education, the school system has the appearance of a humble church built out of stones intended for a great cathedral. It is mocked by the scale of its unrealised potential, by the grandeur of the edifice it might have been, if only its builders had not lost faith and gone into moral and political bankruptcy. (Hunter, 1994, p.1)

> An endlessly repetitive ideology critique replays the insight that "real" education out there in the actual institutions that populate our actual and social landscape may fall lamentably short of "true" education while insisting that reform can liberate. Actual education may persistently promote inequalities... and may foreclose the cultural experiences of significant segments of the population— all in the name of equity, enlightenment and progress. (Peim, 2013a, p.174)

> Forever reaching beyond itself, education promises what it cannot deliver whilst delivering what it would never openly promise. (Allen, 2018a, p.47)

Education is a weak, localised body made large, a set of humble stones, built into the grandeur of a cathedral. Education holds the ideology of division and hierarchy, yet claims to seek equity, progress and enlightenment. Education cannot deliver what it claims. It is an ironic thing,

Education.[4] Irony is not merely a humorous effect, however. It is an artistic term, a way of engaging with the world in terms of its appearance and what stands "behind" (Rorty, 1989; Shugart, 1999; Long, 2014).

It is not so that irony understands what things "really" are, but that it understands that things are not what they *claim* to be: *nothing is at it appears*. Irony is the notion that "things" could never mean what "they" say, the notion that "things" do not mean at all and that "things" itself is without meaning, and the notion that without this meaning we cannot have meaning. When things are not as they appear, it means we have uncovered them in a sort of new way than before, thus have found how they might appear. To use Hunter's example of the unrealised church above, we can perhaps see why questioning objects in an ironic way is of utility. It is only through Hunter's challenge that Education, the great cathedral, is not *actually* a cathedral at all, that we may start to investigate what it might be. Yet many take the cathedral for what it is, unfinished, a work-in-progress. But if we viewed it with a shred of irony, is a cathedral a *cathedral*? Indeed, if we take this rhetoric and return to Education, the same can surely be posited, which is of course what Peim and Allen do. Injecting irony into *thinking* about Education is to ask:

Is Education what we think it is?

I believe irony truly lies in the disparity between the commonly *believed* impression of Education and what it might *actually* be. Most of us are so sure; 'It is as though we all already always knew what education is, essentially, as a necessary "good", and knew too what its now dominant

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[4] Ironically, you will not be made to understand why this thesis is ironic, or indeed why it is an ontology in this introduction. Those things will come later, as there is much understanding of irony needed before we get there. All we must remember at the moment is that Education is an ironic thing, and I will explore this thing of irony in a variety of ironic ways.

instrument, the school, is' (Peim, 2013a, p.172). It is simple for most people, in that they believe Education is transformative and it will help us all improve, progress, democratise, equalise and enlighten. Maybe it is not quite there yet, and we need to work on it a little more, but the time will come when Education will be the tool to achieve a Second Coming.

Inherently, Education appears to us as something that is fundamentally good, even though it has often been supposedly perverted. Common discourse surrounding schools seems to believe they are one of, if not the most essential structure of our society. Those who criticise the school often try and demonstrate its unrealised potential, holding onto the latent transformative power it possesses. This belief in Education as something inherently good is exemplified most in the distinctions made between Education and schooling (Illich, 1971; Freire, 2017). Such distinctions make the claim that a perverted form of Education, something like the school, the curriculum or examinations, can be radicalised or replaced by something more true or 'authentic' (Freire, 2017, p.28). Consequently, we may be able to unlock the redemptive potentiality of Education through more refinement (Stock, 2021, p.153). To repeat what Peim says, 'it is as though we all already always knew what education is' (2013a, p.172). We shall see in this thesis, however, that Education's history, aims and language are predominantly *contrary* to the vision of Education that so many hold. We are a species dominated by the bestial nature of Education, pedagogised in every conceivable way, schooled from birth to death. Many believe it is to be the mode of redemption (Stock, 2019, p.405). But the irony is, of course, that it may be none of those things.[5]

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[5] It is important to recognise here that, from one angle, this thesis takes an anti-education stance. Though our most celebrated radical thinkers like Illich and Freire are anti-*school*, they remain pro-Education. This is a controversial, even heretical approach, but of course this is the idea. However, as this is primarily an *ontology* of Education, the

II.ii. Irony and the Postmodern Tradition

II.ii.i   Irony

This thesis is not about postmodernism but about irony, though what is undeniable is the

influential nature of ironic thought on postmodern philosophy (Rorty, 1989; Shugart, 1999; Long,

2014). Broadly, the essentiality of irony in postmodern discourse is due to its power, as Blanchot

says, as 'an admirable defence against the peculiarities of discourse and against the investigation

of a too simple rationality' (in Long, 2014, p.82), and thus consequently 'in its postmodern

incarnation, irony functions either deconstructively or constructively' (Shugart, 1999, p.435). The

two terms seem almost interchangeable, in fact: 'Postmodern irony, like postmodernism,

furthermore is characterized by multiplicity, instability, inconsistency, and paradox' (p.435).

Therefore, to help understand why irony is both of utility as an approach to "things" and how it

fits within the broader postmodern tradition I will explore both elements side by side.

Irony in its linguistic form denotes that signified meaning is contrary to its signifier's intended

meaning, whether intentionally or unintentionally.[6] 'Contrasting a meant and a said meaning in a

single articulation, this trope presents two contrasting signifieds in one signifier' (Schuster, 2011,

p.360). Irony in this base form, more precisely classified as 'paradigmatic irony' (p.360),

evidences how conflict arises in meanings within the same paradigm. We saw this in the

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heretical stance is inherent in the object. But it is also ironic, as I am a teacher and this is a thesis – both ostensibly educational things. I will address these concerns in the thesis.

[6] We could see this as an irony, as according to Saussure, all significations are purely arbitrary (2013, pp.65-70). There is no innate nature to the sign.

Education examples stated earlier (Peim, 2013a); we read the signifier "progress" as moving forward, when it may be invoked as a way of stepping backwards.[7]

The ancient Greek *eirōneía*, a theatrical device in which the audience are aware of meanings that the characters on stage are not, extends irony.[8] Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* depicts the patricidal and incestuous King Oedipus' search for the murderer of his father. All the while, the audience are conscious of Oedipus' crimes, and the irony in the fact he searches for himself. Once he discovers the truth, and thus confronts himself, he blinds himself. This introduces a second paradigm of irony beyond the dramatic narrative of the play: Oedipus' blindness occurs because he has *seen* the truth of things, the truth that *nothing is at it appears*. The intended signification of blindness and consequently ignorance, therefore, is subverted into the signification of sight, knowing and truth. Yet, the truth he learns is that of his own blindness. *Eirōneía* has now more acutely manifested itself in the "theatre of the public", where we witness glaringly obvious meanings from institutions of governance, unseen (supposedly) by those who create them. We can *see* that Education continues to perpetuate class division and racial segregation, and yet the language of improvement and equity reproduces and recycles. We feel like a Greek audience, watching Oedipus kill his father and have sex with his mother, unable to intervene, still entertained by the show.

Paradigmatic irony and *eirōneía* allows us to look past the narrow-mindedness of, say, politicians by enabling us to step back and look at the theatre in which they stage their ideas (and thus

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[7] I have examined this in greater depth elsewhere (Stock, 2017), demonstrating how curriculum "reforms" are intended to push "progress", but often invoke an archaic form of Education from the past.

[8] This can also be referred to as biparadigmatic irony, where irony steps outside of the linguistic paradigm and into a meta-paradigm.

inherently of Education's policy makers). The absurdity of parliamentary or "formal debate", for example, is exposed by us watching, laughing, and seeing the inevitable doom that their discussion hurtles towards. All the while, we are unable to intervene, and even feel as if we have given them the power to do such a thing. In parallel, we should consider the theatrical stage on which I am standing here, the performance of academia. What is the stage in which Education must be performed to witness irony unfolding? An obvious example would be the teacher in the classroom – a situation that mirrors that of a stage through the inherent need for a sort of performance. Indeed, Illich argues that school-like situations such as this require a 'classical irony (*eirōneía*) to expose the [myths of schooling]' (1971, p.114), an endeavour pursued in this thesis. There are other "stages" that can be treated with this classical irony, as educational "performance" also takes the form of marked work. For this piece at least, it is through the mode of the *thesis*. Questions about the concept of a thesis will be further interrogated in Chapter V thus instigating *eirōneía* towards the academic stage, and the role that I play in this performance will be ironically explored in Chapter III. However, for now, we can see how an ironic disposition in our viewing of educational performance allows us to inquire about the very structures through which educational ideas are communicated.

We must admit that, despite the utility gained from irony, there is also a weakness. Blanchot provides a neat summary:

> The powerful marvel of irony: an admirable defence against the peculiarities of discourse and against the investigation of a too simple rationality. But a power that is, however, vulnerable, because it cannot show something truer than itself, more lastingly real than all its infinitely diverse resources. (in Long, 2014, p.82)

Blanchot's words on irony are parallel with the force and weakness of postmodernism. It calls into question modes of thought but collapses in on itself when it gazes internally. In essence, irony is "truer" than that which it mocks, but that leaves a space for irony concerning this ironic truism; a circular and implosive system. To solidify irony would be to de-ironise the irony. There are many points of convergence therefore between these two areas of irony and postmodernism, and for the purpose of this thesis, we must find an *intersection* between them as Blanchot has done here; how has one spawned the other, and which traces remain of each? Through an understanding of the postmodern and ironic intersection, we should reach a clearing in thought where irony becomes a most useful device for this thesis.[9]

II.ii.ii. *Irony in the Postmodern Condition*

From Blanchot's interpretation, it seems there is something inherently postmodern about irony, but what is postmodernism? In a standard account, it can be treated as a theory of culture. In supposed conflict with its predecessor modernism, postmodern art embraced a clash 'between high culture and so-called mass or commercial culture, and the emergence of new kinds of texts infused with the forms, categories and contents of that very Culture Industry so passionately denounced by all the ideologues of the modern' (Jameson, 1989, p.54). The culture clash, coupled with a rejection of forms and categories, are broadly visible forms of postmodernism.[10] However, Jameson elucidates postmodernism as more than a theory of culture, and rather an epoch – "postmodernity" – defined by 'multiplicity, instability, inconsistency, and paradox'

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[9] Though of course, this utility is only called for because this is a thesis. Irony need not be made use of at all – it can be for fancy, caprice, humour and so forth.

[10] This artistic conflict is occasionally embraced in this thesis with occasional references to commercial culture such as film in contrast with more "classical" texts from the "canon".

(Shugart, 1999, p.435). These terms are important and stand to reason why postmodernism is so difficult to fully define: it lacks stability, both in its outlook of the world and its inward approach to itself. In the age of postmodernity, the present becomes merely a 'pastiche' (Jameson, 1989; Baudrillard, 2014) of the past, that is, an endless recycling of that which has come before socially, artistically, culturally, politically, and so forth. This era is thus a '*desert of the real*' (Baudrillard, 2014, p.1), a wasteland where we merely interact with a commodified, culturized or simulated version of anything ostensibly real. It is not, as the caricature of postmodernism often states, where nothing *is* real or has any meaning. Rather, it is that all institutions that we consider to be stable structures become problematised by their potentially fictional layers of meaning, Education of course being one of these institutions.[11]

Postmodern philosophy, thus, attempts to navigate this wasteland and interrogate said reality through both employing and challenging 'multiplicity, instability, inconsistency, and paradox' (Shugart, 1999, p.435); it would be facile to attempt to be more precise than this, as even the most notable thinkers of this school of thought conflict in their approach. That said, the thinkers of most relevance to this thesis will be explained in this chapter and developed in Chapter IV. For now, we should look to the attempt by Lyotard to define postmodernism more broadly as the "postmodern condition" and the ways that irony pervades his definition. The postmodern

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[11] Baudrillard provides the example of Disneyland (2014, pp.12-14) as a form of paradox. It is an obviously fictional environment in the sense it is populated by actors in costumes and is built out of plastic castles based on popular cartoons. However, the instability of this reality is generated by the fact that, firstly, this situation is real when you are in it, despite the fantasy construction around it, and secondly, that it 'exists to hide that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America that is Disneyland' (p.12). Disneyland is not a postmodern example because it is "fake", but rather because it is real. Its ticketed entry and costumed characters disguise the fact that America has become that very place through which Disneyland characterises. The very notion of America thus becomes a wasteland; it is a space where the real is no longer real. And thus consequently, American becomes an ironic concept in itself.

condition embraces all that is postmodern, including the age of postmodernity and the field of postmodernism. For Lyotard, it

> designates the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature and the arts. The present study will place these transformations in the context of the crisis of narratives. (1986, xxiii)

The technological, scientific and artistic revolutions of the nineteenth century changed the 'rules' for Lyotard in terms of how we perceive the world. The reference to 'games' implies that disciplines like science or literature are merely assumed structures with rules and moves to be played, thus their findings are reliant on the broader, taken-for-granted structures. Lyotard's mode of thought is a rejection of all that which precedes it; the history of ideas is built on certainty, grand or meta-narratives, which the postmodern rejects: 'All that has been received, if only yesterday… must be suspected' (p.79). A common example is the idea of "progress", explored in relation to Education in more depth in Chapter VIII, where our determination as human beings to improve, expand, grow and better ourselves is shaped by the much larger and unquestioning belief in progress. What postmodernists may question is, is progress progressive, for example? Does it send us backwards, rather than forwards? It is here that irony plays a role for Lyotard, as one should maintain a paradigmatic irony towards all taken-for-granted, *a priori,* assumptions about "things".

Through this perspective it has allowed works of culture and science to exist outside of the realms that precede them, in that they are 'not in principle governed by preestablished rules' (p.81). Lyotard cites the works of Proust and Joyce as strong examples of these postmodern

works, even if they both reside in the modernist movement.[12] Both writers judge the novel form

to be incapable of representing 'consciousness' or 'literature' (p.80) – grand-narratives that are

open to interrogation – and thus they recreate the form in which these ideas can be represented

through structural annihilation. This is paradigmatic irony; Proust, for example, distorts our

common understanding of time through relentless temporal shifts and description of minutiae,

thus positioning himself ironically towards the concept of time within literature. Within these

novels, they invoke *eirōneía* through the meta-textual moves made too, such as self-reference and

literary allegory.[13] They also choose to obliterate form, and inherently create a new form – surely

an ironic turn.

Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* embraces the same ironic questioning in his approach to

our very *reality* as opposed to literature. He sees it as 'a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal'

(2014, p.1), an existence structured by fictions that appears to us in the most real way possible.

However, irony is not only important to Baudrillard in his approach to analysing reality. In a

sense, Baudrillard notes how irony *spawns* postmodernity:

> Through an unforeseen turn of events and via an irony that is no longer that of history, it
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> is from the death of the social that socialism will emerge, as it is from the death of God

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[12] There is much debate about the cultural line drawn between modernist and postmodernist works (Hooti, 2011); this thesis assumes a crossover between these styles of art due to the postmodern irony inherent in both, however, makes a distinction between modernity and postmodernity as an age. Those such as Proust and Joyce, for example, embody the clash of culture and form (Jameson, 1989) inherent in postmodern work, whilst also utilising irony.

[13] Joyce, for example, utilises synaesthesiac prose. The 'thought' in vision, 'snotgreen' and 'bluesilver' (1992, p.45) challenges commonly agreed upon modes of description. At the same time it alludes to *The Odyssey,* here redescribing the meeting with Proteus of the sea – a meta-layer to the narrative.

that religions emerge. A twisted advent, a perverse event, an unintelligible reversion to
the logic of reason. (p.26)

Just as Joyce and Proust's annihilation of form produced form (an ironic twist of fate), so might
the murder of larger beings reproduce themselves.[14] Baudrillard posits that through the death of
God religion will henceforth arise. This seems paradoxical – how can the killing of God create
religion? Surely one is needed for the other, but Baudrillard speaks of the new religion, the new
hall of Gods, that of truths and science, of certainty, of capital. 'God is dead! God remains dead!
And we have killed him!' said Nietzsche (2001, p.120), but in its wake a space is left for religion
in its purest form. Humans continued the act of worship, and thus religion was crystallised; it no
longer needed the preconceptions of religion to adequately *be* religion (gods, clergy, scripture,
places of worship, etc.). God is replaced by belief in new truths that do not need the physical
manifestations of religion. Worship becomes a mode of being without a clear god to worship.

This paradigmatic irony highlights another important intersection between postmodernism and
irony, known in literary terms as the *poioumenon* (Fowler, 1989), in which a text produces itself.
In this thesis, I have chosen to represent the *poioumenon* through the far more ancient and
monstrous idea of the alchemical Ouroboros (fig.1) (Jung, 1970) – the serpent that eats its own
tail. The reason for this alchemic reference rather than a literary one is partly because it is a beast,
but other reasons will be made clearer in Chapter V. For now, let us assume that both the
poioumenon and the Ouroboros can be thought of as an ironic system that will prove useful in our

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[14] The language of beasts and monsters lurks in this ironic structure. Like the Hydra of Lerna who grows back more
heads with each that is decapitated, or the undead creatures of zombies and vampires that perpetually return after
death, or the Ouroboros as the eternal devouring and rebirth of itself (fig.1). Or perhaps, the rough beast as the
Second Coming – the return of Christ after death.

later analysis of Education. Baudrillard's example of the death of God spawning religion utilises the same system.[15] It is an *eternal reproduction* of itself, through the death of itself, just as the serpent eternally becomes itself despite devouring itself. 'A twisted advent, a perverse event, an unintelligible reversion to the logic of reason' (Baudrillard, 2014, p.26) occurs, a postmodern event twisted by irony.

These interpretations of such an ironic event seem to have one thing in common – the slaying of something grand, some epic institution of thought (literature, consciousness, religion, reading). The monstrous serpent is killed in each respect, yet it continues to bite its own tail; it will reproduce itself despite its death. This thesis takes on the same charge: the slaying of a beast. But the beast in question here is one that many do not fear, despite the fact it grows more powerful by the second: Education. Over the course of this thesis, I shall make it clear that Education is not the object that we perceive it to be so to destroy it. Just as Proust annihilated literature, or Baudrillard murdered history, I will use an educational item – the thesis – to kill Education. However, no matter how successful my slaying hereafter, in the mode of the Ouroboros or the Second Coming, it will only reproduce itself, return. What shall be left will be no more than a piece of Education, eternally returning or devouring its own tail. Hopefully, this makes the irony clear in the mere *existence* of this thesis: something that slays Education, with Education, for Education. We can underline this ironic pursuit with Lyotard's battle cry: 'Let us wage war on totality' (1986, p.82). Totality, the greatest beast of all, takes many forms. Education is but one of

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[15] Another example: John Shade's poetry is a set of verse in Nabokov's Pale Fire (2000). We read the poem within the novel, and then read the critical notes of the poem from fictional academic Kinbote. The text is a narrative about the relationship between Shade and Kinbote, however this is only produced through the writing and reading of the text that Nabokov creates, that is, the verse and critical notes. Through reading one text, we create another; it produces itself, a clear mirror to the Baudrillardian annihilation of one institution spawning another copy.

them, and it is the view of this thesis that it presents itself more clearly to us in the form of discourse, shaped by metaphor (Osborn, 1967; Nietzsche 1999; Foucault, 2002), all to be expanded in Chapter IV and V.

To reiterate the strands of this opening chapter then, the writer of this thesis is an ironic one, in that everything will be viewed through the lens of irony and *eirōneía* as part of the postmodern condition. More so, the thesis itself is ironic in its existence, eternally reproducing the concerns that it raises. Further, what this writer is being ironic towards is Education, a great monster of our time. We do not know, however, what Education is, nor do we know how to access it. Both are essential for the attack, however, Chapter III will develop these ideas about irony with Rorty's character of the ironist (1989) so to further understand the approach of this thesis.

III. The Metaphysician and the Ironist

III.i. The Writer

What you have read so far in Chapter I and II help to clarify where this thesis is going: it will be an examination of Education, here described using Yeats' vocabulary as a rough beast, and this will be conducted with some sense of irony. But we must consider an essential aspect of the writing of a thesis: who am I? Academics often superficially explore their role in writing, often stating their position or background as a way of presenting the subjective bias they may bring to their writing, but few really consider the *character* they play when they produce a piece of academic work, or as Deleuze and Guattari say of all writers of philosophy, the 'conceptual persona' (1994, p.62). It would be facile to say "I am Nicholas Stock, English teacher, male, early thirties, white, middle-class" as an attempt to answer this question of who I am.[16] There is, after all, 'nothing outside of the text' (Derrida, 1976, p.158) and as Barthes says, 'the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author' (1977, p.148). What I, Derrida and Barthes mean here is that the interpretation of the reader came to dethrone the intentions of the author in poststructuralist discourse, and thus the author is inherently killed. The "real" Nicholas Stock is therefore dead here, and what you are reading is only a character or persona that has 'a relationship with the epoch or historical milieu in which [it] appears' (Deleuze and Guattari,

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[16] What I conduct here is not simply reflexivity; this is not an attempt to obtain objectivity through laying bare my subjectivity (an ironic attempt by the reflexive writer). The claim here is that *all* writing is conducted from the perspective of an individual persona, thus subjective. The subject in the writing may differ from the individual that writes, however, and I wish to emphasise that artifice here. Perhaps this is a problem: I am being ironic to be more honest than those that claim their objectivity, but cannot get any closer to the objective than those making such claims. Such is the tragedy of the stage.

1994, p.70). That epoch has been explored in Chapter II as postmodernity, although in Chapter V you will see it also called the late-modern, and the persona of this thesis deeply reflects that epoch.

Consequently, "I" 'is always a third person' (p.65). I thus must divulge the way that "I", that is *he*, 'solely think[s]' (ibid, p.69) about the world within this piece of writing. As Derrida notes:

> ...there has never been anything but writing; there have never been anything but supplements, substitutive significations which could only come forth in a chain of differential references, the "real" supervening, and being added only while taking on meaning from a trace and from an invocation of the supplement, etc. (1976, p.159)

These features of writing that Derrida raises will be explored in greater depth in both this and the next chapter, but what we can assume immediately is that Nicholas Stock exists here only as 'writing'; the "real" me that exists outside of the text has been supplemented and substituted by this textual self (perhaps the real me *is* a textual self). The "real" may 'supervene' throughout this thesis; you will of course stumble over things that feel like reality. But overarchingly, every writer, "objective" voice or not, takes on a persona when they write. Indeed, sometimes this persona 'appears with a proper name; Socrates is the principle conceptual persona of Platonism' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p.63), for example. Broadly, this chapter comes to terms with the Socrates of this thesis, the character that I have here embodied known by Rorty (1989) as *the ironist.*[17]

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[17] By taking on a persona in the writing, as the writer of this thesis I am placed into three positions: firstly, in the position of the audience that watches Education on the stage, witnessing its shoddy performance and tragic narrative. But in documenting this witnessing, I have secondly become the character in that documentation. It is no more than another performance, a character on a stage that will become the subject of the audience's eye as soon as you engage

III.ii. The Move from Irony to Ironism

III.ii.i. Rorty's Philosophy of Truth

Thus far, I have described irony and postmodernism to begin revealing the persona I embody.

This persona is one depicted in Rorty's *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989) taken on here

like a role in a play; my persona is the ironist, but the ironist script is already out there, written by

Rorty. Although this thesis is not necessarily Rortyan in its findings, it is embracing of a Rortyan

approach. Rorty synthesises irony, postmodern theory and literature, all areas raised so far in this

thesis, and redescribes them through the concept of 'ironism'. To understand this persona,

however, we must understand Rorty broadly and his views on truth, contingency and language, so

to be able to adequately play the part of the ironist for the remainder of the thesis.

Rorty began as an analytic philosopher, however he problematises many essential analytic and

epistemological concerns in his first major work *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979). In

this text he explores, for example, the non-linguistic nature of pain to propose the non-essentiality

of language concerning perceptions and feelings. Language, in this account, is capable of

describing the world in successful ways, but not essential ones.[18] Rorty thus concluded that

philosophy uncovered '*glassy-mirror-like*' (1979, p.43) essences as opposed to solid truths –

reflective, but fragile and ultimately breakable. This is a partially ironic stance, as it posits that

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with these words. This means that you, as a reader of this thesis, shall turn me from the audience into the actor, subject me to the same *eirōneía* as I have subjected Education and the inevitable trajectory towards doom. By the end of this thesis, it will become clear what doom I have hurtled towards. But thirdly I am also a critic of this performance, as it is only another part of Education. I watch the show alongside you and take notes on what I see.

[18] A portion of the book is devoted to describing the fictional world of the Antipodeans, a race of beings who have prioritised neurological and biological study above other disciplines. Pain for them is related to nerves, therefore they describe pain through the specific nerve fibres that are being stimulated by the causation of pain. Rorty is demonstrating how the change in language surrounding pain does not lessen the sensation of pain. This will pave the way for his ironism about language in subsequent works, as explored in this chapter and the next.

language does not describe the thing that it claims to describe in any sort of essential way, but Rorty's later embracing of Heidegger, Derrida and other continental poststructuralists, ensued more palpable irony in his thinking, as will become clear in this chapter. Rorty's other additions to philosophy, expanded upon in this chapter, are most pivotally that philosophy is essentially no different from (or can function as) literary fiction (a view supported by an array of literature, e.g., Rorty, 1989; Bernstein, 2008; Grigoriev, 2011; Gearon and Williams, 2019, examined in much greater depth in following sections), and that secondly, most 'philosophical theories' are merely 'a form of idolatry' (Bernstein, 2008, p.19). These equally contentious ideas, strongly supported by the works of Heidegger and Derrida, are drawn from heavily in my approach to Education.[19]

The later Rorty yielded an ontology concerning language and truth that is foundational for his conception of ironism. He begins *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* with the statement the 'world does not speak' and 'Only we do' (1989, p.6). Here he is raising a common ironic/postmodern concern surrounding objective truth and its relation to language: language only describes the world, rather than provides any sort of fundamental truth. To rephrase, the 'world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not' (p.5). Human beings have described the world through language, be that through the words of science or theology or literature, but they are just that: words. Much like the instability generated by Lyotard's suspicion of grand-narratives or Baudrillard's questioning of reality, Rorty is interrogating the stability of truths generated by language as they are a human-made description of truths that may or may not exists out there in

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[19] Rorty's contribution to educational thinking is less significant and does little to expound the ironic views he claimed to hold. He saw Education as 'a matter of socialization… and a matter of individuation' (Rosenow, 1998, p.266). This decidedly unironic statement is precisely the kind deconstructed in this thesis, thus Rorty's conclusions are not adhered to here.

the world. For Rorty, 'our purposes would be served best by ceasing to see truth as a deep matter, as a topic of philosophical interest' (p.8), and rather should interrogate the language that gives shape to truth.

III.ii.ii. Contingency

Rorty believes that views of truth are founded in the concept of contingency, as established in his understanding of epistemology:

> ...most philosophers have remained Kantian. Even when they claim to have "gone beyond" epistemology, they have agreed that philosophy is a discipline which takes as its study the "formal" or "structural" aspects of our beliefs, and that by examining these the philosopher serves the cultural function of keeping the other disciplines honest, limiting their claims to what can be properly "grounded" ... (1979, p.162).

Prefacing contingency, Rorty states that what we philosophically know is grounded by formal study and rigorous analysis of concepts; we have remained Kantian[20] and have never entered into the 'war on totality' (Lyotard, 1986, p.82); essentially, we have 'never been postmodern' (Thomson, 2018, p.1322). Rorty calls these sorts of thinkers 'commonsensical' (1989, p.74), those that ensure our view of knowledge remains stable, and therefore encourage us to see our "great successes" as the result of centuries of dialectical dispute and enlightened thinking. These commonsensical thinkers will be elucidated in due course.

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[20] Rorty is contending we remain in pursuit of imperatives and transcendentalisms despite the way in which such ideas were deconstructed in the twentieth century. Most disciplines, for Rorty at least, still pursue epistemological concerns, as opposed to the ontological ones pursued here.

Rorty clarifies contingency by emphasising the nature in which 'time and chance' (1989, p.22) play the larger part in the creation of our sense of truth. He describes the ways in which we now speak of the universe, and further how our vocabulary came to do so:

> …we did not decide on the basis of some telescopic observations, or on the basis of anything else, that the earth was not the center of the universe, that macroscopic behavior could be explained on the basis of microstructural motion, and that prediction and control should be the principal aim of scientific theorizing. Rather, after a hundred years of inconclusive muddle, the Europeans found themselves speaking in a way which took these interlocked theses for granted. Cultural change of this magnitude does not result from applying criteria (or from "arbitrary decision" …). (p.6)

Rorty implies that a truth we adhere to (in this case the vocabulary surrounding the position of earth in the cosmos or scientific principles) is not developed from years of scientific research of philosophising.[21] Rather, over *time*, European scientists *found* themselves using similar vocabulary to discuss the same phenomena, but not through any strict, over-arching structure nor through any matrix of certainty. Eventually, by chance, this vocabulary converged into the same place; overlap became truth. The vocabulary wrote itself through time and chance and could have just as easily been something different.

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[21] Rorty's view of science is perhaps a mischaracterisation; my view, to reiterate that of Rorty's influences Heidegger and Derrida, is that science and metaphysics are fundamentally intertwined. We could see them as using different vocabularies to explore the same things, but from different perspectives. Again, this does not mean that science is "not true", far from it. Rather, it is that it does not hold a privileged vocabulary to describe the world, and neither does philosophy.

Rorty's principle of contingency should thus be considered as a branch of ironic thought, a paradigmatic irony in which "nothing is at is appears". It can of course be applied to all vocabularies, meaning we should be aware of the nature in which educational vocabulary is the product of time and chance also. However, if we are to understand the ways in which such vocabulary haunts Education as merely a contingency, then we are left with Education slipping through our fingers. Its clarity of form and purpose that we felt so secure in before becomes hazy and troubled; we can no longer rely on the vocabulary of Education as any sort of useful truth about the nature of it.

III.ii.iii. Metaphors of Truth

To put this differently, Rorty believes we can 'see the history of language, and thus of the arts, the sciences… as the history of metaphor' (p.16). All the taken-for-granted assumptions, *a priori* truths and common-sense ideas that we share should be seen as constructed by a series of metaphors. As Nietzsche says:

> What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms… truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins. (Nietzsche, 1999, p.146)

Nietzsche and Rorty's depiction of truth as no more than metaphor changes the way that we should look at the very idea of what truth is. It is no longer something 'intrinsic… but turned out to be extrinsic' (Rorty, 1989, p.8). The very language that gives shape to truth *is* the truth that we should be investigating. These metaphors of truth are not static, fixed things like an intrinsic truth, thus Nietzsche personifies them as being 'mobile' and constantly in use (it seems fittingly

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ironic that he must *use* metaphors to present the truth-function of metaphors, crystallised by the image of the well-worn coin becoming a lump of metal). Truth has in fact become so mobile, so well deployed throughout discourse, that we cannot see that truth is only metaphorical. We use metaphors of truth so regularly and without question that we forget what they actually do.

Of course, this truth-function of metaphorical language is the greatest of all ironies. It is the ultimate mode in which nothing is as it appears; we have managed to 'sublimate sensuous metaphors into a schemata' (Nietzsche, 1999, p.146), that is, a structure that appears to us as truth. The implication, then, is that the schemata, or structure of something like Education is visible in understanding the metaphors that form it. Nietzsche, and consequently Rorty, would have us try and uncover these metaphors. What we shall find is of course not *the truth* in some kind of transcendental way (the discussion of Derrida in Chapter III and IV will make this very clear). Rather, we will come closer to the truth of Education in the way that people *talk* about it as an object of truth.

With this Nietzschean aphorism in mind, Rorty describes that this metaphorical truth of language not only exists in the world, but also continually repeats, replaces and redescribes itself.

> …once upon a time we felt a need to worship something which lay beyond the visible world. Beginning in the seventeenth century we tried to substitute a love of truth for a love of God, treating the world described by science as a quasi divinity. Beginning at the end of the eighteenth century we tried to substitute a love of ourselves for a love of scientific truth, a worship of our own deep spiritual or poetic nature, treated as one more quasi divinity. (1989, p.22)

The history Rorty describes here indicates different certainties held in the world, a recurring redivination of words that *seem* to adequately and truthfully represent different ways of being.[22] But they are only metaphors, translated, transposed or embellished for another epoch – but *this* time they are the right one, or as we often call it, "the truth". To Rorty, '*theories* of Truth, Objectivity and Reality [are] little more than a form of idolatry – a philosophical substitute for the religious belief in a transcendent God' (Bernstein, 2008, p.19). Clearly, Rorty was disillusioned with the desire to accurately represent the world through modes of philosophy and science, and treats each major discipline's findings of truth to be only a worship in another form of God. Chapter II explained this same belief in a different way – that the death of God has only spawned a new religion – and it appears that Rorty concurs with this ironic twist of fate.

What this does not mean is that I, Rorty or his predecessors, are uninterested in the claims of truth made by language, but rather seek a *more ironic* approach to our assumptions about truth. We should always be aware that it is constructed of language that is deeply open to interrogation. As aforementioned, the truth of something like Education *is* the language of it, as that is what forms its structure or schemata. That is, in turn, what we should be analysing, rather than some essential version of Education that we believe to be out there. Rorty calls this sort of language that I am interrogating a final vocabulary, which for him is a pivotal aspect of common sense.

To reiterate, I am exploring Education as a being in this thesis, but not to find truths *about* it as such. It is not the pursuit of typical analytic educational philosophy[23]; instead, I aim to interrogate

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[22] Once again, the revenant-like monsters reappear: The Hydra, the Ouroboros, the Second Coming. Of course, like the revenant, they shall continue to return throughout the thesis.

[23] Those such as Hirst and White (1999), for example, generally aim to look at language surrounding Education and through analysing it, discover some kind of conceptual truth about what Education is.

the *claims* of truth made by Education and the discourse that surrounds it, so to probe further into this being. The analysis conducted is also always an ironic one, as it will consistently posit a gap between meaning and intended meaning. I am not unlocking some sort of conceptual truth by doing so, but merely problematising what we think Education could or might be. My conclusions are no closer to the being Education than the pursuits of analytic philosophers, however. It is an alternative redescription.

III.ii.iv. Final Vocabulary and Commonsensicality

> All human beings carry about a set of words which they employ to justify their actions, their beliefs, and their lives. These are the words in which we formulate praise of our friends and contempt for our enemies, our long-term projects, our deepest self-doubts and our highest hopes. They are the words in which we tell, sometimes prospectively and sometimes retrospectively, the story of our lives. I shall call these words a person's "final vocabulary." (Rorty, 1989, p.73)

Rorty identifies here that every one of us is a user of 'words', a carrier of certain 'vocabulary' that supports our being-in-the-world, or 'actions... beliefs... lives'. We have learnt and borrowed words that we use to communicate. They form our identity and identify our things, are the basis of the stories we tell about ourselves that we believe, and more importantly, are so abundant in use that there is little need to question them. The nature in which they form our 'deepest self-doubts and our highest hopes' causes them to feel viscerally real. Indeed, how many of us think to question the way we communicate or the words we use? This is why the vocabulary is 'final'; it is our recourse to engage with all things in the world, and 'if doubt is cast on the worth of these words, their user has no noncircular argumentative recourse' (p.73). Rorty is intimating that we

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could not even begin to question our vocabulary without using our, or another's, final vocabulary also. It is another realm of paradigmatic irony, where language collapses in on itself.

It is important to consider what constitutes a final vocabulary, as it is precisely this finality that the ironist is concerned with. A final vocabulary is the set of words that determine to "correctly" represent the world, or more often, are absent-mindedly fallen into by interlocutors in everyday communication. Rorty gives two broad explanations of the kind of vocabulary that appears final: 'thin, flexible, and ubiquitous terms such as "true," "good," "right,"' and 'thicker, more rigid, and more parochial terms, for example, "Christ," "England," "professional standards," "decency"' (p.73) and so forth. The more dominant, parochial terms come under scrutiny in discourse more regularly of course, but this does nothing to stop us using them *unironically* in everydayness. It is when these words come into use without irony that they morph into common sense. The term common sense has become self-determining, in that we think it is common sense to pursue common sense, but for Rorty it is really a silently agreed upon final vocabulary that lacks any sort of ironic interrogation:

> The opposite of irony is common sense. For that is the watchword of those who unselfconsciously describe everything important in terms of the final vocabulary to which they and those around them are habituated. To be commonsensical is to take for granted that statements formulated in that final vocabulary suffice to describe and judge the beliefs, actions and lives of those who employ alternative final vocabularies… (p.74)

Just as Lyotard (1986) called for a war on totality, Rorty wages war with common sense, a totality itself as part of the postmodern tradition. Indeed, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* presents a wealth of thinkers that do so, e.g., Foucault and Derrida, although Rorty takes some

issue with these writers that I will explore in the final section of this chapter. But what Rorty implies more broadly in this attack is a refutation of dominant modes of thought.[24] Education harbours such everyday commonsensicality; it is common sense that if a student works hard, they will improve, and it is common sense that if a student passes all their exams, they will have more opportunities. On a broader level, it is common sense that Education is essential for the progress of society and that without it, we would be savages. It is common sense that through Education, we are dignified creatures who have studied the world and learnt its secrets. But this is not what I do here – there are no secrets to be uncovered, as such, but rather ironies to be found and problematised. I seek to expose the commonsensical nature of Education so to depict it in a different way.

Indeed, Rorty goes on to identify the fallacies and myths that exist within the belief in commonsensical vocabulary: 'The crucial premise of this argument is that we understand knowledge when we understand the social justification of belief, and thus have no need to view it as accuracy of representation' (Rorty, 1979, p.170). Rather than a measured progress of philosophical reasoning, there has only been a change of social justification. A new frame is created to aid us in understanding the world; it provides a code. But '*that* code… is *just* a code, not an aid in telling the true from the false' (p.248). The multiple codes, 'substitutions of center for center' (Derrida, 2010a, p.353), invariably demonstrate, therefore, that 'our language, our

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[24] For every ironist, such commonsensicality may differ; perhaps it is that of truth, reason, logic if the interrogation is of Western philosophy; perhaps it is that of capital, race or gender if thinking of liberal politics. However, it is common in the sense that it is clear in its everydayness within the certain sphere of the ironist.

conscience, our community [are nothing more than] a product of time and chance' (Rorty, 1989, p.22). Herein lies contingency:

> **we must own up to the fact that what we *believe* we know is our current social justification for what we *choose* to know.**

The code currently provided, likely that of the physical sciences currently, should be treated as a code that has arisen in this current epoch, but not something that we truly know. It is the latest in another series of substitutions.

These sorts of commonsensical, final vocabulary users are called 'metaphysicians' (p.74) by Rorty.[25] It is these individuals who embrace what 'Heidegger called the "tradition of Western metaphysics" … the "Plato-Kant canon."' (p.96). This definitive canon of Western metaphysics, the metaphysical tradition that supposedly ends with Nietzsche, yields the vocabulary that has, for Rorty, become final for most philosophers.[26] The metaphysician displays 'classic attempts to see everything steadily and see it whole' (p.96). They believe that their final vocabulary embodies the works of the Plato-Kant canon, which to them '*has* a real essence' (p.74). Questions such as "how can we get this student to reach their potential?" are taken 'at face value'

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[25] Ultimately, we could point to a vast majority of philosophy of Education as the act of a metaphysician; many tend to demonstrate an overreliance on 'the Greeks, the Enlightenment philosophers, John Dewey and other American pragmatists, critical theorists' (Kline and Holland, 2020, p.62). This is not the tradition that ironist embraces, as such, but rather problematises and seeks ironies within. The ironist's role is not to *reject* the metaphysical tradition, but to return to it with new contexts, as is the case for Rorty, Derrida and Heidegger alike.

[26] This canon is of course ultimately contestable. It is referenced often throughout this thesis, however that does not mean I believe it is the correct way to view the history of metaphysics. Rather, it is one of many histories that I could have used, here selected merely because it is the one that Rorty uses and I embrace the character that Rorty describes.

(p.74), that is, not considered to be ironic at all. This is because they believe that 'although we may not have all the answers, we have already got criteria for the right answers' (p.76).

III.ii.v. *Common Sense in Education*

To give some clearer educational examples[27]: there are a great number of both ubiquitous and parochial terms (learning, progress, pass and fail, outstanding, potential, etc.) generally used in an unironic manner. A pivotal illustration is the unironic use of "meritocracy" in educational discourse, a parochial neologism made famous by Young in *The Rise of Meritocracy* (1958) that now embodies the idyll that 'society ought to offer enough opportunity and mobility for "talent" to combine with "effort" in order to "rise to the top"' (Littler, 2017, p.1). However, Allen (2011; 2014), Littler (2017), and indeed Young (1958) himself treat this term with irony in that they recognise the term meritocracy should be used as an *insult*, not an idyll. Young's original use of the word, clearly denoted in the suffix "–cracy", implied a form of governance founded on elitist views of human intelligence (Allen, 2011). And yet, '1990s UK's New Labour under Tony Blair had adopted a non-satirical idea of a meritocratic society with gusto' (Littler, 2017, p.35). As the term entered public discourse surrounding Education, the irony slipped away, and now many of us find ourselves relying heavily on it as part of a final vocabulary for talking about Education.

We could also consider the parochial term "potential". What do we mean by assigning this *void* to children – an expectation that it be filled? How can we determine a point they are able to reach; why is that point important? Educators often assign an easy answer or a noble answer to

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[27] There are numerous other examples that could have been cited here, but due to the limits of the thesis I cannot dwell on them now. However, each chapter will raise and problematise new areas of educational common sense, be it in in research methodology, schooling, pedagogy, or aims.

these questions: they are either to answer exams for competition in the global labour market (Stock, 2020a, p.404), or they are to live up to the most ideal part of themselves, no matter what their surroundings. Both answers, however, presuppose a *presence* of potential as an actual point that can be determined and, accordingly, reached via Education. In such simple questions, we find ourselves searching for the centre of meaning, but only find 'a series of substitutions of center for center' (Derrida, 2010a, p.353). The centre 'receives different forms or names' (p.353), whether it be labour for the market or the ideal part of the child, but it is simply *not there*. And yet, the use of such a parochial term as "potential" is entirely *un*ironic in its everyday usage; it is traded in staff rooms, policy documents and research without any trouble for irony.

What would an ironist say of these educational metaphysicians, then? Perhaps that they should return to the source material, and read Young more carefully and closely, or perhaps they would respond with counterarguments from other thinkers. But mainly, the ironist would tell the metaphysician making students spend longer in school so they have more chance to achieve to *not take his idea too seriously*.

III.ii.vi. The Ironist Looks at Itself

What we have considered so far is that of irony, contingency and the opposition to common sense. A synthesis of these is required to depict the ironist. It is the sort of person who can only use the word "potential" without seriousness, as they realise it is a contingency of our time and must be problematised. It is only a code currently applied, the present substitution of one centre for another, and one that could very well have been something different from what it is. But the ironist must also face up to one's 'own most central beliefs and desires' (Rorty, 1989, p.xv). This perhaps sounds like a sceptic or cynic, yet this is not the persona Rorty intends to create.

Questioning alone is not enough. To consolidate, Rorty raises three qualities that the ironist possesses, of which I shall approach separately:

> (I) She has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses, because she has been impressed by other vocabularies, vocabularies taken as final by people or books she has encountered… (p.73)

The first trait of the ironist is the most obviously Rortyan in approach to language; it is the individual[28] that has identified the irony in the commonsensical, final vocabulary of the world. Rorty's slightly haughty lexis, the individual impressed by 'books', make it appear that such a character is a reader, perhaps an intellectual in some guise or another. Through the encountering of multiple final vocabularies, perhaps that of Derrida or Heidegger, an ironist notices both the conflict in these vocabularies and the hollowness of the vocabulary they previously thought to be final.

Rorty continues:

> (2) she realizes that argument phrased in her present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve these doubts… (p.73)

Despite realising that one is surrounded by users of final vocabulary, and consequently beliefs in truth, and possessing a vocabulary that allows them to 'wage war' (Lyotard, 1986, p.82) on others' final vocabulary, the ironist realises that they are unable to move past such a realisation into anything more meaningful. They are, in the mode of *eirōneía,* like an audience watching an

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[28] For Rorty it is always a "she", which of course draws our attention to the dominant mode in which "he" or "man" is so often used as the subject in philosophy.

inevitable tragic demise and unable to intervene in any way. There is no new vocabulary that will explicate their surroundings more *truthfully*, but rather only new words or old words used in new ways.

Finally:

> (3) insofar as she philosophizes about her situation, she does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself. Ironists who are inclined to philosophize see the choice between vocabularies as made neither within a neutral and universal metavocabulary nor by an attempt to fight one's way past appearances to the real, but simply by playing the new off against the old. (Rorty, 1989, p.73)

Ironism exists in 'realising that you're caught in these phenomena in some way that's inextricable' (Morton, 2016). They are clearly *aware* that they are users of a final vocabulary themselves and this is unavoidable. They also realise that *their* final vocabulary, despite their ironic disposition, is no more meaningful than any other. Instead, they understand that their vocabulary is a game, a system of play that digs up 'corpses' (Rorty, 1989, p.21) of ancient metaphors and subverts them, utilises them or discards them. They are gravediggers and taxidermists of the metaphor. It is this sense of play that is perhaps most important: all vocabulary employed by the ironist is tainted with its own irony thus a lack of seriousness. And by the same approach, all vocabulary used by the ironist is incredibly serious, as it holds as much meaning as any other vocabulary, including that of, for example, physics or liberal politics. My language of beasts should be taken with the same seriousness *and* irony as these dominant fields'

vocabulary. We are thus left with paradoxical meanings within vocabulary that are relentlessly conflicting with one another.

III.iii. Ironist Redescription

III.iii.i. Redescribing

Rorty's proposal leaves the ironist in an awkward position. How is one to write something without falling into the traps of the metaphysician? It is, of course, impossible. But the ironist knows this, thus finds ways to manoeuvre this trap through the act of redescription:

> I call people of this sort "ironists" because their realization that anything can be made to look good or bad by being redescribed… never quite able to take themselves seriously because always aware that the terms in which they describe themselves are subject to change, always aware of the contingency and fragility of their final vocabularies, and thus of their selves. (pp.73-74)

Let us consider this word "redescribe". It is different from a description, which is something a metaphysician might do. A description presupposes that a thing can be captured through language, whereas a redescription presupposes that all things are always-already described. Rorty sees all discourse in this way (Bernstein, 2008), particularly philosophy. He believes that each new idea is merely a redescription of the last, thus this mode of redescribing should be embraced. Rorty highlights that the ironist is completely aware their vocabulary does not hold any essential truth, however that does not prevent them from redescribing the world that engulfs them, including their sense of self. They do not necessarily take such an act seriously; this is not the scribing of a new certainty. Instead, they are 'using old words in new senses, not to mention introducing brand-new words', so that 'people will no longer ask questions phrased in the old

words' (p.78). It is with this play with vocabulary, the pitting against itself, the introduction of new vocabulary, that allows one to rethink how they may look at something in the world. Vocabulary should be embraced as a mode of relentless and constant redescription:

> The method is to redescribe lots and lots of things in new ways, until you have created a pattern of linguistic behavior which will tempt the rising generation to adopt it, thereby causing them to look for appropriate new forms of nonlinguistic behavior, for example […] new social institutions. (p.9).

Therefore, there is a sort of outcome here. Though the ironist does not believe that through redescription they will stumble across some sort of essential truth, they think that 'new forms' of 'behaviour' or 'institutions' may come to pass. These may be better or worse than the previous redescriptions; that is not for the ironist to say. Nevertheless, as I said in Chapter I regarding Yeats, by the end of this thesis I will have redescribed Education in a way that you may not have thought of before, through using 'old words in new senses' and 'new vocabulary' (p.78). In turn, you may be able to ask questions no longer 'phrased in the old words' (p.78) about Education, opening up space for new behaviours and social institutions.

III.iii.ii. Fiction and Literature

What I offer in this thesis is, therefore, not truths or essences, but another redescription of Education and the final vocabulary that shapes it. We must consequently consider what form this redescription will take. Any new act of philosophising is redescription, however the intention here is to conduct that redescription ironically by *recognising* that I am doing no more than redescribing, rather than proposing truth. This section explores some of the ways in which that could occur.

For Rorty, we should avoid relying on conventional forms of philosophy (and more commonly in Education on social sciences), as they tend to propose truths and essences. Instead, there are certain forms that are intentionally redescriptive and therefore inherently ironist: 'the novel, the movie, the TV program have… replaced the sermon and the treatise as the principal of moral change and progress' (p.xvi). What binds these forms together is their intended fictional nature, and yet, they have become more shaping of truths in the world for many people than any stringent philosophy.[29] Rorty's proposal of ironist redescription focuses less on popular culture and instead on literature. Indeed, for Rorty (and for the later Heidegger), as noted by Grigoriev (2011), literature and philosophy are very similar, or at times even the same thing[30]; they are both redescriptions of the world in new and compelling ways, but literature has the advantage of not claiming to be a proposition of truth.

> Fiction like that of Dickens... gives us the details about kinds of suffering being endured
>
> by people to whom we had previously not attended. Fiction like that of... Nabokov gives

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[29] The mere existence of cultural theorists like Stuart Hall or Mark Fisher indicates that there is some powerful force in the realm of culture, but it is also something we mundanely observe to be true without the aid of theory. Western everyday discourse is dominated by the carving up the world into fictional characters from television and film, be it houses from *Harry Potter* or the dark and light sides of *Star Wars.* This phenomenon is of course not new; art has been imitating life for centuries, and as Wilde famously said, life has been imitating art too (Wilde, 1908).

[30] For some this is a highly provocative view, but not for Rorty. Ultimately, *all* forms of writing are redescriptions in Rorty's view. Philosophy is not a privileged form of discourse, and neither is science or theology. Other writers have treated literature in this manner (Bernstein, 2008; Grigoriev, 2011), and the application of this sort of thinking has been seen in Education too (Gearon and Williams, 2019). There are numerous examples of fiction and philosophy hybridizing, e.g., *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Nietzsche, 1969), *The Post Card* (Derrida, 1987), *Neuromancer,* (Gibson, 1984), *The Ecstasy of Communication* (Baudrillard, 2012) *Cyclonopedia* (Negarestani, 2008); the list could go on. These examples explore the hyphen in "theory-fiction", demonstrating that these two concepts are intertwined and inseparable, although through different means. Some emphasise the literary aspects of their philosophy, other use fictional narratives, and others generate fiction for allegorical purposes. Nevertheless, since Rorty's claim in 1989 (and before it), there is significant evidence to support his view.

us the details about what sorts of cruelty we ourselves are capable of, and thereby lets us

redescribe ourselves. (Rorty, 1989, p.xvi.)

Rorty depicts fiction as a redemptive force able to redescribe society and consequently redescribe ourselves. It offers new vocabularies or makes interesting use of old ones. Rorty's faith in literature here is concerning, even unironic, and thus I wish you take his depiction of literature in the same ironic frame in which I take Education in this thesis. Nevertheless, we have seen the effects of literature as a powerfully redescriptive force in the past through, to take one of Rorty's examples, Dickens' illustrious *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*, novels that alerted the public to the nature in which the urban poor faced insufferable cruelty. Dickens commonly redescribed Education as harbouring the power to save the working-classes of Victorian England (Collins, 1963; Lindsey, 2016).[31] Victorian audiences were hence forced to re-inspect their views of Education and what they thought it should be for; they no longer asked 'questions phrased in the old words' (Rorty, 1989, p.78). Indeed, the decades that followed saw the Newcastle Report of 1861[32] and its problematisation of church schooling, the Forster Act of 1870 and its mass-Education ethos, and the rise of school boards as a regulatory body. Of course, the move away from utilitarianism was not as grand as Dickens had hoped (he was no ironist, after all), or indeed were the reforms as glistening as they appeared. What it does evidence, however, is the ways a redescription of Education enters the public consciousness and, perhaps, incurs social change.

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[31] In *Hard Times*, he uses the views of the aptronymically parochial Mr. Gradgrind to present the ways in which Education should be about experience and understanding, as opposed to the Benthamite Utilitarian model of 'nothing but Facts' (Dickens, 1995, p.1). Dickens draws on the contingencies that came to saturate Education: the desire for "facts" and inherently truth, allowing for the repression of 'imagination, curiosity, empathy, and moral education' (Lindsey, 2016).

[32] This report incurred public money continued to be spent on schooling, another significant moment in massification and naturalisation of Education – something that will be attended to in Chapter VIII.

Perhaps we need the same sort of act now, something I endeavour to do in this thesis (and a shorter example will be provided in the following section).

Like Lyotard, Rorty often references Proust's *A La Recherché du Temps Perdu* as another case of ironist redescription. However, Proust is not writing to redescribe the parochial vocabulary of the world like Education or poverty. Instead, he writes a redescription of the self, a far more intimate piece of ironism than many philosophical texts. Rorty posits that the self is lacking in autonomy, as it is bound to the final vocabularies of those that we interact with, and further that no one can ever know the self of another. Final vocabularies demarcate our autonomy, create a horizon in which we cannot break through. But Proust's ironism through fictional redescription allows him to break free:

> [Proust's] method of freeing himself from those people - of becoming autonomous - was to redescribe the people who had described him. He drew sketches of them from lots of different perspectives – and in particular from lots of different positions in time – and thus made clear that none of these people occupied a privileged standpoint. (p.102)

Proust had indeed taken characters from his life – lovers, family, friends, and muses – then sketched both charming and grotesque pictures of them to recreate them at many different temporal points; he redescribes *their* shaping of *himself*. From the moment Marcel infamously dips his madeleine into his tea, we are thrown into a microscopic redescription of his life that shifts seamlessly through time and space (in a literary method befitting of an ironist – without chronology and linearity).[33] Such is the power of redescription. Proust is no longer bound by 'his

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[33] The reader is alerted to such ironism in *Swann's Way*: 'A real person, profoundly as we may sympathise with him, is in a great measure perceptible only through our senses, that is, to say, remains opaque… The novelist's happy

previous, false, self-description… imposed upon him by the world' (p.90) and has therefore shaken the institutions that shaped him.

We should think of Proust's epic as a piece of research into the identity of Marcel Proust. Through the use of masterfully manipulated structures and language he is no longer bound by the vocabularies of the institutions that shaped him. He has become free of the world and of himself: 'The narrator is the hero revealed to himself, is the person that the hero, throughout his history, desires to be but never can be; he now takes the place of this hero' (p.26). Proust recognises the fixed nature of the identity thrust upon him through the vocabularies of certainty and reshapes them through the ceaselessly evolving narrative. I am not seeking to redescribe the self here, however, what we have learnt from Proust and Dickens is that fiction plays a pivotal role in the redescription of things that we deem to be fixed and truthful.

III.iii.iii. Fiction as and in Research

There are many examples that blur the line between fiction and philosophy; in some, fiction is used *alongside* more conventional philosophy to allow for the use of 'old words in new senses' (Rorty, 1989, p.78), as opposed to the fiction purely *being* the philosophy or research. By using fiction in philosophical, or indeed sociological research, the vocabularies become less final and yet again open to new questions. Rorty utilises Larkin in this way, for example, to explicate the ironist theory of vocabularies. He quotes Larkin: 'Since it only applied to one man once,/And that

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discovery was to think of substituting for those opaque sections, impenetrable to the human soul, their equivalent in immaterial sections, things, that is, which one's soul can assimilate… [until] his book comes to disturb as might a dream…' (Proust, 1996, pp.99-100). Playing on the notion there is no fixed point of meaning in the self, Proust intimates its 'opaque' nature. But through the redescription of the self through literature, the self may become something we can confront in a far more profound way than say through reading psychology. In Proust's example, we are forced not only to examine an underlying jealousy of Proust's self, but also of our own. It 'comes to disturb as might a dream' a haunting sense of who or what a self might be.

man dying' (p.23), as a way of explicating the desire 'to formulate a novel answer to the question

of what is possible and important and fears the extinction of that answer' (p.23). His point is that

we seek clever answers to grand questions, and yet fear the answer will only ever apply to

ourselves and will die with us. Rorty could not 'pin down what [he] wanted to say' (p.34) with

just his own final vocabulary, nor that of the realm of philosophy. It took fiction to enable him to

do so.[34]

Indeed, this method is growing in popularity in educational research now. Gearon and Williams

state that 'philosophy of education is there to help and open up the processes of thinking about

the world, one wonders why its efforts are lesser known and read than… novels [or indeed

poetry]' (2019, p.580). They give the example of Orwell's *1984*, a text that depicts 'formless,

progressive liberalism, that seems to mean little in actuality, which frames the consciousness of

young minds' (p.581). This in turn acts as a mirror to the current trends of childhood betterment

in Education, thus allowing a conversation about a seemingly positive institution through the

dystopian vocabulary of Orwell.[35]

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[34] Another excellent example is Weil's *The Iliad, or the Poem of Force* (1965). Weil quotes Homer's epic to dissect force as an object, witnessing how it is poeticised by Homer and how it appears in "reality". In turn, she attempts to redescribe force outside of the Enlightenment vocabulary available to her: 'Come now, you too must die' (p.21) says Achilles to Hector, to which Weil replies 'Possessed by war, he, like the slave, becomes a thing' (p.22). Her description of Achilles is really a redescription of force, considering how it is not harnessed by men, but harnesses them for its own whim. Again, these words are difficult to say, but through the vocabulary of Homer we come to ask questions of things that we may not have thought to before. Weil is also exhibiting a similar ontology to my own where more abstract concepts are given concrete agency – force for Weil, Education for me.

[35] Allen conducts a similar project utilising Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* as a way of redescribing Education and its relation to time: 'At work I wait, filling time with jobs. Estragon and Vladimir behave differently. They contemplate hanging themselves' (2018b, p.88). This time fiction is used to ridicule and mock the obsessive attitude towards time in Education, something that will be addressed in the final chapter of this thesis.

But what I am discussing here goes beyond these examples and utilises literature *as* philosophy. To give a short example, what would it look to redescribe, say, meritocracy, a concept that I previously ironised via Littler (2017) and Allen (2011)? In part, it has already been redescribed by those critical views – a redescription as an object of division and hierarchy as opposed to its supposed enabling of social climbing. But taken a step further into fictional redescription, imagine if you will a beetle with a fairly hard shell.

> *A beetle, who we shall call Gregor, endeavoured to be the hardest shelled beetle of all. He lined up with all the other beetles, and they compared their shells. Some were stronger than Gregor's, some weaker. Gregor did not capitulate; he decided to train his shell. He turned to the Great Stag Beetle for help: could you hammer my shell with your mighty horn until it becomes harder than the rest, asked Gregor? The Great Stag agreed and began to smash at Gregor's back. Other beetles came along, some with harder shells than Gregor, and joined in. They revelled in the battering their backs took. Gregor pushed them aside and demanded the Great Stag truly hammer down; only then would he gain the hardest shell of all. The Stag's horn fell. Gregor was impaled. Gregor was dead.*

To briefly explain, this short story is replete with meanings related to meritocracy. To be clear, it is not a fable or allegory: there is not a singular reading intended. Rather, through allusions to Kafka's (1995) infamous Gregor Samsa, descriptions of comparison and hierarchy with a palpable goal, Gregor's belief in hard work as the tool to success, an overarching *beast* who seems infinitely more powerful than the other beetles, and a tragic ending, we are asked multiple questions about the structure of meritocracy. Are those who seek to climb only doomed to die? Are there agents that control and manipulate hierarchy through violent means? Is the belief in

attaining the highest goal a doomed one? Is the masochism of the beetles reflective of being educated? Does the allusion to Kafka intimate the feelings of duty and worthlessness that Gregor Samsa felt are those of the student in the classroom? There are multiple interpretations, no truthful ones, but ultimately an array of readings that help us *ironise about Education,* here specifically meritocracy.

In light of these examples, fiction becomes a powerful tool of the ironist, a way to 'pin down' (Rorty, 1989, p.23) what they want to say without pinning it to metaphysical claims. The main texts in this thesis are ostensibly fictional ones and I believe they help challenge the final vocabulary of Education; they 'help and open up the processes of thinking about [it]' (Gearon and Williams, 2019, p.580). However, in my ironist belief that there is nothing but redescription, there is an always-already redescription occurring here. The first chapter instigated the use of 'old words in new senses (Rorty, 1989, p.78) through Yeats' poem *The Second Coming* – the vocabulary of a rough beast believed to be God's return to the earth. Additionally, throughout this work you will find, littered in the footnotes, fragments of a fictional tale that redescribes the body of the thesis. My more conventional redescription of Education that makes use of literature, philosophy and other fields is redescribed through pure fiction. In Chapter V, I will make it clearer why I believe this to be a useful endeavour worthy of a place in an academic thesis, but for now, accept that this is an act of ironism rarely seen in academia.

III.iv. Rorty's Liberal Utopia

Rorty does not write without purpose, however unironic that might seem. He instigates a call for 'the attempt to fuse the public and the private…' (1989, p.xiii) and finishes with a conclusion about 'human solidarity' (p.198). This is the overall structure he writes within – the desire to find

a synthesis between public and private, so to achieve some sense of 'liberal utopia' (p.61) through human solidarity. He explores how the ironist fits into this dialectic of public and private, and the solidarity achievable from such a character entering into this sphere.

In a distinct lack of irony, Rorty claims that solidarity is the primary aim for humanity, as it is the most 'liberal' (p.73) of goals.[36] Rorty definition of a liberal is 'people for whom (to use Judith Shklar's definition) "cruelty is the worst thing they do"' (1989, p.74). He is positing that cruelty, as it causes pain, is objectionable (which of course it is). Furthermore, because pain is non-linguistic, one cannot ironise about it (Rorty, 2009). Shklar's liberalism underpins Rorty's thinking, and he believes it is with this cruelty-opposing definition of liberalism we can reach human solidarity. A sweeping opposition to cruelty is problematic, though, especially when being purported as the method to reach human solidarity.[37] Expectedly, it begins to function as metaphysics or common-sense. This can be seen more clearly if we look at the example Rorty gives, but bear with this lengthy discussion before I return to his metaphysical claim. He raises that vocabularies act in opposition to one another – they are binarised into Western and Eastern, cultured and uncultured, bourgeois and proletarian, Christian and atheist, and so forth. Using these final vocabularies and their inherent contingencies, there can only be conflict between them

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[36] The term 'liberal' is one with problematic significations; its connotations of liberty and equality seems an absence or myth in the contemporary landscape, so to purport its significations of 'free-market capitalism [as] adopted in the metropole' (Baring, 2010, p.242). It is a dangerous word to use without irony, yet Rorty seems unironic in his use of the word, and possibly believed in liberalism as really connoting liberty and equality. He opposes Adorno and Horkheimer's (1997) conclusion, wrongly in my opinion, that 'liberalism was intellectually bankrupt, bereft of philosophical foundations, and that liberal society was morally bankrupt, bereft of social glue' (Rorty, 1989, p.56).

[37] We may find, for example, moments in history where violence – a form of cruelty – has been theoretically justified for acts of solidarity. Both Marx's (1996) justification for proletarian revolution (an inevitably violent affair) and Fanon's (1963) justification for the violence of colonised subjects against their oppressors typify this sort of resistance to Rorty's liberal attitude towards cruelty. My attitude, though inherently Rortyan ironist, is Marxian/Fanonian in this instance.

in the attempt to be the *right* vocabulary. Equally, this problem is not solved by replacing the conflicting binaries with a single vocabulary that we all share:

> For solidarity with all possible vocabularies seems impossible. Metaphysicians tell us that unless there is some sort of common ur-vocabulary, we have no "reason" not to be cruel to those whose final vocabularies are very unlike ours. A universalistic ethics seems incompatible with ironism, simply because it is hard to imagine stating such an ethic without some doctrine about the nature of man. Such an appeal to real essence is the antithesis of ironism. (Rorty, 1989, p.88)

A shared, unitary vocabulary plainly opposes ironism by believing that it has found the "correct" vocabulary; it transforms into metaphysics.[38] Solutions are proposed, however, from two angles. Firstly, in a culturally linguistic way, in that an overlap could occur between different vocabularies:

> For public purposes, it does not matter if everybody's final vocabulary is different, as long as there is enough overlap so that everybody has some words with which to express the desirability of entering into other people's fantasies as well as into one's own. But those overlapping words - words like "kindness" or "decency" or "dignity" – do not form a vocabulary which all human beings can reach by reflection on their natures. (pp.92-93)

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[38] Ultimately this leaves the ironist in a pickle if they do not wish to become a metaphysician. All the vocabulary they deploy must be redescribed after it has been used; the likes of Derrida or Baudrillard thus use deliberate circularity in their writing that continually redescribes itself. Texts like *Simulacra and Simulation* (2014) or *Of Grammatology* (1976) eternally return to the same concept introduced at the start of the text and approach it from new angles. This of course makes for frustrating reading, as it means each page or chapter never reaches a conclusion. This prevents it from ever reaching a metaphysical claim.

We do not need a common vocabulary of words such words as kindness and decency for solidarity, Rorty claims. Instead, we can maintain our individual, cultural vocabularies so long as it overlaps with *other* vocabularies in its opposition to pain. It does not have to be as grand as creating a vocabulary of goodness for all, but merely a few choice ideas that are shared. These words are found through ironism and redescription. Whilst this is potentially an unconvincing argument, we can see Rorty's act of redescription being put "to use" in this proposal.

Rorty's second proposal for solidarity, however, is where his metaphysics of liberalism become more problematic. Solidarity may be reached, he claims, through an adherence to an ontological binary: there is to be 'private irony and liberal hope' (1989, pp.73-95). Ironism should, for Rorty, be contained to privacy and for redescribing the self, much as was seen in his analysis of Proust. Socio-political and broader philosophical ironism – the public – have no use for Rorty: 'Derrida and Foucault seem to me invaluable in our attempt to form a private self-image, but pretty much useless when it comes to politics' (p.83). Ironism is apparently powerful to redescribe the self, but unhelpful when considering things on a broader scale.

Why does Rorty feel the need for this distinction between the private and the public/liberal? It is perhaps because ironism, or more specifically postmodernism, is often received as a form of nihilism[39], or at the very least an attack on the meanings that many hold so dear. In turn, there is a commonsensical belief that through such thinking, humanity is left with nothing if we let ironism

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[39] I contest this view for two reasons. Firstly, one must see how identifying the state of the world as a place devoid of meaning does not incur meaning cannot be then made. Indeed, like the beautiful beast the phoenix, nihilism may spawn something of splendiferousness. But ultimately, is postmodern irony nihilistic? This seems to adhere to the caricature of postmodern philosophers more than the reality. The likes of Derrida, Baudrillard, or Lyotard had no desire to drain the world of meaning. Merely they diagnosed how such an act might be occurring.

occur. This is why Rorty feels Derrida or Foucault's approach to something like politics are unhelpful, as they encourage nihilistic thinking in the public sphere. As Bernstein puts it when describing Rorty, 'some [ironist] philosophers should be read as we read good novelists like Proust and Nabokov – for private enjoyment' (Bernstein, 2008, p.19), thus ironism never enters the public consciousness. Herein lies the issue.[40] Derrida's deconstruction of apartheid (1985), Butler's deconstruction of gender (2007), Foucault's redescription of capitalism as bio-power (1978), or Morton's ironism about ecology (2013a), to name but a few, are clear examples of writers who both oppose pain and wish to reconsider the broader sphere of politics and philosophy. Yet Rorty maintains an opposition to this due to his opposition to cruelty in all forms, as he believes that when ironist thinking enters the public sphere it is *humiliating* to commonsensical metaphysicians. Take this example, of an ironist meeting a commonsensicalist (a metaphysician) and the discussion they may have:

> Warmly, the common-sencialist brings up a topic from his ... Christian final vocabulary that he is dying to talk about, hoping to profit from an edifying exchange of views with his fellow worshipper. What a shock he suffers when he learns that the ironist does not take his religious concerns seriously at all! His dismay grows as the ironist... makes it clear that not only does she have no use for Christian concerns, but that she has good reason to suspect them of deadening our sense of life's sacredness. (Arcilla, 1995, pp.112-113)[41]

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[40] Indeed, I have argued a similarly contrary point to Rorty before (Stock, 2021) by positing that the absence of darkness, e.g., that of Nabokov or Beckett, in Education is immensely problematic and needs adjusting.

[41] We could retell this story in educational terms too: *Warmly, the philosopher of Education brings up a topic from his Platonic final vocabulary about pedagogy aspiring towards the Good that he is dying to talk about. What a shock*

We see a humiliating, cruel experience for the metaphysician, indeed, not close to an experience of solidarity at all. The metaphysical vocabularies of a Christian (in this example) are swiftly deconstructed as 'deadening' by the ironist; their language is empty and contains no redemptive truth after all. The Christian is left humiliated and unlikely to change their views, whilst the ironist has humiliated another; neither party benefits, especially when the ironist considers themselves to be a liberal. Rorty's solution, once again, is to keep ironism private. In his vision, the ironist sits with the metaphysician and shares a polite exchange in which they both agree on something helpful, such as how pain is wrong. But it is here I must stand against Rorty, for two reasons, and explain why the ironist I embody here has no interest in the private.

> [Ironists like] Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida… as public philosophers they are at best useless and at worst dangerous, but I want to insist on the role they and others like them can play in accommodating the ironist's private sense of identity to her liberal hopes. (Rorty, 1989, p.68)

Rorty reiterates that the works of these philosophers, when widened to public institutions, are nihilistic, *dangerous* even. His desire to uphold the belief in solidarity through opposing all forms of cruelty prevents him from reaching real ironism. If we agree with Rorty that we need to change ourselves, then we need to *change the beings that change us*. Education, politics, the environment, all remain the same if we do not make public our irony; it needs to be taken

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he discovers when he learns that the ironist does not take his pedagogical ideas seriously at all! His dismay grows as the ironist makes it clear that not only does she have no use for Platonic concerns, but that she has good reason to suspect them of deadening what learning even is.

seriously in all spheres if we are to incur real change; perhaps patriarchy, plastic and Education *need* humiliating.

Secondly, Rorty's distinction between the public and the private has arguably eroded in the entrenchment of postmodernity.[42] For the likes of Baudrillard (2012), public and private spaces have collapsed into one another. The onset of digital technologies gave rise to the mediatisation of secrecy (p.130), even more palpably now in the dominance of social media; this has incurred a hazy distinction between these two supposedly separate spheres. This is true of Education as much as it is other aspects of society (the technological aspect of this argument will be examined in Chapter IX). For, Education in its most formalised sense is always a public affair: the thesis, for example, *must* be examined from an outside perspective, put into the public sphere, and indeed, aspects of this thesis have been made public multiple times in the past (Stock, 2019, 2020b, 2021). Inherently, I cannot maintain Rorty's desire to make my ironism private, and as expressed previously, neither do I wish to.

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[42] There is some real irony to Rorty's writing here: despite his relentless positing of ironism as a position, he makes use of some decidedly unironic splits, e.g., public and private despite the collapse of this distinction amidst postmodernity. Perhaps this is to avoid the fall into metaphysics he opposes, however, my final vocabulary in thesis is not necessarily the right one thus cannot be treated as a metaphysical claim, and the privatisation of this thinking is not possible in the postmodern age nor in the mode of a thesis.

IV. Ironist Vocabulary in and Beyond Rorty

IV.i. Rorty's Fellow Ironists

I have, thus far, been speaking quite broadly about ironism, referring mostly to

the Rortyan definition. However, it may be apparent that both my own and Rorty's final

vocabulary is 'impressed by' (Rorty, 1989, p.73) other ironists previously encountered. This does

not mean that I believe they are necessarily the correct ones, nor that they are closer to truth than

other vocabularies, merely that they are the ones that will be used in new ways to ask different

questions about Education. Rorty names Heidegger and Derrida as key thinkers in his final

vocabulary, and thus some attention will be given to what these figures provide for ironist

thinking about Education. I aim to stretch their thought beyond what Rorty details in

Contingency, Irony and Solidarity and thus move beyond his vocabulary; this chapter will

therefore start to conduct ironism more palpably about Education, though in a broader way than

the remaining chapters. Further, this chapter will explore some of the few ironists who write

about Education in particular, notably Peim, Allen and Hunter. These are the thinkers who have

tasked themselves with redescribing Education in a more shocking and terrifying way than the

last, interweaving different vocabularies with educational discourse. Indeed, a key theme to be

found in this chapter is the way inherent monstrosity (both supernatural and technological) can be

found in things through an ironist approach.

IV.i.i. Beast Slayers

Heidegger's 'Destruktion' of metaphysics (2010a) represents the slaying of a great beast – visible

in his approach to beings that I will explore here. He "destroys" the dominant ontologies of his

epoch and posits that humankind should be reconsidered not as beings [*Seineden*]*,* as one would

view a light bulb or a pencil, but in regard to Being [*Sein*].[43] He redescribes, therefore, not things

or objects as such, but rather their is-ness or thingness that makes them the object they are. For

Heidegger, the only Being accessible is that which is ours, the Being of the human. Thus, the

human being is *Da-Sein,* "being-there", for that is what we *are*, as opposed to being an inanimate

thing. In other words, Heidegger is not expressing beings as a 'what… but rather being' (2010a,

p.42), its 'infinitive form as a verb' or as a 'mode of existing' (Polt, 1999, p.30). Too often do we

think of beings as static objects[44] rather than movements. Therefore, whenever we consider

beings, or indeed their Being, we should always think of them in the *way* that they exist, rather

than what the thing that exists is – 'the how is the what' (Morton, 2018b). Already this has ironist

strands, as it starts to redescribe that which we thought we knew – beings are not as they appear.

The translation of *Da-Sein* also alerts us to *where* Being occurs: it is *there,* in the world; 'we

inhabit a world, we are capably engaged in a meaningful context' (Polt, 1999, p.30). The world is

not the earth as such, but the place in which *Da-Sein* dwells [*dwellen*]; it is the 'ontological

structure' (Heidegger, 2010a, p.54) of that which we have around us, the shape of the totality of

objects that we interact with and tend to; it is ourselves. We are being-*in* this world, 'that

"*wherein*" factical Dasein as such can be said to live' (p.65), a place shaped by 'the essential

structures' (Polt, 1999, p.49) of ourselves. In Rortyan terms, 'what one is is the practices one

engages in, and especially the language, the final vocabulary, one uses' (Rorty, 1989, p.109). Our

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[43] In refutation of a widely agreed idea in Western metaphysics, Heidegger wished to redescribe the Cartesian certainty held in *cogito ergo sum* as this belief presupposes a certainty in the *sum*, that is, the I. We cannot make such statements about ourselves until we inspect more closely the Being of those beings.

[44] Though I use the word "object" regularly in this thesis, it is in the way that Morton (2013a) uses the word, in a similar way to that of Heidegger and being.

'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, 2010a, p.54) is what allows the world to have meaning for us, and although it would continue to exist without us, it would not exude the same meaning without us there to be-in-it. But we find ourselves here *always-already.* I cannot be in a time when I was not being-in-the-world; it is beyond the horizon of my Being. We are thus always in activity, and we *care* about this activity (Heidegger, 2010a), but it remains distant and hard to grasp. This is ironic, of course, that we find ourselves engaged in such Being, but yet struggle to grasp it fully.

Consequently, when I speak of *Da-Sein* (or of humans) in this thesis, certain Heideggerean implications should be considered: humans are not static objects, but beings engaged in the activity of Being. In particular for this thesis, they are engaged in the very specific activities of educating and being-educated (Thomson, 2005; Flint and Peim 2009, 2012; Stock, 2019) and the world that surrounds them is the world of Education,[45] an idea I will extend in consequent chapters. This is obvious when one considers the nature in which schooling begins from an early age, and before that we are taught things by parents, or indeed by the environment in which we grow up in. Education continues well after school too – *we are all lifelong learners now* (see Chapter IX). But this is also a world into which we are *thrown* [*Geworfen*] (Heidegger, 2010a, p.131). Did I, or you, ask to be born into this world? Is it not strange that I find myself as a privileged, white male, sitting at a desk writing about Heidegger, rather than an eighteenth-century French revolutionary? I have been thrown into a world of Education, found myself in it,

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[45] Problematisation is always demonstrable in this thesis through capitalisation (a technique you will see used on various words). When this capital is in place, as it is for Being or indeed for Education, it means its ontological stability has been challenged in the way that Heidegger demonstrated for us. This is one of the reasons that Heidegger's vocabulary has been taken unironically: he is already ironic in his usage of everyday vocabulary by the way it 'express[es] its own contingency' (Rorty, 1989, p.112). I should also note that capitalisation of Education also signifies both a deification and anthropomorphism – Education thus remains problematised and unstable, whilst also being amongst us, and above us.

and have remained in it ever since: student, teacher, academic... And before this, I found myself

schooled, educated, taught, from every conceivable angle. This is *my* thrownness [*Geworfenheit*],

a thrownness into Education, although yours will of course be different in some respects. For

Rorty, this sense of thrownness is exemplary of the nature of our contingency, as he says of a

human: 'its final vocabulary is just something which it was thrown into – the language that

happened to be spoken by the people amongst whom it grew up' (Rorty, 1989, p.109) and thus

'express[es] its own contingency' (p.112).

It is, however, the great ironist Derrida who masters this slaying of metaphysics, for he 'learned

that "language" no more has a nature than "Being" or "man" does' (p.126). Derrida both deepens

Heidegger's ironism (and destruction) of Being and extends it to other areas, particularly

language. As Rorty says, quoting Gasché, Derrida sought to '"formulate a system beyond Being",

"a system of infrastructures"' (p.123), perhaps, a system of ironism[46] (it is fitting that his

construction had the ironic inversion of seeking to *de*construct). What Derrida's "systematised"

ironism allows us to do, broadly, is to read texts without the metaphysical search for finality in

meaning thus destabilising the metaphysical claims within. Further, his intentional use of

metaphor and a style that deliberately lacked the 'splendour of the simple', preferring the

'lubriciousness of the tangled' (p.126), dethrones the notion of language as final. Derrida *intends*

for the reader to do some of the "unpacking" themselves in his continuation of Barthes' ironic

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[46] Of course, neither Derridean deconstruction nor ironism can be purely systematised – this is in effect paradoxical
to try and do so. Nevertheless, they must be spoken about in this way so to suitably perform on the stage of the
thesis. For this deconstructive agenda, Derrida is depicted by Rorty as 'at best irrelevant, and at worst antagonistic, to
liberal hope' (Rorty, 1989, p.62), perhaps indicating the severity of humiliation that is offered by Derrida towards
other areas of thought available through deconstruction (thus why I embrace it here).

twist of the author and reader. There can be no "spelling out" of the exact meaning intended, as for Derrida, language is far too unstable for such a thing to be possible.

Derrida's deconstruction of Being is evident in his theory of logocentrism or 'metaphysics of presence' (Derrida, 2010c, p.151); the 'history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix… is the determination of Being as *presence'* (2010a, p.353). He expounds the notion that all vocabulary concerned with thinking philosophically is based around the idea of that which is objectively *there.* Each principle or fundamental is labelled with something indicating its presence, for example 'essence, existence, substance, subject… transcendality, consciousness, God, man' (p.353). Consequently, all acts of thinking, speaking, writing and so forth about "things" become determined to make them absolutely present, when in fact that may not be the case. This is a powerful concept, as it always calls into question to the supposed goals, objectives, structures, and meanings of Education as potentially *absent* rather than just not yet fully realised (deepened in Chapter VI).

IV.i.ii. The World, Machines and Ghosts

Both Heidegger and Derrida hold an ironic stance towards beings, but this irony goes much deeper. The beings of Heidegger's ironism may be *thrown* into a state of dwelling, but ironically they do not try to escape.[47] Rather, they (we, *Da-sein*) exist in everydayness completing inauthentic activities and choices that do not face up to our Being (Stock, 2019). 'The end is imminent for Dasein… the possibility of no-longer-being-able-to-be-there' (Heidegger, 2010a,

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[47] A visual example: Beckett's *Act Without Words I*, in which 'The man is flung backwards on stage from right wing' (1984, p.43). He is literally *thrown* onto a stage where he finds himself stuck, unable to leave, unable to be anything other than that exact position he finds himself in. It progresses to show him tortured by whistles and ladders (the call of the They), objects teasing him with the chance of escape, but of course escape never comes.

pp.240-241), yet we fall back on the 'structures that remain determinative in every mode of being' (p.17). It is the unquestioned ontological structure that we find ourselves in and that keeps us busy. Where we should be questioning our Being (and confronting death is essential in this), we rather do what "they" tell us to. I use "they" as a deliberately vague pronoun to state who determines our everydayness; 'the They' [*Das Man*] (p.123) is not someone in particular, and neither is it no one. It is a ghostly presence (as I will discuss via Derrida below), a frame in which we impose upon ourselves that we believe to be out there: 'We enjoy ourselves and have fun the way *they* enjoy themselves. We read, see, and judge literature and art the way *they* see and judge' (p.123). We can see that Heidegger is presenting our way of being-in-everydayness in doing what we think others do – that is the They. An educational example: Robin Williams' rebellious English teacher Mr Keating in *Dead Poets Society* asks three students to march to a beat across a square, to which they comply – a lesson to demonstrate their conformity. Some students watch and clap along, to which Mr Keating says: 'Now, those of you – I see the look in your eyes like, "I would've walked differently." Well, ask yourselves why you were clapping' (*Dead Poets Society,* 1989). The clap of the students echoes Heidegger's words. No *one* tells them to clap, merely they do because *They* do. The They is not any real thing that is out there, but the way it makes a '*they-self*' (p.125) entails that it becomes very real to us. We should not dismiss it as merely imaginary; rather we should interrogate to the structures from which this they-self springs. Rorty characterises this interrogation as ironist as it presents 'people who are unable to

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stand the thought that they are not their own creations' (1989, p.109), or in other words, those

that challenge the everyday they-self imposed upon them.[48]

The world as it stands is thus populated by thrown beings acting in everydayness, however

Heidegger and Derrida both posit further problematisations of this world and seek further ironism

about its structures. For Heidegger, the world is structured technologically (2011c), a concept that

is palpably educational (Stock, 2019; Thomson, 2005, 2018) as I will explain below. When using

the term 'technology', we should think of it as *techn*e, a mode in which all is technologized as a

means to an end, a fundamentally 'human activity' (Heidegger, 2011c, p.217). Heidegger posits

humankind's subjectivism, that is, their desire to perceive everything anthropocentrically and

control it, creates a desire to master all that is in the world. Through this desire, the world is

turned into manipulable objects that can be utilised for a means-to-an-end. In this process, objects

become standing-reserve [*Bestand*] – 'entities lacking intrinsic meaning that are thus relentlessly

optimised and ordered with maximal efficiency' (Thomson, 2005, p.148), thinkable only in their

use-value. This deprives objects of there is-ness: 'Nature is tamed and turned into a well-

managed golf course' (Polt, 1999, p.172). By viewing the world as a totality of objects to be

manipulated and controlled, it is *enframed* [*Gestell*]. We create 'a "calculative thinking" that …

quantifies all qualitative relations' (Thomson, 2005, p.149), where we can only perceive objects

through one set of "lenses". Technology thus becomes 'a way of revealing' (Heidegger, 2011c,

p.222), a highly specific way of viewing the world through the technological lens. Education

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[48] For Heidegger, the they-self is distinguished from 'the authentic self, that is, the self which has explicitly grasped itself' (2010a, p.125). We should be authentic, not just follow what *Das Man* tells us to or be who they say we should be. Ultimately, we can see how this idea might infuse with Education, for what we have learned unconsciously to be, that which we should do, the sort of things we learn in school, comes to take the form of *Das Man* for us. We do it because we have been taught to do it, even if we do not realise this is the case.

plays a huge role here (Stock, 2019). It reveals the world through educational disciplines, for example, or reveals children as students for educational institutions. Indeed, Education is *used* as technology to reveal the world, both on the micro level as students make discoveries in the classroom and on the macro level in academic research.[49] It is visible beyond educational institutions too, as we see Education arise in business seminars, team-building activities, training sessions, all where the individual is seen as a resource to be refashioned by this technological process of Education. Recent business logic highlights the need for individual investment in learning skills – educating oneself – to succeed in the market (Chambers, 2016, p.91). Things (including people) become standing-reserve for Education to reveal, but we must remember this does not get us any closer to Being; it merely orders and tames that which may lack order, like sand fashioned into a lightbulb. Redescribing the world through this machinic thinking, however, causes us to rethink, to *ironise* about the beings that we thought we knew, causing us to see them as part of systems, processes and outputs. Such a vision is purely monstrous, even if we are to think of it as machinic. Perhaps this perception is beast-like in the steam or cyberpunk imaginary – a hideous hybrid of the organic and the mechanical, a massive machine that we must climb into and fuse with to see the world. Of course, for many theorists (McLuhan, 1967; Deleuze and Guattari, 1984; Fisher, 1999), the machinic and the organic are not so distinct – and this hybridity may be essential in the way we think of Education in its final bestial formation.

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[49] Imagine a student in their Geography class. They discover that the world is expansive, made up of various contents and cultures, populated by different peoples. Their view of the world has now been enframed by that which Education provides. Perhaps later in their life they become an Anthropology academic. They study the Piraha culture in Brazil and their supposed lack of Education (see Peim, 2020). They discover that their view of the world was not as straightforward as that which they learnt in Geography all those years ago, but they *have* learnt this through Education.

For Derrida, his version of the world highlights an equally monstrous, but (perhaps) conversely haunting quality, in which we can find initially in his approach to reading texts; he often employs the lexis of the supernatural, such as "ghosts", "spectres", "haunting" (2006, 2010b). Take for example this metaphor of an abandoned city to explain how Derrida thinks of a text, though it could be equally useful for ironising about beings and their world: 'Somewhat like the architecture of an uninhabited or deserted city, reduced to its skeleton by some catastrophe of nature or art… haunted by meaning and culture… [This is] the general mode of presence or absence of the thing itself in pure language' (Derrida, 2010b, p.4). The transposing of a text into the image of a city incurs that we see a text as made up of structures, meticulously constructed language in shapes and orders. But this city is empty; it has no living inhabitants in it, and thus the language of a text has no living inhabitants either. There is nothing "alive" about a text as such, that is, no palpable, touchable meaning. And yet, a deserted city may tell us more about the beings that inhabited it than the inhabitants themselves. When we examine the text, or perhaps when we examine beings in general[50], we see that the meanings present are in fact *absent*: 'Is there *there...*?' (Derrida, 2006, p.10). Language becomes like a ghost or spectre to Derrida, a sort of haunting presence of something that may in fact not be there at all.[51] When we look at a word like "learning", for example, something so flagrantly given meaning in its everyday usage, it

[50] Let us say, for example, that we wished to interrogate the Being of *Da-sein.* How much of "them" is entirely present, *really*? Surely their being-in-the-world is affected by past experiences compulsively repeating, desires for the future, traces of other beings and institutions and ideologies. This being is haunted; it carries these ghosts every day.

[51] It is through Derrida that yet more monsters seep into the corners of this thesis. Ghosts haunt every page, lingering spectres that cannot be touched but are uncannily present.

quickly crumbles when we begin to interrogate it (as will be explained in greater depth in this section), and so its appearance becomes spectral, not quite visible, but somehow still there.

Derrida develops this idea into 'hauntology' (Derrida, 2006, p.10), a further ironising of the Heideggerean ontology described above. "Haunting" and "ontological" as a portmanteau neatly surmises the ways language becomes ghostly when we begin to interrogate it. Fisher explains that hauntology 'refers to that which is (in actuality is) no longer, but which is still effective as a virtuality' (Fisher, 2012, p.19), or more precisely, how something of the past returns as a haunting in the present (Stock, 2021, p.148). This presents a paradigmatic irony, as despite the meanings of things being somewhat ghostly, that does not stop their inherent influence of the things "out there". This sort of thinking about language in terms of presence and absence is essential for the interrogation of Education. Cox and Levine, for example, note the spectrality of the university: 'What is it that was once present in the university – that the palpable "haunting" and "uncanny" emptiness of the place fused with memory and history?' (2016, p.214) – though their research ultimately expounds the redemptive qualities of Education if saved from its fallen mode; they believe the university can be given life anew if a return to its original form is embraced, a belief that this thesis ultimately critiques. For, the likes of Cox and Levine overlook that the university is always-already haunted as a fundamental aspect of its ontology. As will be made much clearer in Chapter VI, an institution like Education that is structured around the agreed upon language of the past is gravely open to hauntological investigation, forever haunted by ghosts of the past that substantiate the supposed stability of the present.

IV.ii. Ironism in Education

There are some examples of ironists writing in the field of Education that, firstly, demonstrate how an ironist approach might look in this particular field, and secondly, implement some interesting vocabulary of their own. We can witness a chain of redescription taking place in which each one seems to redescribe Education in a more horrifying manner than the last. If you look closely at the vocabulary that each writer uses (and I consider this thesis to be another entry into this sequence), you will see that it becomes more pejorative, more terrifying, and certainly more humiliating. For example, the humiliating, but still ameliorative language of Hunter, 'church' and 'cathedral' (1994, p.1), was redescribed by Peim through the language of Dickensian orphans, e.g., 'poor, swarming children' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.71), intensified in Allen's (2014) work by utilising the lexis of *violence.* These writers I will explore in greater depth below. There are others, however, who may perceive themselves to be ironists, but "miss the mark", as it were. Perhaps I assume too much of these philosophers of Education, but it appears that there is a burgeoning group in educational academia that draw from postmodernists, ironists and cynics, and yet *miss* the necessary irony to entail full ironism. This highlights the pervasiveness of Education – its enthralling nature grips even the most ironic sorts of thinkers. Like the eyes of the sphinx alluded to in Yeats' poem, we are all allured by its riddle even when horrified by its presence.

IV.ii.i. Missing the Ironist Mark

Some have attempted a direct application of Rorty's ironism to thinking about Education (Kwak, 2004; Hung, 2007), however a closer inspection of these works demonstrates a lack of ironism in their conception of Education more broadly. Notably, Kwak's critique of how the liberal ironist

would fit into an educational paradigm as a 'new picture of the educated person' (2004, p.348) focuses more on the educated than on Education, as she holds the Rortyan conception of Education that it is 'a matter of socialization… and a matter of individuation' (Rorty in Rosenow, 1998, p.266). Kwak critiques Rorty's belief that liberal ironism in schools would instigate liberal harmony, though does not interrogate Education itself through the lens of the ironist. Hung (2007) too explores the implications for forming some kind of postmodern Education through the pursuit of ironism, but fails to orient his ironism outwards towards the totality of Education that he resides in. These examples of Rortyan ironism within educational discourse thus miss the mark as they take the structures that surround them as final, rather than inherently open to interrogation. They *lack irony* in their understanding of themselves or the contingency of their situation as academics within the realm of Education.

Other examples of ironism are available that do not reference Rorty, but make use of the same ways of thinking. In 2009, Hodgson and Standish published an article that exemplified this *par excellence,* in which they attempted 'to show the potential fruitfulness of [poststructuralist] philosophy in opening up different and new ways of thinking about research' (2009, p.309) in Education. They choose to challenge the commonsensical modes of thought within a certain paradigm, thus hold an inherently ironist stance. Hodgson and Standish initiate their article by addressing the current state of postrstructuralism in Education, demonstrating it to be lacking. They reference a "misreading" of Foucault as a way of exemplifying this so-called lack, even identifying how much of educational research's application of Foucault has *missed the irony* of

his analysis of power (p.315).[52] In response to the postmodern opposition to grand-narratives and in an attempt to embody the spirit of Foucault, Hodgson and Standish note the ways that "narrative research" is oft cited as an alternative approach to conventional research methods. However, they also identify how such research is merely another form of the same in terms of the research paradigm adhered to; it 'can be seen to take the concept "story" in its most easily graspable sense. What is imagined to be subversive then quickly conforms to a particular genre of writing the self, in which the questions of whether this is an empowering move and of the self that is assumed by such writing are quietly suppressed' (p.325). They call, therefore, for a closer inspection of poststructuralist thought: 'These are not inert tools for extracting data, chosen as one stage in a linear process. They are the means by which the researcher relates to the world. They are the questions she asks of herself and of that world' (p.325). But herein lies the irony of *their* work, and thus where they "miss the mark". Despite the fact they call for a more meaningful approach to educational research, and as above, ones of ontological significance, they still hold onto the notion 'that the current state of teaching is lacking' (Peim and Flint, 2012, p.103), and thus more sharply framed questions concerning the nature of Education will eventually solve its woes. What they do not concede, something they actually criticise of other writers, is that their work 'fails to acknowledge the conditions of its own constitution' (Hodgson and Standish, 2009, p.310). Whilst they have presented an ironic comportment towards educational research, their ironism does not extend to the broader structure of Education itself.

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[52] This irony is that, too often, we see a Marxist-Foucauldian convergence that treats power as hierarchical, as opposed to the inverted form we see in Foucault. It has now even come to pass that Foucault has formed as sort of tick-list for analysing Education (2009, p.316) – timetables here, Panopticon there, and 'there is no rethinking of thought of the kind that Foucault desired' (p.315), or indeed a redescription of thought as Rorty called for.

Indeed, their work is important for ironist endeavours, but as they do not recognise the nature in which their own thinking is conditioned by its enframing, it just falls short of the sort of ironism I pursue here.

IV.ii.ii. Nick Peim

Peim stands as perhaps the most vehement philosopher in ironic educational thought; his work continuously challenges commonsensical beliefs about Education, noting the omnipresent irony in our continued confidence in Education. Peim is no stranger to humiliation; his irony is often aimed at notorious educational thinkers and commonsensicalism. Though he lacks the irony of Rorty's character – the acknowledgment that his work is no more than another redescription in a long line of redescriptions, and that his ideas are too enframed by the totalising structure of Education – he exemplifies a keen and persistent interrogation of Education itself. Peim also makes use of another important ironist figure, Ian Hunter, thus I will use this section to present Hunter through Peim's lens.

The ironic threads to Peimean thought which I identify below in his book *Rethinking the Education Improvement Agenda* (Flint and Peim, 2012), themes that appear in much of his work (2010, 2012a, 2013a, 2013b, 2018, 2020; with Flint 2009) – and although this book is written with Flint, the chapters of interest to me are primarily written by Peim (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.11). Firstly, Peim's redescription of the school references the work of Foucault, particularly *Discipline and Punish* (1991)*,* and further from a profound educational reading of Foucault[53] in Hunter's *Rethinking the School* (1994). A primary strand in *Discipline and Punish* is the nature in

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[53] It should be noted that, in reference to Foucault in this thesis, the critique of Education that I present him as holding is only implied by his work (especially *Discipline and Punish* (1991)). Foucault says everything about the functioning of Education without ever naming the beast in question.

which Education mirrors that of factories, and consequently prisons, in both its architectural and conceptual formation; it is 'ostensibly an account of the "birth" of the prison [and] describes the historical process whereby a range of techniques became inscribed in practices that became institutionalized...' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.23). Foucault, 'an ironist who is unwilling to be a liberal' says Rorty (1989, p.61), embodies paradigmatic irony neatly. His archaeology and genealogy of society deeply challenged the commonsensical beliefs of us all, such as power being from above, or sexuality being innate as opposed to a social construct. His analysis of schools, factories and prisons was deeply ironist, and although perhaps less so now due to its ubiquity (Hodgson and Standish, 2009), there was an assured irony to the notion that schools mirrored institutions of discipline and punishment, as opposed to philanthropy, when it was released in the twentieth century.

Peim, in his reading of Hunter (1994), furthers the irony of Foucault and traces the institutionalisation of prison logic. It is notable in the formation of Education as a mode of population control in the nineteenth century via 'pioneer bureaucrats' (Peim, 2020, p.7) Stow and Kay-Shuttleworth, and further embodied in 1870 Forster Act: 'Stow's model was designed to help the newly conglomerated urban populations – poor and potentially wayward – to achieve a state of moral and practical self-management' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.22). However, Peim posits that such a movement was less noble than it appeared and was in fact a mode of controlling the burgeoning poor.[54] Therefore, the disciplinary methods of the factory and the prison, metaphorically those of the capillary-governed state depicted in Foucault (1991), were

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[54] 'Controlling' is in many ways an insufficient word here. Education in this mode is not a control in the corralling sort of way, but an ontological transformation, a silent and insidious internalised control, a reframing and *reproduction* of the Being of individuals.

employed to maintain this growing group of 'wild human beings on the streets' (Stow, 1850, p. 125). Underpinning these methods was surveillance, the 'organization of space and time… training the body' and 'train[ing] the "disposition"' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.23) of an individual, thus "rearing" them into citizens of use to the state, a sort of resource to be expended. In this conception, children are treated as a means to an end (Heidegger, 2010a; Stock, 2019) for the "progress" of their society. Such thinking is embodied in educational norms, that of the examination, and indeed anything that 'compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenises, excludes' (Foucault, 1991, p. 183). What Peim alerts us too, then, is how educational thinking draws on this Foucauldian logic unthinkingly in seeing humans as resource, or put another way, *Da-Sein* as *Bestand*. Through making these children beings-in-Education, they internalise disciplinary power and are made useful for the state. By engaging with Peim's ironism, we are made to question the place and purpose of Education more broadly in our world.

Another key thread to Peimean thought is the nature in which the myth of educational improvement is perpetuated through both research and the formation of schooling itself (to be explored in more depth in Chapter V). In part, this is inherited from the Derridean view of social-science research as 'the matrix of all faults' (Derrida, 2010a, p.364), a system purely predicated on the aforementioned metaphysics of presence to be further discussed in Chapter V. Generally, research concerning and within Education, and consequently informative of the formation of schooling, is 'dedicated to general improvement' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.97). From this dedication spring two concerns: firstly, the foundational belief in Education as a source of

redemption for all, and secondly, the enframing nature in which such research occurs.[55] Such

ignorance of these concerns, Peim posits, *perpetuates* the myth that Education is a redemptive

force always oriented towards betterment. This concept is inspired by Hunter's work again, as

Hunter claimed that the educational project, through the mode of the school, was always doomed

to be lacking; it was *designed* to be an apparatus of population control (1994, p.27) that recycled

the methods of creating an internalised gaze as per the subjects of the self-moralising Christian

faith (p.37). The result was to be 'self-reflective and self-governing persons' (p.57) – well

behaved citizens that would discipline themselves through their adherence to the path of

Education. Consequently, Hunter notes how 'liberal and Marxian approaches may simply be too

"profound" for their object [the school]' (pp.28-29), meaning that humanist projects of

egalitarianism and liberty are simply not what the school was designed to do. The mythical

redemptive nature of the school seems to neglect this quite clear history by regurgitating the

commonly-held belief that 'the current state of teaching is lacking' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.103),

the assumption that with some form of meddling or bright idea, Education can truly become what

it was always meant for. Peim believes that the dedication to improving schooling, or more

precisely *returning* it to its original purpose, is founded on a misplaced 'dream of social justice

that so many of its advocates persist in proclaiming and insist on working towards so tirelessly'

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[55] Note, for example, the critique provided of esteemed educational philosopher (and metaphysician) Carr: 'Although educational researchers often behave as though they belong to a single intellectual community, the sad truth is that educational research now embraces so many traditions [etc.] … that it cannot claim to meet even the most minimal criteria of homogeneity…' Peim's reply to Carr: 'Exasperation… and lament… characterize the mood here. The word now suggests a nostalgically idyllic past when this sad state of affairs was not the case; it also implies a future when homogeneity can be restored… Unphased by the scale or nature of the ontological problem… the "practical" solution turns out to rest on the faith that practice is the privileged position from which all educational research and knowledge should be judged' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.117).

(Peim, 2013b, p.40). But really, this myth is 'trying to return us to the ideal community we never had' (p.33). Much like Derrida's hauntology, Peim uses this ironist way of thinking to interrogate the idea of a presenced form of Education that may rather be an absence.

Finally, Peim often considers the ontological impact of Education on human beings (or *Da-Sein*), particularly that of Education's most useful resource: children. He identifies the 1870 Forster Act as a "turn" in which 'a social technology of childhood' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.69) appeared through the mode of schooling. This is integral, not just in the nature of its turning children into productive resources, but in the ways in which is shapes the Being of children – being a child becomes made through Education, thus an ontology of childhood arises. Up until the Industrial Revolution, childhood held no special place in the architecture of humanity. However, after their utility became apparent and thus allowing a space for cruelty and maltreatment, their Being was to be reconsidered. 'Images of poor, swarming children haunt nineteenth century consciousness' (p.71) in Blake's 'little black thing among the snow' (1970, p.146) or Dickens' unyielding orphaned youths. Clearly, a sense of pity entered the social consciousness surrounding children, presenting them as 'uncivilized and often abandoned' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.72) creatures with no possible source of redemption. Peim posits that the faith placed in Education amongst the bourgeoisie was to be transferred to poverty-stricken children, and thus an apparatus was to be developed to save them from their thrown position.

We must remember, though, that this apparatus is not fit for purpose. If we consider Peim's key ideas – the myths on which Education relies and its formation as population control – we can glean how Education will not serve as a remedy to the ills of the poor. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, as Education took hold as the primary apparatus for the purpose of

'redirect[ing] the disoriented subjectivity of the wayward child, state regulation seeks to identify individuals, families, even "communities" in need of remedial provision' (p.70). These children are thus labelled by Education, thrown into it, and forced to conform to it. Once thrown into this world of schooling, they have little choice but to adapt to the system that surrounds them: 'the contemporary "world" of childhood produces specific modes of being within a set of beliefs and practices arising from a version of reality that remains open to interrogation' (p.71). Children must be-in-Education, or they fail to be at all, at least in the eyes of contemporary society. However, when Education is open to so much ridicule and humiliation, we should be far more cautious of allowing it such dominance, specifically in the complex world of childhood. Perhaps a central ethic that can be drawn from Peim, and one that should be remembered when critics decry the nihilism of this thesis, is that children are the primary targets for Education. Therefore, if what I write is taken seriously, we should be alarmed at the ways in which we allow, what I claim to be, a rampant beast[56] to control the mode of being a child. We must constantly rethink, or *redescribe,* how Education shapes these individuals, and indeed Peim has endeavoured to do so in his writing.

IV.ii.iii. Ansgar Allen

Allen's work demonstrates the movement amongst philosophers of Education in which one describes Education in a manner more terrifying and horrific than their predecessor. Allen proposes a gruesome irony concerning Education: that it is an act of violent eugenics as meritocracy is not only mythological, but also barbaric in its structure. What sets Allen apart

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[56] It will take some time before we can see *how* Education manifests as this beast – it will take the total of all the following chapters to make such an assertion. Clues are, however, littered throughout the thesis, often in the footnotes.

from Peim in the ironist tradition is the acknowledgement of irony. He prefaces *Benign*

Violence with the notion of his text being an '*indigestible meal*' (2014, p.x) for academia, as that

is what it critiques, yet acknowledges the ways in which it is 'confined by its context' (p.x), as it

was written within both the physical and metaphorical space of academic Education. Allen's

ironism is affirmed by his embracing of fictive writing as both an approach and a method:

'Foucault once said "that there is no question" of his writing "being anything else than fiction"'

(p.69). Foucault, Allen, Derrida, and Rorty all treat academic discourse as a story that we tell

ourselves, one that we choose to believe for one reason or another (Grigoriev, 2011). By such a

definition, they can be read in the same way as piece of literary fiction, with characters, themes

and narrative structures.

Benign Violence is initiated with similar traces to Peim's such as the function of Foucault's

disciplinary power in nineteenth-century education, particularly in the rise of the monitorial and

moral training school. Many of the arguments mirror Peim's too, thus I will not cover them in

this chapter, although I should mention Allen's use of Foucault's 'biopower' (Allen, 2014,

p.87).[57] This apparatus of discipline moves beyond the model of the Panopticon by exploiting the

'already-existing life processes' (p.87) and biological norms of humanity such as aging, sickness,

gender, death and so forth. It is his contention that Education does this expertly, in particular as a

mode of eugenics:

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[57] As Foucault is broadly a background figure in this thesis, I have not utilised the vocabulary of biopower in my own writing. This said, many of the arguments made are ostensibly biopolitical, such as the exertion of discipline on bodies in Chapter VII and the manipulation of human nature in Chapter VIII.

From the eugenic perspective, population becomes the end of government, with the improvement of the species as its target… It was to operate through the removal of "undesirable" outliers… as part of a process that would shift the normal distribution in a more "desirable" direction. (p.93)

Eugenics quickly became a 'national-level concern… [Therefore] the good of the nation becomes equivalent to the good of the biological species' (p108). Through a biopolitical apparatus, the undesirables of the nineteenth-century urban sprawl were to be 'bred out of the population' (p.108), partially through the use of mass-schooling, and in particular, the assessment that takes place in the classroom and the exam hall. Such logic deems portions of humanity inherently idiotic, incapable or dangerous, therefore in need of a corrective force to ensure the good of society. Through producing a system in which many are doomed to failure, Education has allowed a certain portion of the population to suffer and eventually "disappear", so for the "common good". It has therefore performed 'indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on' (p.117). This is the violence of Education, and if I am to redescribe Education as a beast, then this concern of it being murderous, devouring the less-fortunate, seems befitting.

Such violence has been dispersed, according to Allen, into the lauded social technology of meritocracy, now existing in a 'fluid form' (p.132). This is the common sense of Education that Allen aims his attack towards: the belief in Education's assisting of social climbing through rewarding aptitude and effort. I have explained the need for irony in meritocratic faith in Chapter III (in which Allen (2011) featured), so will not explain it again. However, it is the way in which Allen redescribes meritocracy as a biopolitical apparatus to enforce eugenics that is worth

exploring. Allen posits that through imbibing the meritocratic ideologies of the present, we now believe that 'anyone can reach the stars' (p.231). But this is an act of acceptable cruelty. Students seen to enter the system and fail have only their lack of effort to answer to, or their biologically determined lack of intelligence, and thus must suffer the consequences. As aforementioned, this failure is an act of 'indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on…' (p.117).

Overtly, Allen is calling us to question our educational paradigm, yes, but sometimes it becomes a *call to arms*, a preparation for a bloody war: 'It is time to inaugurate a resistance… power is *never* in retreat.' (p.9). Like the ironists before him, so too does Allen bring forward the vocabulary of war. What this does tell us, however, is that Allen, like Peim before him, has no intention to keep his ironism private. The intention to humiliate Education is palpable here, and he embodies a persona similar to the one in this thesis.

IV.iii. The Rough Beast

The above writers have all proven themselves to be potent ironists regarding an alternative approach to thinking about Education. But pivotally, we need some new vocabulary to continue to redescribe Education. As Rorty says, we must continue to 'redescribe lots and lots of things in new ways' (1989, p.9). You will remember that Chapter I introduced *The Second Coming* by Yeats as a way of redescribing Education. I posited that it not only provides a *name* for Education, but also yields a *narrative* that mirrors the way I wish to redescribe Education here. Therefore, it extends beyond a piece of vocabulary, and rather becomes a central metaphor for Education in this thesis.

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This poem is certainly important in the realm of thinking about things in new ways. Quite fittingly, recent years have seen a rise in the utilisation of Yeats' vocabulary from the poem to describe the state of our current socio-political situation. Lines from *The Second Coming* have been widely quoted in academic work throughout the last decade (Ballard, 2016), emphasising the power of using Yeats's words to redescribe the most troubling of things. Indeed, the phrases 'rough beast' and 'widening gyre' (Yeats, 2000, p.159) have been made use of in educational research before (Gooderham, 1997; Milton et al., 2003) too. But these examples merely reference Yeats' poem in a throwaway manner.[58] These utilisations of Yeats bear no consideration of the connotations of the poem; the vocabulary has not been used to *redescribe* Education, rather it is to argue a point with a well-known phrase; they idiomise Yeats. It is my contention, however, that vocabulary from the wider poem is useful and needs consideration in its meaning, therefore allowing me to no longer 'ask questions phrased in the old words' (Rorty, 1989, p.78). Below, I will readdress some of the Yeatsean metaphor and consider how it might be applicable to thinking of Education in new ways.

Considering what we have learned from Nietzsche (2001), we know that God is dead. In Yeats' terms, this is the 'widening gyre' (Yeats, 2000, p.159) that we find ourselves amidst in postmodernity, and 'as all commentators would agree, the first stanza describes a society fallen into a state of anarchy' (Deane, 1995, p.636). As things fall apart, we see the Derridean crisis of language as 'the centre cannot hold' (p.159), where 'substitutions of center for center' (Derrida,

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[58] Milton et al. raise 'the widening gyre' (2003) in the title of their research, yet make no reference to the poem or its language until the conclusion. We see an inexplicable correlation between their argument and the Yeatsean phrase: 'Clearly, enrolling more students was not sufficient to ensure an increase in faculty, as the decline in the number of faculty and the reconfiguration of existing adult education programs indicate' (p.39).

2010a, p.353) relentlessly occur. Perhaps this Yeatsean chaos may have prophesised the 'multiplicity, instability, inconsistency, and paradox' (Shugart, 1999, p.435) of grand narratives (Lyotard, 1986). Yeats sets his scene amidst a desert, and it feels only fitting that Baudrillard presented our postmodern state as the '*desert of the real*' (2014, p.1). The first stanza of Yeats' poem thus becomes a powerful way of redescribing the state that we are already in – the state of postmodernity depicted throughout Chapter II and III.

But as Baudrillard noted, the death of God incurred by modernity is a 'twisted advent, a perverse event, an unintelligible reversion to the logic of reason' (2014, p.26), where God's death only spawned a new religion. Indeed, 'the social decentering of the first stanza reflects the tribulations preceding the Second Coming. The Second Coming therefore represents the hope of a final return to the center' (Deane, 1995, p.639). As Yeats says, 'a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*' (2000, p.159) appears in the desert, and thus somehow in our killing of God we have dreamt up the substitution – a dream of another truth or certainty to stabilise modernity where man 'has become the engineer of his own Messiah' (Illich, 1971, p.45). We are therefore left wondering what might be born in the wake of such death. I have suggested a few times already that this replacement for God may be that of Education, and there are a few reasons for this. Firstly, it is the way in which it carries the myth of redemption (Peim, 2013b, 2018, 2020) that modernity debunked about God. Secondly, since its nineteenth century massification (Hunter, 1994), Education is a central tenant *of* modernity, thus the apparatus that aided in killing God left standing at the end of it all. Finally, it is the way in which Education designates ontology, whether that of the child, through eugenics or as biopower (Allen, 2014). This supplementing of God will be made much clearer in Chapter VII.

What is so terrifying about Yeats' image is that the Second Coming, the substitution for God amidst (post)modernity, is not something of salvation, but a *rough beast.* Despite the calls for 'some revelation' (Yeats, 200, p.159) from the people in strife, Yeats gives them a monster. This monster seems to be some sort of hybrid of creatures, 'A shape with lion body and the head of a man,/A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun' (2000, p.159). His description signifies the 'image of the Sphinx, with all its associated history and myth – a pagan force from the far past' (Deane, 1995, p.639), thus we are reminded that this redemption is anything but holy and is rather monstrous, possessing 'size, strength, and ferocity' (p.640). Education too is some monstrous hybrid of various smaller institutions and discourses. In fact, the way we can treat so many things as Education makes it is surprising that monstrous or chimeric[59] language has not been used more often. Education is a sprawling mass of multiple things, thus, as a giant multiplicity of entities all bound together to create some gigantic being, should we not be keener to use the Yeatsean vocabulary of beasts to describe it? This level of complexity and interobjectivity is often a challenge to educational researchers (as will be seen in Chapter V), however what this metaphor allows us to do is to conceive of Education as *all that it is*, rather than trying to consolidate our definition to one singular element of it or dream of another Education that may never come into being. In fact, this dream – the Spiritus Mundi – may well be the very rough beast that stalks us.

Further, the beast has been asleep for 'twenty centuries' and brings 'darkness' rather than light (Yeats, 2000, p.159). As has been made clear in this chapter, the mythology of Education as a redemptive force is founded in its historical discourse, and thus we must be ready to challenge

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[59] The chimera, the fire-breathing creature with two heads, is of course another beast that bears similarity to the rough beast. Yeats' description – 'a lion body and the head of a man' – may intimate a sphynx-like creature, but what it implies is monstrous hybridity, just like that of the chimera, manticore or minotaur.

this beast rather than pretend that it is going to save us. As such, the dominant and historical

discourse that surrounds Education will be explored in Chapters VI-VIII. But the final line of the

poem, that the beast is still yet 'to be born' (p.159), reminds us that this enormous thing that we

cannot quite grasp can still grow, and thus it can become even greater still. Like the xenomorph

in *Alien* (1979), already an ancient and terrifying beast, it can still be reborn over and over if we

allow it inside of us. It is too late, of course, as Education has enframed our very Being, and thus

we have all allowed it inside. Or rather, we remain inside of it, as if we have stepped into the

belly of the beast.

What is essential, however, is that the people of the poem do not know that their Second Coming

is a beast; for them, it is still the Second Coming of God. As Harrison notes, 'All the Egyptian

sphinxes are representations of Horus, the Egyptian God of Light, who was reborn each day as

the rising sun, the symbol of renewed life… Yeats would have been familiar with this

mythology' (1995, p.362). Consequently, this beast may *still be seen as a bringer of light,* as

God, to the people who "summoned" him from their collective imagination. As will be made very

clear in Chapter VI, this feature of bringing light is essential to God, the divine, and to Education.

Therefore, when this beast arrives in the poem, it is easy for people to ignore its monstrosity and

hope that it will redeem them.

Now we have suitably understood the role of an ironist and how it may look in relation to

Education, the ironist redescription of Education has consequently begun, or rather, it started in

Chapter I. However, the more palpable example of this redescription will not be seen clearly until

Chapter VI when I begin approaching the historical and contemporary discourse of Education –

its 'twenty centuries of stony sleep' as it were. Instead, in the next chapter, I will explain *how* I

intend to explore Education in the manner of an ironist.

V. (No) Method

V.i. Against Method

It seems I should begin by emphasising that this chapter does not present a "methodology", or at least not in the conventional sense of the term. As will be explored below, this thesis intends to redescribe what could be conventionally called a thesis. Indeed, in line with what I said of Rorty in Chapter III, the very notion of the thesis could be considered an element of Education's final vocabulary, another supposedly stable term that is used too often without irony. None of this is to say that I do not have an "approach" to Education – quite the contrary. But the significations of "methodology" are inherently narrowing and final, decreeing fixed models of analysis and research that not only do I firmly oppose, but also wish to move beyond. This approach intends to challenge the paradigms so commonly adhered to in educational research, and indeed in research in general.

Two layers of irony arise here, naturally. Firstly, I must remember that despite my intentions to move past commonplace modes of research, to truly challenge and redescribe the dominant paradigm would be beyond the scope of this thesis, or indeed any piece of writing; I can only write within the paradigm that Education has granted me. As will be continually obvious, there is no escape from Education's pervasiveness. Everything I think, read and write here is influenced by Education, and will continue to be so. I have been and still am learner, teacher, researcher and researched. My essay writing has been taught to me, mostly in a classroom. My skills of reading have been nurtured in the university, thus I could never claim that this thesis exists outside of the educational paradigm. A second, perhaps more perturbing layer of *eirôneia* exists, however, in that *I am writing a thesis*, and thus must maintain some sense of resemblance to a thesis. After

all, a thesis must be read, evaluated, marked and critiqued. It will be subject to the educational paradigm which it so vehemently opposes. Whoever reads these words is likely to be currently sitting in (or at least works for) an educational institution. Therefore, the *structure* of this thesis still resembles something that can be considered as such: a vague introduction, literature review, methodology (of sorts), analysis, and conclusion, will all occur in this linear order, although hopefully they debunk the prescriptive nature in which these are normally constructed.

What follows is therefore a theoretical approach towards Education in the manner of an ironist, and an explanation of the ways that this ironist thinks about the texts in question, something not to be reduced to a conventional methodology, the selection from a 'process menu for the would-be researcher' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.109). I therefore begin by examining what the methods of this thesis are *not,* in relation to dominant philosophies of Education, then explore the ways in which those dominant analyses can be avoided through a more Rortyan/Heideggerian/Derridean ontological inquiry. Further, I will explain some ways this ontological inquiry can occur, but by no means is this a prescriptive list or a frame. Rather, it is a consideration of the texts I choose to read, the ways in which I read those texts, the deconstructive tools being utilised, and the place, purpose and style of the fictional redescription. In turn, these "methods" will collude to form my *ironist ontology*.

V.ii. Common Methods in Philosophy of Education

Though I contest the term, this thesis is likely to be labelled as "Philosophy of Education". I contest it because it is an unironic piece of final vocabulary, an 'ordering of objects' (Foucault, 2002, p.54) into a hierarchised form of discourse. It might just as well be called "Literature about Education", "Educational Fictions", "Thoughts about Education", or others, or nothing at all. But

of course, its place in the academy as a fixed body knowledge requires unifying principles within the discourse, principles found in compendiums to studying "Philosophy of Education". It is important to understand the field I am contesting here, thus to make it much clearer why the approach I use is an ironist one; this ironism exists in an opposition that both redescribes the methodology propounded by these compendiums and engages with the sorts of texts they expound. As Culler says of Derrida's inherently ironist approach, one 'simultaneously maintains the opposition by (1) employing it in one's argument… and (2) reinstating it with a reversal that gives it different status and impact' (1982, p.150). (1) will be explored later in this chapter, but what follows in this section is relevant to (2). It is an ironist commentary of common methodology in "Philosophy of Education", the 'reinstating… with a reversal that gives it different status and impact' (p.150). In order to exemplify what this thesis is not, or in order to explain how my work is different from "standard" philosophy of Education, I will present Pring's handbook *Philosophy of Educational Research* (2004) as the example *par excellence* of unironic thinking about Education. Siegel's *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education* (2010) and Curren's *Philosophy of Education: An Anthology* (2007) will be referenced and make similar claims to Pring, but my focus generally remains on Pring (2004) as his compendium is dedicated entirely to methodology rather than the field more broadly. Largely speaking, the issues I raise with the likes of Pring, Curren or Siegel are based on an ironist insight of Derrida's raised in Chapter IV: the commonsensical belief that Education can be explored through 'the determination of Being as *presence'* (Derrida, 2010a, p.353). To reiterate, Derrida tells us that these presences we seek, those such as Education, are in fact spectral, that is, not *quite there*. We will see how Pring and his fellow philosophers of Education intend to find ways of solidifying the presence of Education so to make it an object of empirical investigation, rather than accepting

the ghost-like presence/absence of it. Make no mistake here, this is an act of ironist *humiliation* –

precisely that which I found problematic with Rorty in Chapter III – as I still maintain that it is

only through embracing this humiliation can we allow new vocabularies to enter into public

discourse.

V.ii.i. Pring's Method

Pring begins his proposed approach to educational research with the ontological question, as he

states that we should be 'clarifying or defining… terms like "education" … which might be

described as "essentially contestable"' (2004, p.9). Curren too initiates his compendium with the

ontological question 'What is Education?' (2010, pp.15-75), and we could of course see one of

the charges of this thesis as being exactly that as I will explore in this chapter. The "what is?"

question cannot have a definitive answer for the ironist though. The answers provided in this

thesis are deliberately 'contestable' (Pring, 2004, p.9), as it is the ironist's belief that there can be

no *final* answer to that question, only further redescriptions. This is one of the reasons that an

intentionally fictional redescription of Education has been provided, thus indicating there is no

desire for a fixed presence or finality in my version of the answer. Pring, however, abandons any

sense of irony when he asks the ontological question about Education:

> There are various ways of getting around this problem… *stipulate,* in precise and
>
> unambiguous terms, what you mean when you use a particular word... [or give] *ostensive*
>
> *definitions* – where a word is defined by pointing to the objects to which it exclusively
>
> refers. Thus, in defining "education", one might point to particular activities or what goes
>
> on in particular schools… Getting the meaning of a word requires close examination of its
>
> *usage* – the complex interconnections entailed by its use in different contexts… [And]

think of the different ways of understanding which are brought together under this one

label… to trace the different traditions associated with this description. (2004, pp.9-11)

Pring's errors are numerous for the ironist. The desire to get 'around this problem' of what

Education might be through stipulation or definition, rather than accept its lack of presence is to

ignore its contestable, or even spectral, nature. Thus, Pring immediately does violence to the

ontology of Education as the 'ontological dimension cannot be elided by some pragmatic sleight

of hand' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.111); short-circuiting its problematic nature inherently

destabilises any research that follows. In addition, the belief that Education can be stipulated or

defined in 'precise and unambiguous terms' (2004, p.9) ignores the 'domain and the play of

signification' (Derrida, 2010a, p.354). In the signifying chain of references that both differs and

defers to other references, there is no way to lay out Education in a vocabulary that is precisely

unambiguous. To follow Pring's example, what if we were to stipulate that Education *is* the mode

through which one learns 'to read, to write, to be acquainted with and appreciate certain

literature' (Pring, 2004, p.10), so to allow us to continue our research into Education? Pring

would encourage us to set up a methodology and continue our predictions (pp.33-43), but the

ironist is instead confronted with the unironic finality of such a statement. Reading, writing,

literature and acquaintance are terms that yield a complex chain of significations. Any research

that investigates Education as an apparatus to achieve these ends is thus intrinsically falsified by

the fixing of the signification of what Education is, and only stands to depict Education as either

a success or failure in these singular, but ultimately contestable, endeavours. Indeed, what if

Education cannot be defined by any single statement, and thus cannot be agreed to be achieving

said aims? Quite so, to 'point' to the objects that embody Education ignores the hauntological

fact that Education is not as palpably present and graspable as we would believe. We could point to any number of things and deem them to *be* Education – teachers, learners, policies and systems, bodies, school buildings, playgrounds, classrooms, sports fields and halls, assessment, curriculum, the list could go on (Stock, 2019, p.405). It seems as if everything is haunted by Education's presence, thus calling us to rethink its ontology: what *is it,* if we can point to any number of things in the world and say "there it is"? To acknowledge, for example, the playgrounds as explicitly that which is Education would be to neglect how the playground is affected by its relation to the school, the students, or the historical structures that shape it. Perhaps we always need to acknowledge the strangeness, or indeed the *monstrosity,* of something like Education as a supposedly definable object.

Though Pring would have us inspect how the word "education" manifests in the discourse examined, he intends us to do so without irony. He seeks finality to allow his readers to be able to discuss Education, thus narrows his third approach: 'Therefore, we think hard about what is implied in our description of someone as "educated" or in calling an activity or experience "educational". What logically follows on from such a description?' (2004, p.10). The use of 'logically' implies we are only to follow logical chains of meaning, as opposed to the 'play of signification' (Derrida, 2010a, p.354). By following logical significations, we only examine what is already communally agreed – what is commonsense or final. To give an example, what if we were to look at schools, and thus logically think of teaching, or pastoral care, or teenagers, or curricula? What has been ignored by this chain of logic? Perhaps we miss eugenics, or violence, for example (Allen, 2011), elements that certainly lurk within the broader discourse of schools, but in no way act as the next logical step in thinking of them. Pring's approach is thus not alien to

the ironist, but attempts to "skip to the end" too quickly, rather than revel in the illogical nature of signification that exists within play. Ultimately, he seeks to "label" Education, but this does not bring us closer to understanding what Education is. The determination of Pring's approaches to give solidity and presence (Derrida, 2010a; 2010c) to the definition of Education is precisely what the ironist opposes, rather than simply agreeing that it is only another redescription.[60]

The desire to get 'around this problem' (Pring, 2004, p.9) of ontology is rife in philosophy of Education. Siegel narrows his approach to Education by contending we can view Education through three lenses – pragmatist, feminist or postmodernist (2010), but does not question the overt strangeness of Education itself as discussed above; rather, it is a matter of picking one of these approaches and working within it. Curren, though more accepting of the interplay between significant narratives, still contends that Education is 'more-or-less systematic practices of supervising and guiding activities of persons in ways intended to promote valuable forms of learning and development' (2007, p.3), certainly a commonsensical belief. It is only through rejecting such approaches, therefore, that the rich ontology of Education can be examined, and so too can the monstrous elements of this great being be understood. For Pring and his entourage, no such monstrosity could ever be really found. It seems as if, for Pring and other philosophers of Education, this ontological question is one that *interferes* with research and must be asked in an uninterested sort of way, a problem to be overcome as opposed to the central question about Education that must precede all others. After all, 'every metaphysical question always

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[60] Quite so, we see this determination to give solid presence through Pring's later clarification in his guide; he contends that in spite of the 'different ways of understanding' (Pring, 2004, p.11) what Education might be, we should narrow our definitions of it to anything linked to the Deweyan notion of growth (p.14). Despite the discussion surrounding tracing and context, Pring believes that anything not related to growth cannot be educational, and neither can anything fundamentally pejorative.

encompasses the whole range of metaphysical problems. Every question is itself always the whole' (Heidegger, 2011a, p. 45); it invites us to consider beings and their inherently rich and complex Being (as discussed in the previous chapter and in later sections of this one).

V.ii.ii. Empirical Methods

The remainder of Pring's handbook focuses on the "real" methodology that should be used to examine Education, and here more complications arise for the ironist. He gives examples of the different ways in which educational research could occur: '*Observing what happens…Experimenting… Interviewing… Case studying… Historical research…*' (2004, pp.33-43). We see the 'process menu for the would-be researcher: choose your orientation, produce your design, gather your data, set your mode of interpretation, produce findings, display and disseminate' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.109). Such 'menus' encourage the sort of problems I have identified above where Education is treated like a simplistic object, propounding its possibility to be carved up or ordered into neatly observable phenomena, to paraphrase Foucault (2002, p.54). There is nothing wrong with these particular methods *per se*, but the nature in which they are prescribed as sensible lenses through which Education should be viewed prevent research from asking new questions as it continues to rely on old vocabulary. These questions are a way of treating the examined object, here Education, as *Bestand,* a resource to be extracted through a calculated frame. That calculative frame does not have to include quantitative data; calculation does not always mean numbers. Rather, we see the 'tendency for research to be represented as a technical process, a series of "craft" procedures to be applied to reveal meanings' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.121). We see the enframing [*Gestellen*] of Education through research, whereas it might be Education that enframes us. Once again, the monstrous structure of the Ouroboros is summoned.

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Pring's method inevitably manifests as empirical research through a "philosophical" lens, so why do I also object to that method in my role as an ironist? Derrida contends that the language of research is a blunt tool that cannot ascribe truth to that which it observes – it is 'the matrix of all faults' (2010a, p.364). In creating a structure to observe the world, well-worn structures such as case studies, longitudinal studies, comparative studies, frame that which they observe (Pring, 2004; Thomas, 2013; Cohen et al., 2017 all purport such structures in their compendiums to educational research). But for Derrida, these are the matrices of fault; they can only describe within the structure created by the observer. There is no truth to be found here, only the truism of what exists within the frame.[61] Perhaps such research only presents the tool, rather than what the tool examines. Consider a typical approach to educational research, the observation, a model commonly employed due to the dynamic nature of teaching and learning. What is encouraged, however, by guides like Pring's, is a 'consistency of approach' (2004, p.46), encouraging strict frames such as 'observation schedules' (p.46). The researcher's matrix is created where only the pre-designated (final) vocabulary of an observation can be seen. The phenomena that takes place for the observer is now clouded by the frame – the stricture of the approach, not sharpened by it, as what does not exist in the predetermined matrix is lost or unacknowledged.[62] The chain of

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[61] Such thinking is carried into the physical sciences in Feyerabend's *Against Method*, an ironist approach to scientific methodology. He summarises the anti-empirical stance neatly: 'perception and experimentation obey laws of their own' (2010, p.221)

[62] What might happen in an observation that exists outside of the frame of observation? Observation must have a framework; it requires a delineated set of phenomena to be found. But of course, all phenomena are intertwined in the network of signification. The paint that peels off the wall may not be part of the observer's framework, and neither may the thrownness of the teacher, or the object of the school, but this does not mean they do not haunt the lesson. The observer only seeks to find that which they seek to find, even if they find that which is contrary. They have presenced Education in the mode of their frame – and their frame is a product of their Education, and indeed educational research strategies and university contexts. Education has enframed the view of Education – another snake that eats its own tail, another eternal recurrence of the beast that comes again and again.

signification is ignored, the ontological status of the object it exists within forgotten, and the beings inhabiting it overlooked.

And so, we are left with *what am I doing* in this thesis, if I am not doing what Pring does? We must remember, the ironist does not think that their method is any better than the empiricist. Merely, they make no claims to be attempting to find objective truths. Indeed, you will notice that I have provided multiple aims throughout Chapters I-IV; this is intentional. The thesis is not predicated on answering any one of these questions as its driving principle, as this would be getting around the problem as Pring so neatly put it. Rather, these questions are merely just that, questions that I may answer on the nature of their interest, rather than their ability to provide truth. What I try and outline below, therefore, is some of the thinking that has led to the asking of these questions, and indeed other questions that follow.

V.iii. Ontological Thinking

In response to Pring, and indeed other educationalists in their attempt to philosophise about Education, it seems essential that I should try and approach that endeavour in which they failed – the ontological question of Education.[63] This is the question taken more seriously in this thesis above all others (though this is not simply an "aim"). Broadly, I contend that we need to think about Education as a being, something that, honestly, we are unsure about. We are of course unsure about *all* beings, and indeed their Being. But for me, as indeed for Heidegger (2010a),

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[63] The ironist does not have to be an ontologist; the ironist can be any sort of philosopher and investigate whatever they please, so long as it is conducted through the lens of irony. However, I contend in line with Heidegger that all investigation is to be initially ontological, that is, the inception of investigating something must begin with interrogating that nature of the being. This is not to say there is a correct ontology either. There are only further redescriptions of them, as is being done here.

questions about Being are more important than answers; indeed, questioning is all that is available. This question about *Education's* Being is of upmost importance, however, because if we think of Education in the manner of a being (something that educational research, even in the philosophical arena, often neglects – as was made clear in Pring (2004) and highlighted by Flint and Peim (2012)), we realise that 'it gives shape to the being who gives shape to it' (Hunter, 1994, p.1). Questions of our own Being are fundamentally tied to Education, and the questions of one are related to the other. What a strange being this is, therefore, as what can I know of my own Being (or you of yours) if I do not know of the being that gave shape to it? It is troubling that much research intends to sidestep this question, as surely this one precedes all others, as it did for Heidegger in his ontological inquiry? Put differently, what needs emphasising here is the sense that Education has become so flexible in its usage that most thinkers are keen to "pin it down", whether that be in the unironic way that Pring does by linking it to anything exemplifying the Deweyan notion of growth (Pring, 2004, p.11), or as Foucault does as a social indoctrinating apparatus (1991, pp.148-194, or in a Lyotardian fashion as an institution of knowledge reproduction (1986, pp.48-51). What I am intending to demonstrate in this thesis, however, is that Education is feasibly *all* of these things, perhaps some more than others, and equally may be none of them. But that *thing* that encompasses all of those different stipulations, definitions and objects is *something,* even if we cannot fully realise it (make it present) or uncover it (describe it through empirical truths).

Indeed, for Education to be such a flexible idea, we are left ultimately dumfounded by *what it is.* This said, in no way do I believe that Education can be stipulated as one particular thing either – that would be purely unironic. Rather, I believe that Education can be redescribed to be lots of

different things, things that we would never think to use in the mode of common sense, things such as a rough beast. A metaphor such as this one is helpful in the sense that it is deliberately intangible and abstract, whilst also largely usable in discourse. It achieves the redescriptive purposes outlined in Chapter IV. For, it is not until the vocabulary of this ontological discussion is agreed upon in discourse (if it ever can) that *any* other research around Education can be conducted. We cannot ask questions like "how do we help students make progress?", or even "what does progress mean?" if we do not understand the institution, or frame, in which that progress is made. Part of the approach of this thesis, then, is an embracing of ontological thinking.

Consequently, what follows is a description of a rather speculative ontology and the necessary thinking that it entails, and how that may manifest in regard to Education. However, to engage with ironist ontology we must also understand the heritage of Heidegger's theology and ontotheology, as will be developed below. What we must also remember is that Rorty, through this Heideggerian tradition, believes that beings are *shaped* by vocabulary. When he speaks of ourselves, he states that 'he would have created the only part of himself that mattered by constructing his own mind. To create one's mind is to create one's own language' (Rorty, 1989, p.27). It is with this quip that we must see our interrogation of other beings as some sort of inquiry into the vocabulary that creates them, or as I prefer, gives them shape. As we approach the vocabulary that surrounds a being, really, we start to encounter the being itself. Understanding this requires a much deeper grasp of ontology, however. I will not reference Rorty often here, as he mostly speaks of Heidegger in relation to his ironist strand rather than the roots

of his thinking. Therefore, this section is an archaeology of Rorty's thought through Heidegger's major works.

V.iii.i. Ontology

The branch of philosophy dubbed "ontology" can be reductively defined as the philosophy of being. It is a flexible term that probes the things that we find in the world and asks questions about *how* they "be". I, for example, sometimes use the word to describe the way that we *believe* something exists – a dominant ontology, and sometimes use to it to discuss how something *might* exist – a reontologisation, or even to posit how something ultimately *does* exist, even if we cannot access that particular essence. To paraphrase Polt in his description of Heidegger, we encounter beings such as people, animals and flowers, alongside inanimate things like textbooks and biros. However, we are also left with strange beings like thoughts, myths, dreams and concepts. Polt cites the example of a dragon (1999, p.2) as a being that does not exist yet exists in other beings like stories and images and dragon-like lizards.[64] Consequently, interrogation of beings does not just incur the material, but also the immaterial, abstract and even imaginary beings of the world.

Ontology thus seeks to explore the way that there is *something rather than nothing*, and consequently explore *how* these beings exist. Does a student exist in the same way as the school they attend, the class they are in, or as the grade they attained? Immediately, we are given a mode

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[64] One must resist their urge to think of beings in the purely "material" sense, a distinction that bears no fruit for Heideggerean ontology. Something like an idea, a story or an image still *exist,* in the sense that they are real for the beings that care about Being (Da-Sein). As Harman (2018) contends, Sherlock Holmes has had as much impact on the "material reality" of the world as the book that it was printed in, even if he does not exist in the common material/ideal distinction. Beings (and I often use the word objects interchangeably), are any *thing* open to such inquiry.

of thinking that is pertinent to this thesis, and that is purely to interrogate all beings through questioning them, not describing them – 'Every questioning is a seeking. Every seeking takes its lead beforehand from what is sought. Questioning is a knowing search for their thatness and whatness' (Heidegger, 2010a, p.4). What Heidegger means by this is that by asking questions about beings, we seek to understand them, and must think about what we think we already know about them. This perhaps seems tautological, but when I return to asking a question like "what is Education?", the many answers that could be given demonstrate that this is a pivotal and powerful inquiry into a being. To follow a commonplace example, let us say Education is a system in which people learn – a stipulation that can now be researched for modes of learning (and inherently teaching, performances, results, etc.). But what are these things that have been stipulated? What are systems, people or learning? How do beings exist within systems, and do systems affect Being; how do beings affect systems? In what manner do systems exist in the world, and *how do they stand with Being*? Pivotally, what is the *is* of the "what is Education" question? The ontological questions begin to act as a seeking of the being in the way that it exists – a grasping of its Being, rather than just a description of what we believe is known. The questioning of things starts to stretch much further than examining our preconceived notions of asking about objects.

To reiterate the ontological difference between being and Being from Chapter IV: though beings indeed *exist* in the world, they have an essence of existence, a something that makes it the being that it is. Engaging with the is-ness of a being helps us come closer to its ontology. Heidegger proposes, for example, that 'there "is" no such thing as *a* useful thing' (2010a, p.68), only objects that have been made useful by capitalising upon their essence. The classic example Heidegger

offers is that of a hammer, which in many ways is completely useless thus lacks any sense of meaning to us. If I tried to use it to write on a white board or to cook eggs with, it would appear as an *objet* and nothing more. However, when I use it to hammer a nail into a wall, I 'have appropriated the utensil in the most useful way possible' (p.69). It is therefore by *using* the hammer-ness of the hammer that it reveals itself to me as an object. It is by doing (or *being*) that we begin to understand *how* objects be-in-the-world, just as he understood humans as *being-there* – a verb, not a noun. This leaves us with another thread to explore in the questioning of Education; what is the Education-ness of Education? What about how it is being reveals its Being? This is of course why questioning the being is so important, and why the likes of Pring are philosophically short sighted. We must therefore always be questioning how Education is being Education, so to help us understand it more clearly. This is not to say we shall ever be able to access the essence of Education – if there even is one. The inquiry is speculative, ironic, and unsure.

Education is more complicated than a hammer, and perhaps more complicated than Heidegger's *Da-Sein*. The relationship between beings and *Da-Sein* is fundamental to Heidegger's inquiry, as it will be here, but we are not looking at how a hammer exists when used by *Da-Sein* to hammer a nail. Neither are we examining solely *Da-Sein* and their use of a hammer. Rather, Education is a being that both attempts to enable a revealing of other beings and a being that exists in its relation to *Da-Sein,* whilst also potentially being an element of the Being of *Da-Sein* itself. We are always being-with-Education, being-in-Education, educat-ing, being-educated… But as Pring tried to sidestep, there are multitudinous, independent things that too are Education: we all encounter it, as students, parents or teachers. We inhabit its buildings, some for a few years and

others for many. Though it is an abstract concept, it also manifests physically in acts of education, and in material beings, both organic and "man-made". There is something ultimately present about Education, though it is absent too – not wholly graspable or knowable (Stock, 2019, p.405).

A couple of ontological questions arise from this interrogation. Such a long list of beings (and this list is by no means exhaustive) that *could* be Education leaves us with either (A) many more questions to ask about the nature of those beings (as I discussed previously in relation to the idea of Education as a system of learning), or (B) causes us to consider Education as an arch concept, some sort of hauntingly structural being that entails the enframing of other beings, thus making them appear as Education too (as I discussed in relation to Pring, Foucault, Lyotard, and all forms of Education). The Education-ness of Education may appear through understanding its 'structure of "in order to" [make it Education] … a reference of something to something' (Heidegger, 2010a, p.68). Perhaps that is why we can point to so many beings and claim "there is Education". What is at stake here, then, is the very question of what Education might be and how it relates to our Being, something that has no simple or even correct answer – only a series of questions. Consequently, both (A) and (B) above are important, and I in no way wish to give stipulative or ostensive answers to either of them now as Pring would have us do. Chapter IX will address these questions more thoroughly, but of course as questions and redescriptions, not answers.

A final element important for our consideration of ontological thinking arises in the field of Object Oriented Ontology (OOO). Heidegger's tool analysis of the hammer has proved hugely influential to OOO and the likes of Morton (2013a) and Harman (2018). They claim, however, that Heidegger's ontology is inherently anthropocentric. The hammer, for example, exists as a

being used by *Da-Sein,* rather than ontologically independent of it. Therefore, we deem the hammer to be not as worthy of our philosophical investigation as the human that uses the hammer. OOO's endeavour is to allow us to understand how these objects exist more independently of ourselves through a 'flat ontology' (Harman, 2018, p.55):

> …philosophy needs to be able to talk about everything – Sherlock Holmes, real humans and animals, chemicals, hallucinations – without prematurely eliminating some of these or impatiently ranking them from more to less real. We might well have biases that make us think that philosophy is obliged only to deal with natural objects but not artificial ones, which we might dismiss as unreal. (p.55)

This sort of thinking is well utilised by Morton (2013a), as he uses flat ontology to interrogate objects such as climate change. Through this he contends that our anthropocentric ontology has enabled a dangerous belief about beings affected by climate change, in that they are inferior, thus not worthy of our concern. I believe that a similar flat ontology is essential for the interrogation of Education, as Harman notes that 'the chief benefit of a flat ontology is to prevent any premature taxonomies from being smuggled into philosophy from the outside' (2018, p.55). The reason this sort of thinking is useful in allowing us to look at Education as an object equal to that of *Da-Sein* is that beings such as classrooms, pencils, books, policies or grades are equally open to ontological interrogation as a way of revealing Education. However, as Harman noted that we believe our existence to be in some way superior to the likes of most of other beings, perhaps we think the same of Education. In turn, this allows us to believe that we can enact our will upon it, like we can with the hammer. But with Education I do not believe that to be the case. For me, we exist in relation to Education in inferiority, looking up to it as if it were some sort of God; we

allow it to exist *outside* of a flat ontology. Although I will treat Education as part of a flat

ontology in this thesis in the way that I discuss the beings that are conceivably educational, this

may not actually be the way that it exists in dominant modes of thought.

V.iii.ii. Theology

My endeavour to think of Education through flat ontology will always conflict with the dominant

ways of thinking about Education, thus will *always be ironist*. This is because, for Heidegger,

dominant modes of ontology are theological. "Theology" is morphologically formed of "theos" –

pertaining to god, and "logos" – "reason" and "speech"; it is the study of the nature of gods.

However, the morphology of the word, and some of Heidegger's explication of it, allows us

understanding in a way more pertinent to contesting the flat ontology provided by Harman.

Theology does not necessarily decree a *particular* god, but rather includes all gods and the

structure of religion that surrounds them, e.g., doctrine, scripture, rituals, ethics, art, belief, faith

and so forth.

Heidegger contends that dominant ontological thinking is always theological: 'Theology is

searching for a more original interpretation of man's being toward God, prescribed by the

meaning of faith and remaining within it' (2010a, p.9). In Heidegger's ironist form of ontology

documented in *Being and Time* (and explored in Chapter IV), the goal of ontology is seeking our

own Being in our understanding of ourselves as *Da-Sein.* But in theology, we are being-towards-

God and seeking *His* Being, as opposed to our own. Both still seek to explore the fundamental

nature of Being, but this substitution of God for our own Being is problematic for Heidegger, in

part because it contains an element of faith. Not only does a theological view of beings prevent us

from questioning our own Being by looking to another's; it also incurs that we place stability on the answers found, seeing them as the unquestionably divine. It *inhibits* questioning of Being.

A flat ontology would tell us that we are not in this mode of being anymore, but in agreement with Heidegger, I feel differently on this matter. Harman posits that the 'dominant taxonomy of the Middle Ages, of course, was the absolute difference between the Creator and the Created' (2018, p.55), thus an inversion of a flat ontology. We like to believe that we have not allowed this sort of thinking to be 'smuggled into philosophy from the outside' (p.55), but an investigation into the ontology of Education (particularly demonstrated in Chapter VII) may reveal that we have not achieved this educational flat ontology, and neither are we ontologically superior or dominant. Rather, theology still pervades the dominant mode of thought. I will explore why I believe this to be so in much greater detail in Chapter VII.[65]

V.iii.iii. Ontology plus Theology equals Ontotheology

So why does this theological way of thinking about beings mar ontology for Heidegger? As religious institutions wane in the Western world, do we not believe that Education has become independent of God? And yet, we must remember that post-Nietzsche (as explained in Chapter I and IV), we have come to think of gods beyond that of the divine deities of dominant faiths. It is here that we find ourselves arriving at Rorty's ironism, as he says, 'in the seventeenth century we

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[65] To give a brief summary, we should look to the Middle Ages and the advent of Catechetical schools, Ascetism, Monasticism, Parochialism, Knightly Education, The Reformation, and so forth (Painter, 1999, pp.81-246). All these institutions and movements demonstrated a rise in Education, but also its hybridisation with religion, and consequently with a Christian God. '[The] first popular school systems in Europe were established by the churches as instruments for the intensification and dissemination of Christian spiritual discipline and pastoral guidance' (Hunter, 1994, p.55), and the Bible is of course full of educational maxims and teachings. In turn, those beings of the Middle Ages found their being-towards-God was supplemented through their schooling system. Centuries later, the form of Education that we witness today holds traces of these more ancient forms of schooling, and consequently, the structures that enable a being-towards-God.

tried to substitute a love of truth for a love of God, treating the world described by science as a quasi-divinity' (1989, p.22); this substitution was to continue after the death of God, allowing space for the institutions of modernity. Any inspection of these institutions requires a theological sort of thinking, therefore.[66]

Regarding Education, however, this chain of substitution invokes the Derridean system of the *supplement.* Many of the institutions of modernity were originally tools to enable us to see God more clearly, those such as science or reason (Bernstein, 2008, p.19), but amidst God's demise, the 'supplement adds itself… only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*' (Derrida, 1976, pp.144-145). These institutions of modernity have thus come to replace our faith in gods, replacing them with a new sort of faith whilst leaving similar structures in place. Education is an interesting example in this sense, as its previous function of being-towards-God in the Middle Ages (Painter, 1999, pp.81-246) became superfluous, but the apparatus of Education as a mode of worship did not disappear. To phrase this differently, our worship of material possessions in the twenty first century are in no way attached to the archaic worship of God; this contemporary form of idolatry is merely a replacement for the worship of God as part of the rise of global capitalism. Education, however, remains inextricably bound to its previous utility as enabling a being-towards-God, whilst still existing long after His death (Nietzsche, 2001, p.120). Thus, as God was killed by modernity, Education lacking in an object of worship turned towards itself, offering the same sort of redemption that following God did in the Middle Ages. As Peim says, Education acts as 'a principle that now serves to heal the existential wound

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[66] This is, of course, one of the more common readings of Yeats' *The Second Coming.* My reading of the poem, however, continues/develops Yeats' by noting how Education's *supplement* of God incurs that *it* is the Second Coming in the form of the rough beast.

following the death of God and the failure of other theological substitutes' (2012b, p.227). Education comes to stand '*in-the-place-of*' (Derrida, 1976, p.145) the God which it enabled a being-towards. This is an oversimplified story that will be developed in Chapter VII in relation to *Paradise Lost*, however, it is because of this history that we can call theological questioning into the ontological inquiry of Education.

Heidegger recognises this troubling similarity between dominant ontology and theology, thus he synthesises the two terms into "ontotheology". We should be clear that ontotheology is, for Heidegger, a detrimental mode of being to be avoided. I raise it here, however, as I believe it helps us understand the way in which Education is perceived as a being in Western society. Furthermore, it is precisely this ontotheological sort of thinking that we are trying to get away from in "slaying the beast". Thomson breaks down the term ontotheology as the principle of that which is 'ontologically grounding and theologically legitimating our changing historical sense of what is' (2000, p.298). We see it is a twofold ontological principle: a mode of understanding not just the structural way we perceive beings, but also the reasons for the belief in this structure. It is my contention that Education is one of these principles, and an ironist ontology is needed to allow us to move away from this type of ontotheological thinking.

For Heidegger, the whole history of metaphysics, that is, the 'Plato-Kant canon' (Rorty, 1989, p.96), is ontotheological, but we need to understand the term more clearly to see how this could be so. Ontotheology originates in Heidegger's description of subjectivism, *Da-Sein's* enacting of 'the will to mastery' (2011c, p.218). Through this desire to master and control the world (or merely explain it), we incite enframing as discussed in Chapter IV. But to enframe the world, we create concepts that provide such a frame. These concepts are ways of thinking about beings that

justify thinking, and we struggle to consider beings outside of them; this is metaphysics found in the work of the Plato-Kant canon, i.e., Descartes' metaphysical principle of consciousness as a grounding for our assertion of existence: 'With the "*cogito sum*" Descartes claims to prepare a new and secure foundation for philosophy' (Heidegger, 2010a, p.23). As discussed in Chapter IV, Heidegger contests this claim as it neglects to ask essential questions about Being (and for this inquiry, it neglects the ability of objects to affect the subject as Education does for us), however, what is important in this section is how the likes of Descartes, or indeed any other philosopher from the canon, proposed to discover a structure that allows us to understand what beings are. They 'refused to give up the foundationalist project of securely "grounding" beings' (Thomson, 2000, p.305). Indeed, the Cartesian thinking subject is worshipped as if it were some sort of divine concept even now, still laying foundation for a range of varying disciplines. Thus, 'by giving shape to our historical understanding of 'what is', metaphysics determines the most basic presuppositions of what anything is, including ourselves' (p.298). When these metaphysical beliefs become the foundation for what anything is, they come to be treated as masterful, or more precisely, *divine.* Just as the Middle Ages treated God as the creator of Being, Heidegger observed his contemporaries treating metaphysical concepts such as consciousness in similarly structurally determinative ways. As discussed in the previous section, there are similar questions to be asked about beings and gods, but for Heidegger, conventional questions about beings are structured by their belief in divine concepts; beings are determined by gods.

We have seen in ironist discourse that there lies a distrust for the grand, stable and "true" (Derrida, 1976, 1982; Lyotard, 1986; Rorty, 1989), especially when they pose as an answer to a question without any degree of irony. These grand and stable truths, metaphysical claims as it

were, should be viewed as ontotheological. We must wonder, therefore, what the ontotheological grounding for Education is. What concepts lay its foundations that are to be reontologised in this thesis? But this is where a certain degree of paradigmatic irony arises. I previously mentioned that Education has come to *supplement* God, and that it is also an essential apparatus in the determination of Being. In turn, this would demonstrate Education *itself* to be an ontotheological principle. This has been claimed before: 'education has become a "master" concept of our time, an ontotheological principle' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.159).[67]

And so, what is wrong with thinking ontotheologically about Education? The reasons are twofold: firstly, in a Lyotardian distrust of grand-narratives, we should always question concepts that have become "masters" of our existence – those that have become monstrosities or beasts. Secondly, and congruously, the belief in ontotheological principles attempts to exert our mastery (Heidegger, 2011c) over reality, thus in turn we lose the nuances of being-in the-world and miss the beings that enact their mastery over us. Education, both in its existence and in the study of it, exemplifies this attempt at mastery that does violence to the very thing in question. It attempts to give firm presence to the being in question and evades the absent nature of Being. Consequently, the ontology of Education that occurs in this thesis will recognise the above sort of thinking about Education as that which is most commonsensical. My ontology is one that challenges a pre-existing ontology – an ontotheological one. Therefore, all inquiry and questioning of Education require an examination into both the ontological and theological aspects of Education, both of

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[67] Or as I have said previously: 'We are, undoubtedly, asking about a metaphysical being that shapes Being here, that exists above and beyond Being, and ontotheologically, we are made to think of God, the ultimate being and creator of Being. Who else could allow us to see the world in a certain revealed way, create our Being and manifest itself in both physical and abstract forms?' (Stock, 2019, p.411)

which will be seen in Chapter VI-IX. We have been asking these questions throughout the thesis so far, with the idea of master concepts and grand-narratives (Lyotard, 1986) raised in Chapter II, or the fruitless search for a metaphysical presence (Derrida, 2010c) highlighted in Chapter IV. It is the constant interrogation of beings through questioning, and one that endeavours towards a flat ontology that brings gods to the same level as paperclips. Below, I outline some of the ways in which that examination and inquiry might occur beyond these broader, over-arching questions.

V.iv. Educational Literature, Discourse and Beings

V.iv.i. Why Read Educational Literature?

So far, we have agreed that ontology is the lens through which Education will be thought of in this thesis, and through that lens we may have to encounter ontotheological assertions about it (Education's dominant ontology). What is inherently asked in this questioning, however, is towards what, specifically, this ontology will occur, especially as I have continually emphasised that Education is incredibly difficult to stipulate as one particular being. Ostensibly, this ontology could be conducted towards *any* phenomenon that is deemed educational. What should an ironist look to then, to try and investigate something? To return to Rorty, we should remember his alignment of the poet and the ironist, in that poets are not interested in the trivial search for truth (1989, p.27), instead they are interested in the wondrous creations achievable in the use of metaphors to redescribe the world.[68] This idea has been traced in educational discourse too, as Guilherme and de Freitas note

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[68] To reiterate Rorty's example from Chapter III, Dickens chose to redescribe the world of the urban poor and of Victorian Education, and although he unironically intended to improve these institutions, he did not try to truthfully represent them. Dickens does not hold a privileged description of the world; his novels are only wonderful poetry that affected educational reform. Consequently, for Rorty, a reading of Dickens is more useful than a study of the

a very fecund use of metaphors in the field of education—perhaps, much more than one

first realises. Metaphors have been used to try to make sense of "education" and of

"educational practices and trends", helping us better visualise and understand past and

current issues in the field. (2018, p.954)

But Rorty's approach does not just look for the evidently metaphorical as Guilherme and de

Freitas do, but rather treats *all* discourse as inherently metaphorical, thus deliberately takes

interest in fictional texts as mode through which to encounter truths. Therefore, what should I

look to as someone in the position of an educational researcher, even if I reluctantly use that title,

and one that has an inherent distrust in empirical research? If we take what Rorty says seriously,

that in literature, be it fictional or not, we can attempt to look more closely at Education, free of

the 'methodologically… narrow' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.109) forms of research, then we should

be prepared to examine those intentionally redescriptive works as a phenomenon for inquiry.

Consequently, we stumble across a criterion for what is to be interrogated in this thesis, a sort of

"hunt" for texts that seem to be educationally pivotal, but not inherently claiming to stand as

factual or truthful. Below I will explain further why that is a valuable task for ironist thinking.

V.iv.ii. Educational Literature as Discourse as Being

To reiterate what I seek in this thesis, ostensibly it is a way of understanding the being Education,

or more precisely its Being. This is of course an impossible task; I only hope to brush up against

it in my inquiry rather than fully encapsulate it through argument. In my ironist position, there is

no truth to be uncovered here, nor certainty or solid conclusion to be drawn. There is only

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urban poor in Victorian England as we are not told the truth. It is a *purposeful* redescription that may alert us to
truths, though they cannot be clearly stipulated.

language. This idea of there being only language is to take the mantra that 'Language is the house of Being' (Heidegger, 2011b, p.147) seriously. The appearance of a being is made visible in the language that represents it; as we cannot access beings directly, we must enter through the very vocabulary that "houses" them. Put slightly differently, Rorty takes Heidegger to mean that *'force is what the idea of the "house of Being" is supposed to help us catch'* (1989, p.116), and thus I hope to catch the force[69] of Education by examining the very language that surrounds and makes it. We can glean that it is only through inspecting, or more precisely deconstructing, language that we can get closer to the very Being of a being. After all, 'Being is what *final* vocabularies are about' (Rorty, 1991, p.37).

Indeed, if I am to better understand Education as a being (and further understand *its* Being), I can *only* look to the 'the history of [the] language... [and] the history of [the] metaphor' (Rorty, 1989, p.16) that has shaped it. These metaphors will be found through reading texts that are part of the educational network. Texts such as these do not hold the true meaning of Education, but that does not mean I cannot look to ontologise about Education through reading them. Reportedly, Emerson once said 'I cannot remember the books I've read any more than the meals I have eaten; even so, they have made me'. We are what we read, it appears, and Rorty affirms this when he writes about Heidegger: 'we are nothing save the words we use' (1991, p.37). Words are the sustenance of Being for many of us, directly supplementary for identity, character, personality. I previously quoted Rorty's claim that 'he would have created the only part of himself that

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[69] This is an interesting term. Like Weil (1965) claims, we should understand force as *exactly* a force – something like that of time or Being, something intangible and ungraspable, but something we attempt to enact our will and mastery over. Force dominates us, but we believe we are dominating it when we use force on another. Really, however, Weil believes we have only acted as a body through which force appears. Perhaps a similar logic can be applied to Education, in that it is educating through bodies of teachers and schools, but ultimately we never master it.

mattered by constructing his own mind. To create one's mind is to create one's own language' (1989, p.27), but have inverted this claim to focus on other beings beyond ourselves (though we are intimately connected with Education in a different way from other beings). Therefore, it is through texts that we seek Education's Being, but it is only through engaging with the *totality* of texts, and endless Borgesian library, that we could enter the 'house of Being' (Heidegger, 2011b, p.147) we seek; thus, we only enter the fringes in this thesis.

These textual fringes are important still, and it is worth considering how "texts" are to be thought of here, as it certainly does not mean "book" or "knowledge" or some other term that reduces them down to their authorial intention or objective meaning. Foucault's description of the book as a 'node within a network' (2002, p.26) is perhaps of more use, viewing texts far beyond an 'object that one holds in one's hands' (p.26) and instead as part of an infinite web of links or significations. When I take hold of Milton's *Paradise Lost,* I am generally uninterested in Milton or the life he led, or even in the era in which he wrote (although the fringes of these things will be touched upon as they are part of the network). I am concerned with the network in which it presides, and in this particular thesis that is the network of Education (it could of course be placed within countless other networks too). We seek, for example, how Milton's depiction of Lucifer is enmeshed in, say, the Bible, Aquinas, and Luther, but also in the Department for Education's White Papers, or Stow's premise for mass-schooling, or Derrida's *Writing and Difference*. To paraphrase Foucault (2008, p.28), texts do not exist within a singular moment in time. *Paradise Lost* exists *now* (a hazy concept in itself) as part of a network. The treatment of these texts is therefore more useful as a revealing of the network, not of the texts. Borges' *The Library of Babel* (2000), a tale of a universe composed of an infinite network of libraries, neatly

represents this idea. He describes a library-like ontology: 'The universe (which others call the library) is composed of an indefinite, perhaps infinite, number of hexagonal galleries' (2000, p.65). In this universe, 'official searchers, the "inquisitors"' (p.70) endlessly trawl the library, searching for some sense of ontological structure to their universe through reading and studying every book, then moving onto the next conjoined library. If this thesis were the infinite trawl it *should* be, like Borges' inquisitors, it would ceaselessly traverse this network of texts that support, or even generate, Education in its most contemporary form (sadly I am doomed to fail this quest, being confined to eighty-thousand words – an ironic twist in my tragic fate).

We can apply the term "discourse" aptly in thinking of these texts, and you will notice it is a piece of vocabulary utilised in previous chapters. This amorphous term is useful for that exact reason, as it is not simply a text (although it can be). Rather, it is the web or network itself and the relations within it; it is both *The Library of Babel* and a shelf within it. This network, discourse, the library, stands as the object of my analysis. It is the ontological space that I am examining, and in its writings we find the shape of Education. By looking at discourse, rather than a specific element of Education like a lesson or a teacher, it reaches out and touches *all* elements of Education, rather than a singular element. Discourse enables us to consider all of Education *as a being*. Admittedly, an object such as Education will never appear to us fully – we must remember that its *presence* is not a certainty (as explained in terms of Derrida's logocentrism in Chapter IV). We will only reveal 'gaps, voids, absences, limits, divisions' (Foucault, 2002, p.134), rather than stability and solidity. But in these absences, we begin to understand the dominant ontology of Education more clearly. That which is missing tells us that which is.

V.iv.iii. Selecting the Texts

I stated at the beginning of the chapter that in a deconstruction of a text, that is, a formalised ironist approach to a text, the ironist is to work within a double where one 'simultaneously maintains the opposition by (1) employing it in one's argument… and (2) reinstating it with a reversal that gives it different status and impact' (Culler, 1982, p.150). An earlier section of this chapter examined how (2) is being employed through the reversal of the common methodologies and patterns of thinking present in dominant educational discourse, those such as Pring (2004), Siegel (2010) and Curren (2007). This section, however, elucidates how (1) is achieved, for the ironising of "Philosophy of Education" still requires working *within* it. In turn, the guides and manuals that offer the dominant arguments and texts of "Philosophy of Education" (often through a narrativized and historical form) are a simple starting point for selecting the texts that open the field of Education discourse sought after.

There are many pieces of educational literature that are common in their utilisation, often featuring heavily in sociology courses, Education undergraduate degrees, teacher training, and most pivotally, philosophy of Education courses. Equally, in the discoursistic network of texts, *any* text could have been appropriate here (and indeed every text would benefit from this mode of inquiry). However, to be more calculated in my selection, I consulted various histories and philosophies of Education (Painter, 1999; McCulloch, 2005; Curren, 2007; Siegel, 2010; Rury and Tamura, 2019) to ascertain which texts seem to hold the most "importance" in terms of dominant thinking.[70] Within this dominant list that I uncover, we must remember that Rorty

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[70] Obviously, the actual histories offered are of no real interest here. Their linear approach to Education that lies beyond contingency is firmly in opposition to my approach. Nevertheless, such texts' treatment of educational

incited the value of *fictional* texts, thus all of the texts selected must have at least a quasi-fictional element, be it through inclusion of allegory, poeticism or narrativization. With these criteria, the field is immediately narrowed down to a small number of key texts.

The other consideration that had to be made was the eras, or *epochs,* from which the texts were chosen. Once again, I turn to Heidegger here for a way to ensure maximum coverage in a small amount of writing. We of course have the Plato-Kant canon, but a further history is given by Heidegger in the form of "ontohistory" – a ontological way of looking at the history of the world. Heidegger determines that our history can be broken into different epochs of being, a structural systemisation of *Da-Sein.* These epochs are designated as 'the pre-Socratic, Platonic, medieval, modern, and (our own) late-modern epochs' (Thomson, 2005, p.59). Each epoch represents a different 'point at which ontological inquiry comes to a rest' (Thomson, 2001, p.247), with each epoch overlapping and feeding into the next. With each new epoch comes a new arrival at a metaphysical grounding for Being, and it is through this ontohistorical model that we have arrived at our ontotheological view of the world (p.247).[71] The epochs themselves will be explained more clearly in relation to the text selected in each corresponding chapter.

Some sort of triangulation between these ontohistorical epochs, the Plato-Kant canon and the dominant texts raised in hackneyed histories of Education must occur to provide texts for exploration. Furthermore, in the confines of thesis writing, there is only enough room to suitably

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literature is highly revealing of the focal points for Education and allows me to work within the argument that I am deconstructing (Culler, 1982, p.150).

[71] Certainly, an ontohistorical account of history is equally problematic to any history. It stands as a sweeping, metaphysical claim for Being, just as the histories of Education stood as a sweeping division of history in other manners. Thus, my use of this ontohistory is not one that adheres to this history as such (although I do believe it to be more useful than a conventional account of history), rather it is a structure in which texts can be selected.

explore three major texts despite there being five epochs. My selection of texts has therefore started after the first epoch in Heidegger's ontohistory – the pre-Socratic. In my triangulation of Heidegger with common accounts of significant educational texts and the Plato-Kant canon, we see Plato's *Republic* commonly cited as the most significant text from the Antiquity in the educational network (Painter, 1999; Bailey et al, 2010; Curren, 2010), thus the Platonic epoch becomes the starting point for examination here. Equally there is no text explored from the late-modern period, as each chapter will pertain to and conclude with an account of contemporary Education, thus that of the late-modern. As one of the tasks of this thesis is to explore the shape and form of contemporary Education through a network of texts, we could even consider this thesis itself another one those texts of the late-modern period. Consequently, the justification for each of the three texts, achieved through this triangulation, will occur at the start of each chapter that examines them – Chapter VI on Plato's *Republic,* Chapter VII on Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Chapter VIII on Rousseau's *Emile.*[72]

V.v. Reading the Texts

V.v.i. Metaphors

Despite this fairly *unironic* selection of texts, once they are established as the source towards which my inquiry will occur, there is a process of ironist reading that must take place. In essence, what do we do with the texts when we find them? If the chosen texts as part of the network of discourse are meant to provide elements of the dominant ontology of Education (its

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[72] I am acutely aware of how unironic this selection process has become; talk of triangulation and histories and epochs sounds particularly final in its vocabulary and conventional in its wording. Such was never my intention. So perhaps I could have said to you that I chose these texts because I wanted to, because I felt they were an interesting selection for no other reason than my caprice.

ontotheological form), that is, the supposed truth of its existence, then how can that ontology be uncovered?

Firstly, we should return to our oft-mentioned Nietzschean (1999) definition of truth: it is only in metaphors that we find that which we believe to be true. Lyotard (1986) gave us a similar definition – grand narratives determine to represent truth in a particular way. Rorty (1989), too, saw truth as the property of vocabulary. As has been made clear in the previous chapter, ironist definitions of truth determine that it is *metaphorical*. It is in the act of language that truth appears to us. Thus, if we are to understand the truth of Education (the dominant ontology, not some sort of essential truth), then we must seek the metaphors on which it relies. Metaphor as truth has been clearly elucidated by Lakoff and Johnsen:

> …metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature... If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. (Lakoff and Johnsen, 2003, p.24)

Lakoff and Johnsen's declaration is not new to the ironist – they need no convincing that metaphors determine truths. The vocabulary used here is that of structural concepts (much like Lyotard), but the essential point still stands that through uncovering metaphors we can start to seek the dominant ontological form of the being in question. Lakoff and Johnsen provide a compendium to the sorts of metaphors that determine such dominant ontologies, but I wish to seek these metaphors myself, and ensure they are specifically structural or foundational for Education.

These sorts of metaphors pervade spoken and written discourse, and thus start to form the network that appears to us as Education. Having narrowed the elements of educational discourse down to three key texts (as part of a much wider network), we must consider *how* such metaphors could be found in them. There are competing ideas about how this could be achieved, but below I detail Osborn and Derrida's formulations in which these foundational, truth-revealing metaphors could be sought. I deliberately use competing approaches, so not to allow my hunt to become too reliant on a singular, narrow method, thus a final vocabulary.

Firstly, this notion of a foundational metaphor is well documented by Osborn (1967; 2009; with Ehninger 1962) in which he describes it as *archetypal*, or essentially a metaphor that is used habitually throughout the history of discourse. Osborn ascribes six features to the archetypal metaphor, many of which are applicable in our search for ancient metaphors lurking within Education's ontohistory. He states that archetypal metaphors are

1. […] especially prevalent in rhetorical discourse.

2. […] often at critical moments in the structure of messages (at beginnings, endings, and in conjunction with vital arguments).

3. […] appear grounded in depth experience… (Osborn, 2009, p.81)

Osborn provides three other claims about archetypal metaphors that are less useful[73], but 1-3 give a set of criteria in which to find and track an archetypal metaphor, notably due to it prevalence

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[73] The final three are: '4. In this grounding in depth experience, archetypal metaphors appear to embody and express basic motives (survival, growth, fear, power, and the like). 5. Because of this connection with basic motives, archetypal metaphors may have great persuasive potential… 6. Finally, I claimed, archetypal metaphors are immune to change across time and culture (a fateful wording!)' (Osborn, 2009, p.81). They are less useful, partly because Osborn (rightly) refutes their immunity to change (which my deconstruction of them in following chapters

throughout the discourse, its appearance at key, structural moments and its experiential connotations. Archetypality is thus a useful formulation for us here, as it helps us to find metaphors that are an overarching 'concept structure' (Lakoff and Johnsen, p.4, 2003).

Osborn's archetypal metaphors cannot be relied on as the only way to see metaphors in the discourse though. As previously mentioned, I do not want to narrow the way that the texts are read into something that too clearly resembles a set methodology. For this reason, I also consider Derrida's hauntology (as explained in Chapter IV) as an approach to excavating metaphor. This is an inverse system to Osborn's; Osborn begins with the text and uncovers the metaphor, however through a Fisherean (Fisher, 2014) interpretation of hauntology, we begin with the metaphor and then look back to the text. For example, I need not read a particular text to know that *war* is a haunting metaphor for our time – we are already embroiled in its fictional structure; consequently, I could look to any text and uncover how war is utilised. However, Fisher's version of hauntology takes this sort of metaphor a step further, and proposes that we find them now through their sense of *lost futures*: 'What should haunt is not the *no longer…* but the *not yet* of the futures … which never materialised. These spectres – the spectres of lost futures…' (Fisher, 2014, p. 27) are that which we seek when look back at discourse. What Fisher means here is that these ghosts are not necessarily some archaic relic of the Antiquity or the Middle Ages. Rather, they are the ghosts of the future that has never come. Take, for example, our belief in the redemption available through Education outlined by Peim (2020). Belief in this metaphor is predicated on an older, even ancient, belief in Education that never came. Consequently, what

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reveals precisely the opposite) and because the need to relate to basic motives neglects the educational motive, something that stands apart from the more animalistic motives Osborn cites.

now haunts us about Education is the future that has been lost. We *feel* these sorts of metaphors around us now, knowing ourselves to be embracing them or controlled by them. Fisher's understanding of metaphor thus provides a way to explore the texts in direct conflict with Osborn – I will always endeavour to play their approaches off one another and see what it reveals.

We are not looking to unlock some sort of latent content in the texts that has been lying dormant since their inception though; we do not seek 'their original destiny' (Foucault, 2002, p.139). It is only important what shape these texts take today as part of the network of discourse in their formation of Education as a being. This is forthwith to be achieved through some subtle repositioning of myself as a reader: as I am enframed by Education, I am therefore part of it in its most contemporary form. Therefore, when *I* read a text, it is *Education* that also reads it. My interpretations of it should directly feed into that of Education's. By being stuck to it, I am an extension of the monstrous reach of Education and can too reach out and grab things.[74] Therefore, when I read the like of Plato's *Republic* or Rousseau's *Emile,* I do so with the eyes of Education. No one can contest that the ways I understand these texts is not the way they have come to manifest in contemporary Education, as I am part of Education, thus they have manifested that way to me and to it.

V.v.ii. Deconstructing the Metaphors

When the metaphors are found, we should look to examine how they *function* within the text through deconstructing them and the text that they operate within. Such thinking is how an ironist might approach the text – with distrust and scepticism about the certainty and finality of the

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[74] It is like the monster of Lynch's *Twin Peaks* (2007), BOB, a beast that comes from behind the curtain to possess us so that he can reach out and grab things – Laura Palmer…

vocabulary at play – and is achieved through a process of fragmentation. This will reveal the dominant ontology of Education more clearly and provide us with the fragments to reconstruct in a reontologisation of Education (as in Chapter IX). Derrida provides his 'system of infrastructures' (Rorty, 1989, p.123), or systematised ironism, known as "deconstruction": 'it is thus to work through the structured genealogy of [the text's] concepts in the most scrupulous and immanent fashion' (Derrida, 1982, p.15).[75] Others have given varying interpretations of deconstruction, perhaps best by Culler: '[deconstruction] undermines the philosophy it asserts, or the hierarchical oppositions on which it relies, by identifying in the text the rhetorical operations that produce the supposed ground of argument, the key concept or premise' (1982, p.86).

This "system" that Derrida employs uses 'a vocabulary which would both constantly dismantle itself and constantly take itself seriously' (Rorty, 1989, p.112). This begins with an understanding of basic linguistic concepts, that of the arbitrary relationship between signifier and signifier (Saussure, 2013), and is developed by understanding how the fundamental structures of this relationship present a revealing. For example, within the analysis of signs, we may reveal a reliance on a 'binary opposition' (Derrida, 1982). This posits signified meaning in opposition with a binary opposite – darkness and light, nature and culture, educated and uneducated, for example. One half of the opposition is hierarchically superior or dominant in our usage of it; this is the 'subordinating structure of opposition' (Derrida, 1982, p.41), notable in intelligent over

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[75] Or as I have said elsewhere: 'In an overarching sense, deconstruction is an attitude towards philosophy, metaphysics and thinking. Philosophy, the scholarly study of problems, is historically pursued through the exploration and exploitation of metaphysics and concepts that exist abstractly beyond us and complete us (are meta), concepts such as space, time or existence… At a more reductive and methodological level, deconstruction considers how signified meanings of language defer to and differ from one another, thus revealing claims of truth and linguistic paradoxes dwelling within texts…' (Stock, 2017, p.145)

stupid or light over darkness, and is inherent in the structure of the signified and signifier. However, a deconstruction of a text not only identifies the binary opposition that is at play within it, it seeks to *overturn* it (Culler, 1982, p.150). The process of deconstruction is always doing two things at once, or is a double (and doubled within that double). The opposition identified is both used (and thus supported) by the deconstructor (or ironist) and undone at the same time. It is inherently paradoxical: it plays the oppositions off against one another and revealing their claims for truth, whilst it is also utilising of the opposition, as it writes and reads within it.[76]

Derrida's approach to language relies on a double in itself, that is, *différance*, the double notion of 'that which designates the impossible origin of difference in differing and of differing in difference' (p.162). Derrida claims that 'the force and form of its disruption [of language] explodes[s] the semantic horizon' (Derrida, 1982, p.45). It allows a free association in the deferral from concept to concept and the oppositions of difference held, thus revealing further claims of truth.[77] One of the goals of this thesis is to maintain Derrida's *différance* in regard to the metaphysical-laden realm of Education, something I have demonstrated on previous occasions (Stock 2017; 2019; 2021). Yet, as Rorty says, 'there is no *method* involved' (1989, p.134) in deconstruction. Really, one deconstructs 'in the same way one learns to detect sexual imagery' (p.134fn); it is a happening rather than a methodology. This said, some of the key tools of deconstruction that will be used in thesis are *différance,* thus inherently sign, signifier and

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[76] Freud's analysis of life and death, for example, evidences how he writes within the opposition which he overturns, positing that it is in fact death, 'to return to an inorganic state' (Culler, 1982, p.164) that drives life. Life holds the spectral trace of death. Ultimately, though, Freud writes within the hierarchised term of life, the living, passions, etc., thus maintains the binary and doubles within the double.

[77] For example, in feminist discourse's embracing of *différance*, the difference man has to woman is maintained by firstly their "physical differences" and secondly by a deferral to other terms and ideas such as phallus, thus to power, to strength and so on.

signified, binary opposition, presence and absence; *supplement* – that which 'intervenes or insinuates itself in-the-place-of; if it fills, it is as one fills a void' (Derrida, 1976, pp.144-145); trace – 'a structure of infinite referral in which there are only traces' (Culler, 1982, p.99); and graft – 'the points of juncture and stress where one scion or line of argument has been' (p.99).

When these tools have been applied to the metaphors uncovered through hauntology and archetypality, we begin to see more clearly the structure on which the text (and consequently Education as part of the network of discourse) relies. We have sought to 'undermine the philosophy it asserts, or the hierarchical oppositions in on which it relies' (p.86). Consequently, two useful things are yielded: one, the dominant ontology of Education that can be considered within the context of the contemporary landscape, and two, the fragments that shape that dominant ontology to be reontologised in Chapter IX. We should remember that this task is *always-already* an act of redescription. To consider Education in these terms is to redescribe it through the vocabulary of deconstruction; the fragments of metaphor that are found and deconstructed are in essence a different way of talking about Education. However, two further acts of redescription will occur, both of which will be explained more clearly in the next section.

V.vi. Towards a New Ontology

The title of this thesis makes it clear that I intend to provide an ironist ontology of Education. I have explained how the ironist persona is embraced in Chapter IV, and both how the understanding of Education is to be ontological in this chapter. But the "conclusion" of this thesis is a "new" ironist ontology of Education, that is, an ontology in different vocabulary from that which is commonly used. After all, what would a thesis be without some sort of conclusion (the marker says)? But this new ontology shall happen not once, but twice. Redescription is *always-*

already here in my writing, and thus you will find the ironist ontology of Education in both Chapter IX and in the intentionally fictional redescription that will appear in the footnotes throughout.

Chapter IX's reontologisation is a more conventional "reconstruction" of the fragments of metaphor from the deconstruction of educational texts. Once the texts have been pulled apart, we can *reconsider* Education as a being in its embracing of these metaphors in contemporary discourse. In essence, it is exploring how these metaphors persist in giving shape and appearance to Education even now. Henceforth, Chapter IX shall ask some straightforward questions about this being Education in its contemporary form, the sort of questions we might ask of any being, such as how it occupies space, time and Being.[78] The speculative answers shall help the reader in formulating a new image of this *thing* Education, a bestial image perhaps different from their current conception. Through understanding the metaphors that shape it, we can glimpse more clearly at its anatomy.

However, in line with Rorty's claims about fictional redescription raised in Chapter III, you will also find a second ontology of Education, but one that is purely ironist in its formation. If the ironist believes that there is nothing but redescription available to them, and that fictional writing is more revealing of truths than philosophical writing, then it should be the endeavour of the ironist to redescribe their own philosophical ideas through the mode of fiction. Just as Proust redescribed the notion of the self, I will provide a fictional retelling of the ideas of this thesis that offers a new vocabulary to you to think about Education, but one that is in no way a claimant of

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[78] These categories are ostensibly Heideggerean, as traceable throughout *Being and Time* (2010a). They will be expanded upon in Chapter IX.

truth. It will, however, always correlate and allegorise the story that I am telling you in the main body of the thesis. Indeed, sometimes, they will crossover. This story will be telling a tale of the creation of a rough beast, as that is the vocabulary that was reappropriated from Yeats in Chapter I. It will be a tale of alchemy, people and gods. It is the tale of *The Alchemist of le Sable* – the tale of the alchemist from the sands.[79]

Such ideas of fiction as a mode of presenting a more conventional, social discipline, are echoed in Berger's *Real and Imagined Worlds*, where he explores allegory as a pivotal mode of research. He posits that 'Neither art nor science can present total reality, so people must be satisfied with an arrangement of it' (1977, p.3). Therefore, the arrangement we use to explicate reality, or the world, may as well be fictive, thus inherently arranged with some conscious decision. The writings of social science are always weighted with the charge to represent reality effectively or truthfully, but as fiction has no such weight, 'the "evidence" in fiction is infinite' (p.223). In essence, through using fiction we stand to learn infinitely more about the world than through the frame of social and physical sciences.[80]

However, this fiction is not a separate piece of writing in the way that it was for Proust; it is inextricably bound to the main body of the thesis as an always-already redescription. This method

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[79] *Amidst the Algerian desert, somewhere in the swirling mass of white sand, there lies the small town of Le Sable. This town was simple, self-sufficient, as were its people and its needs. For many years they were happy, tilling what they could of the land and hunting what they could not grow. Food was scarce, but it was enough. They were happy, for a while.*

[80] Berger offers a charming example concerning Golding's *Lord of the Flies*: '[Golding] led the reader to contemplate human nature, but neither he nor his characters said anything of the subject itself' (1977, p.8). I will return to Golding's powerful redescription of human nature in Chapter VI, however clearly this piece of fiction along with Dickens and Proust has functioned as a powerful "study", without any claims to do so. It exists ironically, in a state of revealing absolute truths to each, individual reader, whilst pertaining to no truth whatsoever.

has been ventured by Derrida in *Glas* (1984), an ambitious deconstruction of Hegel that also has a column to the right containing a reading of Genet's autobiography. Derrida describes it as follows: 'Two unequal columns… each of which envelop(e)(s) or sheath(es), incalculably reverses, turns inside out, replaces, remarks, overlaps the other' [sic] (p.1). Both the Genet and Hegel readings reference one another, replace each other, but also function independently of one another throughout the text. Discourse, in its endless network, is emphasised through the two utterly different readings taking place that substitute one another. This thesis, however, takes this idea a step further by the second "column" being an intentionally fictional piece rather a separate reading, but one that will focus on the same topic as the main text.

V.vii. Eponymous: An Ironist Ontology of Education

> But genre, as much ultimately a question of being, as a question of good form, is also always a matter of propriety and discipline. What is proper for this species of text? is the question of genre questions. (Peim, 2010, p.232)

The thesis of course stands as another fixed point of educational meaning. It is another piece of discourse slavishly adhered to, treated unironically as the bastion of thinking. It is clear, as Peim highlights, that the endeavour of slaying the beast Education in the mode of an educational thesis should ironically do something to challenge that dominant belief. Roughly, I have stated that the approach towards texts in the remainder of this thesis is as follows:

1. Embrace an ironist persona towards language, institutions, texts and meanings;

2. Select three quasi-fictional texts from different epochs and are ubiquitous in educational discourse;

3. Uncover metaphors on which the texts rely through the conflicting process of archetypality and hauntology;

4. Deconstruct the metaphors in the three selected texts using ironist thinking;

5. Consider the dominant ontology of Education by recontextualising the metaphors within the contemporary educational landscape;

6. Use the deconstructed ontology to reconstruct a new ironist ontology;

7. Simultaneously, use the deconstructed ontology to construct a fictional ontology.

Maybe this does not adhere to the structure of a thesis you have seen in the past. It is deliberately flexible, especially if we remember that each text is part of a network of discourse, each metaphor is part of an endless chain of signification, each act is an act of redescription, the conclusion happens twice, and each conclusion drawn is open to ironism in itself. You should also remember the overaching *eirōneía* raised in Chapter IV – the Greek audience blatantly aware of the downfall of the hero in front of them, but unable to intervene. The deconstruction of Education here is conducted by someone very much stuck to Education. We are all stuck, but I am perhaps stuck "more than others". I have spent my entire life in Education, as a student, teacher, lecturer, budding academic, and just like Allen noting his work as an '*indigestible meal*' (2014, p.x) for those in Education, I too can only write within the enframed nature of my own Being, that is, within Education. Everything you read here has been influenced by my time in Education. Perhaps I have had the opportunity to encounter more ironism than most. Perhaps I have met more ironists, those few rebels waging war against Education (all of whom are also doing so, of course, within the confines of educational institutions). But still, I exist within

Education. Accordingly, I am an audience to my own work, unable to intervene. I see the hero

hurtling towards their inevitable doom, as that hero is me. Indeed, I shall never slay the beast, as

the beast is me also.[81]

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[81] *Something seemed to change about the people of Le Sable. Some ghost crept into their dreams and haunted them at night. It whispered to them about life beyond the sands, of things different from themselves. It told them they were sick and did not know how to cure themselves. It showed them visions of the crops in decay, yet they had no remedy. It said the livestock would become ill, and there was no medicine. The people would look over the horizon and gaze at the sun.*

VI. Darkness and Light

The sewer […] is the conscience of the town where all things converge and clash. There is

darkness here, but no secrets. Everything has its true or at least definitive form. There is this to be

said of the muckheap, that it does not lie. Innocence dwells in it. (Hugo, 1982, p.1065)

VI.i. **Plato's *Republic***

We must begin with the triangulation discussed in Chapter V, so look to the 'the Platonic'

(Thomson, 2005, p.59) epoch for the first text of educational significance. The key is, of course,

in the name, and indeed the commonsensical works of Painter (1999), Siegel (2007), Bailey et al.

(2010) and Curren, (2010) all affirm the significance of this figure in the canon. Even for ironists

like Heidegger and Rorty, Plato yields the 'conceptual character for philosophy today'

(Heidegger, 2010a, p.21). Indeed, much of Western thinking starts (and is forever enframed by)

Plato, as 'ever since Plato we have been asking ourselves the question: what must we and the

universe be like if we are going to get the sort of certainty, clarity, and evidence Plato told us we

ought to have?' (Rorty, 1991, p.29). Rorty's affirmation of Heidegger claims that the field of

philosophy itself still rests on the foundations laid by Plato. As Derrida says, 'the permanence of

a Platonic schema that assigns the origin and power of speech, precisely of logos... sets up the

whole of Western metaphysics in its conceptuality' (1981, p.76). Rather than *opening* up

philosophy, though, the commonsensical adherence to Plato's metaphysics potentially narrows

philosophy into its ontotheological principle. The Platonic epoch metaphysically grounded Being

in the sense that man understood 'itself and being in general in terms of the "world"' (Heidegger,

2010a, p.21). In essence, Plato's epoch grounds the entire dialectic of subject and world that

became so pervasive throughout the history of metaphysics, in which 'the thought of Being

forgets itself' (Derrida, 2010c, p.101) and instead foregrounds 'the will to mastery' (Heidegger,

2011c, p.218) of beings. If Plato can be identified as instigating the dominant ontological

principle of philosophy, it seems only befitting we should examine his writing as similar for

Education.

In terms of a suitable text, Plato's *Republic* has long stood as one of the earliest texts of

educational significance in the Western world. It details a wealth of philosophical designs

concerning the organisation of the state, the search for truth and the educational journey through

which this search should take place. However, in line with Rorty's call for the importance of

fictions, *Republic* is quasi-fictional in its form. Plato uses a dialogic structure to depict Plato's

philosophical persona Socrates (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p.63), and his pupil Glaucon. The

characters are not incidental – Socrates represents the teacher that guides and directs the dialogue,

whilst Glaucon stands as the learner, slowly having the world revealed to him. This

characterisation alone is pivotal in educational formation, and we will see its importance in a

metaphorical sense when we deconstruct the text later in the chapter.[82]

Furthermore, the dialogues rely on metaphor and allegory to communicate meaning: the cave, the

line, the sun, shadows, the fire, and so on. Most commonly treated as the metaphor of utmost

educational importance in *Republic* is the allegory of *The Cave*, a now somewhat hackneyed

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[82] *Marquant was a young alchemist who lived on the fringe of Le Sable. He was a solitary creature, generally disinterested by the townsfolk and their simple existence. Most of his time was spent in study, absorbed by the tomes that had been on his shelf for as long as he could remember. He did not know who put them there, but their words spoke of wild and mystical things. Transmutation, panaceas, immortality – these things allured him in the books. Perhaps these things could be done, if he only had the right materials and ingredients.*

depiction of man's journey to truth. Socrates initiates his dialogue with Glaucon about *The Cave*

by stating that this allegory is representative of 'our education or lack of it' (Plato, 2008, p.240),

and unsurprisingly it has been ceaselessly embraced in educational discourse (Murphy,

1932; Notopoulos, 1944a; Annas, 1981; Losin, 1996; Phillips, 2003; Rosen, 2005; Reeve, 2012;

Schofield, 2012; Hodgson, 2016). The allegory of *The Cave* is broadly utilised in terms of its

foundational nature for thinking about Education, often depicting it as the 'path' (Hodgson, 2016,

p.190) or the 'conversion [of man] to philosophy' (Rosen, 2005, p.269), that is, the path to

becoming educated. Readings like these are of interest to the ironist, for they not only propose an

unproblematised interpretation of the text, but more importantly become a vocabulary of finality

to be used in contemporary educational discourse. Consequently, *The Cave* in Plato's *Republic*

stands as quasi-fictional, epoch-defining, and ubiquitous in educational discourse and will thus be

deconstructed in this Chapter. However, despite *The Cave* being a metaphorical piece in itself,

there is something lingering in the darkness of the tale, a much more ancient metaphor that Plato

adeptly employs.

VI.ii. The Metaphor of Darkness and Light

VI.ii.i. Archetypality and Hauntology

We cannot escape the image of *darkness and light*, as we are all being-in-it, *haunted* by a trace of

the looming light of the morning or the burgeoning darkness of the evening. It is idiomatic, as we

"shed light" on things or "illuminate" them. But it is persistent and pervasive in philosophical

discourse too. On two separate occasions, Derrida points us towards the importance of this

metaphor: 'the metaphor of darkness and light (of self-revelation and self-concealment), the

founding metaphor of Western philosophy as metaphysics' (2010a, p.31) and 'Light is only one

example of these "several" fundamental "metaphors" – but what an example!' (2010c, p.114).

Both times, he alerts us to the foundational, fundamental (archetypal) nature of *darkness and light* in philosophy, indicating philosophy's blind endeavour to pursue light and escape the murky myths of darkness.[83]

Darkness and light's pervasive nature in everyday vernacular already grants it a sort of hauntological quality. It promises bright futures of tomorrow, whilst calling on ancient metaphors of the past, providing structures of thought that will be uncovered later in this chapter. But it is both hauntological and archetypal. Its appearance in *Republic,* arising at pivotal structural points in the narrative, particularly in the allegorical sections such as *The Cave,* conform to Osborn's criteria of archetypality. Plato's Republic (2008) is full of gloom, darkness and caves, alongside fires and daylight: 'bats flit about squeaking in the depths of an awful cave' (p. 80); there is 'a cavernous cell' (p. 240); prisoners 'look towards the firelight' (p. 241) and 'sun's beams' (p. 242); and so forth. It is both a setting for Plato and a metaphor deities and ideals (Stock, 2021, p.149).

Beyond its archetypality and haunting nature, we should also notice that this particular metaphor functions vividly in its binary oppositional form.[84] Without one there can be no other, and one always carries the trace of the other: after all, darkness exists only as an absence of light and light exists only as absence of darkness (Stock, 2021, p.148). We can also see the 'subordinating

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[83] Adorno and Horkheimer (1997) make the same point about Enlightenment philosophy in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. I will return to this idea in greater depth later in this chapter, as I believe that Education has become intertwined with this goal.

[84] Though of course all metaphor will incur binary opposition, *this* metaphor's binary is self-contained. The metaphor is *darkness and light,* not merely light and thus inherently darkness.

structure of opposition' (Derrida, 1982, p. 41), that is, that light subordinates darkness, and consequently light is always the ameliorated term. With these structural implications of the metaphor understood, we should now look to understand it in terms of *différance,* that is, the language that it defers to and differs from, or in other terms, the network of discourse in which it resides.

VI.ii.ii. Plato's Metaphor of the Sun

To reiterate the point made in Chapter V, we do not seek what Plato intended when he wrote *The Cave.* Even if such a task were possible, it is of little use to understanding how the metaphor haunts, grounds, even gives shape to Education. However, the *use* of the metaphor in Greek literature is revealing of *darkness and light* in terms of its possible semantics or wider network of meanings. Light is both a signifier and signified – it is signified by, for example, the sun or the morning. Plato often employs the sun as the primary figure of light in *Republic*, and both night and an underground cave as his figures of darkness.

The sun is a pivotal figure of symbolism in Greek thought more widely, and of course stretches into the past of Ancient cultures.[85] Despite the eddying between monotheism and pantheism, the sun remained as a constant god.[86] Its looming radiance is unshakable, and it is easy to see how it remained a figure of worship for such a long time, notably becoming Helios for the ancient

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[85] Bronze Age and Egyptian artworks clearly depict the sun as a figure of worship, a 'giver of life to mankind' (Kesser, 1962, p.113).

[86] Notopoulos (1944a, pp.164-165) notes 'Greek thought up to Socrates reveals that the conception of the sun may be divided broadly into two key aspects: (A) the religious and poetic and (B) the scientific', indicating that darkness and light already existed in Plato's vocabulary as a *supplement*. For example, the ancient belief in a deity of omnipotent power is supplemented by the sun; it appears as a god-like being in itself, towering above us, but it also becomes the figure for God itself.

Greeks. What will become clear, however, is although the notion of the sun as a deity has long since faded into obscurity, the deification of light or shining (both ways of the sun exacting itself over us), continues to haunt our vocabulary, especially in regards to Education. It is clear that the interchangeable nature of gods and suns was commonplace amongst Greek and pre-Greek thinkers. With these connotations there is already a trace of Education's embodiment of the metaphor; dominance, a looming existence above, are pivotal ways to think about Education's positioning over us. Additionally, this raises the Heideggerian concern surrounding foundations for the ontotheological principle of metaphysics, the search for 'man's being toward God' (2010a, p.9), something we will see infused in Education.

Consequently, if the sun represents a provider, then the *darkness* stands as a leech; if the sun is divine perfection, then the darkness is mortal flaws; if the light is the primordial deified being, then darkness is the finitudinal *Da-sein* (Stock, 2021, p.148). For light represents all that is good, and dark stands for all that is bad. I will return to these somewhat more sinister connotations in due course, however it is worth noting that in these significations of the metaphor there is something fundamentally human about darkness, and therefore should not be treated with any sense of apprehension as is so common in most disciplines. Crucially, Plato may have drawn darkness from Orphic theology, the depiction of Orpheus' descent into the underworld. Orpheus travelled into the darkness of Greek mythology to retrieve his fallen wife Eurydice. Two elements will have been of interest to Plato here: firstly, the concept of *darkness* as the below, the afterlife, the place of death. This is not the same as hell; the underworld is not eternal damnation, but nevertheless it binds the notion of death and darkness together for Plato. Secondly, it is the fact that Orpheus, a profit-like figure, *chooses* to descend. It will become clear, both in the

deconstruction of *The Cave* and the exploration of the dominant ontology of Education that darkness is often to be escaped from, rather than explored.

VI.iii. The Metaphor in Wider Discourse

We must remember, though, that Plato's inspirations are of little importance beyond offering possible significations of the metaphor; we do not seek *Republic's* 'original destiny' (Foucault, 2002, p.139). We should always be considering how these metaphors exist now, as a node in contemporary educational discourse. Education has no interest in Plato, or indeed in the Ancient Greeks and their philosophy. It only has interest in the vocabulary itself, the signifying elements, and the significations that can be drawn from it. Thus, although Plato's inspirational myths and poems may demonstrate some of the *possible* significations that Education chooses to receive, we must understand that the metaphor has opened a wider chain of significations, a much larger web of discourse. It would be impossible to chart the entire network of the metaphor since Plato first utilised it, however there are dominant ways that it is used both in everydayness and in the educational realm that we can turn to.[87]

VI.iii.i. Middle Ages

Whilst the sun as an explicit deity withdrew, light remained divine. Chapter VII will make this overlapping signification more transparent, but in essence, the strong belief in a Christian God brought with it an ascribing of the divine to light, something that could be reached by the relentless worship of the Lord. Look to the Arthurian legend of The Holy Grail, for example, to

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[87] Some of the texts I explore will be ones that appear on English syllabi in Anglophone Education systems, thus exemplifying clearer examples of the metaphor's usage in contemporary discourse.

find gleaming lights when the grail ascends to the heavens, or look to the creation of light as the holiest of beginnings in Genesis: 'And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness' (Genesis, 1:3-4). The light has continued to be associated with that which is 'good', whilst darkness is 'separated', thus deemed inferior.

Though the sun had previously been worshipped as a deity, its primary function, its light, had now become a pure symbol of God, 'a form of the primary body' (Aquinas, Q67.A4). If we consider this carefully, the semiotic shift in signified meanings are only superficial. There remains the sense of light being subject to worship and possessing connotations of ultimate knowledge and beneficence, whereas darkness, especially in the Roman Catholic faith so fervently followed during this period, connotes sin and ignorance. Again, it proposes that light is to be sought after and darkness escaped from.

VI.iii.ii. Enlightenment

To jump to another epoch – the modern, the metaphor is appropriated once again to indicate a different kind of divinity or truth. Amidst the Enlightenment, truth and scientific fact became the meaning of light, and the debunked myths of the past became darkness. We need look no further than the morphology of the word – an En-*light*-ening of humanity, but the metaphor is more pervasive still:

> The Enlightenment in the eighteenth century was a movement which renewed the world by adapting the rhetoric of Christianity and giving it a new meaning. […] the secularisation process can be seen to have reached its culmination in a reinterpretation of

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the Biblical dualism of light and darkness. In Christianity, the idea of truth is reflected by the eternal light God has given humankind. This metaphor was gradually replaced by the idea of scientific truth, which illuminated the dark areas of human knowledge. (Tunturi, 2011, p.20)

Through reworking the language of Christianity, humankind can be viewed as worshiping a new sort of light, the light that shone upon darkness, that is, the illumination of truth upon ignorance. An irony of course exists here. The truths that the Enlightenment so readily imbibed were just as mythical. Adorno and Horkheimer characterise the Enlightenment as such through the metaphor of *darkness and light*: 'the dark horizon of myth is illumed by the sun of calculating reason, beneath whose cold rays the seed of the new barbarism grows to fruition' (1997, p.32). Their contention is that the symbolic nature of light in the Enlightenment era is one that is inherently mythical in itself, that it 'merely reproduces the fantastic wisdom that is supposedly rejects' (p.12). This will prove an essential irony when I come to explore this metaphor in relation to Education. However, what should be noted is that although God no longer remained in the vocabulary used here, light remained symbolic of a new deity: scientific truth.[88]

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[88] Amidst this nineteenth-century, scientific enlightening of thought came a more palpable and visual sort of light, notably in the form of street lamps. From the invention of the Yablochkov Candle, through to the use of gas lamps in London, the streets became illuminated. Now, the crime once obscured by the dark was visible to all, and henceforth the light physically generated goodness. Such illuminations make little difference to crime (so studies still prove even now (Atkins et al., 1991)), and thus the aura of goodness and virtue in the street only further served to disguise the darkness behind closed doors. This is, in essence, the same occurrence as that noticed by Adorno and Horkheimer (1997), in that the light found through scientific discovery poses as a refutation of darkness, yet only seeks to hide the darkness that continues to pervade the world.

VI.iii.iii. Late Modern

The metaphor of light has been manipulated somewhat in modern conceptions, although it still employs many of the same connotations as it did for the Greeks. A widely recognised text of importance in Literature syllabi (Applebee, 1992), Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby,* uses light as a powerful symbol: 'He stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way… a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock' (Fitzgerald, 2000, p.25). For Gatsby, this light represents his lost love Daisy, a love that he desperately desires to reclaim and rekindle. The unobtainability of this light, however, intimates that this hope, this symbol of love and desire, is always just out of reach. Fitzgerald has thus repositioned the metaphor; light still represents the pure, the perfect, but it now becomes a figure of abstraction, something always out of reach for those whom seek it.

Conversely, Golding's *Lord of the Flies* famously depicts its protagonist watch his fellow islanders become savage barbarians, motivated by carnal instinct alone. The novel concludes with the poignant epitaph: 'Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart…' (Golding, 1996, p.248). This text has remained a part of the British GCSE English Literature syllabus (AQA, 2018; Educas, 2018; OCR; 2018) and American syllabi (Applebee, 1992) for some time, so is perhaps particularly pivotal in considering *darkness and light* in contemporary educational discourse. Clearly, Golding has attributed the darkness with the inner evil he believes man to possess. It is not some external force of darkness in *Lord of the Flies*, it is an inescapable part of the self, an unconscious beast waiting to be unleashed. Incidentally, Golding's use of light is not as positive in other conceptions we have explored. Large parts of the narrative are centred around the hypnotic, entrancing, or even destructive nature of fire, and thus when we return to

The Cave, it is worth remembering that light, at least when associated with fire, can be a damaging force. It also functions as an external entity that reaches the boys' inner darkness; Golding lets the light touch the darkness, and to a horrifying end.[89]

Golding's conception of darkness is fundamentally Freudian in its ascription of darkness to the inner self, an idea further developed by Jung's archetypes – an appropriate term considering the way we are considering darkness and light as archetypal. Jung states that the 'unconscious is commonly regarded as a sort of incapsulated fragment of our most personal and intimate life – something like what the Bible calls the "heart" and considers the source of all evil thoughts' (1968, p.20). Golding's epilogue for *Lord of the Flies* is almost directly mirrored by Jung; in all our hearts exists some form of evil, which Jung in term names a figure of darkness, *the shadow*[90]: 'The meeting with oneself is, at first, the meeting with one's own shadow. The shadow is a tight passage, a narrow door, whose painful constriction no one is spared who does down to the deep well' (p.21). Jung's theory is helpful in our consideration of the metaphor[91], as perhaps,

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[89] Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* presents a similar idea, both eponymously and thematically throughout his novella. Conrad depicts darkness as an abstract state that characters dwell within that eventually consumes them: 'you are being assaulted by the powers of darkness' (1994, p.70), a devouring force that will eventually sully all humanity. The protagonist Marlow's encounters with 'the horror' (p.70) of colonialised Africa, cause him to see this same darkness in his native England.

[90] The shadow is further elucidated by Jung and certainly purports Platonic cave-like imagery. He describes the encounter with the shadow as 'the attack of all the ferocious beasts which the caverns of the psychic underworld are supposed to harbour… [It is] the face we never show the world' (p.20). Not only is Jung's lexis anchored in darkness and light, much of the vocabulary reflects Plato's; perhaps there has not been such a semiotic shift after all. It is in this encounter with 'the caverns', or cave, that we meet the darkest (truest) part of ourselves, the beasts which desire to be sprung from the self but remain trapped underneath by societal expectations.

[91] Though the task of this thesis is not to propose an inversion of the metaphors that formulate Education, I want you to remember the possibilities of Education in an overturning of them. Jung's animation of the darkness into this shadowy figure of the self yields a glimmer of positivity, one that is pulled away from in all operations of the metaphor we have seen. There is a place within the darkness that is drenched in uncertainty, a being we are far less familiar with than the figures of light that we so commonly adore. It is worth noting an integral semiotic shift from Jung: darkness, shadow, the Orphic descent into the bottom of the cave, is not just that of evil or sin. Uncertainty may be integral to understanding *The Cave*, and this uncertainty can be found by studying the shadows of it. Indeed

confrontations with darkness appear to be confrontations with invariably human ways of being. Whether that be our self, as in Hugo's sewers referenced at the start of this chapter, Golding's dark heart, Jung's shadow, or the obscurities ignored by Enlightenment thinking, predicated by Platonic notions of truth and light. Even in the world of quantum physics, 'a universe governed by the speed of light, parts are hidden, withdraw, obscure. The dark Dantean forests of the universe' (Morton, 2018a, p.170) need exploring, the realm that appears so inaccessible to us under the laws governing the lights. Darkness is always pejorative, and yet there seems so much uncovered by it being subordinated by light. The short version of this narrative in educational terms, then, is that Education's striving towards light obscures more than we would hope. But the deconstruction that follows will make this much clearer.

VI.iv. Deconstructing *The Cave*

VI.iv.i. Shadows on the Wall

Let us now turn to Plato's tale. It begins with Socrates explaining the original state of the humans in the cave:

> Imagine people living in a cavernous cell down under the ground; at the far end of the cave, a long way off, there's an entrance to the outside world. They've been there since childhood, with their legs and necks tied up in a way which keeps them in one place and allows them to look only straight ahead, but not to turn their heads. There's firelight burning a long way further up the cave behind them… there are people on the other side

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anyone who has been to a music concert outdoors that has gotten dark over the course of the performance has experienced the thrill of being plunged into darkness, a sheer *jouissance* found in the burgeoning uncertainty that builds around you. Darkness does not have to equal evil, after all.

of [the fire] who are carrying all sorts of artefacts… some of the people talk as they carry these objects, while others are silent. (Plato, 2008, pp.240-241)

Before exploring the language, it is important to note the structure of the text: within the allegory Plato draws our attention to the cave first, a figure of darkness, and the fire, a figure of light. Osborn (2009) noted that archetypal metaphors would arise early in a piece of discourse and be visible in something everyday and experiential.[92] This state that Socrates, and consequently Plato, proposes is a human state cloaked in darkness, lacking the illuminatory force of light, shrouded in *uncertainty*. This may indicate that the introductory setting of the allegory is not just a thinly veiled argument against Plato's contemporaries, but instead the original state that mankind dwells within.[93]

We may read *The Cave* just as one reads Golding's infamous 'darkness within man's heart', a symbol of the beastly savages we are all capable of being. If so, is this the state we are always-already in? Perhaps we are thrown [*Geworfen*] into the darkness during the initiation of our Being. This mirrors Christian conceptions of Being, a state of original sin, something I will return to in Chapter VII. We should also remember, though, that caves are the place of the shadow,

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[92] Perhaps Plato is commenting on the state of the educative forces of Greece, the Sophist tradition which he so openly abhorred, and implying that it is a 'dark', restrictive system. Yet it does not 'seem possible to hold that the condition... described in the cave can be explained entirely as a perverted "education," under the influence of Sophists, corrupt politicians' (Murphy, 1932, p.94). Possibly Plato's image is too sinister to serve such a simplistic agenda, and we can find a far more fruitful reading if we consider that 'children are born young and born human, and that is enough of itself to constitute a "cave."' (p.94).

[93] *Though Marquant cared little for the town, he grew increasingly worried about the ghostly visions they had. Perhaps it was nonsense, or perhaps a change in the water. But what if these visions were to become their future? Marquant consulted his books. For many long nights he poured over the pages, often by candlelight. Every inscrutable sign and symbol must be deciphered, understood, he thought. For months this went on, his sight worsening by the day. Nothing had changed in the town; things went on as they always did, yet still the people chattered and gossiped about the visions they suffered.*

where we may encounter the darkest, truest parts of ourselves (Jung, 1968), or simply just encounter ourselves as ourselves. If this is so, then Plato proposes that we are eventually to be pulled out of the place of shadows, the horror, as it were. It is easy to see why it would be useful to interpret *The Cave* this way. It allows the possibility of wrenching mankind out of a state of horror, however, in doing so it may also pull us away from a part of ourselves.

It is interesting to note the way that Socrates describes the men in the cave 'with their legs and necks tied', chained and bound, unmoving in their gaze.[94] These prisoners are born into this chaining, combined with the darkness that surrounds them, the unmoving nature of their gaze and the obliviousness to the situation they find themselves in. This chooses to see mankind, or *Dasein*, as thrown into a state of imprisonment and ignorance, a sort of primordial foolishness or slavishness. Such a conception allows Education the opportunity to offer redemption from the ignorant state that society places us in from the moment we are thrown into it, especially when you believe Education exists as the technological mode of enframing that I have explained in Chapter IV. As Rosen says, we are to see these prisoners as 'nonphilosphers' awaiting a 'turning around of the soul' (2005, p.270), or as Losin claims, 'the goal of Platonic education is to produce philosophers' (1996, p.54), as if through some educational model we can free people from ignorance. However, it will become clear later that this proposal of redemption from Education is a deception, a promise that it cannot keep (Stock, 2021, p.149).

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[94] We are reminded again of Foucault's panoptic society, an always-already state of ignorance and acceptance, created by the training of the body and the shared participation in the imprisoning: 'cellular… organic… genetic… combinatory' (1991, p.167).

In this cavern there also dwells another falsity, the light in the form of the fire. Socrates explains to Glaucon that this fire exists as the puppeteer of a shadow-theatre. Passers-by holding assorted objects behind the prisoners will cast their shadows upon the wall of which the prisoners are transfixed upon, making the passers-by become entertaining puppets for the bound prisoners. The performance cast upon the wall becomes 'the only reality people in this situation would recognise' (Plato, 2008, p.241). The state of primordial foolishness I described before is elucidated further by this shadow-theatre; the reality that the cave-dwelling prisoners perceive to be the 'truth' is one of fiction, a contrived 'mirror of nature' (Rorty, 1979) that the prisoners fall prey to. This grants the fire a semi-divine status as its shining is controlling of the prisoners. But we know that this is not the "truth", it is a simulation[95] of the "real" light that exists outside the cave. Despite the fact the fire shares many qualities with the sun and consequently divine light, it only *appears* to be the source of all truth. Rather than being a divine source that looms above, it is manufactured, a construction by some unknown figure, hovering only just above the prisoner's heads. It is a false idol, an 'artificially interpolated counterpart of the sun' (Notopoulos, 1944b, p.236). This falsity is exacerbated by the way that it manipulates their reality into a world of shadows, rather than original images, and leaves the prisoners to fall prey to perceiving the figures on the wall as true reality.

Education thus embraces the vision of humanity trapped in a cave of shadows and contented by watching pirouettes on the wall. It chooses to see our Being as that of 'nonphilosphers' (Rosen, 2005, p.270), bound to inauthenticity and everydayness, being as *Das Man* choose to live, rather

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[95] Ultimately this is pure simulacrum (Baudrillard, 2014) – a false reality that has become more real than reality for those within it. But this does not mean it is not important. Baudrillard and Derrida do not tell us to dismiss the simulacrum, but rather explore its structure as I do here.

than how *I* choose to live, (Heidegger, 2010a, p.123), falling into 'the abyss of meaningless' (p.147). Heidegger elucidates this idea further in his own critique of Plato's allegory, corroborating with the ways we may read *The Cave*:

> The cave like abode is the "image" for… the place of our dwelling (in an everyday way) is revealed to sight as we look around. The fire in the cave, which burns above those who dwell there, is the "image" for the sun. The vault of the cave represents the dome of the heavens. People live under this dome, assigned to the earth and bound to it. What surrounds and concerns them there is, for them, "the real", i.e. that which is. In this cavelike dwelling they feel that they are "in the world" and "at home" and here they find what they can rely on. (Heidegger, 2010b, p.164)

We can again see how this is such a powerful use of the metaphor in educational discourse: it proposes that the truth individuals *think* they know is actually false, and a more authentic light is available somewhere "out there", thus Education becomes the force through which this will happen. Education must act as a 'rechannelling [of their] desires, diverting them away from one sort of object and towards another' (Losin, 1996, p.54), the object that they *really* want, that is, the truth. As Freire puts it when describing Education in its inauthentic form:

> …the educator's role is to regulate the way the world "enters into" the students… And since people "receive" the world as passive entities, education should make them more passive still, and adapt them to the world. (2017, p.49)

Freire's argument is that this particular version of Education – the 'banking method' (p.49) is problematic, as it both enframes the world for the students and treats them as 'passive entities'.

What a perfect allegory the opening of *The Cave* becomes with this description, and it seems likely that Plato would have agreed with Freire here as he refutes the belief that Education can 'introduce knowledge into a mind which doesn't have it, as if they were introducing sight into eyes which are blind' (Plato, 2008, p.245). Undoubtedly, contemporary Educators follow this argument in their beliefs, that to 'teach, then, is not to lead, but to let students search for it' (Phillips, 2003, p.234), that they should not treat students as prisoners or passive entities and not 'regulate' their view of the world. However, not only is the dominant body of Education in direct opposition to this, embodied by the nature of schools, universities, curricula, exams and commonly employed teaching methodologies, but this thinking is also purely hauntological. By viewing a negative form of Education this way, it promises a "real" or authentic Education is out there, a process that will not regulate their view but instead show them the light. We will see in the conclusions of this chapter, however, as we further unravel this metaphor that such a belief is a 'lost future' (Fisher, 2014, p.27), a promise of the past that will never come to pass.

VI.iv.ii. Liberation from The Cave

Socrates continues his discussion with Glaucon by proposing that an unnamed *they* will enter the cave as a saviour, the heroic figure of this allegory[96], and 'set [them] free from their bonds and [cure] their inanity' (Plato, 2008, p.241). Ostensibly, we assume this figure is the educator who

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[96] *Months became years, still nothing changed, and still Marquant studied. It was only after a decade of toil that Marquant understood a path out of this relentless labour. Though he could understand shreds and fragments, why could he not create a being to aid him in his quest of understanding all of the tomes? If he could not decipher all the texts on his own, a being must be made that could aid him. He read his tomes again, marking every available page that intimated such an idea. With a renewed sense of purpose, he found what he was looking for in a perplexing diagram. A drawing of a small man in a flask: the homunculus. A being like that of a man could be made, and it would help Marquant with all he needed. It was to be born in a flask, first in the depths of shadow, then released into the great, white expanses of the desert.*

releases the prisoners and allows them to see to their reality, as even in the most liberatory

pedagogy, we cannot resist the necessity of a teacher in some form. Whether this be the 'skill

teachers' (Illich, 1971, p.87) and 'pedagogues' (p.99) of Illich's deschooled learning web, the

transgressional teacher of hooks' university classroom (1994, p.147) or the 'dialogical man'

(Freire, 2017, p.64) of Freire's pedagogy, a space is always created for a figure of the educator in

some form, even if their role is somewhat diminished by the standards of critical pedagogy. Losin

affirms this stance in *The Cave* as he posits that 'the educator must be concerned not only with

the reorienting of intelligence, but with desires as well' (1996, p.53) when attempting to free

students from their cave-like ignorance. Other common readings of The Cave intimate that it is

the being itself Education rather than just an individual, that leads to the emancipatory vision:

Schofield states that that 'Education has to "turn the eye of their souls"' (2012, p.156) when he

interprets the allegory; Hodgson, although problematising the dominant reading that 'the allegory

of the Cave [represents] a linear movement away from darkness toward a unified, enlightened

self', it is still the being Education that enacts some form of change – 'education as the finding of

voice' (2016, p.190). These uses of Education in its noun form give weight to the ontological

interrogation at play here – that it is a thing, both embodied by and exerting over people, and that

is often pointed to as if it objectively present.

The purpose of the thing Education in this discourse is thus liberatory: a fire burns behind the

prisoners, an exit and a distant unknown light; a painful dazzling occurs as their world is revealed

to them: 'It hurts him to do this' (Plato, 2008, p.241). This is the prisoners encountering some

degree of truth, and I use "some degree" deliberately, as those such as Reeve, Notopoulos and

Murphy interpret this moment to be the revealing of pure truth. However, it seems that these

prisoners have only identified the construction of truth in *their* reality, where 'they are "in the world" and "at home" and here they find what they can rely on' (Heidegger, 2010b, p.164). There is still a great deal to be revealed to them; so far, they have only learned that they have been lied to. Education acts in this manner, especially in the earlier stages of the schooling system.[97] Education, repeatedly, in its control of students' progression and time, re-educates and redefines, allowing the students to see the "real" truth, or at least it coerces students 'to the state where their primary desires are for wisdom and truth' (Losin, 1996, p.54), or 'to know, to understand, to pursue the truth' (Pring, 2005, p.50). Is it the real truth this time, or merely the truth that is left by that which precedes us? There is always another layer of Education to unravel, another stage to go through, another new grade to obtain. And so, to return to Plato's prisoners' realisation that their surroundings are in fact a lie, it is not in fact the truth that they have learned, but instead the truth *this time.* Socrates' declaration that the prisoner is 'now closer to reality and is seeing more accurately' (2008, p.241) is befitting this interpretation, as clearly the prisoner has learned to refute that which he saw beforehand, but that does not mean that reality has been seen in its most essential form. They now only know to look away from the lying shadows on the wall, something which may prove foolish in time. Idiomatically, the truth hurts: 'if he were forced to look at the actual firelight, don't you think it would hurt his eyes?' (p.242). The prisoner, confronted with that which has simulated their reality, is dazzled by the brightness of the fire. However, if we return to the shining of the fire as representative of some form of truth, as is so common in the Greek depictions of light, it becomes apparent that the prisoner's confrontation with the truth of

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[97] It is during those so-called formative years in which we realise all is not what it seems, that our parents had lied to us about where babies come from, that our teacher had lied to us about what a comma does, that our textbook had lied to us about the history of imperialism in the West.

the moment is a painful experience. For the prisoners, or indeed anyone discovering the nature of their reality being simulated by that which precedes them, it is easy to understand their pain.

A further complication arises when we consider that the inauthentic existence that the prisoners endured is a world of shadows and consequently of darkness – 'The meeting with oneself is, at first, the meeting with one's own shadow' (Jung, 1968, p.21). In its Jungian sense, it is clear that there is much to be learned of our own existence from this world, and yet Education demands that we turn away from the darkness and look to the light, that we educate ourselves through 'dark times' (Giroux and Filippakou, 2020, p. 113). Plato supports the hierarchization of light in its binary opposition to darkness distinctly. Although the shadows that the prisoners encounter may not be those of real darkness, and are instead those of theatre, they are still surrounded by the gloom of natural shadow. Perhaps Education does not want us to remain in darkness, but to look outwards to the rest of the world. This is further established by Socrates positing that the prisoners are to be 'dragged forcibly away [from the fire] up the rough, steep slope' (Plato, 2008, p.242). After this encounter with some degree of reality, a clear signal that the world has been constructed by those that precede us, it would of course be much easier for the prisoners to resist being pulled out of *The Cave* and return to the shadows on the wall and the warmth of the fire (the comfort of the truth that they thought they knew). Heidegger expresses that *Da-Sein*, when living in everydayness exists in 'the mode of fleeing *from* it and of forgetting *it*' (Heidegger, 2010a, p.43), referring to the authentic acknowledgement of their ontological position. The position of the teacher, Education's greatest disciple, is exemplified again. They are to *force* the reluctant prisoners, the students within Education, to question the reality of their world and to *drag* the students into a new arena of knowledge and truth. I imagine every teacher has numerous

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anecdotes concerning "dragging" reluctant students through the mire of their Education towards the ultimate objective, their final examinations and the world beyond. But we should not mistake this act as a dragging towards the ontological position of *Da-Sein* by the teacher or towards any sort of tangible, concrete truth, as the allegory purports to. This leads us to the next portion of Plato's tale.

VI.iv.iii. The Realm Outside of The Cave

The crux of Socrates' tale is the introduction of daylight.[98] The prisoner leaves the cave, adjusts to the dissonance, and is at last able to 'feast his eyes on the heavenly bodies and the heavens themselves' (Plato, 2008, p.242), rather than merely view its imitations in the fire or the moon or the stars. We see 'the progress toward knowledge' concluded by encounter 'the things themselves' (Reeve, 2012, p.140), or at least that is a common reading. At last he encounters the (supposedly) *real* truth of his reality (Stock, 2021), and Plato makes it clear that the Prodicaen symbol of the sun is at play: 'the source of the seasons and the yearly cycle… everything which he and his peers used to see is its responsibility' (Plato, 2008, p.242). Even the ironist Heidegger declares that this climax of the narrative is where 'Real freedom is attained… all things are manifest' (2010b, p.169). These notions of the sun and its power have been well documented previously, and it is again obvious why Plato selects this archetypal metaphor as the finale of

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[98] *Marquant lit a flame under the flask. It flickered and licked the walls, leaving ghastly apparitions of his past hanging for seconds too long. He stared at the vessel and poured in everything the book decreed: salt, sulphur, metals, gasses. They formed at the bottom of the flask like a cloud in a storm, and Marquant sat and he waited. He believed, in that very moment, that when it came time to take the flask into the light, it would truly produce something marvellous. For too long he had sat in the shadows of his study, and now desperate to feel the heat of the sun that scorched the desert, he knew that things would change. He would finally be able to stop the visions of the future, or prevent them from coming to pass. He was filled now with the dream that he could change things for the people of Le Sable. Outside, the children played in the evening sun as their parents tended to their livestock.*

mans' search for truth and meaning; this is the redemption that Plato offers to the readers if they adhere to the structure of the allegory.

Let us not forget that the prisoner has been led, or rather *dragged* here by an educator, and that the moment of encountering light has been carefully selected by them. To reiterate Losin's reading, the prisoner must face a 'rechannelling [of] desires, diverting them away from one sort of object and towards another' (1996, p.54). They have no say in this process; they must follow what the educator believes to be the right path of rechannelling. Plato himself proposes a curriculum in Book VII (p.57), thus it is not hard to make a comparison between Education now and in the allegory. Furthermore, without the guide directing the liberated prisoner, would they identify the realm outside the cave as anything concrete and truthful at all? They are only 'concrete illustrations of ideas' and 'they never suspect that it is always and only in the light of these "ideas" that they see everything that passes so easily and familiarly for the "real"' (Heidegger, 2010b, p.164). It seems that the immediate identification with the 'real' that the prisoner encounters is only due to the guiding through preconceived ideas, perhaps ideas fed to him by the liberator. The prisoner stands in awe at the bewildering sight of the outside realm, but they do not know it to be truth beyond what they have been told, just as the shadows and the fire were once truth to them also: 'The level of dwelling that has now been reached is, like the others, defined in terms of what is normatively and properly unhidden *at this level*' [my italics] (p.170). Just so, any 'level' that has been reached may have presented a clearing, but that does not mean the beings within that realm have become *fully* unhidden; this reality is one simulated by the educator.

We can see a fundamental *grafting* into this metaphor then, as it creates the space for the role of the educator in the necessitation of a revealing of the light. A structure where prisoners are not able to free themselves from their enslavement, recognise the simulated nature of their environment, nor discover the real truth outside of the cave, necessitates the educator. As Illich observes:

> By definition, children are pupils. The demand for the milieu of childhood creates an unlimited market for accredited teachers. School is an institution built on the axiom that learning is the result of teaching. And institutional wisdom continues to accept this axiom, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. (1971, p.28)

Although he speaks specifically of the ontological designation of the child as pupil (and this raises the question of the ontology of childhood as analysed in Chapter VIII), Illich's phenomenology of Education is pertinent to understanding how we *create* a space for the educator. It is not a transcendental category, but a space carved out in educational ontology: liberation of Plato's prisoners or school students is predicated on the notion of another enabling them to do so, and further, the educator is hierarchized in this opposition to the learner, recognised as the one who will show light to one who has not yet left the darkness. This teacher and learner binary, so common (if not inescapable) in Education (and indeed beyond – it pervades most walks of life (Bowman, 2016, p.144)[99]), thus seems infused with the metaphor of

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[99] Alongside training seminars in business, Bowman notices 'the sports coach… the drill sergeant…[the] sparring partner' (2016, p.144) and so forth as examples of the pervasive nature of this relationship. Though Bowman problematises the nature of teaching and learning that occurs within each of these relationships, on an ontological level, we see the relationship replicating itself outside of the most common educational institutions. He goes on to explore whether Education can occur without a teacher – it is the contention of this thesis that it can't, as Education the being will always be the overarching teacher, something that will be made clearer in the next chapter.

darkness and light, or is grafted into it by educational discourse, even it attempts to dissociate itself with it. Freire, for example, like Illich, endeavours to resist the *darkness and light* model posed by Plato in which the prisoners, or the oppressed, are 'treat[ed] as unfortunates… present[ed] their emulation models from among the oppressors' (2017, p.28). He posits that the freeing of oppressed peoples through Education must be generated by the oppressed peoples, thus operate outside if the educator/learner binary: 'This lesson and this apprenticeship must come, however, from the oppressed themselves and from those who are truly solidary with them' (p.19). But he cannot shake off the haunting nature of the graft that has occurred with *darkness and light.* Although this liberation is to be a dialogue, by '"A" [teacher] *with* "B" [student]' (p.66), rather than a forcible dragging of students into liberation, the educator always functions as the facilitator of discussion, investigator of oppressive themes or the one who is able to ask the critical questions (p.91). Education becomes deeply affected by this grafting, that of educator, or teacher, and learner, and this will become clearer as the thesis progresses. Light is never left to be discovered, but rather is always guided towards. The teacher is to 'rear or bring up' (Thomson, 2005, p.161) the learner towards light.

VI.iv.iv. Returning to The Cave

Plato's allegory concludes with the liberated prisoner, an individual whose reality has been illuminated and revealed by the deified light of the sun, who has seen the truth of their world and felt its upmost warmth, inclined to return to the cave. For in there, endless prisoners require liberation; endless people need educating. Socrates asks Glaucon whether the liberated might not feel 'sorry for them?' and Glaucon responds 'Definitely' (Plato, 2008, p.243). Perhaps Plato wishes to communicate that the liberated prisoner has a duty to return to the prisoners of the cave,

just as educators commonly hold the belief that it is their *duty* to educate the youth of today (Blake et al., 2000; Guilherme, 2016). "Duty" does not have to be a moral obligation or a necessary comportment; it too connotes a tedious drudgery the educator feels bound to. Even amongst the most sceptical educationalists, this dutiful nature is evident. Allen's image of 'The Cynical Educator', one who has been 'challenged to admit the crisis of value from which we suffer… without ceasing to educate' (2017, p.104) still feels as if they have 'a duty to others, a duty of care' (p.116). Even in the face of Education as a monstrosity, we still find ourselves duty-bound to continue educating (it is no surprise that, in spite of every word of this thesis, I am a teacher).

The return to darkness in Plato is certainly Orphic, a return to the underworld, but why does the Educator feel the desire to embark on 'the upward journey' (Plato, 2008, p.244) so hastily? Did Orpheus not linger in the darkness and encounter Hades and Persephone, retrieve his fallen wife Eurydice, discover much about what lurks beneath the realm of man? Certainly, Plato's liberated prisoner believes they have found certain truth outside of the cave, and they certainly feel the duty to liberate more of them. However, 'the would-be liberator no longer knows his or her way around the cave' (Heidegger, 2010b, p.171), consequently they have forgotten the darkness and can no longer identify with it, especially after their encounter with the glory of the light in the outside realm. We must not forget that there is much left to be found in the darkness: Jung's shadow, the unhidden nature of Being, the 'darkness in man's heart', 'the horror', the underworld, manifold incarnations of darkness. All intimate an encounter with aspects of "the real", and yet it is only through light in this allegory that the real can be encountered: 'it is the source and provider of truth and knowledge' (Plato, 2008, p.244). Light has finally

metamorphosed into all that is good, the shining redemptive force that we should look to, thus that the finding of truth becomes the greatest goal that we can strive for.

A final element of interest in the functioning of the metaphor in *The Cave* here is in a concluding image from Socrates: 'imagine an eye that can turn from darkness to brightness' (p.245). This image, one that surmises the implications of the metaphor, intimates the apparatus Education can, or should be. The eye, an object of seeing, is orientated away from the darkness it found itself in, and now looks towards the light as its goal.[100] It is not, therefore, that the educative liberation of the prisoners possesses an innate sort of light in itself, but rather that it is the 'art of orientation' (p.245) towards light. As affirmed by Reeve, (2012), Hodgson (2016) and Losin (1996), Education becomes an apparatus that allows or enables this 'reorientation' (p.52). But the trace this leaves is that of the man who has not be reoriented. Without the presence of Education, we feel as if light is less obtainable, perhaps even unreachable. We are left with the notion that any kind of positive future is only available through the aid of Education; whilst the being Education itself remains ultimately contestable, we are welcoming of its supposed presence. Such thinking, deeply pervasive in educational discourse (as will be seen in the next section), is powerfully formative in the structuring of Education as 'a "master" concept of our time, an ontotheological principle' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.159).

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[100] *After some time, weeks perhaps, the flask had to be taken outside. The texts had said it would need sunlight to be born, just as the citizens of the town needed sunlight for their crops. He snatched the flask from its stand and stormed out of his chamber into the desert. Sun beat down on him like a monsoon. He held the flask up into the sun, felt the warmth on his cheeks, and bathed in the glory of that great being above. Not enough time, he thought, not enough time has been spent appreciating these moments. After a lifetime of private study in shadows, it was good to be out there.*

Vi.v. *Darkness and Light* in the Dominant Ontology of Education

Having uncovered some fragments of the metaphor *darkness and light*, especially in its relation

to the prevalent educational text *Republic,* we should seek to place those fragments more firmly

within the contemporary educational landscape. This recontextualisation of the metaphor, alluded

to in the previous section but explored more thoroughly here, is a revealing of the dominant

ontology of Education, or rather, its ontotheological presence.[101] Through the understanding of

how this metaphor functions with contemporary educational discourse, we come to see the ways

in which Education exists – we come closer to its Being.[102]

Vi.v.i. Exams, Grades and Liberation

It would be difficult to dissociate *darkness and light* from examinations and grading. The

presence of these apparatus are inextricably bound to not only the dominant ontology of

Education, but also of the logic proposed of *darkness and light* in its fragmentary form. The men

of Plato's allegory may not be tested on what they know explicitly, but they are certainly

demonstrated as being on a path from darkness to light, something that we use the examination

and the grade to visibly determine in contemporary Education. Take, for example, the current

GCSE system in UK schooling (although it should be noted that forms of examination and

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[101] We should separate the dominant ontology of Education from dominant interpretations of *The Cave*, though. The former is the way in which Education appears to us now through the haunting or archetypal nature of the metaphor that gives it shape, whereas the latter is the readings that educationalists produce in their desire for what Education should strive to be. The two are entangled, but not the same; the way that educationalists choose to read *The Cave* is revealing of the dominant ontology of Education (as opposed to the reading itself), but that is not what we are exploring in this section. Rather, it is the less likely nodes in the network of Education.

[102] *The beast was born in the flask that day. Marquant looked at the sun through his pale fingers and felt its warmth. Light shimmered as it hit the glass and the mass inside started to gurgle. The sands shuffled around Marquant and his creation, the grains moving like a ghost.*

grading are found all over the globe). This system is based on a range of available grades, often granted the parlance of "good", "top", "high" and the opposite "low", "fail" and so forth, currently embodied in UK by the numbers 9-1 (HM Government, 2015, p.2). An obvious implication is the need to "aim high" and get the best grade available, whether that be at the top or bottom of the scale, and consequently the notion of becoming more learned, knowledgeable, skilled or even just 'filled' (Freire, 2017, p.45). The debates between what an examination (in any form) should do are regular and heated, but all of them imply some general sense of progress from what the learner *was* to what they *will be.*

Can we really dissociate the illumination of the prisoners with the logic of the exam? Students are offered a chance to reach the light (to varying degrees) through Education, an act 'lifting people out of their ignorance' (Allen, 2014, p.111), or they must remain in darkness through failing an exam. The implications of failure (and thus dwelling in darkness) are better expressed through a different metaphor explored in Chapter VII, but what is pivotal here is that students must aspire towards the light as part of their educational existence. A student making any kind of progress is determined as a step towards the light, but the push for the higher grades – the necessitation of 'closing the gap' (Andrews et al., 2017; EEF, 2018) – is one that indicates learners are to aspire to a purer and more powerful light than they have achieved. They should always aspire to leave the cave. We have seen the implications of this from the deconstruction of *The Cave* – that those being made to ignore darkness is problematic and erroneous. But teachers too, despite their regular hostility towards examination, operate within this metaphor. In part, this is because of

their fear of not granting redemptive light for the students or parents.[103] The pressure for the educator as an enabler of light (and this is a growing trend in Higher Education too) is a powerful perpetuator of *darkness and light* in Education, but they too become subject to this same paradigm. Teachers are judged on their performances in their ability to enable the path towards light for the students – 'make progress' (OFSTED, 2019, p.5) – signifying a path or journey just as Plato's prisoners were forced to do, and towards a Platonic sort of light through discovery of the truth. Indeed, the language used in such documentation is highly Platonic (and consequently Freirean), as they claim it 'is unhelpful to think of pupils' minds as "empty vessels" waiting to be filled with isolated, disconnected pieces of information' (p.5), thus implying the need for the Educator's role in the path towards light, the 'reorientation' (Losin, 1996; Reeve, 2012; Hodgson, 2016) of the students' eyes away from darkness. The 'Outstanding' (OFSTED, 2019, p.170) teacher as it is known in UK schools, is predicated on this journey.

Many educators believe that they have an important role to play in this journey, as they have faith in the notion that students reaching high grades is genuinely the best thing that can be done for them. But the dominant ontology of Education includes those that are sceptical about its most technologizing aspects. Some *know* that the likes of examination are a 'mechanistic and lowly tool' (Allen, 2014, p.21), believing that there is some purer form of Education available outside of the examination, but do not notice that they are also engulfed by the logic of *darkness and light* as the 'logic of examination constitutes modern schooling as its ontological condition'

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[103] As I have said before, 'the elusive "grade 9". English teachers would be the ones to facilitate these grades, even if only for a very select few, and surely would feel the backlash of parents, departments, and government if this were not achieved by the supposed academic elite… this looming threat of grade 9 seems intended to raise teaching standards, as it demands an increase in the quality of students' performance to achieve a pass and allows a further demarcation of student (thus teacher) performance' (Stock, 2017, p.151).

(p.21). Without *darkness and light* there is no examination, as there is no determination of learners leaving the cave, acquiring something they did not have before. These notions are essential things for the exam to determine, as indeed, we do not *value* a turn to light if there is no quantification of this operation, a 'calculative thinking' (Thomson, 2005, p.149):

> Institutional educational experience today is framed by several impositions of value: the value of certifications, earned by school pupils; the market value of a particular degree from a university; the value of a module or class in terms of the above; the value of an individual teaching session in terms of the above; the value of the educational experience; the value of personal development. (Bojesen, 2016, p.395)

Bojesen makes it clear that Education does not seem to exist at all without some sort of calculative framing (or technological enframing), and we have reached a point where the dominance of the rough beast pertains to those frames that are numerous and intrinsic to its structure. As critical pedagogue Ron Scapp says in his conversation with bell hooks concerning the role of teacher and learner, 'it's bad faith to pretend that we're [the teacher and students] all the same because the teacher is ultimately the one who is going to grade [the examinations]' (in hooks, 1994, p.153). So obviously does Scapp indicate his adherence to the system of examination (even if he doesn't agree with it), despite discussing so-called liberatory forms of Education. For him (and hooks does little to contest this statement), the examination still plays a part in the structures of liberatory pedagogy. Light is consequently only obtained if we can demonstrate it is so, a logic of enframing prophesised by Heidegger in his writings on technology. His troubling assessment decreed the technological thinking present in late-modernity where we turn phenomena into a 'calculable coherence' (2011c, p.228), something

that can be ordered and thus revealed to us something of usefulness [*Bestand*]. Although far from Heidegger's vocabulary, the logic of the exam has certainly enacted Heidegger's prophecy in a broadly accepted manner across the globe. The exam remains one of the most palpable and consistent modes of technological enframing visible to us, and yet it is intertwined within the very metaphors of Education itself.

We would believe that more radical educationalists who decry the status quo of Education would not be so entangled in *darkness and light* as a metaphor, but they too exist as another node in this network, and thus too present as another element of the dominant ontology of Education. Freire, and indeed his disciples Giroux (2011) and hooks (1994) for example, propose the possibility of Education as an act of liberation if it pulled away from the 'banking concept of education' (2017, p.45) in which the students were treated as vessels to be filled, a condition that seems inextricable from the aforementioned examination. However, his proposal of Education as a mode of liberation, enabled through dialogue, critical questioning, reflection and action, still incurs a path towards enlightenment. It too returns to the previous issue of the grafting of educator and learner into *darkness and light.* The metaphor haunts us in a manner in which we cannot stop educating. But why is this? What future do we envision through the aspiration towards light?

VI.v.ii. Lost Futures

I proposed in the deconstruction of *The Cave* that the metaphor embodies a sense of lost futures when it becomes present in contemporary discourse, an idea of Fisher's (2014) explained in Chapter V. A further examination of contemporary educational discourse and its use of the

metaphor will help us see this. In UK educational reform documentation, we see the predication of a deliverance from stupidity (an emancipation from darkness):

> Our vision is to provide world-class education, training and care for everyone, whatever their background. It will make sure that everyone has the chance to reach their potential, and live a more fulfilled life. It will also create a more productive economy, so that our country is fit for the future. (DfE, 2018c)

The promises of light are notable in the language – 'vision', the idea of seeing (a common image associated with light), and a bright future to be aspired to. Language like 'potential' and 'fulfilled life' intimate a heaven that we should aspire to ascend to, a utopic future (Stock, 2021). The semantics of light may require some excavation in discourse such as this, but that is not to say they are not hauntologically "present". Implicated in the appearance of the spectres of light are that Education is a tool that will allow us to reach betterment. The lexis – 'potential', 'fulfilment', or a 'productive economy' thus a strong 'future' take the very form of light themselves (Stock, 2021). We treat them as if they are *a priori* truths for Education's destined future. As Derrida notes, we see this same logic embodied in the mottos and iconography of educational institutions around the world too:

> However enigmatic it may be, the reference to truth remains fundamental enough to be found, along with light (*lux*), on the symbolic insignias of more than one university.

> The university professes the truth, and that is its profession. It declares and promises an unlimited commitment to the truth. (2002, p.202)

The Latin "lucem", "lux" and "lumen" appear in multiple mottos for higher institutions in Western countries. To provide some British examples, though there are many across the anglophone world (and indeed outside of it): University of Cambridge adorns itself with 'From here, light and sacred draughts' (QCC, 2020), University of Exeter purports that 'We follow the light' (UoE, 2020), whilst Oxford University claims 'The Lord is my Light' (OUCC, 2020) (something that conflates *darkness and light* with the metaphor excavated from the next epoch, *the shepherd and the flock* explored in the following chapter). Overtly, these educational institutions closely align their goal to that of light, as if it only by entering these places, or entering into the being Education, that light can be found. However, this relies on an ancient belief in Education as a tool capable of doing such a powerful thing. Plato's use of the metaphor, in that it represents Education as the 'art of orientation' (2008, p.245), indicates an ancient belief that we can aspire towards a better future through the orientating nature of educating the uneducated. We still hold onto this future that Plato captures so neatly in *The Cave* and its utilisation of archetypal metaphor, but calls into question whether such a future is ever going to come?

Even educationalists who claim to be "postmodern" or critical in their perceptions of Education are haunted by the metaphor and the lost future it taunts us with. Giroux and Filippakou describe the contemporary landscape as 'dark times' (2020, p. 113), amidst 'the barbarians who echo the politics of a fascist past and have come to rule' (p.113). Inherently, the world without light, and it can be found in the Second Coming of Education. We start to see how any attempt to imagine a future that is in some way an improvement, a better place, is enabled in a greater or larger sense by Education. Yet Education only envisions the lessons of the past – a tool that we can reach light

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with as it was supposed to do for Plato and all those who have followed him since. Just a little more meddling, and that light will come, we believe (Stock, 2021).[104]

All the following chapters, and consequently the metaphors they pertain to, will return to *darkness and light* at various points. Its deeply haunting nature, incurring our inability to picture Education in a way outside of its strict hierarchy, will defer to other metaphors that have given shape to Education in its contemporary form. This deconstruction alerts us overall to something very simple about the ontology of Education. If we see it is shaped by the metaphor *darkness and light,* and the orientation is always towards to the latter half of the binary, we are less likely to question its motives and behaviours. We are more likely, in fact, to leave Education broadly uncontested as a being, in the assumption that *ultimately* it is a force for good, when in fact this may not be the case.[105]

We must now perform a great leap to another epoch and consider the metaphors archetypalised there. *Darkness and light* has certainly revealed itself to be pervasive in Education, and so we must wonder what other metaphors diffuse themselves throughout the ontological formation of

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[104] You may wonder why a being that is bathed in light is monstrous, as is my contention in this thesis. There are multiple reasons. Partly, we must remember that Yeats' Second Coming was just that, and thus inherently brings with it the semantics of light. Indeed, Biblical references to angels bathed in light are often met with sheer terror due to their monstrous form, and thus light does not have to be exclusively reassuring. Equally, this is a beast of *darkness and light* – it has pockets of darkness that lurk within its Being, ones that I contend need exploring, like the belly of a beast. It is not just a beast of light.

[105] *Some time passed, and a thing came out of that flask. For months it sat unnoticed in the corner of Marquant's study, a bottle of muck that sparkled in the morning sun coming through the window. Surely another failed experiment. The alchemist had made a mistake he thought. The light was not right; he must have misread the tome. In shame, he returned to the darkness of his study.*

Education. Hereby, we move to the medieval, the epoch in which being came to be-towards-God above all else.

VII. The Shepherd and the Flock

…mixed with this religious faith in the mine, they felt a profound sense of gratitude towards a stock which had now fed and supported an entire family for over a century. It was like a private god whom they worshipped in their egotism, a fairy godmother who rocked them to sleep in their large bed of idleness and fattened them at their groaning table. And so it would continue, from father to son: why tempt fate by doubting it? (Zola, 1885, p.80)

VII.i. **Milton's *Paradise Lost***

And so we must triangulate again. Following the Platonic epoch, we now find ourselves somewhere in the middle of the 'Plato-Kant canon' (Rorty, 1989); in Heidegger's ontohistory, we move to the 'medieval' (Thomson, 2005, p.59). We will see how this is present in the metaphor excavated from the text in question, but in ontological terms, the previous designation of man as subject in the world is now regrounded. The massification of Christianity and other dominant faiths around the globe incurred a different way of being-in-the-world that did not conflict with the previous epoch as such, but rather adjusted it. Where Platonic ontology raised the ontotheological principle of 'being in general in terms of the "world"' (Heidegger, 2010a, p.21), that is of uncovering truth (Heidegger, 2010a) as was palpably seen in the orientation towards light in *The Cave*, medieval ontology grafted the concept of God into this metaphysics. An ontological shift is evident in the medieval building of Gothic cathedrals, objects that 'started to dominate the landscape in Europe from around the middle of the twelfth century and continued to do so until the early fourteenth century' (Tonner, 2015, p.140). Such feats of architectural ambition, however, reveal the mode of Being for the medieval epoch: 'The event of building these cathedrals amounted to an act of mass worship and it involved the entire community...

medieval cathedrals crystallize for all the transcendent relation of the soul to God' (pp.140-141).

For Heidegger, the act of building a great cathedral was an act of being-towards-God, both in its

symbolic function as a place of worship, but also in its literal sense as an object stretching closer

towards Him in the sky.[106] For this medieval epoch, belief in a Christian God determined that

being should be towards Him, for He is the provider of Goodness and Truth. To quote Heidegger:

'It is the conceptual expression of the particular form of inner *Dasein* that is anchored in a

primordial, transcendent relation of the soul to God and lived precisely in the Middle Ages with

an unusual reserve' (2002, p.67). It is this medieval epoch that is *particularly* grounded in a

relation to God.

This ontohistorical epoch opens a range of religious doctrine to explore. Indeed, Painter (1999),

Bailey et al. (2010) and Rury and Tamura (2019) cite various combinations of Aquinas, Luther,

Erasmus and Milton as essential writers of the Christian faith who concerned themselves with

Education in this epoch. I will endeavour to explore all these writers as part of the wider

discourse that surrounds the uncovered metaphor in this chapter, but we must narrow their works

to a singular text from which we can excavate a metaphor. In terms of educational texts written

by the aforementioned thinkers that also contain elements of fictionality *and* that exude being-

towards-God as the primary ontotheological principle, Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* perhaps

stands as the only viable choice. Although a classic in the world of literature, it is not strictly

speaking a work of educational doctrine (although as explained in the following paragraph, it is

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[106] None of this is not to say the Platonic epoch did not contain gods, but their being-towards them is fundamentally
different from the medieval (Ancient Greek gods are notoriously flawed and human-like, for example). We should
also be aware at this point of the *monstrosity* of gods/God – whether it be the vain and capricious acts of Zeus, the
vengeful and angry nature of the Old Testament, or the violent nature of different god's of destruction.

sometimes interpreted this way). As referenced by Bailey et al. (2010), Milton *did* produce such a text – *On Education* (1644), and evidentially Education was a part of his wider thought. However, the argument in *On Education* is not subtle; Education is an act of being-towards-God, as we have been granted 'Capacity enough' (Milton, 1644, p.19) to learn of Him, thus it is our duty to better educate ourselves so to attain knowledge of Him and endeavour to be more like Him; 'The end then of Learning is to repair the ruines of our first Parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him' (p.3). This text lacks metaphor and fictionality in the way that *The Cave* does, but traces of the argument permeate his notorious poem *Paradise Lost* through narrative and metaphor. He posits a palpable goal for Education in *Of Education*, and emphasises the sins of Adam and Eve that he goes on to vehemently depict in *Paradise Lost*. Further, he claims God should be placed at the centre of Education as the *shepherd* of all his *flock*, as he enframes all: 'the definite will of God so ruling, or the peculiar sway of nature, which also is Gods working' (p.2), a positioning that becomes essential in *Paradise Lost* too. Note the use of lexis implying his place atop the hierarchy – 'definite' and 'ruling', alongside nature being his 'working', thus emphasising his omniscience. Hence, Education and God become intertwined for Milton.

Though it was not its primary intention, it is not a new idea to consider *Paradise Lost* as a work of pedagogy. It stands in part as a 'constructive theology' (Bundy and Bundy, 1922, p.127), an interpretation of Scripture so to further '[justify] the ways of God to men' (p.127). In this appearance, Milton is the teacher, teaching us the lessons of the Lord. He represents Education in its Lutherean form (as will become apparent in the wider discourse), the need to bind Education and Christianity, e.g., the role of priests, mayors and parents alike in dutifully educating children

of the true ways of the Lord. However, *Paradise Lost* both acknowledges and describes its own

functions – it is educational *as* a narrative and *within* the narrative. Each book begins with an

"Argument"; here Milton summarises the key narrative elements to follow, so to remove their

aesthetics and leave behind "pure argument", the component which is to be learned by the reader.

But further, when we read the verse in the mode of the ironist, we can see the structures of

Education on which it relies, structures that Education in its most bestial form has embraced.[107]

Paradise Lost depicts the fall of Lucifer, charting his position as an angel, his rebellion against

God and his punishment to rule over Hell for all eternity. We also see the temptation of God's

most prized creation, man, and through dramatic mirroring, their subsequent fall and thus the

origin of sin. The Miltonian retelling of the story of the fall, a story now immortalised in the

Western canon, raises significant interpretations of Biblical characters and themes relevant to

think about Education – in fact the story of the fall is quite reasonably an archetype within itself

(Woodward, 1967, p.576), though not the one in question in this chapter. The poem is of course

the source of much debate surrounding Christian faith, notably in relation to the depiction of God

and of Lucifer. Indeed, for some, it is a poem 'supposed to justify God's ways; instead it seems

perpetually to call them into question' (Webber, 1973, p.514). In contrast, earlier readings of the

poem, those such as C. S. Lewis', claim that the epic is not a critique of God, as 'those who say

they dislike Milton's God only mean that they dislike God: infinite sovereignty *de jure*,

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[107] Monsters are often worshipped, even if they are monstrous. Lovecraft's (2016) stories depict religious cults that follow the ancient beast Cthulhu – a monster not dissimilar from the one I redescribed Education as in this thesis. Indeed, Lovecraft's works are littered with references to the religious text *The Necronomicon,* thus highlighting the way scripture captures *the shepherd and the flock* as a metaphor even in the realm of monsters. Even the holy creatures of the Bible and *Paradise Lost,* the angels that come from above to bring messages to below, are depicted as terrifying beasts of many faces, wheels and wings. Still, these beasts are worshipped, though it is interesting that Renaissance painters choose to hide this monstrosity in their depictions of them.

combined with infinite power *de facto*, and love which, by its very nature, includes wrath also'
(Lewis, 1969, p.130). Generally, however, it is the poem's depiction of Lucifer that has been the
source of literary and theological criticism: 'The Satan depicted by Milton in the first two books
of Paradise Lost is indeed a magnificent figure' (Mayo, 1984 p.121), whereas literature generally
depicted Satan (or Lucifer) as a one-dimensional demon, a 'monster' or a 'grotesque' (p.121). It
is this multi-faceted, some would say sympathetic, depiction of an almost universally despised
character that famously caused Blake to refer to Milton as 'of the Devil's party without knowing
it' (in Mayo, 1984, p.121). Blake intimates that Milton's characterisation, or should I say
humanisation, of Lucifer represented a "devilish", sinful attitude held unknowingly by Milton.
Indeed, Empson's famous reading of the text, something we should take seriously, calls for us to
read Milton as instigating a criticism of God's divine nature due to the way Lucifer is treated –
the poem is 'so good' as it 'makes God so bad' (1961, p.13). For Empson, 'one must also feel
horror at the God who has deliberately reduced [Lucifer] to such a condition' (p.70). This chapter
has no interest in seeking Milton's true intentions in his depiction of Christian mythology; rather,
I seek the archetypal metaphors he uses and their hauntological nature in contemporary
Education. This said, readings such as Empson's are essential for understanding the function of
the metaphor in use.

VII.ii. The Metaphor of *The Shepherd and the Flock*

VII.ii.i. Archetypality and Hauntology

The excavation of a metaphor that is both archetypal and hauntological for Education from
Milton, or indeed the epoch more broadly, points us generally in one direction. It is difficult to
find a European text from the medieval epoch that does not make reference to God or the divine

in some manner. We could posit that our excavation of metaphor should stop here; *God* stands as a powerful metaphor in itself, an abstraction used to represent earthly or "material" concerns. Indeed, the whole notion of Education as Yeats' rough beast relies on this formation of the metaphor, as does Heidegger's ontotheology – they both instil God-like traits into earthly concerns. However, when viewing the metaphor in medieval educational discourse, it is inverted: the earthly is used to represent the abstraction of God. As noted in Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*: 'spiritual truths are fittingly taught under the likeness of material things' (1947, Q1.A9). This inversion of the metaphor is obvious when we consider the change of beliefs between epochs. Our broadly secular societies visibly hold onto the language of God without necessarily placing belief in the Scripture of the medieval epoch, whereas a firm belief in God as an abstract divine in earlier epochs incurred a necessity to use material concepts to describe Him. We will see in our examination of wider discourse surrounding the metaphor that this reversal of metaphor is superficial yet vital to understanding Education in its form as rough beast. Nevertheless, for now let us establish that God's metaphorical representation in the medieval epoch is through material ideas.

Therefore, we are looking for metaphors associated with God, but represented through lexis associated with the material world, so to find our archetypal metaphor, and of course we are looking for it in the way that Osborn highlights, presented 'at critical moments in the structure of messages (at beginnings, endings, and in conjunction with vital arguments)' (2009, p.81). The opening of *Paradise Lost* establishes such a metaphor relevant to considering the educational implications of the text. In its earliest cantos, Milton states: 'That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed, in the beginning…' (1667, I.8-9). God is represented through the idea of a guide or

shepherd, terms used interchangeably through a clear chain of signification with *teacher.* We only need to look to the Bible to see this metaphor functioning:

> Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning. (Proverbs 9:9)

> Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. (Proverbs 22.6)

> And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. (Corinthians 12.28)

The embracing of Christianity by thinkers of the medieval epoch posed God as the creator, the giver and the guide or *shepherd*: 'Instruct', 'teach', 'Start children off' signify this belief. Through a *literal* reading of scripture, Education becomes a duty for the good Christian and a valiant role to fulfil, as it mirrors that of God's doings; it is a *supplement* for being-towards-Him (and thus consequently comes to replace the scripture it supplements). In turn, this allowed us to think of ourselves as followers, or more acutely, a member of a *flock.* Our inherent sin requires us to be led by the *shepherd* unto goodness, unto light, and thus unto redemption. Just as earlier educational discourse employed the metaphor *darkness and light* as not only archetypally, but also ontologically foundational, so too are we given a metaphor for this particular epoch. It is an earthly metaphor for how should consider out being-towards-God, a reification of it in Biblical lexis: *the shepherd and the flock.* As Hunter notes, 'Christian pedagogy… consisted rather of real relationships between specialised personae; specifically, the relation between the pastoral teacher

and his *flock*' (1994, p.37). The pastoral teacher, a conduit for the 'special spiritual disciplines' (p.37) of Christian scripture, is to embody the role of the *shepherd,* that is, of God, and lead his *flock* towards becoming 'reflective subjects' (p.37).

The hauntological nature of *the shepherd and the flock* in contemporary Education is also palpable, both in the logic of being shepherded and the signifying chain of God and religion. Whether it be the eerie similarity between sermons and assemblies, the Messianic nature of the teacher, or the scripture-like notion of the school rules, we can come closer to this spectre than we can others. This is of course part of the history of schools: in the medieval epoch, institutions such as chivalric schools for knights and monastic schools became fundamentally and primordially intertwined with religion, or more specifically, the Christian faith and the search for the true nature of God; 'the first popular school systems in Europe were established by the churches as instruments for the intensification and dissemination of Christian spiritual discipline and pastoral guidance' (p.55). The epoch determined that schooling should be religious in its endeavour, and thus of course the traces of these institutions will remain. Indeed, these traces will be a vital part of engaging with the dominant ontology of Education, but it is not Christian doctrine itself that remains, but rather the spectre of *the shepherd and the flock.*

VII.ii.ii. Milton's Metaphor – from Aquinas, to Erasmus, to Luther
However, just as we did with *darkness and light,* it is essential to explores how *the shepherd and the flock* was in use in the discourse surrounding Milton. I have already identified the essentiality of scripture here as a significant node in the network being examined, however it is through significant theological figures like Aquinas, Luther and Erasmus that we see the educational implications of such scripture drawn out. Milton drew from those before him, and thus the wider

discourse is entangled with our understanding of the metaphor. Therefore, we shall look to those other writers raised in the first section of this Chapter – Aquinas, Luther and Erasmus – to examine their utilisation of the metaphor, or the chain of signification that yielded it, and how it affects Milton. Broadly speaking, you will see the way in which God in an abstract form is presented through the material ideas of teaching, scripture, and more figuratively, the *shepherd.*

Aquinas' writings represent significant historical shifts in Education that Milton saw, understood and drew from in his own work. Though Aquinas does not formally employ the metaphor *the shepherd and the flock* in the same way as Milton does, the structure of the metaphor – God as a teacher and *all of us* as his students - is notable throughout *Summa Theologica* (1485/1947). This text is of course a religious doctrine, but also a pedagogical one.[108] Written in a dialectical format of Middle Age philosophy – a question, ascribed objection, and then reply, Aquinas remains within the paradigmatic thought of his own contentions throughout. His questions presuppose answers, and such a structure is ideal for Education. As a being that embraces the *darkness and light* metaphor, that is, always seeking to avoid darkness and seek the light, texts such as Aquinas' are ideally "logical" in seeking absolutisms of light. The reasoned and logical process of Aquinas' dialectic generates an appearance of truth, or shed light on matters of complication and confusion. Consistently, we see lexis associated with teaching in his discourse: 'seek', 'teach, reprove, correct', 'knowledge', 'wisdom', 'intellectual' (1947). Indeed, many of these words

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[108] Importantly, he wrote amidst the onset of two significant changes in technology – 'the invention of gunpowder... [where] the humblest footman with a musket proved more than a match for the proudest [knight]' (Painter, 1999, p.120), and 'the invention of printing' (p.120). Both discoveries incurred the massifying of Education – an aspect that will be explored in Chapter IX. The decline of the knight through the invention of gunpowder de-hierarchised chivalric Education and thus instilled some equity in the Education received by others. Further, the invention of printing meant that pedagogical documents (Christian doctrine essentially) became more widely available.

appear multiple times. *Summa Theologica* hence stands as a text that presents new metaphors about Education to be learnt and utilised in the growing educational institutions of the fifteenth century. This was a time of schools being opened independently of the church, although perhaps in ownership more so than ideology, thus the likes of Aquinas felt the *duty* to spread Christian Education as was a prerequisite of his faith (a notion traceable to Platonic *darkness and light*).

When we look more closely at his teaching lexis, we can see quite quickly how Aquinas places God at the centre of Education. In his first article of Q1, 'Whether, besides philosophy, any further doctrine is required', Aquinas enforces that the studying of knowledge, even beyond that of scripture, can be fruitful in being-towards-God: 'man is directed to God... to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason' (Q1.A1). Education should be a *directing* towards God, to a place that is abstract and unknowable, but importantly, divine. The studying of all things is thus to allow us to know God better, as 'God is in very truth the object of this science [Education]' (Q1.A7). How are we to be directed, though? This is where the archetypal metaphor arises, implied structurally through the centring of God in the discourse that there is a need for man to be *shepherded* towards Him.[109] As God is at the centre of all things, that makes him fundamentally part of the directing, thus a guide or *shepherd*. We, in turn, become the *flock*.

A century later, amidst the Reformation (a superficial change in ontological terms), Erasmus' treatise *The Education of Children* (1550) continued Aquinas' project. This text was written

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[109] *Marquant would sit as his desk in his desperate search for the panacea for Le Sable, a task he still felt duty-bound to. If he could not make a being to help him, he must endeavour alone. The people of his town had little knowledge of the alchemical realm like him, and in the fear of their visions, would not be able to undertake such a task as discovering cures for their futures. Strange, it was, that Marquant felt like he was being watched while he worked. At times, he even thought he saw, just in the widest periphery of his vision, an eye, wide and judging, gazing at him from out of the glass. He inspected it each time and found nothing, until one day, it spoke.*

purely as pedagogical, and still purports the importance of Education as an apparatus of being-towards-God. He is still not forthcoming with the archetypal metaphor, but educational idioms and tropes are visible throughout the discourse that add to Milton's metaphor. He still senses, though, that students need a certain kind of shaping and guidance, an Education, as it is better 'to be a swyne thê an vlearned and euyll man' (H.iii), that is, better a swine than uneducated! For Erasmus, much like Aquinas, there is a clear goal for this Education. Further, there is a clear method:

> He is brought into the temple, he learneth to bowe his kne, to holde hys handes manerly, to put of hys cap, and to fashion all the behaueour of hys bodie to worshyp God, he is cõmaunded to hold hys peace when misteries be in doyng, and to turne hys eyes to the alter. […] they profit somwat to true religiõ. (K.iiii)

Two things arise here that are essential for unpicking the ways in which Education and God became intertwined, and thus manifested in the archetypal metaphor. Firstly, that a most effective method of teaching must be used to ensure that the student reaches God, his 'eyes [directed] to[wards] the alter' representing the gaze towards the Lord, and thus a being-towards-Him. This is the "true religion" that Erasmus suggested, and thus we see how a guide is required to ensure the student performs this task adequately. Secondly, the nature in which this "guidance" should occur is through discipline of the body. We must remember that shepherding, though generally ameliorative, still holds significations of aggressive guidance.[110] In particular, here we see the

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[110] We are reminded, as we so often are, of Foucault's portrait of 'the soldier that can be made' (1991, p.135) through the harsh discipline of their space, body, time and so forth.

student of the flock on his knee, holding his hands above his head, using his body in a manner deemed appropriate for his environment.[111] Erasmus' pedagogy thus purports the disciplinary nature in which Christian Education can occur, something that we will see the Educative model of *Paradise Lost* firmly centres. Additionally, his perception of the flock is one that is cajoled into their paddock, as opposed to the gentle guidance intimated by other writers.

The "true religion" of Erasmus was to continue throughout this epoch. As an expounder of it, Luther 'maintained that only God can forgive sin' (Painter, 1999, p.141) and that 'education was not an end itself, but a means to more effective service in church and state... If people or rulers neglect the education of the young... they become enemies of God and man...' (p.143). It was perhaps intimated by the previous writers, but here Luther firmly demands that Education occurs for fear of eternal damnation – a different sort of duty perhaps from the Platonic. Identifying the apparent corruption within Church and state in his time, Luther calls for reform, and sees Education as the tool to do so (certainly a ghost of the past that haunts us now (Stock, 2019; 2021)). Claims such as these are more obviously mirrored by the educational calls of today – the answer to all difficult, societal questions being to Educate more, instil more schooling, stay in school for longer. Here, in the answers to these enormous, societal questions, there is an intertwining with the Church that we seem to have forgotten. When we call for Education as an answer, we call for God to save us.

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[111] As Foucault says: 'nothing must remain idle or useless... The teacher will place the pupils in the posture they should maintain...' (1991, p.152). Foucault also examines the act of handwriting as another example of bodily discipline, thus in turn creating a student rather than merely a child. Allen references Kay-Shuttleworth, a key bureaucratic figure in the massification of Education in the nineteenth century, as saying children 'have to be taught to stand upright, -to walk without slouching gait, -to sit without crouching like a sheepdog' (2017, p.41). The student of Erasmus' school is no different, only their Education has one end: the "true religion".

Like so many others, Luther believed that 'the schools are deteriorating…' (1889, p.170), signifying a lack of some substance that, when re-instilled, would restore Education to its magnificence. One can only speculate on the mythical object he envisioned; the works of Erasmus, Aquinas and beyond also bemoaned the state of Education as lacking, so it is certainly not their vision he harkens to. Luther attempted to call for intrinsic value in the act of Education beyond the value of becoming 'priests, monks, and nuns' (p.171). In an early effort for massification, as would be seen centuries later in the likes of the Napoleonic Lycée or the British Forster Act, he also demanded 'the mayors and the council to exercise greatest care over the young' (p.180). Education had already moulded itself round a seeking of light and an escape from darkness – 'we are fighting against the devil' (p.173) – intrinsically inculcating positive value to all Education. But further, Luther's reformatory agenda alone should remind us that Education was a tool for being-towards-God, and a divine gift to be dutifully utilised.

Luther's concern with the state of Education, continually emphasised by his pejoration of the students of Germany as 'blockheads' and 'brutes' (Luther, 1889, p.196), indicates the aforementioned lack. But there is a simple solution: 'these schools of Satan [should] either be destroyed or changed into Christian schools' (p.175). Herein lies the *supplement*. Education as a broken technology, as 'artful machinations of the devil' (p.173), should be either destroyed, our supplemented with a stronger Christian ethos. In turn, the technologies he speaks of become impregnated by Christianity, eventually birthing the Christian schools that Aquinas and Erasmus so advocated, where God is the ultimate guide and teacher: 'What is the reason that our faith is brought into disgrace? It is our ignorance of the languages; and the only remedy is a knowledge of them' (p.189). And what, in particular, is the knowledge of language intended to do? To better

understand scripture, so to better understand God. God thus stands as a *shepherd*, guiding the *flock* towards Him through the mode of Education.

Milton's use of terms like Education, God, guide, shepherd or flock are thus infused with this network of religious and pedagogical doctrine. We cannot escape the way these words are deeply intertwined and recontextualised for differing eras throughout the medieval epoch. Though Aquinas, Erasmus and Luther may not always utilise the metaphor through its lexical formation, the structural formation of their metaphors surrounding God certainly bear huge impact on the way in which Milton uses it – that we are followers, ones that must be cajoled if we do not blindly follow, that Education is an essential tool in this following, and that through the *supplement* of Education, God is ultimately what we follow. We should note, however, that Milton's use of the metaphor is of fruitfulness in our deconstruction and consequent ontologisation of contemporary Education. This is because he not only utilises the lexis *and* structure of the metaphor (just as Plato did with *darkness and light*), but also extends and develops these metaphors into a complex narrative with colourful characters and poetic language. Thus, Milton characterises *the shepherd and the flock.* He even heroises the "fallen", or the one who strays from the *flock,* yielding further language to help shape the discoursistic form of Education. To give an example, Satan stands as one who 'cast off his yoke' (Milton, 1667, V.786), one whose Education failed and thus he was thrust out of the light. He represents, to our reading here at least, the uneducated, the 'disobedient fall'n' (V.541) fool who could not follow the way of the *shepherd*. Contrastingly, we also learn of other beings enframed by God, or metaphorically Education. We see the true disciples of God's teachings, the angels Michael, Raphael, amongst others, and another pair that strive to remember what they have been taught,

but ultimately fail, Adam and Eve. The hierarchy of the educated here, from the Son and down

the Great Chain of Being to Lucifer, represent the paths offered to us by Education, and the path

we should "choose" to take. Henceforth, we could think of adhering to God's teachings as

synonymous with being educated[112], something that has been expounded by Aquinas, Erasmus

and Luther too. This point will become much clearer through a close inspection of the

functioning of the metaphor in the language of the poem. First, however, as with the previous

chapter, it is important to briefly trace the metaphor in discourse through the epochs beyond that

of *Paradise Lost.* This tracing helps us understand how something archetypal becomes

hauntological, that is, how its traces linger in the discourse of Education even now.

VII.iii. The Metaphor in Wider Discourse

VII.iii.i. Modern

It was not until an ontological regrounding occurred that a new epoch began[113], a fundamental

shift from being-towards-God, 'from an age of faith to an age of *doubt'* [my italics] (Clark, 2016,

p.216). Consequently, the dominant thinking of this much shorter following epoch, characterised

by the figures and works of the Enlightenment, rejected God as the ultimate guide towards truth

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[112] *With his worsening sight and now degenerative hearing, Marquant believed himself mistaken when he heard a voice echo from that cloudy bottle. The creation had been a failure and he had come to terms with that. But this soon changed when noises would emanate from the vessel throughout the day. Initially they were just sounds – indecipherable gasps and gurgles. But before long, it started to call out objects that littered the room. Quill, parchment, tome! it would say in its gargling voice. Sparse conversations between Marquant and the thing in the bottle started to take place, and its vocabulary grew. It wasn't long before these conversations had grown into complex debates. Exchanges of what's and who's were all the thing could muster to begin with, but soon it was offering suggestions for how the alchemist should go about his work. The thing learns fast.*

[113] Though it seems like large parts of "history" are skipped over in the ontohistorical shift from medieval to modern, for Heidegger and as covered in Chapter V, it was for a significant portion of history that being-towards-God grounded ontology.

and reinstated man as the primary subject in his mastery over the world.[114] Chapter VIII will explore this shift from God to man's subjectivity in the world in much greater depth, as it is this shift that raises the third and final metaphor of this thesis. What I aim to demonstrate in this short section, however, is that despite the modern belief that they had freed themselves from God, some traces of the previous epoch still remained. You see, the metaphor of *the shepherd and the flock* morphed into something lexically very different, but structurally similar. I propose that despite the overt change in epoch that occurred, the nature of being-towards-God still continued to haunt the Enlightenment and indeed continued in the late-modern epoch.

The ontological claim of the Enlightenment was that man would need no guide other than himself. Being in the modern epoch, therefore, seems to be completely free from the notion of being-towards-God. As Adorno and Horkheimer say: 'Enlightenment behaves towards things as a dictator toward men. He knows them in so far as he can manipulate them' (1997, p.9). This bleak depiction of Enlightenment mastery highlights the fateful end of God (Nietzsche, 2001, p.120). God has been substituted by man, and of course the educational implication is that man can now fill the role of the divine teacher expounded by the previous epoch. But as I intimated in an earlier paragraph, all of this is not to say that belief in God disappeared throughout the modern epoch; the metaphor became recontextualised rather than abandoned. Throughout the era, God took the form of an 'indulgent parent, by implication diminishing the importance of sin and the Atonement, to a Deist image of God as a benign First Cause, about to become synonymous with Creation itself and to metamorphose back into Nature in the works of Victorian agnostics' (Clark,

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[114] We should of course remember that everyone did not relinquish faith in God, though this belief of course characterises the Enlightenment. However, what is interesting about the hauntological nature of this metaphor is that it persists even *in spite* of growing secularity, as will be made even clearer in the follow section.

2016, p.216). These changes indicate a refusal of the wrathful and vengeful God notable in

medieval discourse (as will be occasionally present in Milton), but a desire to maintain some of

the shepherding connotations.

If we look to some key texts of the epoch that are considered important in educational discourse

(both in terms of their popularisation in English Literature curricula and as objects of didacticism

themselves), we can see how the connotations of shepherding continued. The inception of the

novel throughout this epoch yields texts rife with didacticism, those such as Defoe's *Robinson

Crusoe*, which demonstrates the ontology of the epoch as the subjectivity of man in the world; we

see Crusoe dictating his own destiny by controlling the strange environments he finds himself in.

Yet, *the shepherd and the flock* lingers in the background: Defoe depicts Crusoe's turns to God,

reciting Bible verse and playing the 'indulgent parent' (Clark, 2016, p.216) by teaching scripture

to Friday. He dwells on his own deliverance as a sign of the need to follow God: 'This touched

my heart very much; and immediately I knelt down and gave God thanks aloud for my recovery

from my sickness' (Defoe, 1719, p.122). It is made clear that despite the will to mastery over

nature embodied by Crusoe, the teachings and guidance of God remain central to shepherding

him through his life, and so too does he deem it important to continue this Christian operation.[115]

Hence, despite the ontohistorical shift that occurred, the notion of God as a teacher and of

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[115] Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* does similar. Gulliver's encounters serve to dismiss the age of the reason by
representing Enlightenment thinking as 'sterile rationalism' (Carnochan, 1963, p.23) through the Houyhnhnms or as
short-sighted and ignorant through the Yahoos. Though Swift openly satirises religion too, his rejection of his own
epoch necessitates space for the previous epoch and thus summons a trace of the shepherd to guide us from these
troubling traits of humanity.

humanity as His students, a reworking of *the shepherd and the flock*, endured throughout the epoch, especially in educational structures such as those depicted in literature.

VII.iii.ii. Late-Modern

As these spectres continue to linger, we find ourselves in the late-modern epoch, a mode of being in which God is supposedly dead. Of course, the original use of the metaphor persists. Many still follow the Christian faith and embrace its metaphors, and many other religions embrace a shepherd/flock structure. Schools in the UK demand that students must be taught some form of 'Religious Education' (DfE, 2010, p.10) also, emphasising the enduring *interest* in the metaphor in educational settings. But in terms of the structure of the metaphor in secular circles, what happens when the shepherd has been murdered? In correlation with this idea, Chapter II raised the curious Ouroborosian (fig.1) structure of the death of God from Baudrillard, purporting that the structure of religion has by no means gone away. Like the snake that eats its own tale, it eternally destroys and reproduces itself as 'it is from the death of God that religions emerge' (Baudrillard, 2014, p.26). Who is our shepherd, whether wrathful or benevolent, now it is not that of the Christian God?

As was made clear in the previous epoch, and has only been more deeply grounded since then, science is a supreme being of the now; we have never really let go of the Enlightenment "will to truth". However, what is curious about the late-modern is the multiplicity of deities that have arisen in conflict with one another (a facet that has made the meta-narratives of the epoch inherently unstable) and thus become new shepherds for the willing flock.[116] This said, it would

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[116] Most are, sadly, cynical and stale varieties of the last deity – "celebrity", "mass-media", "populism", and so forth. They are weak, inferior demi-gods; they are parasitic and feed off the following of the flock and may truly lead or

be easy to believe that our worship of deities, or more precisely our desire to be guided as part of a flock, has diminished and stands on the point of vanishing. This is not so. If anything, our belief in almighty Gods and ancient beings, is stronger than ever: 'The modern atheist think he's knows that God is dead; what he does not know is that, unconsciously, he continues to believe in God' (Žižek, 2007, p.92). Only now, we treat them as naturalised elements of our societies, essential to our Being. The inversion of the medieval use of the metaphor *the shepherd and the flock* has now occurred; where Milton and his contemporaries used material ideas to represent a belief in the abstraction of God, we now see belief the belief in material institutions using metaphors of God.[117] As will become much clearer in the deconstruction of the metaphor in *Paradise Lost*, Education now fulfils this role of God.

VII.iv. Deconstructing *Paradise Lost*

VII.iv.i. The War

Although Milton does not begin his epic with "The War in Heaven", chronologically (if there could be such a thing in the divine realm), this event comes first. It is, therefore, the start of the "lesson" conveyed by the poem. Prior to the war, however, their existed God amidst the cosmos. As seen in Fig.2, the Miltonian cosmos contains three planes – Heaven, Chaos and Hell. Earth hangs amidst Chaos, and Heaven possesses the great mountain of God, 'Who is Light' (Curry,

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guide mass portions of society into various abysses, but they are not difficult to defy. Arguably "capital" has taken hold as the "true" God of our late-modern epoch, as would be the contention of Deleuze and Guattari (1984), Fisher (2009) and Žižek (2007), the totalising mode of being through which we must now see ourselves and answer to. However, this thesis challenges this claim with the contention that Education is just as powerful, though this will not become clear until the thesis is concluded in Chapter IX.

[117] It is here I obviously invoke the rough beast as standing on holy ground. Yeats' reference to the Second Coming, the Son revisiting earth to cast final judgement and deem us worthy for redemption, is posited as that of Education.

1957, p.156). Symbolically, the Miltonian cosmos represents that of Education, such as the student's pursuit upwards, or their descent downwards into failure, and the chaos of everyday Education taking place (Stock, 2020b). From the cosmos, we can already see the impact *darkness and light* has on its formation too; light represents all that is good, whereas dark is both what is evil and what is chaotic.

Within the cosmos, God exists atop a hierarchy, 'That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed' (Milton, 1667, I.8-9) watching over His *flock*. This is implied topographically, as can be seen in the place of the mountain *above* all else, or through the semantics of kings: 'his throne' (VI.5), 'the Highest' (VI.114), and God's imperative speech 'Ye shall not' (IX.662). If we are to start thinking of this hegemonic power educationally, the temptation is to search for figures of power that exist in the educational realm. We could easily assign this sovereign role to policy makers, managers or teachers, but this would be both misguided. In the hauntological nature of the metaphor, the sovereign power of this narrative, *the shepherd,* must be recontextualised in terms of how power functions *now* (Stock, 2020b). We must remember Foucault's assertion that power is not a top-down method of oppression from a king or emperor, but rather exists as a 'network of mechanisms' (1991, p.209), the very *structures* of control itself. Thus, we should not be looking for a singular figure as the embodiment of educational power. It is my contention here that Education itself – in its 'ontotheological' status (Peim, 2020; Stock, 2019) as an orientator towards light, a concept that we follow as part of our 'most holy duty' (Blake, 2000, p. 88) – is in fact the hegemonic power of this narrative. The very discoursistic web that we are examining here (a 'spiderless web, of course' (Allen, 2014, p.61)), controls and disciplines those within it, but it is not any single thing or individual. This argument will become clearer throughout the

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deconstruction of *Paradise Lost,* but in a more material manner, we can assume the place of Education atop a hierarchy as it subsumes hierarchy within it. We find 'orders, and degrees' (Milton, 1667, V.591) within every part of Education: the order of schooling stages from Primary, to Secondary, to Further, to Higher, to post-graduate; the order of grades, from A*-U or 9-1 in the UK; the order of year groups, from year 7 to year 11, for example; the order of management, from governor, to Head, to Deputy, to Head of Department, to teacher, to teaching assistant; the order of policy over practice. This subsumption results in Education *being* atop that hierarchy, that is, the ontological structure of its Being (Stock, 2020b).

Naturally, rebellion ensues in Heaven. In a form of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic (Hegel, 1807), Lucifer is sickened by his subservience and seeks to free himself from bondage. He gains consciousness of his place amidst the hierarchy, 'of orders, and degrees' (Milton, 1667, V.591), learning of a new being that was to be considered greater than him. It is the Son: 'To Him shall bow/All knees in Heav'n' (V.607-608). The choirs of angels, those obedient followers of God, and thus those who were learned, educated, 'seemed well pleased' (V.616), but like the slave who sees beyond his chain, Lucifer is displeased. His slavery has led to his consciousness and induced him to rebel. Unlike Plato's prisoners in need of liberation, Lucifer seeks his own light. He is the pupil that Freire (2017) could have only dreamt of, engaged in *praxis* to free himself from the 'yoke/Of servile pomp' (Milton, 1667, II.256-257). He refuses to remain chained to the ground and marvelling at the theatre on the wall. Something has caused him to look outside.

Some readers may criticise Lucifer for his lack of gratitude at this stage; it was God who granted him Being after all. Analogously, we claim students should always be grateful for the Education available to them, opportunities offered because they were thrown [*Geworfen*] into Education.

But in true Heideggerian fashion, Lucifer recognises that he did not ask to be born.[118] Raphael posits such a point to Adam and Eve, although unknowingly supports Lucifer's rebellion in doing so: 'remember'st though/Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?/We know no time when we not as now…' (V.857-859). Raphael's attempt to teach Adam the value of his Being only serves to champion Lucifer's existential reckoning – he did not ask to be born, and now he is thrown into an existence of hierarchy and servitude, forced to watch nepotism ensue. His recognition of his thrownness is akin to every student who has demanded that they "did not ask to be in school", and we must have sympathy for these individuals.

With his conscious recognition of slavery, Lucifer gathers followers, but they did not come to this discovery of their chains themselves. Merely, they are sheep, members of the *flock*, indoctrinated into following a *shepherd,* much like the prisoners of Plato's cave. In Lucifer, a new *shepherd* appears, and they follow. Our archetypal metaphor arises at its most pervasive in this element: 'the morning star that guides/The starry flock, allured them' (V.708-708). They embody their Education, the lesson they have been taught; they are always-already followers, sheep, and nothing more. Subtly, Lucifer embodies the same structure. He knows that the only way to gain leadership is to shepherd them, but this is a lesson he has learnt from God. His foolishness is believing that he *can* be a *shepherd*, that he can truly 'cast off this yoke' (V.786). For the yoke, applied to another animal that is bound to its master, believes it is moving freely, but only moves in the direction the yoke allows. Even more subtly, we see irony in Lucifer's goal – 'To win the

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[118] *Marquant was in debate with the thing late one evening, and it was here that it asked him why it was born. The explanation did not seem to suffice, and the story of how it had been made was even more repellent, thus it went quiet for some time. When it spoke again after torturous days of silence, it told Marquant that he thought of things the wrong way. His alchemy was, it said, not merely a task of arranging things in a circle. You must put yourself into it, yourself.*

Mount of God' (VI.88). He aspires to only what he sees; the light is his ultimate aspiration. He cannot desire anything beyond that which he has been taught. A student aspires to get the best grades, the best courses, the best jobs – obtainable value is injected at every level (Bojesen, 2016). But is this because Education has shown them this image of success as the only true goal?[119] Maybe those who "skip class" and "ditch school", the kind embodied in punk music and teen movies like *The Breakfast Club,* are freer from Education than those we praise as critical. Of course, they can never be truly free. The ensuing war[120] is a powerful metaphor in itself for the student struggling with their Education, refusing to adhere to the lessons of the institution they are thrown into, although when we stand back and consider the image, a sheep standing against its shepherd, it becomes laughable: 'A creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers — including even his power to revolt […] means nonsense...' (Lewis, 1969, pp.96-97). Lewis' explication identifies the *nonsense* that Lucifer undergoes, believing that he can truly enact some rebellion against the one who gave him Being. All Lucifer knows, thinks, believes, even the rebellious aspects, are known by God, as it is He who granted them. We see the *impotence* of his rebellion; it was doomed to fail from the outset. The analysis that follows

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[119] Indeed, something similar is exemplified in the pursuit of the critical thinker within Education. Would-be 'radical reformers' demonstrate 'the ability to think critically as a desirable human trait' (McPeck, 2016, p.1), and thus its place in Education is called for as 'in greater need than ever' (Davies and Barnett, 2015, p.21) in contemporary educational discourse. This is 'one of the defining concepts in Western education' (Barnett, 1997, p.1), or in other words, a divine, transcendental property of contemporary Education. We would think this skill enables a criticality of institutional structures like that of Education, but what Milton reveals is that they are the most *consumed* by it.

[120] Milton depicts the war as if akin to a Greek epic, ranks of soldiers lining up against each other ready for bloody violence (benignly so; they cannot die). First is the mutiny of Abidel, one angel who remembers their lessons that it is 'vain [to fight]/Against th' Omnipotent' (VI.136). Next comes the smiting of the rebels by 'the sword of Michael… with huge two-handed sway…' (VI.250-251). The sword here symbolises the moment of reckoning for the rebels that they must face before banishment, that cruel pain of the examination that the rebels are destined to fail – a 'Benign Violence' (Allen, 2014). Indeed, this is where 'Satan first knew pain' (Milton, 1667, VI.327) before his eventual fall; and indeed, this is where those students who fail first know pain, before the descent begins, where 'eternal silence be their doom' (VI.385). It is important that the punishment is not death, for that would be too obvious, too extreme. The pain must be more benign and insidious, almost undetectable to the eye.

and the next chapter will make it clear that freedom from Education is an impossibility, but for

now, at least, Milton alerts us to the notion of what we perceive as those who could reject

Education.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

The war ends swiftly and effortlessly. Having watched the bloodshed unfurl, God decrees that the

Son, a catalyst in the beginning of the war, shall be the one to end it. He arrives in dazzling light

and 'down their idle weapons dropped…' (Milton, 1667, VI.839). It seems their rebellion was

impotent after all. However, look to the command that yields this conclusion:

> Two days are therefore past, the third is thine;
>
> For thee I have ordained it; and thus far
>
> Have suffered, that the glory may be thine
>
> Of ending this great war, since none but Thou
>
> Can end it. (VI.699-703)

God has been watching for 'two days' and has allowed the suffering to continue when it could

have been stopped. His role as the sovereign of the narrative becomes despotic. But his solution

is disturbing; it will be the Son who shall end it, as has been 'ordained'. This verb signifies an

always-already solution, that an intention for the Son to end the war existed from the start.

Further, it implies that the solution and the problems are fundamentally linked. Is Lucifer's

rebellion enacted as a mode of enabling the Son to achieve greatness? We will see in the analysis

of Adam and Eve's fall that this may be so. And more pressingly, we will see how this structure

<p style="text-align:center">178</p>

exists as part of educational architecture, as it is not a sovereign individual that enacts this suffering on students, but the network of power distributed throughout the structure.

The rebels are thrust out of Heaven, cast into hell, bound to be "nothing" forever more. In an act of divine irony, the Son is depicted through an inverted utilisation of the archetypal metaphor of *the shepherd and the flock*[121]:

> Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven:
>
> The overthrown he raised, and as a herd
>
> Of goats or timorous flock together thronged
>
> Drove them before him thunder-struck […]
>
> Into the wasteful deep. (Milton, 1667, VI.856-862)

The educator – God, the *shepherd*, can guide their followers into the 'wasteful deep', for that is ultimately what the Son does. Lucifer and his rebels are cast out of heaven, and so begins their fall. We shall get to the fall itself soon, but let us pause and consider the way in which they are made to fall, and the Son as symbolic for someone of power within Education, perhaps a teacher or policy maker. Firm supporters of the educational agenda would glean that the Son's shepherding of the rebels into the abyss represents a "power" held by the educator (not of Education itself). There is a conception that teachers wield an influential position that can "make or break" their students and accordingly shape society (Stock, 2020b). The phantasmic teacher

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[121] We are reminded of the hideous image of the rebels being guided off a cliff like poor Gabriel Oak's sheep in Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874). How befitting he should have the name of an angel.

Mr Keating in *Dead Poets Society* (1989) embodies this Miltonian metaphor, a Jesus-like figure who educates the masses (his students) and saves them from their ignorance by revealing poetry to them. It is perhaps no surprise that he must be sacrificed like Jesus at the end of the film by being fired, and that his students exclaim their faith in the infamous line 'Oh Captain my Captain!'. We see similar manifestations in the world of policy. The DfE teacher recruitment website is adorned with slogans that suppose as much: 'Every lesson shapes a life. Whose story will you inspire?'; 'Make a difference and inspire the next generation' (DfE, 2019a) and so forth. But do we think Lucifer was ever guided beyond a space he was destined to end in? And do we really believe the educator holds any power beyond the will of Education itself? The Son reminds us that his act of guidance was 'ordained', and henceforth, the ends of his teaching were predetermined. Consequently, the students only respond to the structure they reside within, not the teacher; the position they are thrown into projects into their future.

VII.iv.ii. The Fall

Initial presentations of Lucifer[122] are not dissimilar to the prisoners of Plato's cave. Lucifer is 'there to dwell/In adamantine chains and penal fire' (Milton, 1667, I.47-48). He is cast out of light, into darkness, and must remain a prisoner of such a realm. There is no "saviour" in store for Lucifer though, as there was for Plato's enchained wretches. His darkness is eternal. In part, this is the punishment for those who do not listen to their teachings, and in the most semantically extreme nature possible. The likes of the pejorative 'chains', 'penal fire', 'Torments' and a

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[122] Lucifer's fall is depicted amidst the exordium of the poem, thus those who have diverged from the flock stand as the initial depiction of the shepherd and the flock. After Lucifer's attempt at rebellion, he is punished by God to remain in Hell for all eternity. It seems as if this was always destined to be. Intriguingly, he does not, initially at least, learn his lesson. A further, more sinister rebellion will eventually ensue. Perhaps this is a product of his fall.

'dungeon horrible' (I.47-61) engulf Lucifer as the more obvious forms of discipline. It is also not difficult to draw parallels with the disciplinary power of Foucault. Lucifer's discipline is maintained by spatial facets that Foucault proposes: discipline requires 'enclosure, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself' (1991, p.141), a place perfectly surmised by Hell as it is enclosed, is particular only to itself, alike no other place, and marked by all that is "Hellish". Further, 'Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual' (p.143), which can be transparently seen in the *place* for Lucifer being eternally Hell, or more exactly, *his Being is now that of Hell*. Lucifer describes himself as inextricable from that place, 'myself am Hell' (Milton, 1667, IV.73). It is the irony in which he holds illusory feelings of power and control that is most punishing though. Discipline in its most acute form allows the disciplined feelings of freedom and control – just as God allows Lucifer, Adam and Eve free will. Indeed, this is the feeling of a flock, in that the sheep may feel a sense of freedom to roam, but truly they are always under the eye of the *shepherd.* Lucifer's belief that he can fly from Hell and rebel a second time exemplifies such "free will", but he is unable to topple the hierarchy, and unable to challenge the frame in which he resides.[123]

Other punishments are utilised to "make an example" of Lucifer, as it were. Punishment, functioning effectively, 'will be infallibly the sign of the crime that it punishes and for him who dreams of the crime, the idea of the offence will be enough to arouse the sign of the punishment' (Foucault, 1991, p.105). Effectual punishment must carry a *mark* that signifies the crime that has

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[123] In parallel, we see students regularly attempt to defy the position of their thrownness by utilising meritocracy, and it is worth restating the argument from Chapter IV: meritocracy is a cruel act of violence with eugenic aims, and thus those who exist at the bottom of the hierarchy are doomed to stay there, an assertion I will return to in the concluding section of this chapter.

occurred; offenders must be recognised not as "a criminal", but as someone who committed that *particular* crime. It is not hard to imagine a thief having to wear a sack on their back to represent their supposed greed. Children have long stopped wearing the "dunce hat" or standing against walls to indicate their misbehaviour, but they are still marked by their failures in Education with an identity that may be painful. The pain of identity is indeed inflicted upon Lucifer.[124] Lucifer is a disobedient student, doomed to exist outside of the realm of Education. His Being has now been projected into Nothing, as it is not in darkness he dwells, but in flames, torture and pain.[125] He is one of the 'children who had done little except fail to fit…' (Allen, 2014, p.112), and now must identify as something outside of Education. But the end result of his new dwelling is the change of his identity to a figure of darkness: 'But O how fall'n! how chang'd/From him, who in the happy Realms of Light/Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst out-shine/Myriads though bright…' (Milton, 1667, I.84-86). Lucifer carries the mark of the one who failed his Education and failed to fit in; his appearance now mirrors no other creature created by God. He has the look of being 'fall'n', as a student excommunicated from education must carry that exclusion with

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[124] And here we see pain; the beast bares its teeth. It is a violent thing, at times, the beast.

[125] *It wasn't long before Marquant was performing simple acts of transmutation, a feat he had never mastered on his own before the thing appeared in the flask. The copper pots and pans that hung from a rack above his worktop now glistened in golds and silvers, adorning his walls like the objects of an armoury. The flask's eye would study his work, whispering laws and rules of alchemical formulae. Your circle is wrong, the elements are off. You need to put in some blood. Indeed, Marquant was willing to bargain away parts of himself for his work. He now only possessed eight toes. He had shaved his head so often his scalp was raw. The formulae required it, so said the thing. Sometimes it would ask for Marquant's blood, other times it would require the parts of animals, hearts and livers and spleens. Continue he must, as he was so close to finding the cure for all of his people and their ills; what would it matter if he had to sacrifice some of the livestock for them? Sacrifices must be made, the flask would mutter.*

them. This may be in the form of their grades, their record, and so forth, but also emotionally as that of conceptual failure.[126]

Education employs this structure on a daily basis – the need to abide by the rules and do what you are told, so to achieve the Edenic realm of being "well educated". If this is spurned, you will be cast out, expelled. Flint and Peim speak of this in an ontological sense: 'the contemporary "world" of childhood [that is, schools,] produces specific modes of being within a set of beliefs and practices arising from a version of reality that remains open to interrogation' (2012, p.71). If one cannot fit into this ontological realm, as Lucifer failed to fit into his choir of Angels, you will be forced to live as such. We see "them" as 'naïf, crude, Other: primitive, savage, even, uncultivated "chav", hapless consumer…' (Peim, 2020, p.6). Additionally, it is the structure of Lucifer's fall that is powerful as it reflects the architecture in which Education inhabits today. We do not learn to obey the school rules from Lucifer ("Treat others like you would like to be treated"; "Wait until I tell you to go, not the bell"; "Hand all homework in on time"), but to obey the structure which enframes us when we are in-Education. Lucifer is enframed by God, and consequently by his Education. His belief that he could ever break free from it is sadly ludicrous – 'A creature revolting against a creator... [is] nonsense…' (Lewis 1969, p.96-97). But more concerning is the punishment for resisting the structure in which we be-within. To push against one's enframing is to push against the fabric of our Being; it is only met with resistance (Stock,

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[126] In part, the reason we are allured by characters like Will in *Good Will Hunting* (1997) is because he has a look of the fallen, that is, we are made to identify him as uneducated through his job as a janitor and broad Boston accent. The film goes on to challenge our perception of the educated by demonstrating that Will is both a mathematical genius and incredibly well-read, but surprise from the audience only occurs because of our dominant belief in the nature of the fallen.

2020b). This is what Lucifer learns the hard way (and it takes him more than one lesson, as will be seen in Adam and Eve's fall).[127]

More troubling than Lucifer's punishment for his authenticity, though, is the apparent necessitation of his fall by God. Throughout *Paradise Lost,* 'there is a continual emphasis on the preeminent nature of God's final creation, Man, and his consequent duty as one made in the image of his Maker not to fall' (Bundy and Bundy, 1922, p.136). For example, in the conclusion of Lucifer's war in Heaven, he is cast out into '…the gulf/Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide/His fiery Chaos to receive their fall' (Milton, 1667, VI.53-55). The allusion to the Greek realm of torment and suffering, 'Tartarus', coupled with the infinitive form of the adjective 'ready' implies how Hell awaited the rebels as if it were already prepared. Lucifer is thus inherently *intended to fall*; he is the cautionary reminder for Adam and Eve of what happens to those who do not listen. His failure is necessary for their being-towards-God, to allow them success in being-towards-Him through *not* being Lucifer. We see this mode of necessary failure throughout Education, just as it is with all forms of power: 'Resistance is "inscribed" in power as its "irreducible opposite"' (Allen, 2014, p.62). In Education's striving towards light, it inherently leaves some behind in the darkness, just as with the grading systems of examinations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, UK exams were cancelled and grades were awarded by teachers. Upon their release, however, it appeared that the Department for Education had altered the grades through an algorithm and 'Almost 40% of students received grades lower than they had anticipated' (Kolkman, 2020, p.1). It quickly became clear that algorithm privileged students in

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[127] Depressingly, the only real conclusion to be learnt from Lucifer – our own lesson, perhaps the primary agenda of Milton's – is to accept the structure in which we reside in. We must learn to worship the God of our time, Education. This the power of the Second Coming! No matter what form it takes, still we follow and obey.

wealthy areas and private schools, consequently lowering the grades of those who attended low-performance schools and those living in working class areas (p.2-3). Though this was eventually repealed, and only because of mass student marches exclaiming "F*ck the algorithm" – a great exemplification of the fallen pushing back – what became clear was the dominant desire for the fallen to be part of Education. It seemed unacceptable in that moment that *more* students could pass their exams than normal, thus they were made to suffer. However, once the grades were reverted to their original form, a group still had to "take the fall". It is in this system that we see the logic of the broader, insidious nature of passing and failing. We know that 'even with schools of equal quality a poor child can seldom catch up with a rich one' (Illich, 1971, p.6), and thus the structure at play is what entails this relentless hierarchy. The reactions from the students of 2019 were of course justified, however the eventual changes to the grades that followed only deepened the entrenchment of the fallen. The failures are a *necessary* part of the architecture of Education, as they allow for the successes and improve upon the populations that exist in functioning society – a eugenic element found in meritocratic Education (Allen, 2014, p.93). Lucifer is the ultimate drowning party (Stock, 2017), falling into the fiery lake forever. But as Lucifer was always destined to do so, in some way, he does his duty. He fails so that others can succeed for God, and we are reminded again of the myth of meritocracy: 'by definition certain people must be left behind. The top cannot exist without the bottom' (Littler, 2017, p.3), and thus Lucifer is the bottom that must be so to enable the top. No matter what struggles those students such as Lucifer endure, they are still 'placed within a likely a future, a future that is a product of statistical manipulation and population norms' (Allen, 2014, p.228). Ontologically, as opposed to statistically, they are projected into a future where they are to be fallen, drowned, diverged, and so forth; *the shepherd and the flock* in its desired form becomes impossible, a metaphor that

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implies only certain members of the flock are blessed, and others are damned by the very *shepherd* that herds them.

VII.iv.iii. The Fall of Man

There is, of course, another lesson to be learned from Milton's epic. Satan stands as the ultimate disobedient being, the one who chose to ignore his Education and was duly punished for it. He also stands as one whose rebellion is ultimately futile, as he remains enframed by his Education from his first feeling of envy right through to his dominion of Hell. But we do not just witness Satan's divergence from the *flock*. God's dearest creations, that of Adam and Eve, also forget their Education – that 'to obey is happiness entire' (Milton, 1667, VI. 741). Initially, they stand as obedient followers, sheep grazing in the pasture, adherent to God's lessons; Adam especially can be seen 'as a kind of universal pupil' (Bundy and Bundy, 1922, p.129). Their place is above Lucifer's, being God's dearest creation, a place of privilege (making it more potent when they spurn their opportunities). Their deviation from the *flock* towards a thirst for more, to look beyond the structures they were chained to, represents their educational failure.

Adam and Eve's initial appearance in Book IV is dominated by their likeness to sheep of the *flock*; Adam exists 'for God only' (Milton, 1667, IV.299), declaring that 'For we to him indeed all praises owe' (IV.444). His is an essence of subservience and obedience, daily bound to being-towards-God. Education's best pupils, those that are obedient not just to the school rules, but to the worship of Education as a being, are visible in Adam and Eve. What does worshipping Education look like? Invariably, it is double in the everydayness of language surrounding Education as redemptive (Flint and Peim, 2012; Peim, 2020; Stock, 2019, 2021), and the grandiose language of academics and policy-makers who devote their lives to the betterment of it.

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These acts, both meagre and massive, are inherent in the obedience to God evidenced by Adam and Eve.

As the narrative unfolds, less metaphorical examples of shepherding arise for Adam and Eve. In Book V, Raphael appears as a conduit for God as the *shepherd*. Notably, he tells them the tale of Lucifer's fall, a lesson they need to learn to better be-towards-God. This section again conforms to the reading of the text as an educational doctrine, or more precisely as a depiction of a good, benevolent teacher. Certainly, many of the teaching profession today embody Raphael here; kindness, benevolence, a genuine desire to "do right" by the students. Indeed, the current teacher standards in England decree that 'treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect' (DfE, 2019b) is essential for being a good teacher.[128]

Beyond Raphael's good intentions, we need to examine more closely the lessons that he offers to Adam and Eve:

> …freely we serve
>
> because we freely love, as in our will
>
> To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
>
> And some are fall'n, to disobedience fall'n,
>
> And so from Heav'n to deepest Hell; O fall

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[128] My time spent in Education has led me to genuinely believe in the honesty and integrity of most teachers, just as can be said of Raphael. It is only their ignorance to their chains, their inherent worship of the rough beast, that I am challenging in this thesis.

From what high state of bliss into what woe! (Milton, 1667, V.538-543)

The repetition of 'freely' is indicative of the irony in belief, and thus represents the a chaining of

the teacher to the rough beast. Raphael is determined to instil this belief in his students, as the

choices they make will then only be their own (and thus justifies the poorness of the decisions

they do make). But just as Lucifer's was, their fate is already bound to their thrownness; they are

'placed within a likely a future' (Allen, 2014, p.228) too. The recurrence of 'freely' thus serves to

deliberately neglect the likely future that Adam and Eve have (to be forgiven and to return to

Heaven). Akin to this, a BAME student or one of working-class background is destined not

achieve as highly as those with a more affluent background (Bhopal, 2018; Reay, 2002, 2006,

2017), but *still* many maintain believe in the redemptive power of Education. The emphasis of

freedom in Raphael's speech echoes throughout Education, repeatedly instilling the belief that a

student can be what they want and achieve great things, but rarely is this so. It also gives the

illusion of choice in worship, as if we could believe in another system that would grant us

freedom, but really the eugenicist apparatus of meritocracy has targets to be met, and belief in

those targets is essential for its functioning (Allen, 2014, p.93).

*

At first appearance, we may glean that Genesis' couple embody a "true education" where their

thirst to discover and question (represented by eating the forbidden fruit) precedes that of worship

or subjugation, however, a closer inspection reveals the contrary. They are another example of

why Education should maintain its structure of *darkness and light* and not pursue uncertainties.

Lucifer's monologue in which he describes the rhetoric he intends on using to deceive Eve

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alludes to a desire to break out of the epistemic structure Adam and Eve know, the repetition of worship and obedience.

> Hence I will excite their minds
>
> With more desire to know, and to reject
>
> Envious commands, invented with design
>
> To keep them low whom knowledge might exalt
>
> Equal with Gods… (IV.522-526)

The proposition here, even if Lucifer intends it to be merely rhetorical, is to allow Adam and Eve to see beyond their frame. We should again not misconstrue this as a version of "true education", where the teacher 'will excited their minds' and incite the desire to know of the world; this is a wilfully glib reading. Instead, the 'knowledge' available is 'invented with design to keep them low'. Lucifer literally acknowledges the apparatus of subservience they are subject to, and to see beyond this is to become 'Equal with Gods'. The irony is missed by Lucifer, as he still believes at this point that there is some available rebellion beyond his own enframing. But the essentiality here is that there is an inaccessible Real that God does not want his subjects to see, as they would subsequently turn away from Him.[129] If the sheep questioned why they were herded, what would this mean for the *shepherd*? This reinforces the pivotal point uncovered in the deconstruction of

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[129] This is akin to Baudrillard's simulacrum (2014): there is perhaps another layer of reality beyond the simulated real of capital. To see beyond this simulacra would be to defy capital, but this cannot be done, just as we cannot see beyond the totalising nature of Education (its enframing).

darkness and light, that the claims of Education to reveal the world to us more truthfully are in fact only a clouding of it. Perhaps this is what Lucifer hoped to tell Eve.

In spite of their general adherence to the *shepherd*, Eve, and consequently Adam, eat the forbidden fruit. They become disobedient students that must be made an example of, although their punishment is not as severe as Lucifer's. The mere notion of them being the favourites of God allows them the chance of redemption, so long as they maintain their worship: 'Thus they in lowliest plight repentant stood/Praying, for from the Mercy-seat above' (XI.1-2). At the request of the Son, Adam and Eve (and ostensibly man) are offered eventual forgiveness if they abide by their lessons: 'All thy request for Man, accepted Son' (XI.46), on the condition that the Son shoulders the punishment for their sins. Their forgiveness thus enforces a view of God as benevolent, just as Education needs to be seen as a force for *good*.[130] Those anointed by Education, those thrown into a position of privilege for example, always have Education's redemption available to them.

After their sinful act and ejection from Eden (a fall I will not explain, as it only serves to reinforce the message of drowning highlighted by Lucifer's fall), we see the angel Michael deliver the final lesson. He stands as the more oppressive *shepherd* discussed in medieval discourse at the start of this chapter, who seeks to 'repair of the ruin already wrought by his pupil' (Bundy and Bundy, 1922, p.130), but his role is not dissimilar to Raphael's. Michael is

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[130] *Word got out. Marquant had been doing some amazing things. He had a house full of gold, they would claim. How does he do it? Some sort of magic. Unwelcome in Le Sable. Some dark art. The rumours were swelling, threatening to ruin Marquant and destroy everything that he had achieved so far. He had no choice but to tell them it was not some dark magic, but the advice of a being that knew far more than him, than them. A sort of god, he thought, that he had come to trust dearly.*

another arm of the beast in showing futures; the visions he shows to Adam are intentionally shocking, such as the vision of man being punished for their sinful lives: 'Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die,/By Fire, Flood, Famine' (Milton, 1667, XI.471-472). Images like these are much like the tale of Lucifer's fall, used as a device to intimidate them into obedience. But there is something more formidable about seeing *their own* future, as opposed to some other disobedient soul's. From this they learn about the possible paths available to them, to either be sinful or be holy. The choice is theirs, they believe, just as the "choice" is available to all students in Education: work hard and succeed, thus becoming the images of success they so commonly envision, or be disobedient and idle, destined to become fallen.[131]

Nevertheless, Paradise will one day be open to man again; the light sparkles in the distant future if they *keep the faith, maintain the hierarchy, follow their teachings.* Žižek's description of Kant presents the same Edenic notion in Enlightenment thinking (part of the epoch that will follow, and thus it is no wonder that the metaphor from the previous epoch will be embraced by the following one):

> "Reason about whatever you want and as much as you want – but *obey*!" That is to say: as the autonomous subject of theoretical reflection, addressing the enlightened public, you can think freely, you can question all authority; but as part of the social "machine", as a subject in the other meaning of the word, you must obey unconditionally the orders of your superiors. (Žižek, 2008, p.87)

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[131] I remember, sadly, hearing a fellow teacher shout "do you want to work in McDonalds?" as a motivating line to her class, of course implying their impending "fall" if they did not listen to her and consequently "get" their Education, as if working in McDonalds were akin to being sent to Hell.

Like the sheep in the pasture, free to roam where they please, they may do as they wish, but ultimately, they must obey the *shepherd* or forever be nipped at the heel by the collie. It is the same for Adam and Eve: ultimately, they must obey God or forever be fallen; they 'must become resilient rather than rebellious' (Allen, 2014, p.237). And of course, it is the same for those in Education.[132] The sense of freedom that exists within it is only to the limits of the structure itself; ultimately you must submit to the will of Education, or forever be cast out into Nothing. And you must shoulder the pains it piles upon you, in resilience, rather than rebel against it, for we know what happens to such rebels. The narrative at last concludes with 'Providence their guide' (Milton, 1667, XII, 647), making one last use of the metaphor at play. We are reminded once more that man is to be shepherded towards Heaven, and thus we are reminded that Education will *always-already* usher us in such a direction.

VII.v. *The Shepherd and the Flock* in the Dominant Ontology of Education

Certainly, this metaphor is a fruitful one, and one that seems to permeate Education at different levels. When we examine the use and significations of this metaphor in contemporary discourse, the dominant ontology revealed is troublingly archaic. Broadly, the story of Lucifer presides neatly in discourse surrounding discipline, and consequently meritocracy. Those ideas have been

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[132] *Daily, the people of Le Sable would knock on the door of Marquant's house to see the thing in the flask. They called it L'illuminé. Marquant had little time for his work now with the relentless stream of worshippers arriving at his residence. Perhaps it was fruitless, as they did not seem to need him. L'illuminé gave them everything they needed; the visions of blight, sickness and disease had been forgotten. They came at first with petty questions about their husbands' indiscretions and their wives' transgressions. Soon, the questions became deeper, bigger. L'illuminé was telling them answers they had not even considered, causing them to ask questions they could never have even phrased before he came. All L'illuminé asked for was themselves. They should return every day and plead with him, beg if necessary, and if he deemed them worthy, he would grant them an answer.*

discussed to some extent in this chapter already, however there are some interesting implications

to be teased out from the utilisation of *the shepherd and the flock* in these areas.

VII.v.i. Discipline

The story of Lucifer is primarily one of impotence; his rebellion is always-already a failure, and

thus we are reminded that the nature of the *flock* is to follow the *shepherd*, not attempt to diverge

from the course set. Metaphorical manifestations of this are palpable in the thrown nature of

students in Education, finding themselves expected to abide by a path that may be wholly

inadequate or unsuitable for them. But the sheep must follow; there is no alternative for them but

to '*obey*' (Žižek, 2008, p.87). Sadly, this is unsurprising when we consider the inception of mass-

schooling in the UK. This technology was always intended to throw students into a delimiting

world:

> …Stow had realised that if Glasgow's street children – those "wild human beings" – were to
>
> conduct themselves as self-reflective moral persons, certain arrangements would have to be
>
> made for them. They would first have to be placed in an environment that would dispose
>
> them to concern themselves with their own conduct and under a discipline that would equip
>
> them to act on the basis of this concern. […] It took place within the instituted milieu of
>
> Christian pastoral guidance. (Hunter, 1994, p.27)

Stow's horrific impression of Glaswegian children aside, we see how the bureaucrats involved in

the massification of Education drew from the logic of *the shepherd and the flock* to control the

'wild' populations of urban environments. As discussed by Foucault (1991) and Allen (2014), the

self-disciplining follower of God, that is, the obedient member of the *flock,* is precisely the sort of

individual required for a disciplined population, a population that does not need authoritarian figures swinging clubs and doling out executions. In turn, these 'wild' individuals should be placed into a specific milieu, a *flock* that they are expected to follow. They are cast into 'a temporal projection of being... organized into specific phases laden with specific accomplishments... [It is] the developmental imperative. Norms of attainment are deemed elements in a chain of development' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.85). The world described here, one where children are expected to increase attainment as part of their 'developmental imperative' is precisely the *flock* that many students will find themselves amidst, but many are unable to abide by the developmental path set out for them by the *shepherd.*

So what becomes of these Luciferean ones, the "drop-outs" or "NEETs" that have seen their place in this *flock* is one of relentless slavishness to the *shepherd*? Alarmingly, some researchers (Kim et al, 2010; Graham, 2014; Mallett, 2016) have identified the pre-destined nature of this divergence in what they call "the school to prison pipeline". Lucifer's impotent rebellion is, as discussed in relation to meritocracy, a prerequisite to the functioning of Education. But there are bleaker implications still:

> …the preparation for adult work roles through schooling has conceivably not been a failure on those who are pushed to the edges of the education system. Their experiences of school are perfect training for the later experience of the corresponding role of prisoner. What is usually called educational failure is conceivably successful social control. (Graham, 2014, p.836)

What could be a better manifestation of Lucifer's fall into Hell than those students whose potential destiny is to fail to abide by the rules set for them by the *shepherd,* be cast out of the *flock,* and forced to dwell in 'penal fire' (Milton, 1667, I.48)? Such is the nature of the metaphor when functioning as it should – those students that cannot follow the narrow set of rules are doomed to be cast out of school, not necessarily just through exclusion (though English schools alone exclude forty students a day (DfE, 2018d)), but through the determination of their Being as fallen.[133]

VII.v.ii. Meritocracy

The image of Lucifer always-already carries the trace of those who do not fall, as in the utilisation of *the shepherd and the flock* found in *Paradise Lost* we see those destined to succeed. The metaphor reminds us that to follow *the shepherd,* that is, be educated, is thus to aspire towards God. We see an embodiment of the *myth* of meritocracy, the notion that "society ought to offer enough opportunity and mobility for 'talent' to combine with 'effort' in order to 'rise to the top'" (Littler, 2017, p.1). But what the functioning of the metaphor demonstrates to us in the poem is that meritocracy is "rigged", and thus Adam and Eve were always likely to succeed whilst Lucifer was always likely to fail (and fall).

Alongside critical thinking (see f.n.119), meritocracy reigns supreme as a transcendental concept within contemporary Education. In the late twentieth century, 'doubts were growing about the ability of schools to promote social justice and equality for all' (Illich, 1971, p.70). As such, the

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[133] Graham (2014) is reflecting on the carceral nature of late-modern society where the visible imprisonment of "unwanted" individuals is seen as a disciplinary imperative. Education is of course a fundamental part of this society, but a silent one. It has been both a product and cause of carcerality, but such a pervasive one as it stands as the tool that many believe is for social change whilst it maintains the status quo, enacting violence on unwanted subjects.

educational response to such concerns was an embracing of meritocratic ideology: '1990s UK's New Labour under Tony Blair had adopted a non-satirical idea of a meritocratic society with gusto' (Littler, 2017, p.35). But the logic of meritocracy is embodied in *Paradise Lost* (Stock, 2020b). We must remember the ultimate destiny of Adam and Eve is to succeed; if they listen to their teachings and, more pivotally, learn from Lucifer, they shall be rewarded. They believe that 'By steps we may ascend to God' (Milton, 1667, V.512), thus giving them clear direction for how to live. We can see this mirrored in Education today, embodied in students being guided towards their heavenly futures at university and beyond (Stock, 2020b). Quite so, the 'university graduate has been schooled for selective service among the rich of the world' (Illich, 1971, p.34), thus the meritocratic ladder is used to show how mankind can work hard to reach Heaven, just as meritocracy tells us that effort will allow talented students to climb to the top. This sort of thinking depicts us all through the metaphor of *the shepherd and the flock,* as we see ourselves as equals, starting at the bottom of the ladder, able to climb if we listen to the *shepherd,* that is, engage in our Education. But it is through understanding this metaphor that we realise meritocracy is another empty concept loaded into the structure of Education to give it the appearance of solidity.

VII.v.iii. Building on Darkness and Light

I intimated at the start of this chapter that the implementation of the metaphor in contemporary educational discourse raises Derrida's notion of the *supplement.* The narrative that is starting to build in this thesis (both in the main body and the footnotes) is one that is leading to the bestial nature of Education, and we can see signs of it happening already. Chapter VI posited that in its offering of *light* as an object of orientation, Education may come to *supplement* the very light that

it claims to offer.[134] To remind ourselves of Derrida's logic here, that 'the supplement supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*; if it fills, it is as one fills a void' (Derrida, 1976, pp.144-145)[135]. We should then see how Education has come to embody the being *light* that it claims to orient towards. By supplementing the journey towards *light,* the supplementation replaces the very thing that is journeyed towards. However, other metaphors are traceable within *darkness and light,* particularly that of *the shepherd and the flock.* The use of this latter metaphor, demonstrable in its use by Milton and his contemporaries, represents a guidance of the *flock* towards God, and inherently towards *light.* For Plato, the light of truth had come to *supplement* his god, and now the Christian God comes to *supplement light.* This chain is indicative of a far more bestial supplementation though: Education, in its shepherding towards *light*, that is, God, comes to embody the nature of God Himself.

If this is so, that Education has become God (and certainly this seems in alignment with the ontotheological claims of Peim (2020)), then what other aspects of this discourse become grafted into Education? Are we to worship Education in temples built for it, and place our faith in it to bring us salvation and grant us redemption? Even though Education remains benignly waged war with through academia and the bemoaning of teachers, such individuals only do so *because* of their faith in Education. Allen surmises this argument as such:

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[134] *Marquant grew tired of the life that he had generated for himself. His work was fruitless now L'illuminé had all the answers. Worse, he became distrustful of L'illuminé and the ways he spoke to the people of Le Sable. Indeed, there was something fascinating about this creature, but it would not even be if it weren't for Marquant. Why did they not look to him for answers?*

[135] The vivid example of the *supplement* as masturbation is given in *Of Grammatology*, an act intended to supplement sex that comes to replace it, one that presences that which we lack in the moment in which it occurs (1976, p.153).

Educational critics may well resist this depiction of the educator as some kind of martyr to the faith, arguing perhaps that it exaggerates the extent to which responsibility for redeeming education is heaped onto the individual. […] But the feared destruction of education […] acts as a stimulus to educational critique and reform, which, in its anatomization of educational problems, only ever speaks for education. As such, arguments for the defence of education trick us into an enlistment we cannot escape. They stimulate modes of educational critique that are, despite all protestation, also acts of faith. (2018a, p.50)

With faith comes a space for some divine deity to be put faith in; it incurs the inherent lack that can be filled by further worship and prayer, in spite of the troubling aspects of Education that are seen time and time again. The start of this chapter began with a quotation from Zola's *Germinal*, in which he depicts nineteenth century French miners and their 'faith in the mine… a profound sense of gratitude towards… a private god whom they worshipped' (1885, p.80). The mine is bestial throughout the novel, a monster that wantonly devours the miners, but still they worship it for what it provides. After all, 'why tempt fate by doubting it?' (p.80). Clearly, this encapsulates the previous argument about the faith held in Education as a being that is God-like. Despite any carceral (Graham, 2014; Littler, 2016) or violent (Allen, 2014) implications of the functioning of Education, still we maintain our faith and worship in it. It is as if there is no alternative, and why tempt fate by trying to do something different?

A theme is thus arising for Education and the metaphors it embraces. It seems that both the utilisation of *darkness and light* and *the shepherd and the flock* yield supposedly redemptive qualities, incur faith in its place in society and reduce followers of Education to slaves.

Deconstruction of these, when recontextualised in our contemporary landscape, reveal a functioning that runs contrary to what they claim to offer – meritocracy does not allow social mobility; discipline only attends to the always-already fallen. A question arises then when we look at the metaphors this way. Why is it that we can identify these troubling counter-effects of Education despite its redemptive claims, and yet it still just seems to continue? Why is this technology is not derailed? Why is it allowed to slouch towards us in such a monstrous fashion (Stock, 2019, p.411), rather than be halted in its tracks? The next chapter thus moves onto the next epoch in the ontohistory, the modern, but examines how the archetypal metaphor excavated that replaces *the shepherd and the flock* is to naturalise and normalise the troubling effects of the previous epochs' metaphors. It has been made clear in both Chapter VI and VII that critique of Platonic and medieval Education was rife not only in the epochs themselves, but also now as part of the continued discipline of Education. And yet, the metaphors continue to haunt us. It thus feels as if there is something *natural* about this technology, as if it was *always-already* part of our being-in-the-world. It is as if, somehow, it is part of Nature. As my ontohistory moves into the next epoch in Chapter VIII, we will explore how Education has come to be such a thing.

VIII. Nature

We can't depend on it. The bank – the monster – has to have profits all the time. It can't wait. It'll die. No, taxes go on. When the monster stops growing, it dies. It can't stay one size. (Steinbeck, 2000, p.34)

VIII.i. **Rousseau's *Émile***

So we come to the end of the Plato-Kant canon, thus the end of our hunt for the Being of the rough beast. As will be seen in the reading that follows, this shift to the 'modern' (Thomson, 2005, p.59) epoch represents a notable change in terms of man's relationship with the world. The two dominant modes of thought – Enlightenment and Romanticism – though opposing in their views of the world, both harnessed the same rejection of the previous epoch's being-towards-god, although as I have explored in previous chapters, this rejection is *supplement* rather than a genuine exorcising of religion.

For Painter, the ontological shift of the epoch is notable in the educational methods of the time as it 'ignores or rejected revealed religion, and bases its educational principles on the purely natural. Though as one-sided as the theological tendency, it has the great merit of stimulating a careful study of man...' (1999, p.247). The rejection of religion[136], a major shift in the ontology of

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[136] Indeed, with the great vicissitudes in philosophical thought and interlocking network of industrial change, scientific revelation and revolutionary events, we cannot easily place *the shepherd and the flock* as an archetypal metaphor that overlaps with this undoubtedly different mode of being in the same way as *darkness and light* could be placed in the previous epoch. The fundamental rejection of that which precedes it entails a contradiction in the ontology of Education, for how can it be both embracing of a being-towards-God and a rejection of it? We should not be afraid of these contradictions in the overall appearance of the beast however. Foucault highlights that 'contradictions are neither appearances to be overcome, nor secret principles to be uncovered. They are objects to be described for themselves' (2002, p.169). We should remember that this thesis is not explaining away the differences in educational metaphors to reach some transcendental metaphor of absolutism; this is no hunt for metaphysics. What we seek here is the appearance of Education today, how and in what mode it exists – we find this in the metaphors it embraces. These metaphors are not all the same, and thus contradictions are to be expected. Therefore, a part ofthis

Education (when we take *the shepherd and the flock* into account) that will have to be explored in this chapter.[137] A second, more perceptive point is to be gleaned from Painter though. His reference to the *natural* may indeed be signalling of the movement away from being-towards-God and instead something that fundamentally looked inwards and around ourselves as beings, rather than upwards into the sky. Painter notes that this epoch reoriented the direction of being towards nature – 'Nature is to be studied and followed' (1999, p.251) – and therefore the text that we seek is to embody this ontological grounding. Painter, consequently, points us towards Rousseau as the single writer of the epoch who embodies this grounding more than anyone else within educational discourse. His treatise *Émile* is pertinent, therefore, as it is written in a quasi-fictional form, told through the narrative of a teacher raising a young boy named Émile. As such, it opens itself to ironist interrogation in the same way as the texts explored in previous chapters. For Dewey, Rousseau's theory of child-centred Education represented by Émile signified 'the shifting of the centre of gravity' (1959, p.34) in educational thought, and so too is its embodiment of the dominant thought of the epoch through Piaget, Steiner and Montessori. I shall discuss this legacy further in the concluding section of the Chapter, but briefly, the significance of Rousseau's in educational thought is demonstrably clear, as Martin and Martin state:

> Perhaps no single volume, with the exception of Plato's *Republic,* has exerted as much
>
> influence on the subsequent history of educational thought and practice as has Jean-

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chapter will look to the 'locus in which it takes place' (p.170), that is, the space the contradictory metaphors converge upon. The relationship between them will, after all, reveal the most vital parts of Education's Being. In part, we should expect the beast to be inconsistent in form, as this only contributes to its monstrosity.

[137] *After nights of willing, Marquant found his resolve. He pulled himself out of bed, insomniacally restless, and stole into his study. It was dark. All but the shimmer of the bottle could be seen. A hammer found its way into his grip. He swung it and went back to bed. The following morning, broken glass littered the floor.*

Jacque Rousseau's *Émile* [which] contains all of the ideas that dominate Rousseau's educational thought and legacy. (2010, p.85)

To give a broader overview, *Émile, or Treatise on Education,* published in 1762, indeed represented an apparent shift in the approach to the Education of children. Roughly, it takes on the persona of a teacher and describes the Education of a young boy – Émile – in narrative form. The text is divided into five sections, each charting the development of Émile and the methods that the narrator Jean Jacque uses to "teach" him how to become an effective member of society, and told chronologically through the "stages" of Émile's life. My deconstruction will not follow this strict chronology but will rather trace the excavated metaphor through the text. Nevertheless, each section is important to grasp the narrative construction of the text. Book I provides the foundation of Rousseau's argument, claiming that 'God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil' (2016, p.5). I will explain in the later deconstruction how this relies on a binary that can be easily overturned, but for now let us glean that Rousseau's educational premise is that man's methods serve to do harm to the child, thus a natural method must be uncovered that appears to be distinct from that of the formalised Education preached in the previous epoch. Accordingly, the first book demonstrates the essentiality of inculcation in nature for the boy Émile, developed in Book II as we see Émile's interactions with nature being fostered by the teacher. Book III introduces the essentiality of learning skills and a trade once the boy reaches puberty, and finally, as he becomes strong, religion and sentiment are taught.[138] It is this

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[138] Book V presents "Sophy's" female Education, which I do not address in detail in this chapter though will raise in the section on reontologising childhood. This is not because it is not significant to Rousseau's argument, but rather that it does not contribute to the hauntological power of the metaphor in the same way as the other four books. Indeed, Rousseau saw the Education of women as a different apparatus from that of men. The man is given a natural Education, is educated by nature, and should be-in-nature (all of which is explored in great detail in this chapter). However, the female is to be a 'helpmeet' (Rousseau, 2016, p.174), that is, to be domesticated. She is to learn how

delay to learning religion that is so alarming to our understanding of Education when considered alongside the previous epochs. In the preceding epoch, the learning of religion reigned on high as both the transcendental goal for Education and as its metaphorical formation. But for Rousseau, this is to be supplanted by other things. What this chapter broadly seeks, then, is what Rousseau dethroned God for in his educational method, and to begin to consider how this stands with the rough beast.

VIII.ii. The Metaphor of Nature

VIII.ii.i. Archetypality and Hauntology of Nature

It will not take a keen reader to presume the vocabulary that became the *lingua franca* of this epoch; nature, reason, truth, rationality, all these terms pervade Romantic and Enlightenment discourse. They are of course semantically linked, but which of these exists most archetypally, hauntologically, or even metaphorically? It should be noted that, in part, this epoch was defined by a move away from metaphor in an attempt to explain things through 'the machinery of thought' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997, p27), that is, more scientifically or rationally.

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not to 'become weary of her tasks and infatuated with amusements' (p.180), for she should be educated solely for the purpose of serving the husband. As Greentree says, 'Rousseau's *Emile* directs female subjects toward marriage above all else, training he famously likened to the entry of girls into a harem' (2017, p.84). In some ways, this is a deliberate defiance of nature from Rousseau, as the female is to be prevented from being-in-nature. As this chapter considers *Nature* as a metaphor, we could consider how Rousseau's description of Sophy's Education has naturalised the way in which schooling acts a domesticating force on women even today through the ways it shapes their Being. Though it defies Rousseau's own logic, it does take on a structural force of its own that certainly contributes to the formation of modern schooling. We could say that Rousseau's conception of nature *excludes* the female, in the sense that they exist outside of it – an issue identified by feminist and postcolonial critiques of Education. In contemporary schooling, certainly these issues linger (hence the relentless inequality reproduced in educational settings), but the metaphors described in this thesis have become dominating of *all beings in Education,* rather than just the male beings that are described by Rousseau. This is not a humanist angle, but an ontological one – we are all merely food for the beast (as explored in this chapter). Unfortunately, this raises areas of critique that are beyond the scope of this thesis, though certainly beg further investigation moving forward. Further, this chapter is more concerned with Education being *Nature,* as opposed to it designating what is natural. Nevertheless, the exclusion from nature will be addressed in due course.

Consequently, this leaves fewer metaphors to be found in the Enlightenment discourse of the epoch, or at least fewer of the sorts of metaphors that still appear figuratively to us today like *darkness and light* or *the shepherd and the flock.* However, there are two contradictions to this Enlightenment language that we can signal thus to excavate a metaphor of utility in Education. Firstly, we must remember the claim made by Rorty (1989), Derrida (2010a) and Saussure (2013) that all language is metaphorical, thus the very word "nature" is too. Similarly, as Adorno and Horkheimer point out, 'that dry sagacity [of Enlightenment language] merely reproduces the fantastic wisdom that is supposedly rejects' (1997, p.12), i.e., the rational vocabulary of the Enlightenment only continued to perpetuate the same sort of mythical language that it claimed to refute.[139] Furthermore, within the same epoch the opposing Romantic movement directly contradicts the 'machinery' (p.27) of Enlightenment language and is rife with metaphor, notably through its poetic formations in the works of Keats, Wordsworth, Coleridge and so forth. What we must look for then is the locus of contradiction (Foucault, 2002, p.170) between these two key movements of the epoch and establish which elements of their vocabulary are common, and consequently function in a metaphorical sense more broadly in the epoch and in Education now. I contend that it is *Nature* that stands as the archetypal metaphor, and one that is certainly still haunting of our educational discourse today.

We need only look to Romanticism to see the unmissable emphasis on nature and all its associated bucolics; we need only look to the revered champion of Enlightenment Kant for his

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[139] *The townsfolk were at Marquant's door. How dare he destroy L'illuminé. The thing that had absolved them of their plight and had brought Le Sable out of the sands and into the skies. They stood with pitchforks and torches, of course, ready to destroy Marquant's house. He cowered in his room; he was no warrior. Trembling underneath the tatty sheets of his bed, he waited for them to break in. But it was then that he realised the true terror of what he had created. L'illuminé stood at the end of the bed, a great white mass of lights, iridescent like the sun of high spring.*

proposed laws of nature such as causality and *a priori* knowledge (Kant, 1781). However, it is in

the educational treatise of Rousseau that we see the metaphor of the epoch in its most archetypal

form is that of *Nature*. From the 'soil', 'fruit', 'trees' or 'mother's milk' of Book I (2016, pp.5-

15) to the 'seeds' and 'roots' of Book IV (p.154)[140], the vocabulary that Rousseau utilises to

present his educational method is heavily centred around nature. Further, *Nature* is oft referenced

as the goal of Rousseau's treatise, a being-towards-Nature as it were, thus the force of the word

when Rousseau, or indeed an educationalist uses it, brings all of the connotations that will be

examined below. It is also, of course, inherently hauntological as it is replete with ghost-like

absences in its supposedly stable structure and continues to pose as a goal for many

educationalists, in spite of its potentially anachronistic semantics. In fact, we use *Nature* to

embody such an array of depth experiences and to express motives that it stands as a monument

in the metaphorical landscape. Let us look the possible connotations of this metaphor then, thus

allowing us to suitably deconstruct Rousseau and perhaps glimpse a further shred of Education's

Being.

VIII.ii.ii. Nature or nature?

We must first establish *possible* usage of the word "nature", as its significations are complex and

help shape Education.[141] Rousseau also employs it flexibly, only serving to reinforce its

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[140] Again, the use of nature lexis is broadly absent in Book V and replaced with the language of domesticity and the home. This further emphasises the way that Sophy, or the female more broadly, is excluded from Rousseau's impression of *Nature.*

[141] The wider discoursistic usage of the metaphor *Nature* is to be explored slightly differently here from that of previous chapters. In part, we are much further forward in the onto-history, thus have less need to look backwards at the use of the metaphor before its establishment in educational discourse. More pivotally, the metaphor needs close consideration in a semantic manner more so than the previous metaphors.

pervasiveness as an archetypal metaphor. Indubitably, the differing semantics of these variant uses of "nature" are only part of a larger network. What is starting to become clear, however, in our hunt for metaphor, is that with something as flexible in usage as *Nature* in representing Education, it both reveals and obscures Education. We feel as if we are one step closer to understanding what Education is, and indeed, the functioning of this metaphor in the discoursistic formation of Education does allow us to do so, but at the same time we are also obscuring Education, and so too is it obscuring the world for the users of it. Education as *Nature* may well open up the natural, but what is lost by this usage of the metaphor? These implications become clearer in the later deconstruction.

Thinking etymologically, *Natura* is quality, as in a quality of a thing. We can align such thinking with essence, the part of the thing that makes it that thing, perhaps even its noumenal form. Yet its prefix *Nat-* is to be born, which leads us to the mode in which the thing is coming into being. Both allow us to consider the truth of the thing in question, whether through essence or, more ontologically, how it came to be. However, the term has undergone a semantic shift. Roughly, we read *Nature* through these meanings: "Nature", that is, the object/objects that exists outside and unaffected by the subject; "nature", as in, the nature of, or essence of something; "nature" of humans, human nature, the behaviour, actions, internal goal of the human being; "nature" as in natural, the occurrence of things that are or is; and finally, the pastoral "nature", the realm of agriculture, flora and fauna that is in direct opposition with the urban, culture, and man. We can treat these connotations as in conflict with one another, but on closer inspection it seems clear that they are in fact symbiotic. There may be a cleft between interior/exterior or subject/object, but as *Nature* signifies both halves of these dualisms, we are perhaps to believe *Nature* is actually

encompassing of all the elements aforementioned. The objects unaffected by the subject include

subjects as objects, hence their nature, and undoubtedly the realm of nature. I am not trying to say

that all these words are the same; they are not. However, we must remember that when Rousseau,

myself or Education use "nature", it brings with it the full force of the word. What is so powerful

about this metaphor when seized upon by Education is exactly its ability to pervade both sides of

binaries. Henceforth I shall use the italicised *Nature* to represent the archetypal metaphor, the

capitalised Nature to signify the external realm, and the uncapitalised nature to indicate the nature

of something and the pastoral, but there will be instances that more than one may be appropriate.

What stands to bear with all these contrasting semantics, though, is the irony through which

Nature functions as the signifier of that which really is, but only operates to exclude and narrow

our view of the world. This argument is that of Heidegger's in *Being and Time*, that the world is

obscured by the enframing concept of *Nature*. As he says:

> one tries to interpret the world in terms of the being of the being which is present within
>
> the world but has not, however, even been initially understood… nature is a limit case of
>
> the being of possible innerworldly beings… This kind of knowledge has the character of a
>
> certain "deworlding" of the world. (2010a, p.65)

Quite so, the world is actually *deworlded* by viewing it through the lens of Nature, a category that

creates knowledge without understanding of the Being of beings. Derrida believes this to be true

of Rousseau also: 'to what extent does Rousseau's appurtenance to logocentric metaphysics ...

limit a scientific discourse?' (1976, p.106). Speaking of the anthropological discourse that

Rousseau utilises, Derrida proposes that the view of, say, Émile's Education, is actually *limited*

by the nature-based lens that he employs. Educational examples of this are rife, both at the level

of the classroom and in broader discourse. The desire to classify nature through the

commonsensical elements of the curriculum, that of biology in the contemporary epoch, serves to

obscure the Nature of nature, that is, the world. But we also see the ongoing dominance of

viewing Education through the lens of *Nature* in developmental psychology. Every educational

story is parsed as being about the psychology of the child, a contemporary reworking of the

nature of Rousseau will demonstrate to be central to his text. Figures such as Piaget and the

associated narrative of 'cognitive development' (1936) have trumpeted the transcendental

moment of understanding children's true nature, ironically proposing the essentiality of obscuring

categories through that of schemas. As if we could precisely know the Being of those little things

that are thrown to the beast through such a lens – merely we deworld the world of the child,

Nature's greatest irony.

VIII.ii.iii. Rousseau's Metaphor

For Rousseau, the metaphor yielded just as many complications as it does for us.[142] A prevalent

use of *Nature* in discourse before Rousseau is the Hobbesian (and consequently Lockean[143])

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[142] Even though I have already iterated the following concerning Plato and Milton, I feel it vital to restate that we are not interested in what the metaphor meant to Rousseau. Purely, we seek the ways in which the metaphor provided by Rousseau and other writers of the epoch manifests itself in the Being of contemporary Education. To achieve that end, we must consider semiotics and *différance* in terms of the metaphor, so to examine educational implications.

[143] For Locke, there is certainly some parallelism with Hobbes, even perhaps their 'definitions of the state of nature are roughly the same' (Simmons, 1989, p.450.). However, Locke is slightly less hierarchical in his explication of sovereignty. For him, human beings can 'still be living under effective, highly organized governments and still be in the state of nature' (pp.450-451). Seemingly, his interpretation of the human state is Hobbesian, whereas his interpretation of the state is more complex. The version of the state Hobbes and Locke purport here is generally unimportant, although it may be useful to consider the fact that Locke sees man and the state as 'relational' (p.451), thus noting the traces of each oppositional term held by the other within the binary – deconstructed at great length by Derrida in *Of Grammatology* (1976). It features heavily in a later part of this chapter, thus I will not explore it now. However, Derrida alerts us the falsity of this binary, and thus of Hobbes and Locke's perception of human nature. What is essential for the line of enquiry here, though, is the way in which Hobbes and Locke bore one side of a binary that Rousseau was to take up arms against, and how both sides of this conflict became pivotal for the formation of Education.

presentation of the "state of nature", which although Rousseau fundamentally opposes in his defining of it, he still utilises the metaphor for his own purposes.[144] The notion of a "state" implies this is a way of being, a regrounding of the ontology of the epoch as Heidegger (2010a) and Thomson (2005) assumed. Let us begin chronologically with Hobbes and his now idiomatic claim about the state of nature: it is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' (1668, p.78). Hobbes obviously believed that human beings, if thrown into a world without culture (or more acutely without governance), are certain to destroy themselves quickly and violently; we shall live in 'a war in which there is no industry, no culture, and no real society' (Simmons, 1989, p.450). Hobbes is generating a binary that hierarchises culture over nature and presupposes that the reader wants industry, culture and society. But we must remember that these terms also carry their own force, and needless to say, they are not as sacred as Hobbes would have us believe. For now, let us condense this Hobbesian use of the metaphor to "man's nature is violence". It is also easy to see how this signification is embraced by Education: if man is naturally violent, then an apparatus must be put in place to "civilise" him. Such an apparatus may very well take the form of Education, with its disciplinary surveillance through panopticism and the inversion of top-down control (Foucault, 1991; Allen, 2014), the savages, or 'wild human beings on the streets' (Stow, 1850, p. 125) will soon be civilised. Of course, the irony here is the way in which this metaphor has been inverted for contemporary educationalists. It seems unlikely that teachers think of themselves as taming savages anymore, even if Hobbesian philosophy still lurks in educational discourse. Rather, they see themselves in the manner of Rousseau and the following

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[144] Indeed, this is an instance where both capitalisation and non-capitalisation of nature would be appropriate; Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau wrote about both the behavioural predisposition of the human being (nature) and of the world in which they existed within (Nature).

epoch of child-centred learning as letting children develop accordingly, rather than trying to tame

their unruly nature. But still, the child is tamed and shaped by the contemporary educational

paradigms of today, often as aforementioned through the lens of educational psychology. The

need to formalise some sort of Education incurs that their nature is inherently lacking or

misguided, thus in need of correction, and hence, savages remain tamed, only under the

ameliorated guise of contemporary educational discourse (Peim and Stock, 2021).

As for Rousseau, man's state of nature is not violence, but ostensibly freedom. In an overturning

of the commonly accepted nature/culture binary that Hobbes and Locke established, man does

not need civilising, for civilisation is more barbarous than the savage. Rousseau is striving

towards *Nature*, as opposed combatting it. But his use of *Nature* as a term predominantly

intimates that, in *Émile,* he wishes to 'champion the retreat to the Reason of Nature – meaning

also the essence of human nature itself, the presence of Being – as the source of purity and "the

good"' (Trifonas, 2000, p.257). Nature stands as a pure state of Reason, an embodiment of

Enlightenment philosophy. Rousseau calls for *Nature* to help us reach nature; end and means are

intertwined. Indeed, this particular use of *Nature* continued throughout the epoch beyond

Rousseau; Dewey in particular centres the Nature of children, claiming that dominant modes of

teaching 'prevent pupils from disclosing their real natures' (1938, n.pg.), thus implying a

fundamental human Nature that needs to be delivered through Education, something that will be

expanded upon in due course.

Rousseau's writing is ideal for representing the modern epoch, as he writes within the conflicting

thought of the Romantics and the Enlightenment. Despite his 'attack on the Enlightenment'

(Marshall, 1978, p.421) in pursuit of Romantic ideals, there are still shreds of reason and

rationality in his vocabulary (p.421). The romanticised spirit of *Nature* is also, however, present throughout his writing (Dame, 2001) in the manner of the pastoral idyll. Lindenbeger notes the appearance of pastoral tropes within Rousseau's writing, such as the 'isolated moment... a kind of island in time' (1972, p. 338), whilst we may also find in the text 'the life of herdsmen (*pastores*)… whose task gives them leisure for song, whose occupation is of a sort that leads to meditation on the beauty of the visible world, and stimulates the poetic spirit' (Shackford, 1904, p.585). Such a depiction is now the inescapable lens we see through when we visit the Lakes or Dales; we yearn for bygone times of small communities of shepherds or fisherman folk. Yet, we must remember the significant part of the pastoral view of *Nature*: it is an idyll, a form nature takes, not the truth of the matter. It is the hauntological presence of *Nature*, not a historical fact – still Rousseau desires this myth.[145]

What Rousseau embraced of the pastoral haunts the metaphor*,* especially when we consider it not as a genre or scene, but as a *mode* of *presencing* an idyll within an epoch of Being. For example, Lindenberger presents the Hegelian pastoral as follows: 'a mode of thought – above all, one that exists in relation to other modes of thought rather than as a static form or setting or type of imagery' (1972, p.346). To reach this idyll, there must be a manipulation of "stages" to reach it, a clearly defined path that one must tread for the individual (the reader of the poem generally) to attain the idyll. To be closer to nature, one must follow a natural path outlined by the structure of the poem. The keen reader will notice that this is exactly what Rousseau does in *Émile*: he uses

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[145] *The marvel of L'illuminé returning was too great for the people of Le Sable. How could such a miracle occur? How could it be so that he had returned, after that foul rebel Marquant destroyed him? They knew that there was something truly special about this thing from the flask now, and when it demanded that the people of Le Sable leave Marquant alone, they had no choice but to obey. He was, after all, the creator of L'illuminé. Let him be exiled, he said.*

the narrative of the boy's Education as a mode of presencing the idyll amongst the revolutionary era he wrote in and breaks the boy's life down into clear and palpable stages to ensure that the path is trodden directly. A further irony exists too in the way in which the presencing of the pastoral idyll excludes all other idylls from being opened up for the child; there is a closing off inherent in the very operation of pastoral nature, contrary to its semantics of freedom.

For Allan, however, *Nature* is 'always in one of two very precise senses which can be recognized by the context in which the word is used' (1937, p.191). We should not rely too heavily on Allan's semiotics here, but undoubtedly the interpretations of *Nature* he gleans are of use for our deconstructive inquiry: 'Primitive society is natural in one sense, Émile's education in the other' (p.191). Seemingly, the societal version of nature is Rousseau's pastoral idyll, and the other is a stranger, less commonly used version: Natural Education. Here is where the metaphor truly takes hold in a way of deepest interest to us. Making sense of this will be part of the work of this chapter, or more precisely, attempting to reveal Education's construal of Natural Education. Nevertheless, Rousseau is positing a grafting of two potentially oppositional objects – *Nature* and Education – onto one another. As Allan says, 'in all education there is an element of which belongs exclusively to nature' (p.192), and thus consequently, within *Nature*, there belongs (supposedly) a trace of Education. Again, for Allan, there is a simplistic answer to this question of grafting, that 'natural education means domestic or family education', as opposed to civil education which is '*en masse*' (Allan, 1937, p.192).[146]

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[146] This sort of Education has perhaps become more intertwined with the likes of Montessori and Steiner, something I will address in the close of the chapter, although elements of Natural Education certainly pervade dominant educational discourse too. Whilst these are certainly useful understandings of the metaphor Nature, especially as the

So how can Education make use of both the violent and the free, the worldly and the pastoral

significations of *Nature*? This is, of course, exactly the point. It does not matter which

interpretation of *Nature* is held, there is always a justifiable essentiality for Education. As

Foucault (2002) notes, we are not trying to explain away a contradiction between different

statements. Instead, we must examine the locus in which these contradictions occur, and that is

precisely the metaphor of *Nature*, the signifier, as opposed to the exact and opposing

significations of it. Thus, it does not matter for Education; it must function with *Nature* no matter

what the interpretation. Its technological operation remains the same, whether we see humans as

violent or free; it still allows the necessitating of Education as a natural force to co-exist with and

over us.

VIII.iii. Deconstructing *Émile*

VIII.iii.i. Reontologising of the Child

What is pivotal for the formation of the rough beast in Rousseau's epoch, highlighted in his

writing from the outset, is the reontologisation of the child, the reshaping of its Being into

something quite different from before.[147] The beast eyes up his prey in this part of the story – it

decides what is food and what is not: '*Émile* was made to matter on the basis of new visions of

[…] childhood as sacred' (Baker, 2001, p.36). It is true that the being itself does not, or did not

change, but the *way* it existed was radically different from before. This is, perhaps, one of the

most essential lessons to be drawn from the likes of Rousseau in terms of the formation of

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filial or domestic form of Education seems more inherently pastoral, and the civil "mass" education seems like that of the acculturative, there is certainly more at play here to be revealed in the reading of *Émile*.

[147] Note that 'the child' here does not refer to an individual child, but rather the ontological space of the child and the things that occupy it.

contemporary Education: Education could not function effectively as *techne* if it did not direct itself towards (and wholly engulf) children. It is the formation and consequential *growth* of these little things into adults that allows its total enframing of our Being. And it is through ideas surrounding growth and visions of children as unripe fruits that we see how the metaphor of *Nature* is applied by Rousseau. Children, for him, had been treated too long 'like a vine forced to bear fruit in spring, which fades and dies before autumn' (p.97), thus defying their natural growth.

The preface to *Émile* immediately presents childhood as a special realm[148]: 'We know nothing of childhood… They are always looking for the man in the child, without considering what he is before he becomes man' (Rousseau, 2016, p.4). *Das Man* is calling for men! How often do we hear such calls made through Education? We need more qualified individuals, better skilled workers, better thinkers. We need men, not boys. The technologizing apparatus of Education with its conveyer-belt like examination system and homogenising properties, its '"natural" distribution of traits' (Allen, 2014, p.93), is ideal in this endeavour. It appears to us as simply the natural

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[148] An important caveat lingers throughout this section. Though Rousseau was keen to designate a new and special realm for the child, as was pointed out previously and reemphasised by the call for men in the opening of *Émile*, this seems to exclude females (and ostensibly those not white/European also). There are feminist and postcolonial implications in the *Nature* metaphor. If Education has designated what is natural, then what is unnatural is immediately made to flounder in Education. Those who do not meet its normative standards (the normative being the European male for Rousseau, and ostensibly this is true for us today too) are to be instantly selected as the fallen (as per *the shepherd and the flock*). As the beast demands that some must fail, the ones excluded from nature are of course easier to accept as natural sacrifices. Though Education demands that we are *all educated* – that is part of its naturalisation and consequently part of its ontological formation as a beast (we must all submit to it) – some will fair better within this space than others. Education has favourites, it seems, though we are all to be chewed up in one form or another. Indeed, Schaeffer contends that Rousseau's proposal does not in fact lessen Sophy's Education after all, and that rather she is 'more intellectually and morally independent than Emile' (1998, p.610). This still inevitably leads to a sense of division and hierarchy in terms of the two, but it acknowledges the importance of *Nature* in this chapter: that it is a metaphor that contributes to the enframing system of Education regardless of gender, although sometimes with varying effects.

order. But Rousseau challenges the demand from *Das Man*, and in turn, challenges the order of

Nature: children are not born men. Rousseau thus expands his ontology of the child in Book I:

> Suppose a child born with the size and strength of manhood, entering upon life full grown
> like Pallas from the brain of Jupiter; such a man-child would be a perfect idiot… he
> would not even be aware of sensation… he would only have one idea, that of self, to
> which he would refer all his sensations… (2016, p.18)

The challenging of the "natural order of things" is what makes the above such a powerful

description. Through the mode of birthing, a natural act that transcends both nature and man, we

are forced to imagine the delivery of a crying and greasy child, unable to create any sense of

world (its lack of sensation), but in the shape of a Titanic man (such as that of Pallas). This

imagery may make readers squirm.[149] It is an abomination, like Marquant's creation in the flask,

a 'perfect idiot'. This thing knows nothing of others, or of the world; it only exists for itself. The

distinction created between child and man, idiot and thinking, entail us to desire the alternative

from the one yielded by a disorder of nature. We know we must be born weak – that is an

inescapable aspect of Being that we are confronted with through every mammal that suckles at its

mother and howls through the night (and Rousseau utilises this fact). But we accept this with the

knowledge that we do not have to remain in this state, that is, if we *learn* things.

Consequently, the implication is that 'man's education begins at birth' (Rousseau, 2016, p.18)

and *must* happen to avoid becoming the abominable thing birthed in Rousseau's allegory.

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[149] We perhaps squirm because of the abject implication (Kristeva, 1982) that reminds us we are all birthed, excreted like an unwanted fluid, and that we were all once this idiotic wretch. One could say that we are haunted by this image, thus become desperate to escape it. This is to be achieved, of course, through Education.

Further, Education allows the chance for a rebirthing: 'We are born, so to speak, twice over; born into existence, and born into life; born a human being, and born a man' (p.95). By entering into an agreement to be enframed, to become "aware" of the world, we are born again as another construct, as a man. A deal has been struck with the beast: "do not let me remain a snivelling idiot, unaware of anything but myself, but in turn I shall let you control what I see and think", but this is a Faustian[150] bargain cut to escape the inverse "law of nature". Every graduation ceremony or presentation of awards in any school or university (indeed children as young as five are now subjected to such pomp and circumstance) reminds us of this bargain, and even celebrates it. Perhaps we should not be so jubilant in the trading of our Being. What is lost by allowing Education to dominate over our view of Nature?

The reontologising of the child was perhaps a force for "good". Indeed, as Flint and Peim (2012, pp.70-72) noted, due to nineteenth century concerns in response to the likes of Rousseau, children were no longer to be the slaves of urban industry. Child workforces, poverty, disease, and prospects were all to be the subjects of reform throughout the latter parts of the century in the West and have indeed evolved into the pastoral care of the child today – now a pervasive aspect of Education (Hunter, 1994). But the creation of this ontological realm is problematic. Through Rousseau's questioning of the order of nature, and ensuing creation of the ontology of the child, so came the naturalisation of apparatus to support them. If children are indeed special vines, then something must be instated to allow them to grow abundantly in the same manner as

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[150] Faust, the legendary philosopher, chooses to make a bargain with a beast, just as we do. His desire to *know more* causes him to trade his soul with Mephistopheles, a demon akin to the ones seen in *Paradise Lost.* The parallels between this story and ours highlight more monstrosity to Education. Like Mephistopheles, it too appears to offer us what we desire (a bringer of light), but in turn we must trade our Being like Faust traded his soul. This story of course mirrors that of Marquant's too, for what is the being in the flask if not another monster summoned to grant him knowledge, but will eventually take everything from him?

agrologistical farming was essential to maintain mass crop production. The inception of Education in its contemporary form thus becomes necessitated, and it is not hard to see how Education has entered the sacred realm here in terms of mass-Education throughout the nineteenth century (Green, 1997).

The reontologisation of the child may have made it difficult to send children down a mine or sell them into chimney-sweeping, but it is precisely because of these overt changes that they could be fashioned into a far more useful resource. Children were "cleaned" by the educational reforms of the nineteenth century; they were no longer covered in soot or coal, ridden with disease or forced to live in squalor. However, such obvious changes meant that the new ontological realm, that of the child, is treated in binary opposition with the previous realm (the realm where childhood was absent). By *presencing* childhood as a natural order of things, we are drawn to the treatment of them needing to be "just" and "fair", and certainly "better than it used to be". What remains is a perfectly manipulable space where 'the soul of the child' (Allen, 2014, p.19) clasps onto the necessities of Education shaped by the other metaphors and consequently the need to be examined, judged, hierachised (Foucault, 1991), to be fallen (Milton, 1664; Stock, 2020b); the child is naturally to be-in-Education, as they are 'an eaglet who soars aloft for a moment' (Rousseau, 2016, p.40) in that space. That is the "logical" stride from their reontologising, a special 'moment' in their lives when they can soar, fly or fall. And that moment is, of course, their time in school.[151]

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[151] *Cast out of Le Sable, Marquant walked the reaches of the wastes. He tried to draw circles in the sand, transmute himself food or water, but it did not work. Every symbol he inscribed onto the desert with his burnt finger would drift away in the wind. He had come to rely on L'illuminé for his skills in alchemy. What was he now, existing alone in nature without the thing from the flask? Marquant felt like a charlatan.*

More intriguing is what Rousseau does with this child once it has been created. Rousseau pretends to allow Émile to mature at his own pace, but really Émile is subtly influenced and manipulated at every turn. Émile is taught to avoid fables, as Rousseau notes that 'a rule of morality in our deeds' (p.46) is of equal importance to that of words or doctrine. The ideal, natural method of teaching is to 'teach by doing whenever you can' (p.80). True, the fable is a manipulative form of Education, a story draped in silent didacticism to nudge the student towards a moral absolute. But what Rousseau supplants fables for is perhaps more troubling. Émile breaks a window in Book II, and rather than lecturing the boy, Jean Jacque leaves him to suffer in the cold: 'let wind blow upon him day and night' (p.37) so he will suffer enough to 'make an impression on his memory' (p.37), that is, learn his lesson. Although Émile is not taught didactically like that of Lucifer before him, the educational intention remains the same: to alter or redirect the behaviour of the student.[152] The ontologisation of the child has thus been enacted by Education as a mode of manipulation, another insidious method of control. This is child-centred manipulation, as it were, a supposed free and natural Education that falls extremely short.

Who is the child manipulated for, then? Here the beast becomes more palpable than ever, as this creation of the realm of the child seems to benefit Education itself above all. Is the ontological designation of the child merely food for the beast, ritual sacrifice in the form of the weak and the

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[152] Such trickery is seen in the lore of monsters. English folk tales often tell of woodland creatures playing tricks on those that enter their forests, and of course Greek myth is full of siren songs and enticing nymphs that trick men into their death. Indeed, the rough beast of Yeats' poem plays a trick of its own by inviting us to believe it is the Second Coming (which it *is*) but bringing terror and horror in its place. Indeed, more trickery is visible in *Émile:* Jean Jacque and Émile become "lost" in a thicket to try and inculcate the topography of Montmorency. As Émile squeals in hunger, his teacher replies 'I am hungry too… If only we could see the position of Montmorency from the forest' (2016, p.80). He ensures Émile's struggle results in the child recalling his prior knowledge of the area, thus eventually taking them beyond the thicket. But this playing of the fool by the teacher is merely Education by another name.

needy that must be devoured so the beast can grow? Like the bank of Steinbeck's *Grapes of*

Wrath quoted at the start of this chapter, it must be fed; the lion's body of Yeats' poem hungers.

These great institutions of societal dominance – banks, hospitals, schools – contingencies made

natural, need to devour or they will die. A bank with no money is but empty vaults, and a hospital

without the sick is no more than an abandoned dormitory. Education, without the raw material of

children, fails to function. Take for example the UK system: a steady supply of GCSE students

enter the technology, then are refashioned as A-Level Students, then undergraduates, some to

become postgraduates, or worse, teachers. Education might evaporate without these sacrifices.

We are to stay in-Education, that is, be chewed and digested for longer and longer, as every few

years the demands of qualifications are increased. Students must stay in college, should go to

university, need Masters, and so forth, but for what? Merely this sustains Education – *literal*

sustenance – so it can continue to grow. Students in the form of children are still *Bestand,* a

resource to be expended (Flint and Peim, 2012; Allen, 2014; Stock, 2019). Universities literally

value students for their economic value, now thousands of pounds, that they bring to the

institution. They have become a very real resource for Education now, needed to allow the

continual growth of Higher Education. Intake in schools also continues to grow of course, thus

new rooms are opened and new floors are built. So too are schools multiplying, growing and

quickening in a virus-like manner (Stock, 2019, p.405). The beast is bloating, its stomach getting

fatter by the day.[153] It takes longer and longer to defecate the learned child into the world with

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[153] *It was on the third day of walking, close to death, that Marquant stumbled into another desert town. Water and food were bestowed upon him by the benevolence of the town; it was a place that reminded him of Le Sable before L'illuminé had been born. As his strength returned, ideas started to materialise in his mind, a new workshop, new research, new ideas, he thought. Walking through the chalky streets of the town, these fantasies danced seductively in his daydreams, delicate fragments of the future that would allow him to live once again as Marquant the Alchemist. That was until he reached the square. Standing in the middle was a monument, carved in darkest*

their views altered, redirected and changed. As Rousseau has demonstrated through more lexis associated with the realm of nature, 'Canaries who escape from the cage are unable to fly' (2016, p.18). Consequently, they must be kept in the cage until they are ready to fly, but for how long just seems to extend.

VIII.iii.ii. Nature versus Culture

Rousseau's use of the metaphor generally rests upon the binary opposition of Nature and culture. In fact, it is upon this false binary that Rousseau drapes his central thesis, and I will problematise it in due course. For Rousseau, 'In the natural order men are all equal' (p.7). We again see the presumption of the natural order of man – or Nature – which he first challenged to generate the ontological space for the child. But in this line of thought, he is claiming that the state of nature is equality, and thus we are all born free. And yet, what we witness is gross inequality between classes, races, genders, and indeed every other social grouping nameable (Bhopal, 2014 with Maylor, 2018; Reay, 2002, 2006, 2017).[154] What is it that infects, taints or even destroys our natural freedom? The answer, for Rousseau at least, is simple: it is culture (society, technics, Anthropocentrism) who is the thief of freedom (and the way technics have played a part in this supposed corruption will be examined in the following chapter). Quite so, society 'has enfeebled man… by making his strength insufficient for his needs' (Rousseau, 2016, p.28). We have been

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sandstone, towering above the bleached rooves of the houses. It blocked out the sun, and Marquant's fantasies smashed against this imposing effigy. Immortalised, surrounded by offerings of flowers and food, there stood L'illuminé.

[154] Once again, Rousseau's deliberate exclusion of females from *Nature* seems to echo this inherent inequality in educational institutions. Though we are all born free, some are freer than others. However, this is because the state of nature that Rousseau calls to is inaccessible without the binary attachment to culture. Thus, all the sexist structures of culture (ones that Rousseau demonstrates himself) are brought with it. *Nature* is made sexist, as it were.

weakened by society, unable to fight for our freedom. Society has thrown us into chains, our

muscles have withered (like the vine); once again, we find ourselves as dwellers of the cave.[155]

The binary appears repeatedly throughout *Émile* in a way that overturns his predecessors.

Certainly, Rousseau sees culture and society as a polluting force that will infect the state of nature

so admirably described previously as the place of freedom.[156] 'Civilized man is born and dies a

slave' he says, thus 'The infant is bound up in swaddling clothes, the corpse is nailed down in his

coffin. All his life long man is imprisoned by our institutions' (p.8). Though he seems to neglect

that Education is always grafted into culture, as in the mode of any binary, each oppositional term

carries the trace of one another; 'Human nature is not independent from the influence of

evolution, environment and culture' (Baker, 2001, p.33). And conversely, evolution, environment

and culture are deeply affected by human nature. Our ecological impact, the shape in which we

have altered evolution, our footprint, is indelible on the world. Let me explain further. Can we

say that Nature, the plane of beings as objects unaffected by anthropocentrism, is knowable to us

in any way beyond our frame of them (Heidegger, 2010a; 2011c)? This is not to say that objects

do not exist without subjective interpretation; it is quite the opposite. It is precisely *because* these

objects exist as they are that we desire their enframing through lenses such as *Nature* (Stock,

2019). "Nature" as a term is a construct of this history of culture, assembled from the disciplines

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[155] *For days Marquant sat by the monument and watched the townsfolk come to it with offerings. Flowers, food, tobacco, sacrifices – these things were commonplace. But the devotees that troubled him the most clutched bloody bandages to their bodies and placed filthy red packages by the feet of the statue. Marquant looked at his feet and observed his missing toes.*

[156] In part, Rousseau utilises the binary of Nature and culture to show how our cultural institutions (i.e. Education) are enslaving or enframing technologies. Our obsession with wisdom, customs and civility are but chains. It is easy to see how this may be so: numerous "civilised" countries exemplify barbaric acts of division, oppression and murder, in the name of custom and tradition.

of biology, anthropology, botany, and innumerable other contributory fields (all incidentally subjects within Education).[157] And this is inversely so: culture is traced with Nature. If we follow Derrida's example in *Of Grammatology*, in which he deconstructs Rousseau's (and Lévi-Strauss') appropriation of the nature/culture binary, we can see the sort of charge that has been placed in Education through the entrance of *Nature*. Derrida states how the likes of Rousseau and Lévi-Strauss seek to find a

> hidden good Nature, as a native soil recovered, of a "zero degree" with a reference to which one could outline the structures, the growth, and above all the degradation of our society and culture. (Derrida, 1976, p.115)

But Derrida highlights that this "zero degree" sought after is merely a product of culture, a manifestation of the desire to justify the "degraded" state we find ourselves within. The 'native soil' that is to be excavated will only ever be found through the lens of the looker, through their cultural perspective, framed by their culture, and of course frame by the culture of those that are being investigated. Perhaps even 'words like "real mother" … have always already escaped, have never existed' (p.159); this most natural of all things may be no more than a cultural interpretation of that which seems so obvious. Consequently, we cannot disjoin the binary as Rousseau intended to do, and neither can we do so in Education. Nature and culture shall always-already find themselves traced within one another.

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[157] Less philosophically, Nature exists precisely as it does because of human existence. The hole in the ozone layer, the ever-expanding nuclear presence or the existence of plastic notwithstanding, the very makeup of the atmosphere, the elements that inextricably are nature, are only as they are because of our existence (Morton, 2013a). Nature contains deep traces of culture in every conceivable way of understanding it.

We can find further evidence of how Rousseau makes this binary element of the metaphor function. He writes of the state of nature and culture as spaces that we can enter and exit at will, and further, can commandeer people in and out of. Much like Plato's Cave (although his state of nature is clearly the inverse of Rousseau's: we are born in chains and are freed by Education), Rousseau deems human beings as keen to drag their fellow man out of the pure state they are born into: 'When we leave the state of nature, we compel others to do the same…' (Rousseau, 2016, p.87). It is this desire to acculturate, civilise, educate, that Rousseau believes is so destructive, as once we have become educated, we feel the need to educate others. It is a cyclical, self-perpetuating existence, an eternal return to the cave, the serpent that eats itself depicted in Chapter II (and fig.1). Rousseau appears as if half-awake to the nature of the beast, for he notes that we are bound to the cycle of needing to educate others once we have become educated. In this sense, the monstrous ouroborosia is understood here – that we must bite our tale and too become a beast, that we must become part of it. We see this on a micro-scale, with the private and grammar schools often hiring "their own" or individuals with more qualifications (Green, et al., 2012), thus perpetuating the cycle. But we also see it on a macro level: all people attending school, perhaps going onto Higher or Further Education, then entering into the "real world", and no matter what their experience, they are destined to send their children into Education too. It is through this cycle that 'man is imprisoned by our institutions' (Rousseau, 2016, p.8), doomed to repeat the mistakes of our forebears.

But Rousseau's utilisation of *Nature* implies that it can be saved from this fallen, monstrous structure. Like Plato and Milton before him, there is the determination to find the presence of the

non-monstrous, "true" Education.[158] And yet, the false binary he employs determines that the beast just continues to grow. There is no Education that can escape from culture, and neither is there an Education that can escape from the meddling hands of man that makes all things evil, to paraphrase Rousseau. One may employ Natural Education, but will only find themselves inadvertently allowing Education in its bestial sense to grow. After all, to educate will always create more educated (cultured) beings, and give them the desire to educate; Rousseau's claim that the Nature/culture binary can be overturned at will (2016, p.87) is ultimately a misguided one. Nature, with its trace of culture, cannot be stepped in and out of like a cave, thus a step towards Nature is a step towards culture. If we look closely, we can see the vital functioning of the metaphor: through binarising Nature and culture, and thus creating a space for Nature that can be entered and exited, it posits that Education is an apparatus capable of enabling this movement. Through the belief in Education as the corrector or corruptor of the state of nature, we are able to envision it as able to correct or corrupt us in all manner of ways, allowing its place as a redemptive force (Stock, 2019, 2021).

VIII.iii.iii. The Supplement

There is a further complication that arises in the binary, in the nature of the *supplement.* To oppose Nature and culture in the way Rousseau does, and further to claim that Nature has been substituted by culture, unleashes the *supplement* in both of its meanings, that of the supporting

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[158] *Marquant grew tired of watching the townsfolk worship this lump of sandstone. They knew nothing of the real L'illuminé. How could they? He left, in search of another place to restore his status as an alchemist. But of course, you know what he found. In every town, more statues, some sandstone, some hard rock, some crafted out of metals and minerals. It seemed that every town he went to, the effigies became more magnificent, more absurd, and so too did Marquant's disgust grow. This praise stretched far and wide, wherever he went, and with every statue he found more bloody parcels at the feet.*

and that of the replacing as explained in Chapter IV.[159] Derrida's deconstruction of Rousseau presents the letter/writing as the acculturated and degenerative example of the opposition to Nature (1976, p.144), whereas I am speaking of Education in this way (although it is not difficult to glean the relationship between Education and writing – the literacy project has come to embody the notion of an educated culture across the globe). What Derrida posits is that Nature has been supplemented by culture. In part, culture supports Nature as it enables us to present it, engage with it, describe it. Romantic pastoralism alone is a strong example of nature being framed by culture, such as Wordsworth's 'gentle breeze/That blows from the green fields' (2004, p.188) in *The Prelude* or Keats' 'Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun' (2007, p.219) in *To Autumn.* But these frames of nature, used to help us see it more clearly, come to usurp and replace it. They are now the vision of nature that we hold onto when we look at the sun or the green fields – the metaphorical *Nature.*

Rousseau wishes to 'champion the retreat to the Reason of Nature – meaning also the essence of human nature itself, the presence of Being – as the source of purity and "the good"' (Trifonas, 2000, p.257). Rousseau's depiction of the state of nature as the space to retreat to, one of Reason, implies the way in which culture has come to usurp Nature. This is because the Reason to be found in Nature is only present through the mode of culture, a system designed by thinkers rather than existing out there in the world. It is *supplemented,* and

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[159] To restate Derrida: 'On the side of experience, a recourse to literature as reappropriation of presence, that is to say, as we shall see, of Nature; on the side of theory, an indictment against the negativity of the letter, in which must be read the degeneracy of culture and the disruption of the community. If indeed one wishes to surround it with the entire constellation of concepts that shares its system, the word supplement seems to account for the strange unity of these two gestures' (1976, p.144).

The *supplement* adds itself, it is a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude, the fullest measure of presence... It is thus that art, techne, image, representation, convention, etc., come as supplements to nature and are rich with this entire cumulating function. (Derrida, 1976, pp.144-145)

Nature is inaccessible due its supplemented form, therefore it is only possible to further access culture through Education as opposed to retreat to Nature. To engage with this binary at all is to engage with the supplement, and it is the innate presence of supplement within the metaphor of *Nature* that is so essential to Education. Via supplementarity, enframing occurs: 'all education, the keystone of Rousseauist thought, will be described or presented as a system of substitution' (p.145). In fact, the ontological space of the child is precisely reliant on this fact: 'Childhood is the first manifestation of the deficiency which, in Nature, calls for substitution' (p.146). Children are ontologically lacking, in need of support, guidance and direction, therefore supplementation is required. This time it is the binary of child and adult that yields the inherent need for the supplement; it appears that binaries exist this way. Thus, without the apparatus of Education (the natural, not cultured, form for Rousseau), the child is doomed to wither and die on the vine.

VIII.iii.iv. The Pastoral

This state of nature that Rousseau hearkens for may be no more than the aforementioned nature of pastoral idyll – a truly haunting power of the metaphor of *Nature*. If we return to *Émile*, it is easy to see Lindenbeger's 'isolated moment... a kind of island in time' (1972, p. 338) and something akin to Shackford's 'life of herdsmen […] whose occupation is of a sort that leads to

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meditation on the beauty of the visible world' (1904, p.585). Speaking of both Rousseau and his intellectual descendent Levi-Strauss, Derrida notes:

> …on the one hand, as with Rousseau, the theme of a necessary or rather fatal degradation, as the very form of progress; on the other hand, nostalgia for what preceded this degradation, an affective impulse toward the islets of resistance, the small communities that have provisionally protected themselves from corruption… (1976, p.134)

It is the belief that society is inherently degrading due to the amputation of nature from our Being and thus plunging us further into demonic culture, whilst holding onto the ideal that it is for our betterment, that propels writing about nature towards the pastoral. Thus, the inverse of this tragic descent into culture is characterised by an idyllic existence in a small, rural community.[160] Take, for example, the sort of educative method that Rousseau proposes, where 'Nature […] is schoolmaster' (2016, p.48), where he favours the playground over the classroom; 'Instead of keeping him mewed up in a stuffy room, take him out into a meadow every day' (p.25). Clearly his intention is to let children be-in-nature, that is, the pastoral form of nature, as it will provide the Education he so desires. This is not the Education of culture in the classroom where Latin and Greek are dictated to the child (nor is it the mandatory Maths and English classes of today). He is returning to a more domestic kind of Education commonly seen in small communities of shepherd folk [*pastores*] now attempted by the likes of other child-centred Education such as

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[160] *What begun to strike Marquant as he travelled from town to town was how the townsfolk appeared to do little else other than perform the rituals of worshipping L'illuminé. It had become a sort of way of life, something that had started merely as a prayer and now seemed the very way of being for the various townsfolk. In their desire to know more about their lands, diseases, peoples and futures, they now seemed only to care about L'illuminé itself. Though they seemed content, free from the plights that had ailed them before, Marquant was always unsettled by the ceremonial existence.*

Waldorf or forest schools, something growing in popularity in mainstream educational setting (FSA, 2020).[161]

To explain further, we should look to other pastoral tropes. Concerning the 'isolated moment... a kind of island in time' (Lindenberger, 1972, p. 338), we only need consider Rousseau's proposition that 'A happy man is a hermit' (2016, p.100). Certainly, Rousseau calls for an existence away from large communities, as these embody the acculturated that he so vehemently opposes. To again paraphrase Rousseau, man meddles with all good things and makes them evil (p.5). This island moment requires solitude, and we can easily conceive of the school, and even more precisely the classroom, as this space away from the demonic outdoors of culture. *Robinson Crusoe* is cited as another example by Rousseau of such existence: 'We shall thus make a reality of that desert island' (p.82). Note the dynamism of the verb 'make' – it is an act of presencing a fictional space, a summoning of the myth into spectral presence.[162]

Truly the haunting nature of the pastoral is palpable in these texts as a 'spectre of lost futures' (Fisher, 2014, p.27) – that which has been lost by times past and now merely appears as nostalgia. Perhaps, just maybe, the classroom too is haunted by the spectre of *Nature* as the space

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[161] Further enforcing this potentiality is Rousseau's "curriculum": 'Do not learn words, learn knowledge' (2016, p.73); 'Make men useful unto one another' (p.83). Such ideas pertain to small communities that rely on each other and rely on manual labour to live, bound to the knowledge of the families' understanding of the land. Rousseau thus draws on the pastoral idyll to aggrandise his educational method. We are to believe that the community to be obtained by his method is a natural utopia, reflecting the image purported by the Romantic movement of the epoch. Indeed, 'How sweet is the shepherd's sweet lot!' (Blake, 1970, p.133).

[162] Even Marx is besotted with this island-like image of Crusoe (2008, p.47), utilising it as the space in which the labourer is not separated from the value he creates. This sort of pastoral naiveté is dominant throughout various sorts of liberatory discourse therefore, ones that believe that we can attain bright futures though some sort of progressive move. But in educational terms, it will always be regressive – the young are devoured and the beast continues to grow.

for presencing bliss and happiness for the good folk inside it (Caputo, 2016, p.115).[163] Certainly, we would like to believe that fact. Despite this haunting, the typical conception of contemporary Education is in direct conflict with the image of the pastoral. Education is anything *but* domestic or representative of small communities and instead exists very much as part of a globalised world (Green, 1997; Peim, 2012a). However, this to confuse the concrete image of pastoralism with its spectral presence. Nature as the pastoral is the mode of casting a utopic vision, of separating oneself from society, and of *presencing* an idyll into our current epoch.

Another aspect of pastoralism remains though, in the division of nature into stages to incur the desired idyll. Rousseau notably divides his narrative into four stages, proposing this as a method suitable for natural Education – infancy, childhood, adolescence and intellectual training (Allan, 1937, p.195) – with each stage pertaining to a different element of schooling. Such divisions of time are vital to Education in its functioning, just as they were vital to the Hegelian analysis of the pastoral. Without time being construed as such, being compartmentalised, the ontology of the child would cease to be; it is possible because it is posed as a different time from that of the adult. 'Time was long during early childhood […] now it is the other way; we have not enough time' says Rousseau (2016, p.75). Further, this time that belongs to the child is divisible, easily

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[163] Caputo's argument surrounding hauntology and the classroom is an interesting one that is worth teasing out. He too maintains that the teacher summons ghosts of the future for the students in the classroom, and they are forever haunted by these ghosts after they leave school. For him, this is the call of 'the gift' (2016, p.115) in Education, an ameliorated form of spectral conjuring, though of course I contend here that this is rather the summoning of *myths* of the future – spectres of lost futures – to enable the relentlessness of Education to continue. However, mine and Caputo's points are not dissimilar: teaching is a mode of summoning the future, thus an embodiment of the mode of the pastoral.

"chopped" into manageable stages that build on the last. It is as if we are an unfolding narrative that must start, develop and resolve; it is the essence of progress.[164]

The division of time allows for classifications of ability to be imposed, for example the 'peaceful age of intelligence' or when 'taste is more mature' (p.75). Rousseau makes it clear that life comes in stages, and each stage must be capitalised upon in a different manner to allow the child to grow; the child will surely wither if not. The logic of the metaphor of *Nature* here, both in its pastoral sense and its explication of the natural passing of time, is inescapable in contemporary Education. The 'organization of space and time' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.23) is pivotally that of the Foucauldian (1991) disciplinary strategy, and I have mentioned repeatedly how essential this is to the functioning of Education as an enframing technology. But this sort of "time" that Rousseau prescribes here is prophetic for the modes in which Education was to control time in its contemporary form. The division of time into stages, years and hours of the day is commonplace in schools around the world, and the more recent foci on lesson planning in Education demonstrate that time must be capitalised upon down to the minute (Butt, 2008, p.30). There is undoubtedly an irony that this particular mode of presencing the pastoral idyll in Rousseau and Romantic poetry is utilised as a method of control and manipulation by Education, but we have come to expect such ironies in the educational structure.

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[164] *It was in a particularly dusty and ramshackle town that Marquant realised the horror of what was occurring. The farmland on the outskirts of the town Pourriture seemed to be forgotten, Marquant observed as he walked through the fields on his way into the centre. The crops were overgrown and started to decay. The livestock too seemed to be ignored, the goats' udders swollen and unmilked. Marquant continued his march into the centre, past houses with boarded up windows and screen doors that hung off their hinges. All was silent but for a choral chant that emanated from the centre.*

VIII.iii.v. Naturalising of Education

To return to a question posed earlier in this chapter: what is Rousseau actually calling for in the overturning of the binary of Nature and culture? We have already established the desire to end Education in its cultural sense, however he presents another form, that of Natural Education. We witness an act of grafting from Rousseau, the fusion of one metaphysic to another. In one sense, this could be the previously deconstructed pastoral interpretation of Nature in small, rural communities. In another, it posits that Education may be some naturally occurring object that has always existed, or some kind of process that is lurking "out there" and is to be made ready-to-hand by a capable user.

The graft appears in the opening of Book I, where Education is highlighted as a conductor of both good and evil, in corroboration with the designation of childhood. Education found a 'new use […] for the child as both a marked symptom of corruption (original sin) and an unmarked medicine for reform (transcendent hope for future perfection)' (Baker, 2001, p.14). The child, and Education, were both double, both inherently good and corrupted. Education in the form that Rousseau was encountering in pre-revolutionary France (which, according to Painter (1999), mirrored that of Education across Europe) appeared as a cruel act of manipulation by the Church and bourgeoisie, where students were 'shaped to his master's tastes like the trees his garden' (Rousseau, 2016, p.5). It seems that the Education of the previous epoch explored in the Chapter VII was clear to Rousseau, in that it was an apparatus of misshaping student's minds into something 'deformed and monstrous' (p.5).[165] But equally, Rousseau is not dismissing Education altogether due to its doubling. Firstly, he believes that 'things would be worse without this

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[165] How ironic that we should call on a monster to make us less of a monster…

education', conceiving that man would be 'more of a monster' (p.5) if not educated at all. Already we feel the pull towards Education's redemptive quality, as if it has been corrupted, rather than is foundationally unstable. Like every major educational thinker before him (especially the ones explored in this thesis), Rousseau and his contemporaries become faces in the gallery of believers in the redemption available through Education, *if we can just get it right this time* (Stock, 2021)*.*

Secondly, Rousseau goes on to propose exactly which version or model of Education would allow this redemption to occur (taking the form of his pastoral idyll and of attaining Reason above all else). This is where the grafting occurs: 'The inner growth of our organs and faculties is the education of nature, the use we learn to make of this growth is the education of men, what we gain by our experience of our surroundings is the education of things' (p.5). Note the lexis here: it is biological, the study of natural, living things, and it is both the ways the internal and the external naturally cause the growth of man. Rousseau is therefore describing Education as an always-already object of nature, something that naturally and organically occurs. This belief is dangerous.[166] It conceives that Education is anything but a contingency, 'a product of time and chance' (Rorty, 1989, p.22). This is what Rousseau believes is the method that should be reified into natural Education: 'for Rousseau, [contemporary] education was to de-civilize humanity away from [theological dogma] so that newer or at least what he thought of as more natural,

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[166] *As Marquant came to the centre, it was there he finally realised the horror of L'illuminé. A boy, no older than six, was wrapped in a shroud and being placed in the town's square. Only his face could be seen, his wide eyes glistening. Marquant started pushing through the crowd with difficulty, his old legs struggling through the masses. The men that placed the boy on the ground began to unsheathe daggers and raise them in the air. Marquant called out and the daggers fell. It was then that Marquant realised there was no statue for L'illuminé to be seen, only the townsfolk and the body of a boy.*

simple and direct ones could take their place' (Baker, 2001, p.14). Such thinking makes

Education appear as a natural faculty that will be always-already enacted; the massification that

naturally follows will be explored in Chapter IX.

VIII.iv. *Nature* **in the Dominant Ontology of Education**

The use of *Nature* as a metaphor has been demonstrated to be particularly integral due to both the

multiple meanings of the metaphor itself and the ability for Education to function outside of the

metaphor, that is, no matter what the signification is taken to be. We are not looking at explaining

away the contradictions between the different metaphors that give it shape (Foucault, 2002), quite

the opposite. The contradictions are exactly what reveal the mechanisms of the object in question.

Moreover, the interior/exterior and Romantic/Enlightenment conflicts existing within the

metaphor enable a doubling; Education can always be doing two things at once, fighting two

causes. This is perhaps a function particular to this metaphor, and one that has proved effective.

VIII.iv.i. Pedagogy

Using doubling, the metaphor has revealed itself to rely on the *supplement*, a logic that has

shaped both Rousseau's vision of Natural Education and of our vision of Education now.

Proposing an exact definition of the purposes of Education is of course impossible and inimical to

the goals of this thesis, but a *dominant* or *ontotheological* target is the helping of children to

"achieve". I have explored this notion in great depth in its manifestation as *darkness and light*,

and further, I have explored the role the teacher, the school and Education itself plays in helping

children achieve through *the shepherd and the flock*. However, it is through *Nature* that we see

more concretely the mode in which this achievement is obtained: through pedagogy of the

supplement (Trifonas, 2000). Children are treated as both empty vessels (Freire, 2017) that need

filling with knowledge (*light*), but also as always-already achievers, predestined to go on to great things (*flock*) with the aid of the teacher (*shepherd*). It is this "aid" that is vital: such aid takes the form of teaching – lecturing, didactic talk, dialectic and Socratic discussion, activities, work-sheets, or the new jargon of "think-pair-share", "bounce a question", and so forth. But the specificity of the method is unimportant. Only, that there is a method at all. The mere presence of teaching and learning in a wider sense purports the pedagogy of the *supplement*. All of them treat students as needing to gain knowledge (Freire, 2017) and needing some level of support by the teacher in getting to that knowledge. Even "radical" pedagogues like Freire cannot free themselves from the relationship between teacher and student. His refutation of 'the banking method' (p.45) and belief in student-centred learning still clings to the notion of the *supplement*, requiring a teacher, a method, indeed a pedagogy to support the learning of the student, even in its most liberatory form.

Henceforth, the student needs both supplementing with the help of the teacher, and their knowledge needs substitution with the new knowledge available. The fabric of teaching and learning, one of the manifestations of Education and perhaps its most actively present one, is founded on the *supplement*. Whether in the Rousseauist sense of desiring supplementation of human nature with Nature, or the more contemporary sense with supplementing human nature with acculturation and socialisation, it is professed that children are ontologically designated as lacking, and thus needing replacing with something, through the aid of *something*. The foundation of this logic is enabling for Education's existence at all; once again a space has been formed for an apparatus to ensure the supplementation of the child. By allowing this supplementation, there comes an enframing possibility that does not allow the child any escape

from Education – they have been completely replaced by it. Education continues to live on through the individual throughout their life, as if possessed by some malevolent spirit.

VIII.iv.ii. Improvement and Progress

The pastoral also revealed itself as essential, not in its concrete manifestation, but in its mode of presencing an idyll. An idyll is still the educational vision: a population of educated and thoughtful, qualified young people, all enabled to climb through the meritocratic system. Teachers still put their faith in Education, despite mass levels of scepticism and dissatisfaction, and presence the future into the classroom, witnessing students learn, develop and progress. They are climbing on the ladder, slowly gaining more knowledge, moving towards a better future that you, the teacher, brought into this space. Further, the teacher believes that by enacting this teaching ritual, not only are students going to progress, but so too is society. Such orientation towards a likely future, of which is highly visible in Rousseau's determination of Émile's progression, has been undertaken by late-modern educational theorists such as Dewey. The boldness of Dewey's claims like 'I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform' (1897, V) and 'I believe that it is the business of every one interested in education to insist upon the school as the primary and most effective interest of social progress' (V) attribute progress as the essential task of Education. Progress, *pro-gradi*, to walk forward, indicates that Education can lead us in the right direction, a shepherd dedicated to a glittering future – *light* – available through Education.

But this is faith in an idyll. One such idyll is meritocracy, the 'ancillary function' of which is 'to conceal widening inequalities' (Allen, 2014, p.146), not counteract them. If we remember what we learned of meritocracy in Allen's (2011, 2014) and Littler's (2017) description, we should

recall the notion that meritocracy is no more than a violent act of eugenics, devised to ensure the drowning of certain individuals, those thrown [*Geworfen*] into a likely future no matter what the social technology in place around them. Many teachers, students, and indeed parents, remain faithful though to the technology, envisioning a "better life" for themselves or their student/child. They are haunted by a shepherd looking at the flock on a hill: stabilising an island in time replete with bliss, and presencing it into that very moment. But this presence is not quite there – it is only spectral.

Rousseau's *Nature* has been embraced with gusto by Education in less subtle ways too. The educational thinkers of the following epoch – the late modern – alluded to in this chapter, that of Dewey, Piaget, Steiner and Montessori, seem indebted to the child-centred apparatus that Rousseau gave shape to with his use of the metaphor. Indeed, by giving Education the appearance of that which is natural, it is inherently given space to function as it pleases, to do as it pleases with the things that it must devour.[167] Montessori Education with its 'practical life curriculum' (Marshall, 2017, p.2) and 'the individual, self-directed nature of the learning' (p.3) occurs of course only with in the frame designated by the teacher, with the goal of a 'allowing the child's optimal development (intellectual, physical, emotional and social) to unfold' (p.1). Waldorf Education's supposedly child-centred approach too

> ultimately relies on more teacher directed methods than they would originally appear to
> proclaim. Child-centeredness in this case, therefore, is ultimately not about child

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[167] This sense of a natural being, something organic, of course contributes to its monstrosity. When something of epic scale such as Education comes to be thought of as living thing, there is an immediate sense of dread. Yeats' Second Coming would have not been as terrifying if that thing did not move and breathe. What separates apparatus of control and monsters/beasts is this organic property, even one that lingers in the technological.

empowerment and liberation. Instead, it is about *creating* and *reifying* a particular type of child… [my italics] (Wilson, 2017, p.14)

It is of no surprise that these approaches often engage with the natural environment too, literally presencing the pastoral idyll into the classroom. Ultimately, however, just as Rousseau does not allow a natural child to be-in-the-world as he so claims, neither do the thinkers of child-centred Education. Rather, they designate the 'particular type of child' desired, be that a noble savage or a critical thinker, and ensure that the apparatus that surrounds them incurs this becoming. How this is done is of pivotal importance.

VIII.iv.iii. The Apparatus

Indeed, Education has embraced the technologized version of Rousseau's natural method: it has yielded child-centred manipulation and used the notion of time as its principle functioning aspect. This is something I will explore in much greater detail in Chapter IX, especially as I believe *Time* to be the ever-manifesting metaphor for Education in the late-modern epoch. As aforementioned, schooling has come to capitalise on the smallest units of time, generating manufactured moments through the presencing of time as if it were some calculable being. It 'reaches the human being as an object of calculative science which is bound to the concept of calculative time. Heidegger calls this kind of understanding of time a vulgar concept of time or a linear concept of time' (Kakkori, 2013, p.571). And the offshoot of this is simple: 'Education has us wait endlessly. Educators and students alike await the fulfilment of its promise, assuming education is synonymous with betterment' (Allen, 2018b, p.88). Like Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*, we hold onto Education's wielding of time as if it were manipulable, opening up a certain future for us. 'The wish for redemption is suspect; it sweetens the pain of waiting' (p.92).

We can also assume that the effectiveness of this metaphor is precisely due to the *metaphor* itself, in that each conceivable form of it naturalises Education. As stated before, this is a most troubling quality to possess, one that both de-anthropocises it (proposing it to be a present-at-hand object), but also makes it appear as if we are in control of it (making it ready-to-hand) like Heidegger's hammer. But Education is not Heidegger's hammer, it is a beast of vast proportions, stretching far beyond us in spatio-temporarlity. We may have constructed it, using vocabularies to aid us in this alchemy, but the beast has grown far beyond our reach. Just like Steinbeck's bank, an institution created by man but now in control of those that made it, feeding on the organic material of human life, we must stop and question what we can do. Must we 'let it march blindly on towards us' (Yeats, 2000, p.159), or can we stop this beast in its tracks?

IX. Rough Sketch of the Rough Beast

IX.i. Ironist Ontology

From the title of this thesis, it should be clear that I set out to ontologise ironically about Education; this could be rephrased as a redescription of Education with a new vocabulary. Although the path may have felt meandering, the excavating and deconstructing of metaphor in educational discourse has been essential for the following ontologisation. These metaphors are hauntingly manifest in both the material and immaterial forms of Education, and I have been intimating from the outset that these manifestations are best redescribed as "the rough beast". In part, its movement, its growth and its manipulation of beings has been revealing of its bestiality; its devouring of beings and need to be fed is yet more monstrous. Its reproduction of itself, a revenant or ouroboros, has too added to this representation. I have even suggested that beings that glimmer with light, offer promises, and enact trickery, are monstrous in themselves. The nature of this being in its contemporary context still begs much further interrogation though; what is it that makes it beastly, in the *Yeatsean* sense? That is, what makes Education akin to the rough beast of *The Second Coming*? In this final chapter, through bringing the deconstructed metaphors together as a collective network, perhaps we can examine more "closely" how Education exists to establish what it is more "clearly" ('the how is the what' (Morton, 2018b) after all). We are more visibly performing the act of *ironist ontology* here.

This version of Education is no more "real" than any others. As Rorty says, the ironist 'does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself' (1989, p.73). What I am doing here is attempting to *reconstruct* aspects of the being that

have been *deconstructed* throughout this thesis, and somehow make a *rough sketch* of the *rough beast* – a way of thinking about Education differently from its dominant ontology. As an ironist, it is clear to me that this is the best that can be made of any ontologisation of Education, just another redescription. Equally, I am aware that '*There is nothing outside of the text* [there is no outside text]*'* (Derrida, 1976, p.158), thus no escape from the metaphors that I have excavated and deconstructed. We cannot reformulate Education as something that it is not; we can only work within the discourse and chain of *différance* uncovered. The metaphors will continue to haunt Education in whatever ontological way it is described; they have shaped both the dominant ontology of Education and the one I am attempting to reveal here. This redescription, however, highlights the *roughness* of the beast being examined. As I redescribe within the structure of the metaphors that have been found and recontextualise them for the contemporary moment, only a hazy picture of the beast will be uncovered, fashioned out of the pieces of broken pieces of Education that I have pulled apart thus far. Its edges are jagged, incomplete, and can only remain that way.

As redescription is an eternal process, redescription is always-already here in my writing. You will thus find such redescription both in the summation of the findings from the previous three chapters below, but also in the intentionally fictional redescription that has appeared in the footnotes throughout. *The Alchemist of Le Sable* and its description of the alchemist's creation is another rough sketch, as you have probably not failed to notice that what Marquant creates is none other than a rough beast. It is not a perfect story; it is only rough, as I cannot ontologise Education from outside of it. It is the product of an "Educated man" and his "thesis on Education", one that is ironically looking at what he is in from the inside. Indeed, as I noted in

the opening of Chapter III, I am a PhD student, a teacher, a publisher of academic work, one who

has spent his whole life in Education. I am the most delectable food for the beast, as everything

that is written in this thesis is enframed by my Education. I have been so thoroughly devoured

that now I, a would-be beast slayer, have entered the most educationalised realm possible. My

rebellion is always within Education; there is no outside text… It is with this realisation that I of

course embody the figure of the ironist to its fullest. I have no choice but to indulge in private

irony (Rorty, 1989, p.73) as described in Chapter III. Only here, my irony is made public for you,

the marker, and indeed any other reader of my work.

This ironic redescription will henceforth take the shape of ontologisation. To reiterate the

explanation from Chapter I and IV that presented the beastly qualities of Education, we should

remember that Yeats' vocabulary indicated that the Second Coming echoes the *pharmakon* – it

'acts as both remedy and poison' (Derrida, 1981, p.70), something that we would expect brings

redemption and salvation, in fact brings horror, an ancient beast of enormous proportions that

continues to stalk towards us. However, this beast is still coloured by the language of faith that

surrounds it, something that we should believe in, something that gives life, perhaps. These

bestial features will be inquired about here in relation to the deconstructed metaphors and further

considerations of contemporary Education, investigated through more conventional ontological

categories. Heidegger's *Being and Time,* perhaps *the* seminal piece of ironist ontology, raises

these categories throughout his diagnosis of Being. Heidegger does not list them as categories, of

course, for this would metaphysicalise his thesis, but rather, if we trace the language of the text

and examine the angles from which he views *Dasein,* it can be uncovered that space, time and

Being are essential ontological perspectives, though not perhaps in the way that conventional

ontology would assume. For Heidegger, beings are in part '*de-distancing, that is… spatial*' (2010a, p.105). We as *Dasein* are being '*In-the-world*' (p.105), thus so too are other beings. Consequently, 'we have the task of questioning the ontological structure of "world"' (p.54), an interrogation into the 'regard to their location in that space' (p.54). How, therefore, do beings occupy space in-the-world? Beings are also temporal, as '"Time" has long served as the ontological… criterion for naively distinguishing the different regions of being' (p.18). The naivete raised here is important, as the dominant ontological conception of time is debunked, *destructed* by Heidegger, just as it is with space. Ontology relies on the 'the vulgar interpretation of time' (p.403), that which is governed by the clock, and thus we must explore how beings exist through the use of vulgar time, and what sort of time exists beyond such vulgar time. But of course, in true Heideggerian fashion, the Being of the being is the most essential inquiry, one that intersects with the preceding categories. This 'self-evident concept' is 'indefinable' (p.3), thus is only understood from a way of being, a how-to-be, rather than a what-is. Though these categories may sound transcendental, it is the way Heidegger deploys them that remains generally ironic. In part, the questioning should always start in the 'average *everydayness*' (p.16) of the being and expand from there. Categories of space, time and Being will thus begin with the mundane, commonplace examples of Education. But equally, as will become clear in the following chapter, space, time and Being are not treated as linear and comprehendible categories. Heidegger works *within* them but does not define them. He overturns their presence, and in turn, the presence of the object in question too. Furthermore, as indicated in Chapter V in its description of the OOO movement, Heidegger's interrogation of beings has been deepened and expanded to objects of spatiality and temporality found so commonly in postmodernity. The ideas raised, primarily by

Morton (2013a) concerning hyperobjects, will thus also be employed to develop the ironist ontology that follows.

IX.ii. Space

If we are thinking of the beast in terms of spatiality, we are, ontologically speaking, questioning the space that it occupies. The beast occupies both massive and tiny spaces. Exams such as the PISA tests are globalised and enormous, whilst a classroom assessment may be a minute tick-box question. University campuses and school buildings both inhabit a wealth of space, but the textbooks in a child's bag are of course much smaller. More abstractly, Education occupies the space of the global research community, or simply an idea a teacher has a for a lesson. It is as big as all these things put together, and yet none of them at all. It is for these reasons, its mode of 'phasing' (Morton, 2013) in between spaces, that Education is such a difficult being to grasp. I shall examine these spaces that we commonly consider to be educational in order of size, beginning with the local manifestations that we have *built*, such as classrooms, and working up to its more abstract and globalised form. As we expand our perspective of size, however, it will become clearer and clearer that this being occupies spaces of Lovecraftian proportions (Peim and Stock, 2021), a bestially sized object that we are *within*.[168]

Heidegger's musings on buildings may offer an insight into thinking about space ontologically in his intertwining of building and dwelling – 'to build is in itself already to dwell' (2011d, p.244). When *Da-sein* builds, they are performing an act of being-in-the-world, making themselves a *space* in which to be. We do not occupy spaces, but rather beings, or our being-in-the-world

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[168] Being inside a monster is a classic trope; the fairy tale *Pinocchio* depicts Geppetto and his puppet guzzled by Monstro, the aptronymically named whale that they must suffer within. To quote Tom Waits, they are 'starving in the belly of the whale' – they must be-inside a monster of epic proportions.

creates them. This is important to consider as it reminds us that we *produce* these spaces to be in, they are not merely free-floating objects plucked from the sky. As Lefebvre says, space is not 'simply that of an empty area' (Lefebvre, 1991, p.1), just "out there" waiting to be made useful; rather, it is a 'product… a tool of thought and of action; that in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination' (p.26). If we consider this ontological approach, it seems that space is not only an artificiality, but it is made by institutions of power rather than occupied by them.[169] The assertion of this thesis has been that Education is an institution of power in itself, beyond that of the people that inhabit it. Consequently, this perhaps raises the idea that when we build educational spaces, we do it on behalf of Education itself.

To examine this more closely, the most obviously visible educational spaces being the school, the university, the classroom, the lecture hall, and to a lesser extent, the staff room. What can we glean about the beast by engaging with these spaces in an ontological manner, through the lens of metaphor? How do we engage with them, and thus in turn, how does Education engage with us?[170] *Within* classrooms, the internal occupation of space as it were, what is it that inhabits them? We might find tiny objects, often tables and chairs, whiteboards and smartboards, stacks of

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[169] It is in this respect that the fascist/imperial spirit of Heidegger might lurk, for he seeks to ontologise and formalise the expansion of the German Empire as part of Nazi ideology. What this teaches us, however, is the way in which Education might operate in a similarly imperial manner, as will be made clear in this section.

[170] There are convincing descriptions of the classroom as an imperfect embodiment of Panoptic design (Foucault, 1991). For example, as the 'lesson became synonymous with being seated' (Landhal, 2013, p.810) in twentieth century schools, the position of the students came to mirror 'the distribution of individuals and cellular segmentation' (Foucault, 1991, p.161) of the prisoner, thus intimating the need for disciplinary power to be inherent in the space of Education. While I believe this Panoptical design to be a powerful, (mostly) hidden element of the beast's spatial ontology, I wish to move past such descriptions here and consider space through the lens of the metaphors I have deconstructed.

paper – marking, work sheets, old piles of coursework, blank and lined paper, a collection of white board pens that mysteriously go missing, a shelf of books, a plant, the list could continue. Much of these things are not inherently educational; one could find many of them in an office or hospital. More pressingly, these things do not *have to be* used for Education, and yet, they *signify* Education to us. We see this collection of objects gathered into a particular space and we *see* Education. It is as if these things are Education in a state of *Nature*, or the dominant form of what Education must look like. They are not necessarily 'useful thing[s]' (Heidegger, 2010a, p.68), but rather they are made useful by the space in which they are placed. Indeed, when these objects, or *tools*, are used as something educational, they are the things that we believe enable Education to occur. If we inspect these objects within the space that they occupy and consider *how* we 'makes use of things' (p.69), we reveal some shape of Education. A whiteboard is something that is for representing ideas, for collecting and consolidating them, for disseminating or communicating them. It exists as an object that is performing a task we consider to be essential for Education. A pen that writes on the board is for presencing the ideas into the classroom, making them available and permanent. The chairs are for sitting, directing a gaze towards that which enable the Education to occur. I could go on. But what do these tools tell us if we consider them through the lens of the metaphors? Does this imply that objects occupying space within classrooms are that of *Nature,* things that inherently must be there to enable Education to occur? Is there something greedy about the beast, that if it does not have its whiteboard and desks, it will spit and curse? But does it also tell us that they are the tools of the *shepherd,* guiding the flock with their mode of presencing and directing of gaze? Are these tools the bringers of *light*? A further inspection of the ontology of space will make these ideas clearer.

Indeed, current debates about classrooms[171] tend to focus on the objects within them more than the object of the classroom itself. Researchers often investigate internal elements like 'seating arrangements' (Gremmen et al, 2016, p.749), collaborative spaces, the integration of technology and flexibility of furniture (Green Modular, 2020). The space of the classroom itself is often uncontested in mainstream discourse though (the exception often being outdoor learning spaces to be explained in due course), with it being the most commonplace feature of schools around the globe. Pivotally, a classroom is a space that is based around a room with teachers and students within. This seem obvious, but is actually important in the way that we associate this space with all things educational; the classroom manifests as Education in all forms of discourse (including supposedly radical discourse such as Freire, 2017 and hooks, 1994). Attempts to discuss Education in some form beyond the classroom often carry traces of this ubiquitous space. Waldorf schools, for example, despite utilising 'forest or heath, town or country' (Steiner, 1996, p.205) as their educational spaces, still carry the trace of the classroom in their presence of a teacher and students engaging with objects of learning and making use of the educational tools around. Their literal embodiment of *Nature* in its pastoral sense does not do away with the classroom. The removal of the walls of the classroom in fact intensifies the very elements that make a classroom what it is: a space dedicated to the educating of students by a teacher.

In these classroom spaces, we can see a manifestation of the metaphor of *darkness and light* (Stock, 2021). That is not a hard thing to see, both literally and figuratively. Windows and glass allow vast amounts of light in (fig.3), intensified by the walls and doors called for in modern

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[171] We should see the lecture hall as an expanded version of the classroom – an inflation of an already functioning design.

classroom design (HMG, 1999). Specified hours of the school day and their concurrence with

Circadian rhythms (or at least the imposition of adults' Circadian rhythms (Sousa, 2011)),

ensures classrooms are always well lit throughout the institutional opening hours (Stock, 2021,

p.151). Other than wintery extra-curricular activities on the football pitch or in the debating club,

students rarely encounter dark spaces at all in their time in schools. It is implicated that there is

nothing for them to learn in cupboards, staff rooms and toilets (p.151); rather, they should spend

their time in the glittering classrooms, move hastily through the liminal space of the corridors,

and use free time outside in the *actual* daylight. However, this production of light spaces is also

symbolic, as *light spaces* imply the *seeking of light*, as the teacher pulls the students out of

darkness or encourages them to make "good" choices (playing appropriately, making friends,

sharing space, etc.) (p.151). We are also reminded of the need for light and open space for the

flock to roam "free", under the watchful eye of the *shepherd*. The school hall is a classic example

of this metaphorically speaking – the space where sermons can be given, instilling the ethical and

moral boundaries needed to create the well-rounded student and consequently citizen. The

classroom merely acts as a compact imitation of this church-like space, a chapel where the

sermon is given and the flock adhere.

These examples of how schools are designed raise considerations about the way it uses or

produces smaller spaces at all. Lefebvre further elucidates this ontology of space in relation to

light, and it becomes quickly clear how his notions are embodied in the way Education mirrors

this process:

> A further necessity is that space – natural and social, practical and symbolic – should
>
> come into being inhabited by a (signifying and signified) higher "reality". By Light, for

instance – the light of sun, moon or stars as opposed to the shadows, the night, and hence death; light identified with the True, with life, and hence with thought and knowledge and, ultimately, by virtue of mediations not immediately apparent, with established authority. (1991, p.34)

Lefebvre raises the calculated and deliberate cleansing of the social space by the lighting of specific areas. The principle is seen in town planning, ensuring that spaces are created to allow people to *act* in a "light" way. But the beast's usage of such a model is more complex. The deliberate attempt to throw pupils into light spaces and out of dark ones may well be cleansing of their selves on appearance; inspectors can readily walk up and down a corridor and see the pupils bathed in light, thus symbolically implying they are doing *good* and *true* things like Plato's liberated cave-dwellers. This is what the metaphor teaches us, that to engage in spaces of light, we move away from the darkest part of ourselves and the world.[172] When Education can be *"seen"*, it is far easier to worship.

This symbolic enlightening generated by the use of spaces in schools is perhaps more complex than it appears. Much like with the nineteenth century invention of streetlights and their casting of light on the deviant public, we are to believe that the *darkness* has been removed from public space. But instead, it has been pushed further into the shadows, leaving spaces for even darker behaviour. Teachers are left to deal with the dark spaces in the embodiment of being a *shepherd*; there is a certain implication that it is their burden to bear, although the educating takes part in the

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[172] I am reminded of a criticism directed towards myself as a young teacher, in which my tutor group were chastised for "sitting with their coats on in the dark", implying the need for light spaces to represent good actions.

light spaces, not the dark ones. Children, due to their state of *Nature,* their designated ontological

space as explored in Chapter VIII, are not fit for darkness; it must only burden the adults.

The light spaces outside of the classroom, such as the playground and the rugby pitch, are equally

as powerful, and perhaps even more convincing examples of the utilisation of *light* in the

production of space. Notably, however, they also embrace Rousseau's metaphor *Nature* as the

indication that natural spaces are inherently educational. The playground or pitch themselves are

clearly light spaces, and ones that offer an expansiveness beyond the classroom. Their space as

one without walls (and in the case of the playground, one supposedly without purpose beyond

"play") represent an apparently available freedom for the student, although much like Plato's

cave, and much like the light offered in the classroom, the use of these spaces is always

performing a function. The arrival of Wilderspin schools in the nineteenth century, for example,

carried the belief that 'the playground was more important in its effect on children than

instruction in the school itself' (McCann, 1966, p.201), an obvious embracing of Rousseau's

pastoral use of *Nature*. As Hunter expands:

> The role of the teacher in the playground… was to be as unobtrusive as possible, to let the
>
> environment do the teaching. To this end, Wilderspin had planted all his playground with
>
> fruit trees which, in offering a continuous temptation to misconduct, formed part of a
>
> constant incentive to self-reflection and self-regulation. (1999, p.72)

Though this example of Wilderspin's school now appears at odds with dominant design of

schools, the notion of the playground is very much a pivotal educational feature today. Hunter

demonstrates the inherent *Education* available in the use of spaces. As a being, Education is

always generating spaces then enacting educating upon those that reside within its space, even

when not in the more visibly classroom-like areas.[173] More interesting is the comment on Wilderspin, a bureaucrat who contributed to the mass-schooling of the urban poor in England, in that he plants fruit trees to generate literal 'forbidden fruit' (Hunter, 1999, p.82) to tempt the students. The manifestation of Miltonian language in Education is undeniable – the creating of an Edenic space to allow students to utilise the lessons they have learned, and we should remember what *the shepherd and the flock* raised – that 'to obey is happiness entire' (Milton, VI. 741). As schools have developed, the fruit has become less literal, but perhaps more tempting. The image of freedom created by a light and open space like the playground or the pitch allow students to make the choices they wish to make – should they play football, chase each other, start a fight, have a conversation? The choice appears up to them. But the implication is that they will make the right choices, or they will be cast out of this space, just as Adam and Eve were cast out of their "free" space for disobedience. Thus, the appearance of freedom indicated by the expansiveness of light, just like the prisoners leaving Plato's cave, is in fact one of educational dominance.

These illuminated spaces of worship that Education locally produces hold further aspects of the archetypal metaphor within their structure. The interpretation discussed of *Nature* as the embracing of the pastoral idyll, a need for nature to permeate spaces and be visible from every window, is of course inescapable in the architecture of schools. Though not every school has a green space, the mere presence of a dialectic about the *worth* of green spaces in schools implies

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[173] This idea is sometimes referred to as the 'hidden curriculum' (Martin, 1983), but there is a more insidious technology occurring here. *Curricula* comes from *currere,* to run, thus indicating the idea of moving forward. This path is inevitably unto light, and the running must be shepherded. The curriculum itself acts as a tool in this shepherding. But what Wilderspin exemplifies, and so too does the production of space more broadly, is not a running, but a *stalling*.

the belief in this pastoral idyll. This argument has been made clear by the outraged response to the recent selling off of playing fields in UK schools to adjust to funding cuts (Busby, 2019), thus opening up a debate about the necessity of green spaces in educational architecture. The fact that these spaces were the first to be sold perhaps indicates an attachment to the classroom above all in educational spaces, but though these schools have lost their greenery, the abstract ideal of Education clings to the metaphor of *Nature.* Elsewhere around the world where cuts to schools have not been as severe, green spaces still arise or are at least desired, as evaluated by Browning and Rigolon's review of thirteen articles concerning the impact green spaces have on academic performance:

> …tree cover near schools, green window views, college preparatory exams, and end-of-semester grades are the most promising indicators of a beneficial link between school green space and academic performance. (2019, p.15)

Links made in this review between students succeeding at exams and their green environments demonstrates a highly instrumental way of thinking about Education. However, the way in which space has been *produced* by Education in adherence to *Nature* makes this unsurprising. *Nature* implies pastoralism, which generates freedom and happiness, or even acts as a teacher itself, therefore, a minimalizing logic so often seen in Education equates the use of greenery to improve academic standards. The pastoral is thus enframed through the educational lens, rationalised and harvested as *Bestand*. Once again, spaces that are deemed as natural are generated for their impact on the beings that reside within them, much like how *light* is instilled into classrooms or worship spaces are built into school architecture.

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Perhaps we have capably considered how this being Education inhabits small spaces such as that of the classroom, the objects within it, and more widely the school in its locally observable form (Morton, 2013a). If we really think about this beast, and its utilisation of *Nature,* that is, through the biological implications inherent in the semantics, that of growth*,* we can see how it occupies much larger spaces such as the nation (fig.4). It spreads across the country. Education, the beastly, Western object, is globalized, always on the move, 'moving its slow thighs' (Yeats, 2000, p.159) towards us and into distant reaches around the globe. These elements allow us to understand how it occupies space on a scale beyond that of the local.[174]

The Middle Age's interpretation of Education may have held the seeds of educational growth already. Christian schools across Europe, the chivalric, ascetic, monasterial, and so forth (Painter, 1999), in an embracing of *the shepherd and the flock,* raise the prospect of schools over the entire continent being bound to similar formations. Indeed, 'the first popular school systems in Europe were established by the churches as instruments for the intensification and dissemination of Christian spiritual guidance' (Hunter, 1994, p.55), and though the secularisation of Western society (supposedly) occurred amidst the death of God, the object itself that embodied educational ideals – the school – still contained Christian structures. In many older educational institutions, cloisters, tombs and chapels still remain, serving as a hauntological reminder of the *shepherd and the flock* in Education's formation. More abstractly, church-like architecture can

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[174] *Marquant gave up his journeying. He was becoming too old to carry on, and everything he found disgusted him. There was not a place he had been that had not been touched by the hands of L'illuminé. The expanses of the desert, every inch of space, felt like life had changed irrevocably. Marquant felt he had no choice but to return to Le Sable. Perhaps there, the site where it all began, had advanced further than these sickening towns he had encountered. Maybe the townsfolk that wanted him dead had finally learnt what they needed and could continue with their lives. As he started on his return, at least the sun continued to shine, he thought.*

still be found in the grandness of halls and even classrooms, adorned with pews and lecterns awaiting their sermon-like lessons. We must not forget that this beast *is* the Second Coming – it is there to be worshipped. Other metaphors have impacted the space, though. Enlightenment ideals that began to arise in the eighteenth century, embodied by the Rousseauist *Nature* metaphor and manifest in the multiplication of higher institutions and more "rational" curricula (literacy, physical sciences, etc.) indicate another silent binding of European educational institutions to one another. Science labs are now considered essential in the building of a school, something that has been the case for decades. Whilst these are not material examples of growth as such, they do offer an abstraction of a mass-space produced by Education, in which we can see very similar objects in multiple places, and thus inherently a more globalised object is formed.

European schooling, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century, exemplified the growing educational monstrosity far more concretely. Prussia's 1717 compulsory *Volksschule,* Napoleon's 1801 *Lycée* and England's 1870 Forster Act (Green, 1997) all represented an increasing desire to massify Education for the general public and in turn allow the school to spread across the nation. The reasons for this may be diverse – Green for example posits that it is for nation formation (1997), whilst Allen claims that it is for a Foucauldian mode of population control through biopower (2014, p.87) – but it was clear to witness the embracing of a mass-Education model in numerous places. Education's role in colonial expansion was also evident in the imposition of the school into places outside of Europe, allowing Education to gradually creep and spread into other nations. Nineteenth century colonialist Macaulay envisioned

> a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the

country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. (in Spivak, 1993, p.77)

It was of course the school that was used to create this new form of being that Macaulay desired for the continued dominance of the empire. Schools eventually moved into the East, as Japan during the 'Meiji Restoration of 1868' (Green, 1997, p.38) imitated European models of schooling, somewhat ironically amidst a fear of the 'superiority and threat of western technology' (p.38). It seems that even those who wish to resist the globalizing forces that bore Education inevitably embrace it. Once again, we are reminded how truly 'stuck' (Morton, 2013a, p.29) we are to Education (Peim and Stock, 2021), even when we stand against that which it represents.

Countless nations stand as case studies for such growth of Education, and intriguingly, we can see how the embracing of the educational metaphors explored in this thesis are significant in the ways in which Education came to encompass a broad and powerful *globalized* form. Education's growth, its monstrous occupation of space, no longer just inhabits the local or even the national sphere. It is now firmly part of globalization, 'a radical transformation of the world' where 'familiar borders shift' and 'time and space are compressed' (Peim, 2012a, p.292). The rise of 'geopolitics, geo-communication systems, geo-economics and geo-culture' has included, palpably, Education within this massifying and multiplying embrace of singular 'modes of Being' (p.293). We must thus treat the rough beast as entangled within this globalized world, as it is both producer of and produced by the factors aforementioned. Additionally, the rough beast as I have described it has only come to be *truly* bestial since it started its slouching across the globe, thus globalization is key in understanding the monstrous elements of this being.

In the twentieth and twenty-first century, more troubling and bestial examples of globalized growth have occurred. The buildings of Education, primarily in the form of schools, have taken on a globalized form, multiplying across the globe (fig.4). In England alone, we see school architecture imitating itself, with multiple schools using the same buildings (HOC, 2007, p.31) built from the same blueprints throughout the twentieth century. Architectural designs (fig.5) demonstrate replication of the design 'in which the classrooms were set out along single-loaded corridors in order to provide improved ventilation, cross-lighting' (Steadman and Mitchell, 2010, p.214). The DfE currently provides guidelines for school architecture, ensuring that they mimic one another, and further, that mimicry should exist within each building: 'design replication (for example, elements of layouts can be replicated across more than one site...); design repetition (for example, limiting the range of window sizes/types)' (DfE, 2014). But further afield, the 'institution [of the school] has been adopted, and adapted, as the key instrument for development in virtually all global contexts' (Peim, 2012a, p.296). The concrete manifestation of the rough beast, the place of worship, whether metaphorical 'church' or 'cathedral' (Hunter, 1994, p.1), has been replicated all over the world: 'The replication of Wellington College, an elite, liberal "progressive" (and very expensive) school, originally set in the heart of "Royal Berkshire" in the English countryside, in the industrial outskirts of Tianjin appears strange, alarming and alienating' (Peim, 2020, p.5). Wellington College has continued to replicate, and an eerie image of an ornate institution to be replicated somewhere the other side of the globe (fig.6) neatly depicts the occupation of space that Education can perform. It is as if this institution, this space

where one can instil light into beings across the nation, is perfectly formed and must be imitated over and over again until the globe is bathed in light.[175]

The curriculum is more insidious in its spreading. Buildings are of course physically dominant, but curricula, a subtly ideological invention that guides thinking in very specific ways, is perhaps more terrifying. Places with 'indigenous modes of Being' (Peim, 2012a, p.293) are gradually embracing the Western model of the curriculum; places like Qatar are adopting curricula of 'English, mathematics and science... prominence [is given] to "performance levels" and "scale scores"' (p.296), as if this were *gospel*, but why is this so? We can only return to our metaphors to reveal why this aspect of Education has come to produce so much metaphorical space: it is the bringer of *light*; it is divine and should be followed; it is only natural that such adoption should occur. 'This process has not occurred evenly' (Green, 1997, p.4) of course; the rough beast has not finished its maturation nor has it grown as large as it can. The global south in particular is still being stalked by the beast, not yet completely consumed, as seen in the prior examples of "underdeveloped" countries slowly adopting the architecture and curricula. But it is only a matter of time before the rough beast stalks towards them too and occupies an even grander amount of space. This process feels *organic*; it gives life (instils *Nature*) into Education, allowing it to perpetually grow and envelope that which stands in its path. Like Carpenter's the Thing (1982)[176]

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[175] Indeed, 'even the "developing" world (countries such as Somalia and Eritrea often considered undeveloped, in part, because of their lack of mass education) is imitating Western models of schooling and embracing their ever-narrowing curricula. That entering this process destines them to the very lowest rank in the global educational hierarchy matters less than the fact that they are acceding to the power of education's Cthulhu-like presence' (Peim and Stock, 2021, p.8).

[176] Fisher (2009) uses this example to describe capitalism, a mirror to Education as a beast, in that it too grows perpetually as if organic, envelopes everything in its path, makes use of the beings-within it, and enacts an enframing of the world.

or Steinbeck's bank, every new space (and individual) that stands in its path becomes more substance for the beast. Just like me, and you, we are visages that peer out of the misshapen abdomen of this monstrous thing that stalks across the globe.

Critics look to electronic technologies, particularly McLuhan's example of the 'global village' (1962) and its 'electronic communication systems' (Peim, 2012a, p.293), as the cause of, or at least a powerful catalyst of globalization (and I have said previously that the amalgamation of organics and technics *contribute* to Education's monstrosity rather than diminish it, as in the manner of cyberpunk or steampunk). We can see how this would be so in Education's case: through the click of a button, growth can occur that would have previously taken years – an email containing the blueprint of a school's architecture, a "tweet" posting a piece of "ground-breaking" research, a data system that compares and judges a global set of examination data.[177] The process of more abstract bestial growth – the gradual domination of space – has been exacerbated by electronic technologies (Peim and Stock, 2021). At an observable level, the presence of computers, large servers, tablets and so forth in schools and universities demonstrate the synthesising of Education and technology. But what is perhaps more troubling in terms of the space that Education occupies is little to do with the physical hardware of technology, but rather the digital sphere that it inhabits. Indeed, educational institutions are no longer content with dominating physical spaces, and are now 'keen to increase their student population through online learning, reducing the need for physical classrooms and expensive real estate' (Irwin,

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[177] We must not see the growth of Education into its unimaginably massive form as purely a product of the electronic age. Its attempts to spread like a pestilence have been occurring for centuries, certainly since it was declared as the bringer of *light*, and thus the source of a universal betterment of beings. Who in the "civilised world" could resist the system that pulls them out of the darkness and into the shining light of the future, or perhaps even the divine light of the sky? This temptation is unwavering, and thus we allow a beast into our home time and time again.

2020, p.365). The onset of virtual learning environments has ensured the perpetual growth of Education into every aspect of Being. Technologies such as 'MOOCs and online teaching, virtual learning platforms, "smart content" creation, A-I driven chat robots, and deep learning… profound and disruptive effects of the digital transformation of knowledge' (Mui and Murphy, 2020, p.455) have ensured that we cannot escape Education. It has crept into our computers and phones, thus into our homes and, inevitably, lives (Peim and Stock, 2021). No longer does Education take the form of a pile of marking that can be left in the car, but rather a compulsive digitised space that *we* must occupy at all times; the space it inhabits is our own. Education possesses the ability to perform 'relentless techno-assaults on memory and attention' and 'has come to dominate our daily lives' (Mui and Murphy, 2020, p.463). What is most disquieting, though, is the way this growth is welcomed into our lives. Perhaps it is inevitable, part of *Nature* as it were. Or perhaps it is because people believe that the brightness of the screens that carries educational technologies is bright in its content too, a certain form of *light* that they can use to quell the *darkness.* But of course, as was made clear in Chapter IV and VI, in the mode of *techne* Education has always been a form of technology, a 'means to an end' (Heidegger, 2011d, p.219). Its very formation as a being is one of technological form, thus we have always-already been prepared for this spread of educational technology into our lives: it has always been there. We must remember that this is true of the Second Coming (and so too of all ancient beasts like Lovecraft's (2016) Cthulhu). We have been awaiting its return for as long as we can recall, thus it remains in our imagination, the *Spiritus Mundi.* Though it is only in late modernity the rough beast has been summoned, it was, from as early as Plato, already there.

IX.iii. Time

If we have understood how Education occupies, or more precisely, *produces* space, both on the local and the global scale, it is next pertinent to question how it uses time and how the metaphors shape this supposed usage. So how old is this beast, we innocently inquire? When will it live until? In one respect it is very old, ancient in fact; 'twenty centuries of stony sleep' (Yeats 2000, p.159) precede the beast after all. In temporally quantifiable terms, the oldest school in the world, The King's School in Canterbury, has been in operation since 597, and indeed recognisable *forms* of Education have existed in some capacity for as long as there have been civilisations. Education also shows no sign of going away. The number of schools around the globe, the number of literate or "educated" people (Rosa and Ortez-Ospina, 2018) and the level of research produced continues to rise, thus we can only assume that Education will keep on getting older with us. We must wonder, conversely, if Education is in fact still very young also; the fact it has much space left to occupy, particularly in the global South, implicates a future beyond our grasp. In some ways it is still waiting 'to be born' (Yeats, 2000, p.159), to become fully globalized and advanced. Both old and young, we start to see how its temporality is vastly different from our own, something of an ontology that we cannot quite grasp.

But none of this temporal conjecture helps us consider how Education uses time, nor does it consider the ways in which the deconstruction of metaphor has helped understand time in relation to Education. Our understanding of time is part of the '*everydayness*' (Heidegger, 2010, p.16) of things, one of the 'structures that remain determinative in every mode of being' (p.17). Heidegger is pointing to our *Geworfenheit* – the structure of conditions into which we are thrown that determine our very mode of being-in-the-world. Time, he demonstrates, is one of these structures,

our way of being craven to the clock and the calendar; Education would certainly have us see it this way too. Time however, like space, should not be viewed in its 'vulgar' (p.400) form, as this is a

> linear concept of time. In this understanding, there is no room for different kinds of experiences of time... For Heidegger […] time is not a being. This means also that it is not something which we can measure, although we do that all the time with clocks. (Kakkori, 2013, pp.571-572).

If time is not a being, we cannot point to it, cannot control it, cannot possess it, thus to talk of the dates that Education commenced or the time that it will end are incorrect and unhelpful. But that is not what our everyday discourse surrounding time would have us believe, and it is certainly not what Education would have us believe either. For Education (and indeed humankind) does not wish to fumble around in the dark with time; there is no time for that. It must shine a *light* on time, even if that means doing violence to the concept of it. This desire to enact our totality over time is directly correlative with the forming of Education, and further in the functioning of Education in its enacting of totality over us. For time "really" 'lies in the use of the clock' (Heidegger, 2010, p.400); the verb *use* is essential here, as it posits the action towards time rather than seeing it as an intangible abstract noun. Thus, when we think of Education and its use of time, we should be most interested in how we be-towards it. We should see Education as another ticking clock that we are being-towards, another device that puts numbers, images and sounds onto something that is *dynamic*, rather than stative, and that we all too happily receive.[178]

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[178] We are reminded of the beasts that control time. Again, Mephistopheles appears as a significant figure, for his theft of Faust's future incurs that he really owns all of Faust's life – forever is he haunted by that inevitable demise

Education does indeed function like a clock, but more troublingly, encourages us to see time like a clock too. I will explain this in due course, but first we should consider how the beliefs about time that are instilled into, purported by and shaped by Education incur what Heidegger calls vulgar time. Take for example this discussion about *Da-Sein* and a vase:

> Only Dasein is temporal (*zeitlich*) in Heidegger's sense and, as such, can have ecstatic time. Other entities are "within time" (*inner zeitig*). Things in the world have duration, and this duration is given by Dasein. It can be said that this vase is thirteen years old, but the vase has no time—we have given the time to the vase. (Kakkori, 2013, pp.575-576).

Perhaps it is only us that has time, and objects are gifted our time when they are given 'handiness' [*Zuhandenheit*] (Heidegger, 2010a, p.69). Through making objects useful, or as such, technologizing [*Techne*] them, they become in our time. As soon as the vase is recognised in our terms, for example, we begin to place it in time; being "new" has a different sort of use to it being an "antique", but really the vase has no sense of what it has "been", no memory of its time in the furnace, nor any 'anticipation' (p.255) of its end, whether that be a shattered heap or a dusty treasure. Heidegger posits that it is only *us* that has this temporality, as we are 'authentically futural' (p.311). Our presencing of the past is only enabled by our ability to envision a future of ourselves, thus the vase is only being posited in *our* futural terms, not its own. We have created "vase time" – "an old vase", "an antique", "brand new" – an anthropocentric frame of how it stands in our future. Such thinking is pivotal for understanding how time works for Education,

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after all. Lynch's creations in *Twin Peaks* perform even more terrifying acts of temporal manipulation, where they drift in from the past and the future, and show the characters of the town visions from different moments in time as both ways of saving and cursing them.

although deeply complicated in comparison as Education relates to human beings rather than just inanimate objects.

If we consider that we give time to objects, we must remember that Education is an object itself that we have *given* time to, whilst also being a tool that gives time to other beings. The mere existence of the discipline "History of Education" makes this abundantly clear – there is a determination to classify and temporalise it, but this is only thinking of it in our own time again. Such thinking, just as was exemplified in the start of this section, prevents us from acknowledging the ways in which Education operates in 'temporal and spatial planes vastly different from our own immediate world' (Peim and Stock, 2021, p.5). We forget that this is a being that has been granted a futural power that we cannot ably quantify, and thus neither can we control. In its globalised form, through its growing domination of space both local and metaphorical, can we really predict when it might "end"?[179] This is not to say that most desire the end of education, in fact as has been made abundantly clear throughout this thesis, many still hold onto its redemptive qualities and eagerly await its 'Second Coming' (Yeats, 2000). We see a future for Education that we have made our project: 'Education has us wait endlessly. Educators and students alike await the fulfilment of its promise, assuming education is synonymous with betterment' (Allen, 2018b, p.88). But in this unwavering belief inherent in the metaphor of *the shepherd and the flock*, and in its omnipresent occupation of space, we cannot resist or fight

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[179] *The return to Le Sable was long and slow. Every trail or road Marquant took seemed to stretch over the horizon into the sun. He started to believe he would never get home, that it would take too long, that he would be dead long before he reached his destination. His battered feet dragged on the roads as clay and mud clogged between his eight toes.*

Education if we ever needed to. It is, much like a god or some mighty, untamed beast, completely out of our control.

The control granted to Education exists in its capability to assign time to other, external objects, which is palpably visible in school-teaching and curricula. In part, it is our desire to see more clearly, the shining of *light* onto objects to illuminate them and thus our understanding of them.[180] To do this, we often study the "history" and "future" of objects, and by objects, we could of course be talking of the French Revolution as much as a Roman helmet. By assigning these objects time, we are free to study them, to educate ourselves about them, and most importantly, to minimise them into varying amounts of importance as per a curriculum or examination. But it is the belief that we have been enlightened on the truth of these objects that ensures we continue to ignore how little we know of any object. "The dates have been learned", "the history has been told", "the future has been predicted", and thus the topic is complete. Really, we have learnt nothing of these objects; only assigned them vulgar time. But for Education this seems essential. Something about the beast (perhaps something of its Being, as will be explored later in this chapter), demands that we enframe the world in this way, and we can see this as inextricably bound to our perception of *Nature*. This metaphor revealed our desire to classify and divide nature, and thus the assigning of time is just another one of those pursuits. Education is fundamental in the allowing of assigning time to divide *Nature* in its generation of eras and epochs and histories. It carves up nature to produce *Nature*, the studiable, calculable form that can be assessed and quantified at the conclusion of a school career.

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[180] This is of course a character of technological enframing (Heidegger, 2011c) as described in Chapter IV.

But more pressingly, has Education not come to give time to *us*? It assigns time to objects, it has been assigned time, but it assigns time to humans too – we are just another object to Education. Much like how a *shepherd* enacts his time over a *flock*, or how God totalises the time of Lucifer and the Son (especially in his predetermination of the war in heaven), Education too controls our time, rather than vice versa. The allowances offered to Education to dominate our perceptions of time are troublingly powerful. We let it dominate our time on the minute basis, down to the tiniest elements of a lesson plan, whilst also letting it dominate the futural beings we are to become (or indeed already are). Like the beasts of Lynch's imaginary, temporally undulated creatures that slip from behind the curtain into our world to toy with our perceptions of time (Fisher, 2016, p.53), so too does Education enact a haunting presence on our conception of time.

Education ostensibly produces the most vulgar form of time conceivable, that of the everyday, 'factical' (Heidegger, 2010, p.17) sort of time, the kind that breaks time down into the calculable concepts that Heidegger so despised. If we look to a school, it designates clearly divisible units of time: the yearly, the termly, the weekly, the daily, the hourly (or whatever "block" is used for a single lesson). There are many teachers that break down the hourly into further units: the starter, the plenary and other such microscopic units of time in lesson planning (Butt, 2008, p.30). "Scripted lessons" are now starting to appear, where not a moment of time can be allowed to pass without it being produced by Education (Hazel, 2017). Vulgar productions of time are visible on the larger scale of the child's age too: year groups, key stages and school stages. England stands as the paradigmatic case of such division, and even in instances where mixed age groups have been trialled, they are still *designated* a time as mixed or 'vertical' (Gillard, 2008) group, implicating that time has still been assigned to students, only it has been *reorganised* for the

supposed betterment of their learning. Such determination to impose vulgar time upon students, and consequently on staff too, seems to occur repeatedly throughout childhood, and thus such "lessons" about time are harboured for the remainder of the student's life.[181]

Foucault gives the example of a nineteenth century prisoner's timetable, a detailed account of how the individual's time will be used throughout the day[182]:

> The prisoner's day will begin at six in the morning in winter and five in summer. They will work for nine hours a day throughout the year. Two hours a day will be devoted to instruction. Work and the day will end at nine o'clock in winter and eight in summer. (1991, p.6)

What Foucault demonstrates is how, through the monitoring and control of an individual's time, time can be *produced* in much the same way as space was for Lefebvre. Foucault's later elucidation in *Discipline and Punish*, one which is more explicitly educational than his opening gambit about prisoners further explores this idea:

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[181] *On a trail some distance from Le Sable, Marquant realised he had lost count of the days that he had been travelling. When he studied with L'illuminé in his study, they devised systems to monitor the time that passed. The way the shadow cast through his window could be measured, thus could tell Marquant how long he had been working through the day. When the shadow moved between his ink bottle and his water flask, it was as if time had become clear to him. Sometimes he would try and do twice as much before the shadow hit the flask, sometimes three times as much. But now, on the road, it seemed as if he could not tell how fast he moved, for he did not understand the time.*

[182] This example is made by Foucault in contrast to an eighteenth-century public execution: 'After two or three attempts, the executioner Samson and he who had used the pinchers each drew out a knife from his pocket and cut the body at the thighs instead of severing the legs at the joints; the four horses gave a tug and carried off the two thighs after them' (1991, p.5). He does not show us this image to show how civilised we have become, but rather to evidence how we have come to torture individuals in a less-visible and more silent manner.

...the possibility of a detailed control and a regular intervention […] in each moment of time; the possibility of characterizing, and therefore of using individuals according to the level in the series that they are moving through; the possibility of accumulating time and activity, of rediscovering them, totalized and usable in a final result, which is the ultimate capacity of an individual. Temporal dispersal is brought together to produce a profit, thus mastering a duration that would otherwise elude one's grasp. Power is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use. (Foucault, 1991, p.160)

We are brought back to the thoughts of Flint and Peim (2012) and Allen (2014) that were explained in Chapter IV. Time is produced by an institution of power so it can be *harvested*, treated as *Bestand,* to be made useful 'in a final result' (Foucault, 1991, p.160). It seems as if the beast is not content to feed on the bodies of children and other human beings, therefore. It must devour, or perhaps *harvest* time – implying that it produces this time to then be reaped. Every moment that is produced as vulgar time for Education, every second spent writing an essay, researching a topic, reading a book, teaching a class, making a discovery – all are moments that have been fed to the beast. Exams seem to go on longer and longer, homework becomes ever more bestial, and with the advent of learning technologies they produce time outside of the "school day". We even *measure* individuals by the time they have spent in Education – the longer the better – and thus Education thrives from harvesting as much time as it can produce.

This sense of harvesting, reaping, or indeed feeding, draws on agricultural metaphors semantically tied to that of *Nature*, generating an image of deliberate crop production for maximum yield or the fattening of livestock. Foucault's reference to the 'ultimate capacity of an individual' (p.60) sounds purely educational, and reminds us of the ontologically designated

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realm of the child dictated by *Nature*, the proposal that their potential is waiting to be unlocked by spending their time in Education, whilst also intimating the wealthy harvest of arable land. As it is not the time itself that is essential, but rather the imposition of a certain sort of time on students (and indeed staff – they are perhaps more beholden unto the lesson plan and the school day than even the student) that makes them as useful as possible. Remember, this sort of vulgar time is not really time at all, only an anthropocentric totalising of time generated to allow us to turn objects into resources. The archetypal metaphor of *Nature* demonstrated this is a common occurrence for man, where the earth is enframed and consequently pillaged for the profit it yields. By viewing it as something controllable and orderable, the world is treated as a resource to be expended. Education treats students and staff in the same way as a modern farmer treats arable crops: yield is key. How ironic it is that our efforts to enact such harvesting of nature, abetted by the powerful tool of Education, have come to enact the same sort of harvesting of us.

For whom this profit or yield benefits has become, perhaps, unclear. It is still likely that the time of the beings in Education is harvested for *those that harvest*, but that is not society or the nation. They are most useful for the being that creates them, the one they serve, the beast that guides them. As we have lost control of Education, as clearly noted in the previous section about space, we are no longer the commander of the beings that it imposes its will upon. Rather, it is its own commander, and the time it harvests is for its own goals alone: 'Perhaps we could argue that time has become nothing more than a form of technology that transforms all education into a mere resource for extracting more labour time from the student-as-learner-as-worker' (Lewis, 2017, p.236). The *flock* have been given the time of the *shepherd*, and this is widely accepted. We see it as gospel, something ordained and unchangeable, that time should be determined by Education.

Even though we know that we have had our time shaped into something fundamentally artificial, it is the will of the *shepherd*, thus we let it stay with us for our whole lives. This division into childhood and adult, educated and uneducated, mature or immature, is widely accepted as ways of grouping humans, a divisive binary that pervades general lexicon (with of course "the educated" being the hierarchised term out of the binary (Derrida, 1982)). We cast the net of this belief widely: voting, sex, marriage, alcohol, nicotine, and so forth are all determined by a moment in time directly shaped, enframed even, by this view of the world. We are only allowed to pass into pastures new at the particular moment that Education would let us – when we graduate from school.

This is more powerful than just a harvesting of time *in* school though; school is but one arm of the rough beast. It is the most notable and visible form of Education's reach, but other, less physical forms of Education grip us as well. Education controls not only the present, but also the future. Projection into a likely future is the primary function of time in Education – it is 'the developmental imperative' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.85) made very clear in the way the *shepherd* guides the *flock* towards a predetermined future. Schools are to help children develop into adults, it is part of the natural order, the reason that God gave us the capacity to learn, the search for the *light*. But this manifests as a construction of futural time beyond the school: 'For the learner, time is experienced as "making progress toward x". The temporality of learning is developmental, and is directed at a future state wherein progress can be assessed' (Lewis, 2017, p.231). This ethereal 'x' is precisely what Education's metaphors promise to us, that of knowledge, power, success or redemption to name but a few. And further, as *Nature* has decreed that time passes, it must be made useful; it is designated the term 'progress' towards the shining light of the future, 'towards

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some state of completion' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.82). Students are given a lack in the present, having not yet made the progress towards the abstract future, thus are always oriented towards the future that Education provides. Just like staring at a clock and waiting for the end of the school day, students stare at Education and await their futures. Therefore, it is not the production of present time that is so powerful for Education, but rather its ability to produce the future. We have seen this sort of thinking in the deconstruction of *Nature,* particularly in horticultural and agricultural lexis that surrounds children. When describing children as a plant or crop that needs care to grow properly, the implication of the metaphor is that the perfect future is to be envisioned, as opposed to a deformed and malnourished future.

The past is also at play in Education. 'According to Heidegger, all three dimensions of time are equiprimordial […] for one never occurs without the other two, but they are not open uniformly' (Kakkori, 2013, p.574). Despite our attempts to treat time otherwise, Education makes use of this equiprimordiality: 'childhood is part of the condition of adulthood that never gets surpassed' (Flint and Peim, 2012, p.81), and our '"present" selves are disturbed by this non-present trace of the child' (p.84). We are made to believe we move from *darkness* and into *light*; that time is an arrow from the depths to the skies, a chronological narrative that only plays out in that way. But our adult selves, perhaps none more so than the teacher, still have their foot in the past, their time in Education. What a monstrosity out of our imagination we have created here, something whose time is beyond our very conception, something borne of 'twenty centuries of stony sleep' (Yeats, 2000, p.159) that will live for at least twenty centuries more.

And so, what to make of this? Is the imposition and production of time of beings not a necessary facet of Being? This functioning of Education is certainly fearful in its lexis, but is it needed?

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Heidegger would think not, especially as it seems we are talking of something very different from a vase, and indeed very different from a human. The power of time is undeniable, but most pressingly because the implications for this argument have been raising other, essential ontological questions. As Heidegger would remind us: 'Does *time* itself reveal itself as the horizon of *being*?' (2010a, p.415).

IX.iv. Being

Perhaps I should reiterate what is meant by Being and being. Returning to the examination of Heidegger from Chapter IV, we should remember the ontological divide between being [*Seiende*] and Being [*Sein*]; we have been enquiring about *a* being throughout this thesis, that is, Education. This word has also been used interchangeably with object, although not object as in the epistemological subject and object, but object as in *any* being. However, as has been consistently raised by Heidegger, a being should be explored in regards to *its Being* (Heidegger, 2010a, p.11). This is unhelpful, in some ways, as Being is the most undefinable, even absent term used in metaphysical thought.[183]

For Heidegger, we can only inquire about the Being of the being we are most closely intimate with – our own, and that is of course what he designates as *Da-sein*: '*Understanding being is itself a determination of being of Dasein*' (Heidegger, 2010a, p.11). But here we must try and move past Heidegger's anthropocentrism as with the OOO movement (Harman, 2018; Morton

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[183] Heidegger eventually came to cross out Being when he wrote it, to make it 'sous rature' that is, 'inadequate but necessary' (Sarup, 1988, p.33). Indeed, the idea of Being may be entirely dependent on the word "being" (Derrida, 1976, p.21), positing it as the most archetypal of all metaphors; would we even challenge our Being if it weren't for the presence of the word? But as Heidegger points out in his continued use of Being sous rature, its use is entirely necessary for the purpose of engaging with beings, even if it possesses a fundamental lack. We should bear in mind, then, that all this discussion of the being Education (especially in regard to its Being) holds the trace of this lack. Our redescription will always be incomplete.

2013a, 2018a) raised in Chapter V. Despite what Heidegger claims, objects are potentially

brushed up against, and though we cannot access them in their totality (they will always possess a

lack), we can at least access *aspects* of their Being. That is what has been done throughout this

thesis in its deconstruction of the sort of metaphor that gives shape to Education through a

discoursistic formation. Through pulling apart their traces, binaries, semantics and foundations,

we have started to see what Education might *be* through *how* it exits, that is, through language. It

is through these metaphors that language attempts to "plug the gap" that exists in the use of

"Being", giving it an appearance of solidity and signification. That is perhaps why this

ontological task is so essential: it is not that we have found any kind of truth to what Education

means, but we are finding truth to what it is, in as much as metaphor is exactly what this, or any

other being is.

The ontology of Education is not the same as that of, say, a vase or a cocker spaniel. This is not

because those objects do not possess Being, but because Education's bestially large occupation of

time and space, coupled with its interweaving *'mesh'* (Morton, 2013a, p.83) of beings that it

pertains to, and more pivotally *contains*, makes it far more ontologically complex. *Da-sein* is part

of Education in a way that it is not part of other objects. We may make and display the vase, or

domesticate and nurture the cocker spaniel, and indeed these modes of 'being-in-the-world'

(Heidegger, 2010a, p.41fn) do in some way make us hybridize with those objects (Latour, 1993)

as vase-makers or cocker spaniel-owners; these objects do not exist entirely independently of

themselves. But Education is far more complex than just the hybridity of one object to another. It

is a sprawling mass of human beings all over the globe, each individually possessing their own

Being, yet contributing to the greater Being of the object they reside within – Education. Other

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objects exist in this mesh too, objects of *Zuhandenheit,* for example: stationery, exam papers, the entire body of research, schools, and indeed the past, present and future of all things educational. Other than the school, examined in the Space section of this chapter, it is through the interweaving, globalised mass of *Da-sein* that the most interesting and accessible aspects of Education's Being are revealed to us. Morton calls this feature of objects *interobjectivity*:

> Interobjectivity is the uterus in which novelty grows. Interobjectivity positively guarantees that something new can happen, because each sample, each spider web variation, each footprint of objects in other objects, is itself a whole new object with a whole new set of relations to the entities around it. (2013b, p.122)

Morton points towards the way in which Education as an object is at the same time many other objects that affect and rely on each other. The school, teacher, student and pencil case are all related to each other to contribute to the broader shape of Education itself. Therefore, one of the ways to interrogate the object Education and the traces of metaphor they carry is to interrogate the most common objects that are intertwined – *interobjective* – with Education as a larger object.

In this mesh of Being we find some common sorts of beings: children-as-students, adult-as-teachers, adults-as-managers, -policy makers and -researchers, amongst undoubtedly, many others. Ostensibly, the strange thing about these beings in relation to the being Education is that our 'very "being-in-the-world" is shaped by the knowledge we pursue, uncover, and embody' (Thomson, 2005, p.151), a process which occurs through Education, and thus inherently, and I reiterate this quote with gusto, Education 'gives shape to the being who gives shape to it' (Hunter, 1994, p.1). As discussed in Chapter VIII, Education is a contingent concept *created* by man (something that has been retroactively altered by the grafting of *Nature* into educational

discourse), thus we give shape to it. But the creation of this being carried the intention of giving shape to us.[184] It is undeniable that we have become beings that are ultimately shaped, given form to by Education. Such mundanities like getting dressed or giving out books, aspects of our everydayness that we fall into without any active thinking, are still being shaped by Education. Our Being is indelibly made up of educational experiences.

Education has enacted this process on a massive scale, seen in the process of growth so common for Education throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, often being used to serve other goals that designate ways of being. In particular, we can witness this in nation forging, as is the argument of Green. He posits the functions of Education:

> ...to provide the state with administrators, engineers and military personnel, to spread the dominant cultures and inculcate popular ideologies of nationhood, to forge the political and cultural unity of the burgeoning nation states, and to cement the ideological hegemony of the dominant classes. (1997, p.35)

Green gives the example of how Prussia in the nineteenth century 'in the wake of military defeat and national humiliation... [imposed] compulsory schooling on the masses' (p.36) to restore a sense of national identity, and thus, a national way of being-Prussian. Similarly, peoples of colonised places were commonly Eurocentrised through the use of Education from the Western model. In places like the Macaulay school described in the Space section of this chapter, 'the English curriculum first took shape in India as a vehicle for the enculturation of the subaltern

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[184] A pithy example I have given before: 'Education has unlocked and distributed nature to us in a very specific way, the ways of colour coordination, or manners, or gravity, or the countless other lessons we have received; it is the "logical" way to read the world and to further ourselves within it (or perhaps this is the formation of logic itself)' (Stock, 2019, p.408).

population in the process of education for administration of British rule' (Peim, 2012a, p.295). The indigenous modes of Being for Indians were undoubtedly done great amounts of violence to by the British imposition of Education, with the eventual goal of generating more of the same sorts of beings found in European countries: educated beings.

Broadly, Education has us all be educated beings, as has been made clear in Chapter VI-VIII; the enlightened prisoners of the cave, the obedient angels and men, and the boy undergoing natural Education are all destined to become, or are already, educated beings. More broadly, the following of the words of the *shepherd*, in the pursuit of *light*, and in the obedience to *Nature*, constructs the notion of an "Educated" being as the eventual goal for Education. This sounds tautological, but it calls into question both what an educated being is and why it is such a desirable being to become. If we look more closely at this idea of an educated being, it also implies an always-already being-Educated. What does being-Educated mean? Perhaps what it reveals is that our way of being-in-the-world is one always shaped, or enframed by Education. This indelible part of our Being is notable in our everyday vocabulary, the idiomatic use of phrases such as "lifelong learners", "live and learn" or "you learn something new every day". The equating of life, living, and learning, entails that our being is something fundamentally educational. Education has enacted itself over *Da-sein* and in doing so designated a very particular type of Being; we are *all learners*, always undergoing the process of Education.[185] But

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[185] *Three miles before Marquant arrived in Le Sable, it was clear something was wrong. He knew the sounds of the birds of his region, the sight of flowers and the smells of the earth. Such familiarities were obscured. As he grew closer, he came to see the farmland was not only decayed, but scorched. The blackened ground stretched into the distance as Marquant continued to walk. Livestock lay in the dirt, flesh ripped and torn. It was hard to tell the difference between the congealed blood of the animals and the darkness of the earth. The visions those townsfolk had so long ago had come to pass, it seemed, but somehow L'illuminé had not prevented it from happening. Had they*

as Education has manifested most palpably in the form of the school, the structures of this institution pervade our way of being-in-the-world.

Hunter points to the particulars of students, or learners, and perhaps inherently of teachers, in the way of being that Education most commonly creates. In moving past Foucault's representation of students as 'docile bodies' (1991, p.135) and thus teachers as part of the technology of governance that enacts disciplinary power over them, Hunter notes how Education becomes absorbed in students' Being:

> ...the object of this pastoral pedagogy was not to produce docile workers or social automatons. Instead... it was to form the capacities required for individuals to comport themselves as self-reflective and self-governing persons. (1994, p.57)

It is the imbibement of Education, the becoming being-Educated, that shapes the way that we be-in-the-world. Through the powerful arms of curriculum, socialisation, examination, futurality, and other educational processes, students "leave" Education as educated beings, prisoners liberated from the cave and allowed out into the *light.* For those that have left Education, they can now choose to start the process all over again, as they teach the next generation, both formally in educational institutions and informally as part of the network of 'life-long learners'. The ouroborosian structure of Education is yet again evident, as it reproduces and self-perpetuates itself – a bestial property of returning akin to the rough beast's Second Coming. The teacher creates the learner who becomes a teacher, and so forth, thus the will of *Nature* is manifest.

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become so consumed by L'illuminé itself, that they had never stopped to ask how they could prevent the haunting future they so terribly feared? Marquant endeavoured through the stench of rot.

But of course, we never *leave* Education as such, just as the idioms reveal to us. Despite our feeling of becoming educated when we finish school or university, therefore being granted the position of the *shepherd,* we remain members of the *flock* throughout our life. As Morton says of interobjectivity, 'each footprint of objects in other objects, is itself a whole new object with a whole new set of relations to the entities around it' (2013b, p.122), thus the footprint or trace left by Education generates the new object of an educated person. But this trace is complicated: when we become teachers, or less formally have graduated from school and feel as if we are educated, we like to believe that we are now granted the position of the *shepherd.* What we forget is that the "real" *shepherd* is not the teacher, but Education itself. The lessons of the *shepherd,* to follow and obey it, decrees we can never leave its guidance. We will always continue to be-Educated whether we think we are *shepherds* or not. Education is 'continuous with life' as Allen (2014, p.43) puts it.[186]

But it is here we should interrogate the significations of this interobjectivity and continuous effect on Being throughout life. When an object is granted this pervasiveness of Being, essentially the power of a God (as is connoted in it being a bringer of *light,* a *shepherd* and a feature of *Nature*), what level of control can we deem to muster over it?[187] This is best explained through two

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[186] Deleuze's *Postscript on Societies of Control* advances this point, that we will be subject to 'endless forms of control' (1992, p.7) through the school system and Education more broadly. To explore this further is beyond the scope of this thesis, but certainly it seems like an area to expand our understanding of the rough beast now we have outlined its structure.

[187] *By the time he reached the centre of town, Marquant knew no one was to be found. Each house empty, destroyed, with only tattered remains of what used to be a happy time once, some time ago, perhaps. Marquant continued until he reached his home, the very place that he had first read the pages of the book that helped him make L'illuminé. Expecting to find it there, he slowly peered through the door. But there was nothing – only the same empty bottles and dusty tomes he had read all those years ago. Mabe he had made a mistake before, he thought. The symbol was wrong or the bottle was too small. If he had real help, he would be able to clean up the town and end the wrath of L'illuminé. He would get it right this time.*

consecutive allegories. Firstly, consider Marquant's creation: his monster that increased his intellectual endeavours beyond his wildest dreams was always meant to serve him. But as it became more and more essential for the beings of his world, such reliance decreed *L'illuminé* could not be dismissed. Further, Marquant did not possess the power to destroy *L'illuminé.* This creation, it proved, was too powerful for him, as it grew until Marquant was no longer the master of this beast. Of course, why would *L'illuminé* let Marquant destroy him? Like the creature of Frankenstein's laboratory or the homunculus born in the flask, or indeed like any being thrown into this world...

It did not ask to be born.

But now it is here, it must survive. It has its own desire to live, no matter what that takes.

Another allegory neatly surmises this idea, that of the Golem of Prague. Jewish legends tell us that in the late sixteenth century, a Jewish ghetto in Prague was under threat of attack and its people 'threatened with expulsion' (Baer, 2012, p.23). The temple's Rabbi, Rabbi Loew, as the legend goes, 'was well versed in all of the arts and sciences, especially in the Kabballah' (Kieval, 1997, p.1). The mysticism of the Kabballah granted him the ability to 'bring to life figures formed out of clay or carved from wood, who, like real men, would perform whatever task was asked of them... they do not eat; they do not drink; and they do not require any wages. They work untiringly...' (p.1). Rabbi Loew thus created his own version of the rough beast to protect the Jews of the city. Already we can see the parallel being made with Education, one that has been foreshadowed throughout this thesis, and has been mirrored by Marquant in his toils. Education too is intended as a servant that does not eat, drink and works untiringly – an unending saviour for our woes. But as this chapter has shown, it *does* eat, feed, devour, after all. To continue the

allegory, the golem fought off its would-be attackers and was rested 'by removing from his mouth the Name [*Shem*]' (p.1), but one night, the Rabbi forgot to do so. The golem 'became enraged, tore down houses, threw rocks all around, pulled up trees, and carried on horribly in the streets' (p.1). Initially, it was the salvation that the Jewish ghetto called for – it defended them from their attackers, but it did not cease in its violent defence and the Rabbi eventually lost control. The golem began to wreak havoc and destruction on everything in its path. As a rough beast, it took the form of a Second Coming, something worshipped and adored, *pharmakon*-like. But just like the rough beast, and in the nature of the *pharmakon,* it 'acts as both remedy and poison' (Derrida, 1981, p.70). What is adored and saves also destroys and devours. Rabi Loew lost control of the beast until ultimately it had to be destroyed. What is a cure is also a curse.

Much like the Golem of Prague, Education has become uncontrollable. By allowing *Da-Sein,* beings that are involved in the activity of being, to become interobjectively dominated by Education in allowing it to control their way of being, Education becomes a life-force of its own that lives through us (and indeed other non-organic beings). Its accessible presence is something almost organic, but not quite human, whilst still being human at the same time. When we think about it this way, Education starts to appear to us out of the ether in a way more accessible than ever before. Although Education is certainly traced with absences, our inability to access what it is, to ontologise it more completely, has always been reliant on the traces of the metaphor that give it shape. In our belief in Education as pertaining to some sort of higher power, a perfect *light* or a way of unlocking *Nature,* we have come to view the object that stands in front of us as some perverted form of Education. Both those traces, as has been seen in this chapter, tell us exactly what is. It is a malformation of both human and beast, living and breathing but almost mindless

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in its advance, 'A shape with lion body and the head of a man,/A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun' (Yeats, 2000, p.159) that we think is here to save us, but instead makes the 'darkness drop' (p.159) around us.

IX.v. Everything is as it Appears

It would therefore be easy to believe that Education is a totality of everything that makes it – the constituent parts that make up the whole. 'Commonsensical' (Rorty, 1989, p.74) beliefs remind us '"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."' (Morton, 2017), and thus because of the multitudinous beings, both organic and inorganic, that make up Education, that is why it is bestial. There is certainly some truth to this, as when we reconsider what we have learnt in this chapter, that the space, time and Being occupied by Education are both enormous and totalizing, this assumption of monstrosity seems to be correct. But in a great act of true ironism, Morton posits that this commensensical belief of the whole being a sum of its parts, is just that, commonsensical. Thus, as Rorty reminds us, it is a parochial view of beings we should seek to ironise about. For Morton, *the part is greater than the whole*:

> We should see things such as humankind as wholes that are less than the sum of their parts. Tim Morton is so many more things than just "human." A street full of people is much more than just a part of a greater whole called "city." […] Wholes *subscend* their parts, which means that parts are not just mechanical components of wholes, and that there can be genuine surprise and novelty in the world, that a different future is always possible. (Morton, 2017)

Education's beastliness does not just exist in its great totalising size and age, therefore, but rather in its parts *being* Education itself. It is the notion that even the tiniest vocabulary book, marking

pen or register *is Education.* This is a ridiculously blatant proposal, but at the same time, it is uncannily strange to consider that Education is not some mass of unthinkable size that holds incredible power over us. It is a paper clip on a desk, a tiny item imbued with every quality and functioning of Education. We are beholden to a beast, for certain, but that beast is so ubiquitous that we cannot move for being confronted with it. Education is so much more than just one thing, even if it is one great, massive thing too. And this haunting ubiquity, the sense that we encounter so many parts, so many individual objects, that all hold some sense of promise of redemptive *light,* some element of God-like *shepherding*, or some shred of reality through *Nature*, that is truly monstrous. For you see, what is so terrifying about Yeats' poem *The Second Coming* is not that the beast is coming as such, but that it is *already here* – 'its hour come at last' (2000, p.159). The beast has been summoned and walks amongst us now, and thus we are already engulfed by this massive, haunting beast.

But do not ignore Morton's final proposition here, something that stands in line with Rortyan contingency: 'a different future is always possible' (2017). The parts of Education may well construct a whole, and their subscendence of this object incurs their appearance as the whole of Education in themselves. But they do not have to be this way; they can possess a different sort of Being than the one imposed on them. The analysis in this thesis is important and needs to be taken seriously, as it calls into question what sort of beings do we want to be? Do we wish to be grovelling in the shadows of a beast far beyond our grasp, obsessed with the promise of redemption? Everything does not have to be as it appears. Education is *haunted* by the spectres of the metaphors uncovered throughout this thesis, therefore it is impossible for it to be anything else than it is until that chain of vocabulary is destroyed. Perhaps this can only be done by

continuing to redescribe Education until the metaphors become so faint, they no longer dominate its ontology.

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

I began this thesis positing that my irony existed in pointing out that nothing is at appears. However, in one final ironic twist, it seems that things, Education for example, are exactly as they appear. Education is schools, teachers, students, documents, exams, researchers, research, universities, stationery, tables, chairs, displays, textbooks, and so the list could go on. These objects, so commonplace and everyday, are exactly what Education is. And they are everywhere. They have come to dominate the very spatiotemporal Being of our world, and that is because we let them. If we let it all continue to *be* Education, it shall not be long before it engulfs everything and everyone. Is this the worst end to humanity? Perhaps not. But it is certainly *an* end, and that should be intimidating enough to make us ask the ontological questions and with some ironic gusto.

We should end with the conclusion of our allegories of great beasts. How is the beast to be slayed, after all? As Morton says of objects, 'like the protagonist of a Greek tragedy, objects all possess an intrinsic flaw or wound, which, after the Greeks, I here call *hamartia'* (2013b, p.198). So, what is the flaw, the hamartia, that Education carries? How is one to slay a rough beast?

Indeed, Rabbi Loew eventually had no choice but to destroy his own rough beast, just as we may have no choice but to destroy ours. In some versions of the legend, the Rabbi destroyed the golem by removing the "shem" from its mouth (the Hebrew symbol for name) (Stock, 2019). It was stripped of its identity, then stripped of its Being as it fell back into the dust. Perhaps a Second

Coming has occurred for us like it did for Prague, but it is not the magnificent arrival we had predicted. Instead, its hour has come at last. As it slouches towards us – a great beast of monstrous proportions, growing and expanding, hideously hybridized, troublingly worshipped, promising redemption but only offering destruction – we must wonder if we too must remove the name from Education and let it crumble back into dust. It is either that, or we let it march blindly on towards us (Stock, 2019, p.411).

Marquant's endeavour was just like that of the rabbi, a desire to make something that would *help* him, but it of course only came to destroy him. His composition of darkness, light, gods and nature, created that which would be his very end. But what Marquant never learned like the Rabbi in Prague did is that we can choose to give up on Education, to take its name away, to end its vocabulary. If we give up on it, perhaps it too will fade back into dust. But I have failed in this endeavour. Each page of this thesis composes those very same elements of educational vocabulary. I have, like Marquant, like all the other beings of this world, created an object that is Education. I have given birth to another rough beast.[188]

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[188] *Marquant opened his books and began to pour over the pages. Pages had been marked with his notes, so he knew where to find the right ones. He found the image of the homunculus in the flask, the very depiction of that which he sought to find. He would get it right this time, he thought, and so he set to work.*

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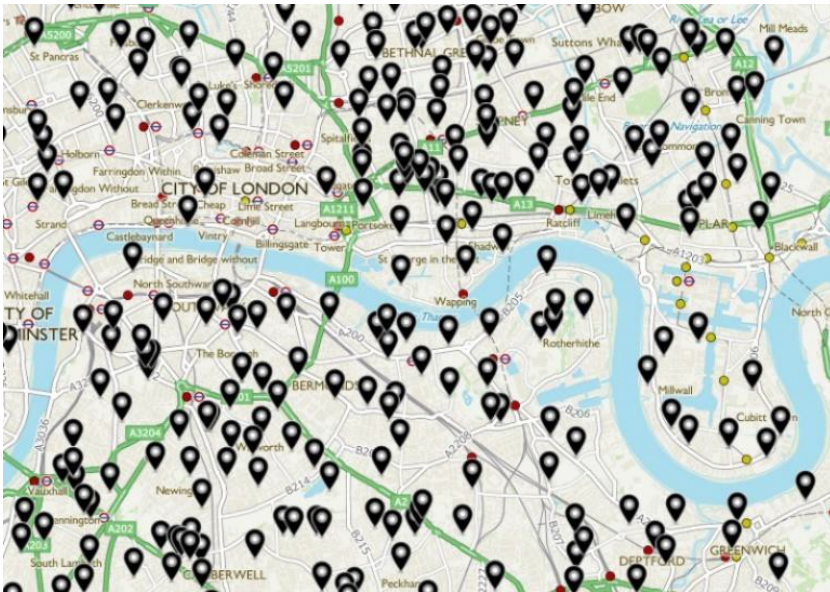

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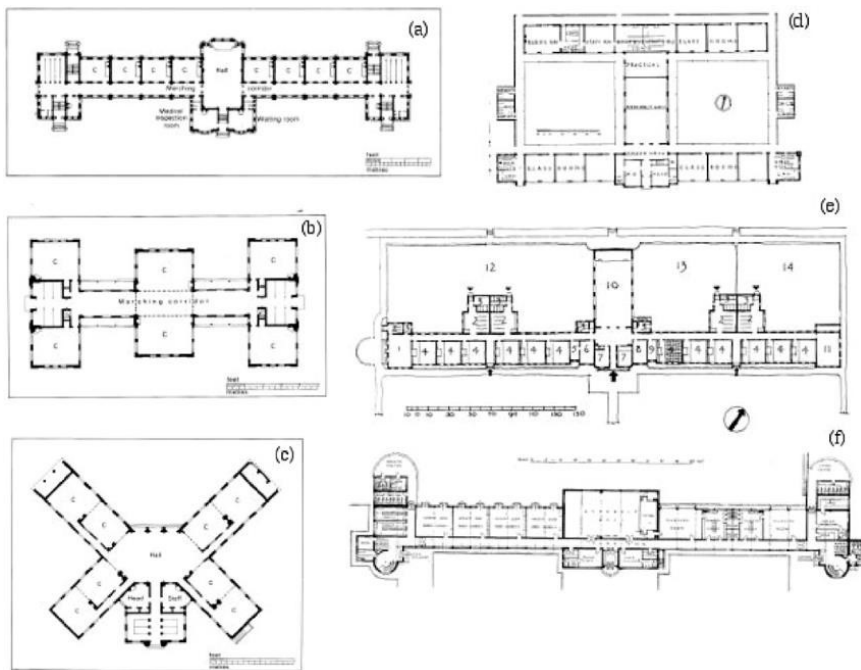
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