

On realizing the possibilities of emancipatory meta-theory:

Beyond the cognitive maturity fallacy, toward an education revolution

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Four hundred years, four hundred years, four hundred years
And it's the same, the same philosophy.
I said it's four hundred years, look how long, and the people, they still can't see.
Why do they fight against the poor youth of today?
When without these youth they would be gone, all gone astray.
Come on; let's make a move.
I can see, the time, the time has come.

-Peter Tosh (from the song *400 years*)

We don't need no education, we don't need no thought control.
No dark sarcasm in the classroom....
Hey teacher! Leave those kids alone!

-Roger Waters (from the song *Another Brick in the Wall pt.2*)

Introduction: Bhaskar is to Marx as Wilber is to Freud¹

Bhaskar's *Dialectic* is at its core a political book. Building out from basic issues in ontology toward characterizations of the emancipatory possibilities implicit in current geo-historical dynamics, *freedom* stands as the concept that unites humanity with the

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directionality of an evolving universe propelled forward by dialectical tension and contradiction. The arguments in *Dialectic* provide essential underlaboring for a fundamentally *revolutionary politics*. The possibility of universal human emancipation is revealed as presupposed in every human action. The pulse of freedom, as it were, is shown to be irrepressible, ubiquitous, and indefatigable. These ideas imply a unique view of social justice wherein a dialectic of human liberation catalyzes *the rational directionality of geo-history* toward universal human flourishing, or a eudemonistic society in which the free development of each concrete singular individual is the condition for the free development of all. A form of totalizing depth praxis is shown to emerge in the *hiatus* between structure and agency, providing a new and profound vision of the human capacity for initiating radical transformations of self and society.²

This kind of politically emancipatory meta-theory has an essential role to play as our species careens toward planitization while at the same time confronting the absolute limits of capitalism's domination of nature, both internal (our humanity) and external (the biosphere). In the midst of this crisis, the culture of late-capitalism continues to churn out irrealist and irrational philosophies that “reify and naturalize knowledge, chiming with the logic of commodification, and cutting the ground from under critique [by] normalizing past and local changes, ideologies and freedoms [and] denying change.... They detotalize, divide, and rule.... [These philosophies are] made for empire-builders,

² I am adopting the *lingua-Bhaskarian* and apologize for what at times will certainly be heavily jargoned text. There is simply not space to define all the DCR terms of art I need to use to make my point here. I am also choosing to work closely with this vocabulary because in the context of the encounter between DCR and IT, it is those working in DCR who appear to need the most convincing as to the fruitfulness of the encounter. So I am speaking in a language intended to convince this group more so than those who work in IT, who are keener on the endeavor of synthesis, yet need help in speaking outside their native tongue. Interestingly, a predilection for giving the benefit of the doubt is the way of IT, which prone to go hunting for some way in which “everyone is partly right,” as opposed to looking for how “everyone is partly wrong,” which is the way of DCR; both stances imply the other and both get us to an integrative meta-theory and meta-critique—only one sees the glass half-full, while the other sees it half-empty.

manipulators, and the masters of subjects₂ who want to distract their eyes from the top of the power₂ relations on which they sit.... As they permeate down from the rarefied stratosphere of philosophy, irrealist ideologies act to disempower and fragment the agent” (Bhaskar, 1993 pp. 305-06). We desperately need new meta-theories because the lack of a coherent worldview has become a source of repression and a cause of alienation.

This “recalls Adorno’s famous adage that not just theory, but the *absence* of theory, becomes a material force ‘when it seizes the masses’” (Bhaskar, 1993 p. 159). The *lack* of meta-theory can become a force that distorts and undermines our abilities to understand our true needs and the realities of the natural and social worlds. In the past, forms of false consciousness were generated by totalizing worldviews that imposed on us the meaning of everything; today false consciousness results from fragmented and de-totalized worldviews that impede us in making meaningful sense of anything. This idea has echoed on the fringes of the academy and in a few leading minds since the great sociologist Daniel Bell (1960) first declared “the end of ideology.” Many were not fooled by the decline of the hegemonic Cold War rhetoric that followed in the wake of Bell’s declaration. On the edges and in the wings were theorists who saw what was emerging, and what has since come to pass in the decades since 1989: a “new normal” characterized not by repressive world order, but by de-repressive world disorder, not by the specter of total submission through integration, but of radical dissolution through fragmentation.

The future depends on the articulation of a new vision of humanity and a new sense of what is possible for the planet and everyone on it. The encounter between Bhaskar and Wilber taking place in these volumes represents one of the most sophisticated attempts to forge just such an emergent meta-theory, specifically one that is

suitable for framing a planetary meta-ethics that could justify and motivate the truly revolutionary changes that are necessary if generations to come are to have anything like a life worth living. In the context of this encounter many questions have been raised about how to best interanimate these two philosophical systems. This paper offers one approach to *constellating* several essential facets of Dialectical Critical Realism (DCR) and Integral Theory (IT).³ I argue that the two systems actually need each other, but focus most of my attention on the *lacks* in DCR than can (and ought to) be filled by IT. The guiding theme of this paper is the primacy of educational activism as a political instantiation of emancipatory meta-theory, and the essential unanimity of these two theories on this point. While Bhaskar provides a dialectical social ontology that locates educational initiatives at the epicenter of contemporary revolutionary possibilities, Wilber provides a philosophical developmental psychology that reveals the profound impact of education on human capacities. Both theories highlight the role of education as a revolutionary catalyst as well as the injustices of contemporary educational systems (which reflect the broader social and economic systems in which they reside) that radically truncate our humanity, sometimes to the point of undermining the very possibility of totalizing depth praxis. In the constellational totality that unites DCR and IT, Bhaskar is to Marx as Wilber is to Freud.

The idea that oppressive and unjust educational systems can undermine the very possibility of totalizing depth praxis points directly at the lacks in DCR that must be

³ It should be noted that I do not address Bhaskar's "spiritual turn" in this paper, making no mention of his philosophy of metaReality and the manner in which it expands upon the DCR framework. The relations between Wilber and Bhaskar get even more complex when one brings in their views on non-duality, post-modern religiosity, spiritual awakening, and the continued relevance of the great religious traditions. I believe Bhaskar's work on metaReality is an important and good addition to DCR; I do not address it here simply due to limitations of space.

filled by IT. Make no mistake: DCR has a lot to say about human development⁴, and in places provides essential philosophical underlaboring for the field of developmental psychology. This thoroughgoing developmentalism will be discussed below. Indeed, whole sections of *Dialectic* are ostensibly about the dynamics of psychological growth, as exemplified by the concept of primary polyadization, which brings us from the primal scream of the infant first separated from the (m)other through a dialectic of universalization that leads to the emancipation of all concrete singular individuals from alienation. Yet in DCR the development of human capacities is taken as unproblematically leading to a certain form of basic maturity. De-agentification, distortions of personality, and the forfeiture of self-actualization are all explicitly mentioned and lamented as possibilities. Nevertheless, the basic models of the person and their capacities for reasoning and reflection in DCR assume as given what are actually hard won developmental achievements contingent upon the availability and utilization of educational resources. This, unfortunately, puts DCR in league with most of the philosophical tradition it seeks to overcome. As Piaget (1932; 1965) first pointed out well over a half century ago, the majority of philosophy is based on assumptions about the basic cognitive endowments of average individuals that totally disregard what is known about human development. This is discussed below in terms of the *cogitative maturity fallacy*: assuming as given capacities for thought and action that are in fact hard won development accomplishments that require the availability and utilization of specific educational resources (education being defined here very broadly, and in no way limited

⁴ Throughout this paper I will use the terms ‘human development’ ‘developmental psychology’ ‘developmental studies’ and refer to ‘developmentalists’, etc. all in reference to a broad field of research concerned with the development of individual capacities for thought, action, and emotion (not to be confused with developmental studies in the sense of international development, economic development, etc.). For an overview of this field see: Wilber, 1999; Miller, 2009.

to what takes place in schools). This is a ubiquitous problem in philosophy generally and contributes to the ineffectual, parochial, and elitist position of the discipline, its irrelevance to the concerns of ordinary people, and its frequent retreats into merely academic exercises.

Thankfully, a solution is readily available for DCR, which entails the adoption of a *diachronic emergent capacities developmentalism* (DECD), to be fit inside and expand upon the *synchronic emergent powers materialism* (SEPM) that already serves as the linchpin of a still nascent DCR philosophical psychology. Wilber's (1980; 1999) work is by far the best place to look for the essential components this DECD, given that it is a meta-theoretical summation of nearly a century of research into the development of human capacities. This tradition of research refashions the models of human personality and reason in DCR, revealing these models to be contingent universal *possibilities* for individuals, as opposed to always already present actualities. It also suggests ways of expanding these models to include an accurate sense of the major qualitative reorganizations of thought and action that have been shown to characterize the development of human beings, from birth to maturity and beyond (i.e., into trans-normal capacities, which also stand as a universal, if rare, possibility for all individuals). Wilber's developmental meta-theory provides insights into the ways by which capacities emerge in individuals, stressing the bio-psycho-social dynamics of cognitive growth, and thus the socio-political prerequisites necessary for the *accomplishment* of human maturity. These additions to the DCR model further clarify the primacy of education in the project of human emancipation, while also clarifying some of the impediments to revolutionary political movements in contemporary society, where the educational resources needed to

enable maturity and autonomy are becoming increasingly scarce due to the continued push of neo-liberal and neo-conservative political agendas (Apple, 2013). The *contradictory* nature of education as a social practice become apparent in light the dynamics of this DECD—education can be a source of oppression or a source of liberation; we can be educated toward greater freedoms or away from them.

Human development and human emancipation

[In] a dialectical kinetic pluriverse *to be* is not only just to be able to do, but *to be able to become...being is becoming....* A *dialectical life* would be a kind of sequence of immanent critiques, comprising the self-reflective overcoming or non-preservative sublation of a concretely singular self...dispositionally identical with its changing (developing and waxing and waning) causal powers and tendencies, naturally interconnected with a changing fabric of contingences, accidents, mediation, rhythemics, and contradictions.

-Bhaskar (1993 pp 77 & 105; italics in the original)

To accuse DCR of committing the *cognitive maturity fallacy* and to recommend remediation through the adoption of a *diachronic emergent capacities developmentalism* (DECD) is to undertake a kind of immanent critique—to give DCR a taste of its own meta-critical medicine. According to its own terms, DCR should already be out to explicitly avoid the cognitive maturity fallacy and should already involve some kind of DECD. DCR is a philosophy that emphasizes process, evolution, generative contradictions, emergence, radical negation, and other development motifs; making DCR the developmental philosophy *par excellence* (although see: Whitehead (1929) and Wilber's (1995)). There are, in fact, many arguments in *Dialectic* that would be invaluable for developmental psychology as field if it ever intended get its ontology

straight (which is no small task, given that no major developmentalists since Baldwin and Piaget have addressed the ontological issues implicated by the field). In this section I will look at the arguments in *Dialectic* that can be taken as philosophical underlaboring for developmental studies. In part this is a way of clarifying the immanent nature of my critique. But it is also a way of clarifying just what kinds of models of human development I intend to bring into the picture; DCR can actually help in weeding out the wrongheaded and simplistic forms of developmental psychology that have given the field a bad reputation and contributed to its dismissal by many philosophers. This sets the stage for seeing the absence of developmental considerations in DCR's models of the self, personality, and reasoning capacities of individuals, which are discussed in the next section.

The simplest place to begin is with the one of the most basic notions entailed by DCR: "Dialectic is at the heart of every learning process" (Bhaskar, 1993 p.43). This way of understanding learning is fundamentally different from behavioristic ideas of learning as conditioned response and other related reductive models. DCR positions human learning and development in the context of certain universal dynamics of dialectical growth and evolution. This is an essential idea in the development tradition, which runs from Baldwin, through Piaget, to Kohlberg, Fischer, and Wilber: development proceeds through the dialectical growth of psychological structures, propelled forward by contradictions, absences, and self-transformative agency. As implied by the passage that began this section, development is best thought of as a series of immanent critiques, or as the iterative self-reflective overcoming of a concretely singular self, resulting in the repeated and sequential emergence of qualitatively new capacities for thought, action,

perception, and emotion. This is the model of development that Wilber builds upon in extending the tradition of development theory, i.e., it is *not* one based on the mere quantitative accumulation of ideas or skills, nor one based on simplistic ideas of maturational inevitabilities. Many contemporary and past developmental researchers could learn from these basic insights into the dialectical nature of learning and development, so clearly shown by Bhaskar to be ubiquitous ontological realities; this would put an end to the methodologically limited and theoretically truncated approaches to development that have come to dominate some regions of the field.

Moreover, the dialectic of psychological development is also dialectical in the sense that it bridges the space between subject and object, proceeding through the action of individuals on the world. This is one of Piaget's (1932; 1979) primary contributions: that thought and action are inseparable, that "logic" does not reside merely in the head of the growing child, but in the evolving sets of operations the child carries out on the world. As Bhaskar says (1993 p. 72), in terms that could be Piaget's: "*Logic does not determine the nature of being, but at best establishes what the world must be like if we are to preform certain operations successfully*" [italics in the original]. This basic idea is repeated again later where Bhaskar (*Ibid* p. 304) lays out a formula that summarizes one of the basic tenants of the cognitive developmental tradition: "to reason = to cause = to negate = to absent = to contradict = to (negatively) constrain." This "meta-theoretical equation" summarizes what Bhaskar previously established as a ubiquitous ontological reality, and points to the auto-catalytic nature of reasoning—an idea that Piaget and others would make much of, arguing that reasoning is by its very nature auto-subversive,

that learning takes primacy over knowing, that development is the natural state of cognitive operations.⁵

Importantly, the most sophisticated models of emergent capacities that can be found in this tradition (e.g., Piaget, 1976; Fischer, 2006; Wilber 1999) do not hold to “the tradition of neo-Platonic-eschatological-Hegelian-vulgar Marxist thought” that characterizes emergence and higher-order structuration in terms of “assumptions of originarity [sic], uni-linear directionality and teleological necessity of an empirically and conceptually untenable kind” (Bhaskar, 1993 p. 51). This is an important point, because many developmental models associated with IT *do* fall prey to simplistic growth-to-goodness assumptions and untenable ideas about unilinearity and cross-domain developmental synchrony (Stein, 2010). And while Wilber is careful to use these models in the context of his broader theory, which does not harbor these liabilities, the models are nevertheless often discussed outside his proposed meta-theoretical context. In fact, as Wilber (1999) argues for clearly, development is a radically messy affair, fitting well with Bhaskar’s (1993 p 50) caveats concerning the nature of emergence, which are worth quoting at length:

Before I praise emergence, I must bury Hegelian versions of it. In the real world, whether we are dealing with conceptual, social...or entirely natural terrain, ontological dialectical processes are not generally a product of radical negation alone, let alone that of the linear kind to which Hegel leans. For our world is an

⁵ As we will see in the penultimate section below, the *naturalness* and seeming inevitability of learning and development, which is a presupposition of much of the developmental tradition, points to the contradictory nature of educational systems in contemporary societies, where children struggle to learn and where learning often does not take place at all. As Habermas (1973 p. 15) explains, drawing explicitly on a DECD inspired by Piaget and Kohlberg, and foreshadowing his definition of ideology: “It is my conjecture that the fundamental mechanism for social evolution in general is to be found in an automatic inability not to learn. Not *learning*, but *not-learning* is the phenomenon that calls for explanation.... Therein lies the rationality of man. Only against this background does the overpowering irrationality of the history of the species become visible” [italics in the original]. According to this view, the hegemonic ideologies of late-capitalism function as *impediments or barriers to learning*; they counteract the natural dialectical growth of the self and society, holding us in place, blinding our eyes to the truth of our condition.

open-systemic entropic totality, in which results...are neither autogenetically produced nor even constellationally closed, but the provisional outcome of a heterogeneous multiplicity of changing mechanisms, agencies, and circumstances. Moreover, in real emergence the processes are generally non-teleologically causal...and have an inverse that does not figure in the entelechy of the Hegelian scheme, *viz.* disemergence, the decay, demise or disjoint detachment of the higher level. Further, emergence may involve a substantial degree of non-preservative, rather than simply additive, superstructuration. And the result may be internally complex and differentiated, consisting in a ‘laminated’ system, whose internal elements are necessarily ‘bonded’ in a multiplicity of structures (perhaps composed of their own structured hierarchies and sub-totalities). Such systems may be...asymmetrically weighted, and contextually variable...composing an internal pluriverse...populated by a plurality of narratives, internal discordance and even palpable contradictions.

These ideas about the sheer diversity and complexity of emergent processes are strongly aligned with advances made by the so-called Neo-Piagetians, especially their work using dynamic systems modeling techniques as a part of research into individual development (Fischer & Biddle, 2006; Van Geert, 1993). This work characterizes the development of the mind in terms of a “complex evolving ecosystem of skills and capacities.” According to these models capacities and skills are hierarchically and heterarchically related in competing and complimentary ensembles, with different sets of capacities developing at different rates, some sets growing in synchrony while others asynchronously diverge, as the whole “cognitive ecosystem” remains continually and inextricably enmeshed within cultural, social-structural, and interpersonal dynamics. These models, on which Wilber draws heavily, provide tools for understanding the life of the mind as an evolving “internal dialectical pluriverse” (to borrow Bhaskar’s redolent phrase, as he borrowed it from Della Voep). This is far from the simplistic linear growth-to-goodness models that are often used to stereotype the field, such as the versions of Piaget’s model found in most psychology text books, which presents development as an inevitably unfolding staircase of four levels from the crib to pure reason (this is both

patently false as a characterization of Piaget's model (Smith, 2001) and is such an obvious oversimplification of development that it can only be taken as a straw man to be burnt in effigy by behaviorists and nativists).

This brings us to the final set of issues that display the profound confluences between the field of development studies and DCR: "thematizing *the presence of the past [and the future.... in terms of] process-embodied-in-product*" (Bhaskar, 1992 pp.139-40). Human beings are never complete. And what is past is never gone. "We may be said to contain possible futures within us, and these may be vital to our being" (*Ibid* p. 143). Developmental models offer a thoroughgoing processual view of the individual, which show (often with great diagnostic detail) the continued legacy of prior achievements (and failures) as well as the tangible futurity of present behaviors. This profoundly augments the ways that individuals should be thought about and their lives and actions evaluated. As Baldwin (1906) first put it: we must learn to understand the personality as a *trajectory*, not an entity. With the idea of *developmental consistency*, Bhaskar echoes this notion and offers what is one of the most important lessons from *Dialectic* for developmentists, in so far as the idea integrates the field's ontological-descriptive moments with its normative-evaluative ones. "To be developmentally consistent is to know when to be inconsistent, when to grow, when to mature, when to apply a dialectical comment on dialectical comments, when to wait until the agents concerned have made up their own minds into what their freedom consists. Dialectical processual consistency recognizes the authenticity of every concretely singular agent's own narrative or story no less than the rights of her being.... The point about [developmental or dialectical] consistency here is

that no general formula for it can be given: the criteria are necessarily *intrinsic* to the processes concerned” (Bhaskar, 1993 p.170 & 270).

These ideas on the evaluation of developmental trajectories get us directly into the educational implications that would follow from a sustained encounter between DCR and developmental theory as exemplified by IT. Both can be understood as revealing the emancipatory power of catalyzing the development of the concrete singular individual, and thus both can be understood as *philosophies of education and liberation*. But the scope of arguments about the revolutionary implications of this new theoretical constellation must await the concluding section of this paper. First it is necessary to see that DRC lacks some of what it needs to make good on its commitments to understanding and catalyzing individual development and to sketch the contours of what it would take to “absent these absences” in DCR—namely, the importation from IT of a *diachronic emergent capacities developmentalism*.

The cognitive maturity fallacy: growing up is hard to do

The average-expectable level of psychocultural development in any given society acts as a *pacemaker of development* up to that level but does not guarantee that development in all individuals will so proceed. Very few people even in “developed” countries reach a firm base in worldcentric, postconventional awareness (one study found only 4 percent of the American population at the higher postconventional stages....). Even if society collectively evolves to the average-expectable level of [the postconventional], every single person born in that society will nevertheless still *start development at square one*, as a single-celled zygote: and have to begin the arduous developmental climb.... The pace of this climb can be accelerated, but the fundamental stages cannot be bypassed.... And at *every* stage in development, *things can go wrong*. The more stages, the more nightmares of possible developmental miscarriages.

-Wilber (1995 p. 654).

Surrounding the passages about developmental consistency quoted above, Bhaskar offers several very important reflections, which get directly to the heart of the immanent critique that will be unfolded in this section. He argues that universalizability is a test for consistency and a criterion for truth, and thus sets the *directionality* for dialectical rationality as it develops (Bhaskar, 1993 p. 170 & 220). This echoes arguments in other places about the dialectic of universalizability and the dialectic of desire to freedom (*Ibid*, p. 279-80). The idea here is that *all* human action and speech contains within it a drive toward both universalizability and universal freedom; that by simply intending to say something true or satisfy my own desires I am initiating an autocatalytic process toward saying things that are universally true and doing things that contribute to universal emancipation. Norrie (2010 p.123-24) is correct in interpreting this line of thought as a radicalization and generalization of Habermas's formal pragmatics, which also claims to reveal the universalizing commitments implicit in every speech act that drive humans toward the universalization of their practical and epistemological orientations and eventually to hold explicit (worldcentric) ethical and epistemic views.

Norrie (*Ibid*, 232-237) is also correct in linking this up with Bhaskar's (1993 p. 177 & 221) account of the judgment form, which is his account of what takes places when we are asked to make a judgment (e.g., to give advice to someone about a complex state of affairs). Bhaskar argues that there are four core elements that characterize a human judgment: it will be "expressively veracious," "imperatival-fiduciary," "descriptive," and "evidential." The first two concern the nature of the *relationship* between addresser and addressee, the second two concern what the judgment is about. All

together they entail the establishment of a relationship of trust between two people, based on a shared understanding about the world. They say: “trust *me*, on the available evidence, this is the best thing for *you* to do” (Norrie, 2010 p. 134).

The point here is that in the very nature of human judgment are universal commitments to both solidarity and truth. The dialectic of universalizability takes off from what is implied every time we give advice or act on it. The very form of our judgments compels us toward ever expanding circles of emancipatory truth stating, solidarity-enhancing praxis. That is, “we can...proceed...directly from the axiological commitment implicit in the expressively veracious judgment...straight to...the goal of universal human emancipation.... The eudemonistic society is implicit in every desire, assertoric remark or successful action.” (Bhaskar, 1993 p.286). This is only one of several places in *Dialectic* where Bhaskar relies upon the ubiquity of the four-part judgment form as the catalytic kick-starter of a dialectical process toward the totalizing depth praxis that is as the ultimate demand of DCR as a philosophy of revolutionary political action. This best summarized by one of the many “general schema” (p. 179):

Axiological commitment in expressively veracious moral judgment
→fiduciariness → solidarity → totalizing depth praxis (including inquiry) →
content given by explanatory critical theory → emancipatory axiology =
[transformed transformative (trustworthy) totalizing transformist (transitional)
politics/praxis]

But here is the problem (and the opening for an important immanent critique of DCR): this starting point of the four-part judgment form is actually the outcome of a long developmental process.⁶ That is, individuals have a lot of growing up to do *before they*

⁶ As Norrie (2010 p. 135) notes, Bhaskar is well aware of the fact that the judgment form is, in a certain sense, an *idealization*. Aware of the gap between the actual and the ideal, Bhaskar’s (1993 p. 285) response is to suggest their

can even begin the reflective dialectic of universalization (and other related dialectical progressions, such as the dialectic of freedom). This is one case of the cognitive maturity fallacy as it plays out in DCR; and there are others as well, as we will see.

Even a cursory familiarity with any number of developmental models clearly shows that this form of judgment is very far along the course of epistemological development, which can itself be thought of as *a developmental progression of judgment forms*. For example, the models of Fischer (2006) and Kitchener and King (1990) confirm what Piaget (1928) first proved nearly a century ago, that human judgment begins as fundamentally egocentric, lacking all four aspects of the judgment form. These early (but often quite persistent) forms of judgment do not function to establish a relation of trust between addresser and addressee relative to a shared understanding of the world. This is not because the individual is unwilling or deceptive, but because of *limits in their capacity for judgment*—they are unable to coordinate the need for evidence and adequate description with the perspective taking necessary to establish an imperatival-fiduciary relation and the self-reflectiveness needed to claim expressive veracity.

In the earliest and most rudimentary forms of judgment, individuals are unable to even understand the need to justify their judgments, in part because, as Piaget (1928 pp.21-22) showed in a series of breathtakingly simple experiments: “the child is incapable of differentiating clearly between relations of causality, of sequence, and of justification...which means that he is incapable of assigning a fixed function in speech to

constellational unity—the ideal and the actual coexist and stand in complex co-relation, which is one of the tensions that propels and gives directionality to geo-history. This is all well and good, but is beside the point I am making here. The issue here is not the relation between the ideal and the actual, but rather what capacities are actually needed to grasp the form of this specific ideal. That is, there may never be a pure instance of judgment (as defined by the four-fold judgment form)—it is an idealization—and yet to be moved toward this ideal it must be possible to see it as distinct from the actual. As will be explained, the capacity to even recognize something like the four-fold judgment form is quite an achievement, let alone the capacity to reflectively correct one’s words and behavior in light of it.

each of these relations.” Moreover, perspective-taking incapacities contribute to this early epistemic solipsism and related forms of incoherent (or simply absent) justifications (*Ibid* pp. 11-14):

It is because it is not detached from the ego that this sort of thinking does not know itself.... There is nothing in egocentrism that tends to make thought conscious of itself... The successive judgments that constitute the child’s talk are not connected by explicit relations but are simply stuck together.... This absence of direction in the successive images and ideas is itself the outcome of that lack of self-consciousness that characterizes all egocentric thought. Only by means of friction with other minds does thought come to be conscious of its own aims and tendencies.... This is why every act of socialized intelligence implies not only consciousness of a definite thought-direction (as, for instance, of a problem) but also consciousness of the successive statements of a narrative (relations of implication) or of those between successive images of the object of thought (causal relations).... We have on many occasions stressed the point that the need for checking and demonstration is not a spontaneous growth in the life of the individual; it is on the contrary a social product. Demonstration [and justification] are the outcome of argument and the desire to convince. Thus the decline of egocentrism and the growth of logical justification are part of the same process.

This quote can be taken to stand-in for dozens of others that could be taken from Piaget’s numerous studies on the development of logic and morality (for an overview see: Piaget, 1977). It also stands-in for the hundreds of quotes that could be taken from the theorists that followed him and confirmed and expanded on his findings (e.g., see: Kohlberg, 1981; Fischer & Biddle, 2006). The implications of these models are that (1) the four-part judgment form cannot be assumed as a given or as an ideal that always already (even if counterfactually) guides practice; (2) the emergence of the four-part judgment form in individuals requires a host of educational resources, which cannot be assumed as a given; (3) the four-part judgment form is an historically emergent human capacity, which must reemerge in the individuals of each new generation (and could, by implication, potentially cease to broadly characterize human judgment if the requisite

educational resources are not in place). I will return to this last point the final section as part of a discussion of the contradictory role of educational systems, which are at the same time our greatest potential source of oppression and our greatest hope for emancipation. It is the first two points that are the jumping off point for the rest of this section and the next.

Importantly, the points above should be taken as part of an immanent critique, because Bhaskar (1993 p. 220) knows better: “End-states, which should be universalizable, are not always realizable by agents (e.g., one can’t get from x to everywhere and one can’t go to y from just anywhere). However, in general it is plausible to suppose that one can progress towards them, or mitigate regress away from them.” There are other places in *Dialectic* that echo this sentiment and where can be found arguments about the irreducible uniqueness and positionality of concrete singular individuals (*Ibid*, p. 170-71) as well as the contingency and complexity of individual development, which is recognized as being prone to truncation, forfeiture, and regression (*Ibid*, p. 285). Yet even with these insights the cognitive maturity fallacy plagues DCR’s models of the human individual and personality. Make no mistake: these models are hierarchical, processual, and stratified, which makes them vastly preferable to most accounts of the human individual and personality offered by philosophers. Nevertheless, they are all *synchronic* characterizations of human capacity, and take as a given what are actually hard won developmental achievements contingent upon educational resources. The same version of the cognitive maturity fallacy committed in the account of the four-part judgment form can be seen to spread throughout the system.

Take for example, the “Stratified Model of the Self” presented in *Dialectic* (Bhaskar, 1993 p. 149, Figure 2.20). It presents a set of hierarchically structured strata that constitute the self, beginning at the bottom with the “biological substratum/constitution,” on top of which is the “unconscious” then the “preconscious” and then “consciousness (self-consciousness = sentient socialized self-awareness.)” On top of this bias are then layered the structures of an “agent’s praxis, set in material, intersubjective and social context”, which is presented as another synchronic hierarchy, beginning with “agency (transformative negation of the given)” on top of which is “conscious absorption in the task at hand” on which is put “reflective monitoring of everyday (or exceptional) spatio-temporalized activities,” on top of which is “meta-reflexively totalizing [awareness of] self-situation,” and finally “subjectivity” is perched atop the whole. Crucially, this whole model is presented in the context of a discussion concerning the importance of the capacity for *a meta-reflexively totalizing awareness of the self-situation*, which is suggested as necessary for truth seeking as well as providing the distance necessary from social-structural determinations to enable emancipatory action (i.e., this capacity, like the four-part judgment form, is a condition for the possibility of totalizing depth praxis). It is worth quoting at length to get a sense of what this capacity entails (Bhaskar 1993 pp. 148-50):

Consider an agent N’s participation in, say, an experimental programme. Amidst a multiplicity of practices and spatio-temporal paths she engages in a distanced and self-reflexively monitoring participation in a particular aspect of it. Suppose she has to test, as a member of a research team, a particle’s spin. She is focusing on untying a knot in a cord. She is competently doing so. She is aware of the role of her task in the context of the overall programme and in the context of the hierarchy and plurality of projects with their own rhythmicities in her life. She could recall last night’s TV, she is aware that she has an unconscious, that the sign has a trace structure, of the metaphoricity of language use, the very language she is using now, that she is subject, in a multiplicity of dimensions, to the internal drag of the

past and its delayed casual efficacy. She knows she will die as so much cosmic dust at the same time as she is untying the knot and attending to the matter at hand....She know all this in a meta- reflexively totalizing (reflection on her praxis and) situation of her life....The same concept of a meta- reflexively totalizing situation allows the agent to understand both that her engagement with reality is inexorably linguistic and that reality must be referentially detached from her language use.... It is also the concept of a meta-reflexively totalizing situation that allows us to appreciate how we can have a future despite the saturation of social (and to an extent natural) life with the past.

It should take very little thought to realize that the capacity being described here is developmentally extremely complex and assumes basically a Ph.D. level education. Put to one side that this agent is testing a particle's spin, a choice of activity that at once reveals the profound distance between this example and the everyday experiences of the vast majority of humanity. The forms of reflexivity, meta-linguistic, meta-autobiographical, and meta-historical awareness described greatly surpass the four-part judgment form in requiring developmental achievements contingent upon the availability and utilization of educational resources (and recall the four-part judgment form was already shown to be placing the bar too high). For example, this type of meta-linguistic awareness—where languages itself is taken as an object, understood as giving structure and texture to experience, while also being epistemologically problematic—this has been shown empirically to appear only at the highest levels of epistemological and personality development (see: Broughton, 1975; Wilber, 1999). Moreover, this is only one of several equally complex capacities that make up this meta-reflexively totalizing awareness of the self-situation. Yet this form of awareness is built right into the model of the stratified self and discussed in this example *as if it was a common or universal human endowment*—a near perfect example of the cognitive maturity fallacy.

The very same problem occurs in other places in the text. Take the discussion and figures presenting models of the stratification of agency and action (Bhaskar, 1993 pp. 265-67, Figures 2.28 & 2.29). These present the human as not only fully-grown, but as well educated, suggesting that we can take as given capacities for self-reflection, accountability oriented self-monitoring, and expressive veracity. And again, it is the assumed presence of these capacities that lays the groundwork for the arguments that follow concerning the potentials of totalizing depth praxis for human liberation. These capacities are taken as the *starting point* for the unfolding of a dialectical life and as much needed catalysts for enlivening social transformations. Not to beat a dead horse, but: these capacities presented as the starting point are, in fact, the *outcome* of a long developmental and educational trajectory, which is in no way guaranteed to unfold toward such a socially and personally advantageous culmination.

I can almost hear the protests from the DCR camp: “But *of course* these capacities are very sophisticated, require education, and cannot be assumed to be universally available to all; the whole thrust of *Dialectic* makes clear the contingency and messiness of developmental processes, as well as the oppressive power₂ relation that can undermine potentials for human flourishing.” To which my response is: *that is exactly my point!* This is an immanent critique; Bhaskar knows better. I am simply pointing out that, given the overall arguments in *Dialectic*, it makes no sense to present these kinds of capacities as if they are simply given.⁷ More importantly, because of the emancipatory and political

⁷ I am not taking up the question *why* these capacities are presented in this way: there is no space here for a meta-critique₂ type exploration of the historical, socio-cultural, and political reasons behind the occurrence of the cognitive maturity fallacy in DCR. Suffice it to say that despite DCR’s distance from and critiques of traditional academic philosophy, DRC is nevertheless a philosopher’s philosophy. Aside from the notorious difficulty of the writing style and vocabulary choices, it assumes background knowledge of a wide array of philosophical traditions and ideas. This means that it was written for and is read by *highly educated individuals*. These are the very same individuals about whom it is reasonable to assume their having developed many of these higher level capacities, which explains, in part,

thrust of the text, and the essential role these higher level capacities play in the central arguments, it stands to reason that a great deal more about the development of these capacities needs to be said. If DCR suggests that it is a long and complex road for individuals to get to where they can *exercise* the freedoms that are their birthright, why does it not offer any road maps, or even any suggestions and elaborations concerning the lamentable detours and potential cul-de-sacs? According to its own terms, the DCR project *requires* insights about what can go wrong in individual development (beyond passing mentions concerning the internalization of power₂ relations), as well as insights into how to insure healthy and full development (beyond platitudes about human flourishing and dialectical life projects). Without substantial insights along these lines we are left unequipped to undertake the meta-critical analyses and concrete utopian theorizing necessary to fundamentally alter the existing social realities that radically impact the shape of human development.

Diachronic emergent capacities developmentalism: a gift from IT to DC

This emancipatory component of [developmental] structuralism is a fruitful area of inquiry.... If development in general moves from pre-conventional to conventional to post-conventional... then a profound motivation of doing adequate [developmental] structuralism is to help individuals and cultures move from egocentric and ethnocentric stances toward more worldcentric levels of compassion, care, and consciousness.... On the other hand, simply asserting that we should all learn a worldcentric ecology, or embrace global compassion, is

why the cognitive maturity fallacy would remain undetected and even be perpetuated—only those in whom these higher level capacities are present can even read the text, and for them and those they associate with these capacities *do* appear as given. This elitist academic insularity has also been compounded by the politically Leftist nature of DCR: the Left takes as taboo any discussion of politically significant differences in individual capacity, which are taken as anti-democratic, and often rightly so, given the use by the Right of reductive (and racist) genetic arguments about innate intelligence (e.g., Herrnstein and Murray, 1994). This inarticulacy on the Left concerning individual differences in reasoning capacity and personality structure has contributed the ineffectualness of many contemporary Leftist political movements, especially in educational reform, a point I will return to in the final section below.

a noble but pragmatically less-than-useful project, because worldcentric levels are the product of development, not exhortation.... The “new paradigm” approaches exhort a goal without elucidating the path to that goal—they are cheerleaders for a cause that has no means of actualization, which perhaps explains the deep frustrations among new-paradigm advocates who know they have a better ideal but are disappointed at how little the world responds to their calls.

-Wilber (2003 p.109)

It is easy trace the cognitive maturity fallacy found in *Dialectic* back to Bhaskar’s (1979) earlier pre-dialectical work *On the Possibility of Naturalism* (PON). This work provides unrivaled philosophical underlaboring for both sociology and psychology, and is similar to Habermas’s (1970) *On the Logic of the Social Sciences*, being written around the same time to address the same issues. Both of these books can be read as primarily written to reveal the emancipatory power of the human sciences, which are characterized as intrinsically tied into possibilities for emancipation, liberation, and the subversion of demi-realities. Most important for our purpose here, and being the central move that puts distance between himself and Habermas, are Bhaskar’s arguments that psychology as a science must be based on a *synchronic emergent powers materialism* (SEPM). SEPM argues for the real casual efficacy of reason (and thus the ontological irreducibility of human agency and mental life) in the material world as an emergent property of natural systems of sufficient complexity. Whereas Habermas reproduces the Neo-Kantian *division* between humanity and nature, leaving unaddressed essential ontological issues centering the place of mind in the material world, Bhaskar provides transcendental arguments that ontologically position humanity *within* nature and place psychology on a firmly naturalistic basis. However, the point here is that, as important as the SEPM model

is, it begins the trend that would be carried forward into DCR of modeling the human individual *synchronically*.

It is illuminating to compare SEPM with the model of the “compound individual” that Wilber developed, which has played a major role in his theorizing beginning with his first work *Spectrum of Consciousness* (1978) all the way through to the nearly full blown articulations of IT found in *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality* (1995). The model of the compound individual, a phrase taken from Whitehead (1929), is very similar to the SEMP model, in so far as it is an attempt to characterize the human individual as a nested hierarchy, beginning with a naturally determined material substrate, leading up through ever more complex biological organization, resulting eventually in the emergence of the *sapience* characteristic of human psychological qualities and traits. Some of the ontological distinctions between the two models are beside the point here.⁸ What is important here is that the hierarchical strata of Wilber’s compound individual *evolve into place* during the course of the lifespan and, moreover, Wilber identifies the processes by which emergent capacities emerge from previously emergent capacities in an iterative expansion of embodied consciousness, skill, cognition, and emotion.

Recall the quote above where Wilber states, “every single person will...*start development at square one*, as a single-celled zygote.” What is implied here is an essential point: *even the biological substrate that supports human consciousness is an*

⁸ One essential ontological difference between the two models that is not discussed here is Wilber’s thoroughgoing *panpsychism*. That is, for Wilber, consciousness does not only (or suddenly) appear in highly organized forms of matter—popping out of the top, or being “secreted” from matter only at the pinnacle of terrestrial evolution. Rather, consciousness (in some form) goes *all the way down*, and thus the unique qualities of human consciousness are taken as expressing not only the development of matter, but also the evolution of consciousness itself. There is not space here to go into the complexities of this view (which requires an essential distinction between *sentience* and *sapience*, see Brandom, 1994), nor is there space to explore the degree to which Bhaskar’s ontology allows for this possibility (I think it does).

outcome of individual development. We all begin development in utero. And as the tragedies of birth defects and poverty stricken mothers teach, the normal development of even our most basic biological endowments cannot be taken for granted. This is why many insightful educational reformers argue that educational reform begins with the care of the pregnant future mother (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2010). It can be too late if we wait for the child to reach school age, after years of nutritional deprivation and toxic stress—often starting in the womb—have left their nervous system literally unable to learn.

The point here is that SEMP deals with emergence in a strictly *synchronic* manner (as the name itself implies). It may be a useful way to consider the ontological status of human psychological powers, but it assumes the prior normal development of (at least) the biological substrate of the individual nervous system. More importantly, *new capacities and powers keep emerging throughout an individual's life*, and while each time a new power emerges the SEMP model can put it in its ontological place, the model does not account for the *diachronic* processes that are necessary for any and all psychological powers and capacities to exist. This is why I suggest working toward articulating the constellational unity of SEMP with some form of a *diachronic emergent capacities developmentalism* (DECD).

The shape and details of this DECD should be determined through a concerted effort on the part of those working with DCR to grapple with the developmental tradition, and IT in particular. IT is worthy of specific focus, as opposed to focusing just on Piaget or Kohlberg, or any other individual developmental researcher, because IT provides a set of invaluable meta-theoretical distinctions as part of a developmental meta-model, an *Integral Psychology* (Wilber, 1999). IT is also by far the most philosophically

sophisticated and wide-ranging expansion and deepening of developmental studies to date. So while there is not one model or even one research programme within the developmental tradition that can satisfy what DCR needs in a DECD, IT can provide an orientation to the field particularly amenable to the task.

For the rest of this paper I will simply take off from Wilber's DECD and *begin* to explore the patterns that appear when it is brought into the constellational structure of DCR. I am not even going to touch the epistemological and ontological issues raised as a result of interanimating these two meta-theories.⁹ Instead, my project is political. Namely, to begin to articulate the emancipatory philosophy of education that emerges during the encounter between DCR and IT, specifically that aspect of the encounter that results in DCR's overcoming of the cognitive maturity fallacy through the insertion of Wilber's DECD into Bhaskar's SEMP.

Conclusion: philosophy of education as first philosophy

Philosophers in general, although they are themselves usually teachers, have not taken education with sufficient seriousness for it to occur to them... that philosophizing should focus about education as the supreme human interest in which, moreover, other problems, cosmological, moral, logical come to a head.

-Dewey (1930 p.156)

In rejecting the cognitive maturity fallacy and adopting a DECD we immediately face questions surrounding the problem of *paternalism*. A philosophy aiming to promote

⁹ Some of the issues here concern the role of enactment and constructivism in developmental epistemologies, as well as the implications of the co-evolution of ontologies and epistemologies. The importation of DECD impacts some of the central elements of DCR, especially the relations and distinctions between the ontic/ontological and the transitive/intransitive dimensions.

totalizing depth praxis must face the fact that not everyone is currently capable of this form of agency and thus it must argue in favor of actions that will foster the development of this ability. This follows from the broader insight stemming from the adoption of a DECD: *not everyone knows what is good for them*. The implication is that we have an educational responsibility to others; those with greater knowledge and capacity *must* act so as to raise others into the fullness of their capacities.¹⁰ But recall footnote 6 above where I suggest that politically relevant differences in cognitive ability are a taboo subject in Leftist discourse, which has contributed to the perpetuation of the cognitive maturity fallacy. Too often this stems from a sense that paternalism is *always* an unnecessary stance taken up by oppressors in the context of power₂ relations, being necessarily tied into the use of force and leaning toward forms of coercive human engineering. And indeed, this has often been the case; as will be discussed below, the Right often embraces just such a paternalistic form of politics in education. Nevertheless, the educational implications of a DECD suggest that *the constraint of freedom is a necessary part enabling greater future freedom*. If we take as given things like the capacity for a meta-reflexively totalizing awareness of the self-situation (or even the four-part judgment form) we can end up abnegating our educational responsibilities and leaving others to have more freedom than is healthy and appropriate. That freedom is unhealthy and inappropriate the exercise of which disallows future freedom. Dewey (1916) understood this very clearly and was at pains to make this point clear to those in

¹⁰ Importantly, none of this talk about the absence of capacities in individuals should be taken to mean that true freedom is not a latent and native potential for all individuals, or that certain politically relevant capacities are simply not available to certain individuals. Barring severe and tragic forms of disability, the field of developmental studies provides no reason to consider any individual uneducable or to believe that certain capacities are beyond anyone's reach. We may not all have it in us to become Einsteins and Gandhis, but essential capacities constituting, for example, totalizing depth praxis should be understood as potentially available to all, *given the presence of the right educational environments and the absence of the wrong ones*.

the progressive educational movement that took up his name while creating educational environments that were so “free” they damaged students’ future prospects for living a fully autonomous life (e.g., students not “naturally drawn” to reading and mathematics being allowed to remain illiterate and unable to multiply).

The fact that children’s’ autonomy is *always* in some way overridden through education is a very important issue (in education at any level and in developmental work in general—it is part of *all* student/teacher dynamics). Indeed, children (and many adults) don't know what is good for them and often can't be recruited to their own cause. The point here is that there are more and less acceptable ways to impinge upon anyone's burgeoning autonomy. This difference between negative and positive forms of paternalism becomes extremely important when we introduce a DECD into DCR, because now we must deal with the fact that individuals need to be educated *into* freedom in the context of complex power₂ relations. Lack of education or exposure to the wrong kinds can imprison the mind, while access to the right kinds of education can liberate the mind. The question here is how to characterize the difference between educational relationships and processes that are oppressive and this that are emancipatory. I argue that this difference can be directly intuited in the form of the educational relationships established between concrete singular individuals (Stein, 2010; 2013).

There is a difference between doing something *to* someone, doing something *for* someone, and doing something *with* someone. Ideally, education is undertaken *with* someone. Beyond a certain level of maturity, individuals can often be reasoned with about what is in their own interest, in which case teacher and student collaborate in a mutually educative undertaking (all good teaching requires that the teacher learn from

their student, even if only to understand where they are coming from). Of course, this cannot always be the case. When it is clear an individual is not willing or able to take responsibility for his or her own development then we are obligated to override this individual's autonomy to some degree. This is done unjustly when they are treated in ways they would not consent to under the condition of full knowledge—it's unjust when something is done *to* them, not *for* them. However, it is possible *to act in ways we believe they could not reasonably object to* (if they knew enough to make a decision that would be in their own interest). That is, it is possible to limit the autonomy of another without it being merely a result of coercive power₂ relations (although, in most cases power₂ relations are in play, e.g., laws that require school attendance). The difference between coercive education and emancipatory education is the difference between doing something *to* someone and doing something *for* someone. This is close to the classic parental, "you'll thank me some day"—it is a kind of thought experiment in which considerations concerning the probability of future consent are informed by a recognition of the concrete singular individual before you, the validation of whose unique life trajectory requires the use of broad standards of reasonableness, as well as an abiding and explicit desire to establish a cooperative relation with them *as soon as possible* (Habermas, 2003). Importantly, this is also a way of considering the ethical issues involved in educational power₂ dynamics that transcends but includes questions about *justice between generations*, as often this form of educational activity must be done between members of the same generation.

Make no mistake: in today's educational institutions the problem is usually *not* an excess of freedom resulting from an abnegation of educational authority, but rather a

profound lack of freedom resulting from the infantilizing and oppressive exercise of educational authority. The point here is that the inability of the Left to understand and embrace educational power₂ dynamics has resulted in a failure of nerve and a strategically significant inarticulacy and ineffectiveness in the field of education. This inability to clarify the differences between liberating and oppressive forms of paternalism, has led to a certain post-modern squeamishness concerning the educative use of power₂ relations and thus opened the door for the authoritarian modernization of schooling by the Right, who understand the political significance of a kind of DECD, and thus have mounted a concerted multi-decade effort to use education to their own ends (Apple, 2013).

There was a time when public school systems raised the cultural center of gravity, and in some places they still do, but on the whole this time has passed. At this point schools (from kindergarten through university) are literally being designed so that students end up less developed than they would be if they spent the equivalent amount of time doing something else; education is done *to* them, not *for* them—there is no reason to believe they would ever consent to the way they are treated if they had full knowledge of their situation and the full potential of their latent human capacities. Elsewhere I have discussed the dominance of *reductive human capital theory* (RHCT) as an orienting meta-theory of education in late-capitalist societies (Stein, 2013). We are also witnessing the simultaneous widespread hijacking of education by forms of fundamentalism, extremism, and nationalism, which are designed to perpetuate violence and terror, and which create humans with grotesque personalities that are bound and imprisoned in ideology—bringing to mind the theological notion that the opposite of the human is not

the animal; the opposite of the human is the demonic (Blumenthal, 1993). It is important to understand that these educational configurations (that go way beyond mere schooling) have arisen as a result of complex and well-coordinated forms of educational activism, usually justified by DECD-type insights into the profound malleability of the most essential human dispositions and capacities. These forms of activism have stepped into the void created by the aforementioned failure of nerve on the part of the Left, who now protest all forms power₂ and paternalism, instead of embracing their appropriate and necessary uses as part of the process of human emancipation.

Beginning in the 1980's and leading up through the first decades of the 21st century, educational systems around the world became subject to a form of authoritarian modernization, wherein neo-liberal RHCT aligned with conservative (and in the US) religious fundamentalist political actors to create a hegemonic block (Apple, 2001; 2013). During these decades educational systems became increasingly characterized by career oriented technical knowledge, conservative social values, standardized forms of curriculum and testing, authoritarian social relations, privatization, and marketization. One of the essential pillars of this *global education reform movement* (aka: GERM, see: Sahlberg, 2012) has been sophisticated and self-conscious political organization and activism on the Right, which reflects their implicit rejection of the cognitive maturity fallacy and related recognition of the realities of a DECD. That is, they understand the formative impact of education on essential capacities, claim to know what is good for others and the world, and are willing to use coercive and strategic means to exert as wide an educative influence as possible. These trends are compounded by the efforts of the so-called "billionaire boys club" (Racvitch, 2013) who have leveraged their positions as

captains of industry to wield unrivaled influence over the shape of educational reform, so drastically shaping the funding landscape that many self-ascribed liberals have embraced policies that would previously have only appealed to conservatives (e.g., charter schools, school choice, marketization, accountability-oriented testing). A few wealthy individuals are drastically and unilaterally impacting the shape of schooling, displaying undisguised the interests and power of capital in shaping human development; all this supports the ideas of those who fear a return to the patterns of the Gilded Age (Piketty, 2014), which was the only other time in history that the power of capital to shape education was so extreme.

All this also makes clear the essentially *contradictory* role of education, which can be either a liberating force or a force of oppression. While the drive to freedom cannot be totally vanquished, and remains always latent even in the most oppressed and “wretched of the earth” (Fanon, 1961), it is also true that oppressive forms of education can radically *disable* individuals, undercutting the development of capacities that are a precondition for the exercise of totalizing depth praxis. Because of the ineliminable innate freedom of all humans, some will develop these capacities *despite* the system; counter hegemonic practices are always present, even in the most repressive educational regimes (Apple, 2013). Nevertheless, any true DECD should convey a sense of *urgency* concerning the cultural transmission of certain essential capacities—which are not guaranteed to each reemerge with each new generation—as well as providing insights into the necessary future emergence of unprecedented capacities, as humanity continues to grow up and into the full stature of its freedom. As discussed above, many of the capacities that we take for granted (even ones as fundamental as the four-part judgment

form) are, in fact, historically emergent, were at one time unprecedented, and remain reliant upon the continuation of complex processes of cultural transmission and education. And just because these capacities have emerged to become taken for granted aspects of social life does not rule out their wide-spread disappearance due to socio-cultural regression or organized repression through oppressive education.

This way of understanding the function of education in social reproduction and individual development, which is foregrounded in the merger of IT and DCR, leads me to echo Dewey and argue for *the primacy of education as a philosophical concern*. Whereas Aristotle argued that metaphysics was to be taken as *first philosophy*—the most important branch, the one from which all else follows—Kant argued it was epistemology. More recently following the linguistic turn, it was semiotics and philosophy of language that were given philosophical primacy. However, as suggested by Dewey in the quote that began this section, all aspects of philosophy come to a head in the problem of education; it may be that the philosophy of education should be taken as first philosophy, as synthesizing all other branches and dealing with the most essential tasks of philosophy in its service to humanity—providing us with a (non-foundationalist) foundation in our approach to follow the injunction: ‘know thy self.’

It is interesting to note in this light that the word ‘education’ does not appear in the index of *Dialectic*. Yet there are places in the text where Bhaskar (1993 pp. 158 & 262) is fully aware of the unique power and position of educational processes. In at least two places he locates education as a basic right that serve as the condition for the possibility of other rights, including the right to truth:

The oppressed have a direct material interest in knowledge of [power₂] relations that the oppressors do not. Is this why there is a constant tendency for those in power in times of (or in revenge for) crisis to repeat the sin against Socrates and education generally? The real importance of the explanatory critical derivation of values from facts and practices from theories is that it can be generalized to cover the failures to satisfy other axiological needs, necessities and interests besides truth, including *those which are the necessary conditions for truth*, such as basic health, *education*, and ergonomic efficiency (Bhaskar, 1993 p. 262. emphasis added).

So it is that all our global crises are best understood as crises of education. As Wilber (1995) argues in several places, the crises of the biosphere are in fact crises of education and decision-making. Until enough of humanity ascends to higher levels of worldcentric consciousness, capacity, and responsibility, even transformations of the legal system will not be enough to stave off ecological disaster, as citizens must not only know the letter of the law, but also understand why it should be considered as reasonable. In the US, the recent economic crisis has involved the best graduates from our most prestigious schools, our greatest test takers, and our academic over-achievers, who leveraged Ivy League success to land (ridiculously) high paying jobs in the financial sector. Their greed and incompetence speaks eloquently to the failure of our educational system. But the economic crisis was also a crisis capacity and decision-making, as the sheer complexity of the global economy has begun to outstrip the analytical tools used to understand it. Of course, our political crises are multifold and entrenched, but they are also all at root educational. The emergence of a “post-truth” democracy coincides directly with the dominance of the RHCT educational reforms alluded to above. Just as unique technologically-wrought spaces open possibilities for truly deliberative forms of democracy, they are occupied by a generation of minds warped by inadequate and oppressive schooling, who are unable to reflectively participate in democratic discourse. Terror and fundamentalism are the result of massive and perverse educational

initiatives—terrorists of all stripes are educated into a life of murder and hold beliefs that are divorced from regulation by anything like the ideal of rationality implied by the four-part judgment form. And finally, our collective spiritual and personal crises appear in the common sense adoption of an abstract individualist materialism and a kind of crass and flagrant nihilism; these emerge from the very fabric and content of our schooling and socialization patterns. An education revolution is necessary for survival (ecology), security (terror and fundamentalism), liberation (economics), sanity (spirituality and personality), and democracy (politics).

It is for these reasons that I have chosen to focus on the revolutionary implications of the encounter between IT and DCR, and have located education as the focus of praxis aimed at realizing the possibilities of these emancipatory meta-theories. In DCR terms, the next step is to begin the meta-critically informed articulation of concrete utopian alternatives and to thus clarify the directions in which preferable future lie. It is in working toward this end that a truly fruitful merger of DCR and IT might begin (Despain & Stein, in preparation).

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