

**Ivan Illich's Theory of Learning: From Theology to Philosophy**

by

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## Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Statement of Authorship.....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Defining an Illichian Set of Terms	
a. On Technological Positivism .....	6
i. Common Ground Amongst Illich's Various Strands of Thought .....	6
ii. Technology .....	7
iii. Positivism.....	10
b. Prometheus and the Unknown.....	15
Chapter 2: Illich's Theological History	
a. The Prometheanism of the Institution.....	22
b. The Institutionalisation of Christianity.....	25
c. <i>Corruptio optimi quae est pessima</i> .....	30
Chapter 3: Schooling	
a. Illich's Modernity and The Disembodiment of the Gaze .....	37
b. Ritual and Alienation .....	41
c. On Educational Research .....	46
i. Institutional Learning .....	46
ii. The Object of Learning .....	55
iii. <i>Title One</i> .....	62
Chapter 4: The Embrace	
a. Introduction to the Philosophical Attempt.....	67
b. Naming Epimetheus .....	70
c. Promethean Knowing.....	74
i. The Certainty of Prometheus: Expectation and Correspondence ....	74
ii. The Accumulation of Promethean Knowing: Apparatus and Objectivity .....	81
iii. The Tragedy of Prometheus.....	89
d. An Illustration of Illichian Learning .....	98
i. A Proposal .....	98
ii. The Dialogue .....	100
Conclusion.....	108
Bibliography .....	109

## Abstract

This thesis is an exposition of Ivan Illich's notion of learning. My central claim is that, while Illich's thought has directed itself at other concerns, it is possible to develop a philosophical reconstruction of his concept of education. This is conducted by making explicit an interpretation of his fundamental ideas surrounding schooling, agency, and the possibility of overcoming the formalism of technological thinking. I begin this process by recounting Illich's theological concerns as the basis for his analysis of modern schooling, and from this I then move to a discussion of his fundamental educational thought by revisiting his *Deschooling Society*. Through these expositions and critical re-interpretations of Illich's thinking, I develop an Illichian theory of learning that recognises his affirmation of the individuality of the student as central to any pedagogy. This critical re-appropriation of Illich respects the religious grounding of his thought, and pushes beyond his theological framework by offering a philosophical appreciation of learning that can be applied in both secular and post-secular settings alike.

## **Statement of Authorship**

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

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To my mother and father, to whom my son's debt remains unpaid. I love you.

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Thanks to Alonso and David. You have both introduced me to Ivan, and through him, I have come to appreciate what before I could only imagine.

This work owes its entirety to Ivan Illich. I hope I have interpreted your words and thoughts without compromise.

The learning I prize is immeasurable re-creation.

Deschooling Society, Ivan Illich<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1971), 58.

## Introduction

Ivan Illich's work in *Deschooling Society* 'bestowed on him celebrity status'.<sup>1</sup> It is, perhaps, this strange reception to Illich, in which his ideas are widely discussed, and then dismissed, that lead him to being 'one of the most enigmatic figures in the institutional debates that happened in the American continent during the decades of the sixties and seventies'.<sup>2</sup> However, in the recent literature Illich's ideas are being reconsidered by a small circle of critics.<sup>3</sup> And it is part of this growing contemporary scholarship that this thesis attempts to contribute its own interpretation of Illich.

Focusing on Illich's educational thoughts, the work here focusses on his concept of learning. Illich's *Deschooling Society*, albeit being a book published discussing his educational analysis, is nevertheless a work more concerned with bringing about a conversation in its contemporary time on the purposes and meaning of education.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it was never Illich's intention to develop a theory of learning than it was to analyse schooling's role as a central institution of modern life.

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<sup>1</sup> David Gabbard, 'The Second Death of Ivan Illich: A Theoretico-Active Analysis of a Discursive Practice of Exclusion', Ph.D. thesis (University of Cincinnati, 1991), 105. Here, Gabbard lists two statements to present a claim that Illich's work in the 1970s, beginning with *Deschooling Society*, drew widespread attention. Despite this, Gabbard's thesis produces a Foucauldian analysis in which educational literature has, over time, silenced Illich.

<sup>2</sup> Alonso Baptista, 'From Individuals to Citizens: Towards a Radical Education Imaginary in American Modernity. A Castoriadean Reading of Three American Radical Education Theorists and Practitioners in the Twentieth Century: Dewey, Illich, and Freire', Ph.D. thesis (La Trobe University, 2018), 33.

<sup>3</sup> See Sandro Serpa, Ana Santos and Carlos Ferreira, 'Contributions of Ivan Illich to Education in a Digital Society', *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 9/2 (2020), 23-30; Silja Samerski, 'Tools for Degrowth? Ivan Illich's Critique of Technology Revisited', *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 197/1 (2018), 1637-1646; Jesse Perillo, 'Ignoring and Encountering the Tragic Neighbor Through the Built Environment', *The International Journal of Illich Studies*, 4/1 (2015), 55-69. I have listed here only three examples, but they are each articles dealing with disparate parts of Illich's thinking and their implications. In the context of this thesis, as it relates to education, studies on Illich are characterised by Bruno-Jofre and Zaldivar as: 'part of a search for new frames of reference in critical pedagogy on the part of educators committed to ecological, anticapitalist, and messianic movements, and of those attempting to theorize the changes brought by new information and communication technologies to pedagogy and education'. Rosa Bruno-Jofré and Jon Zaldivar, 'Ivan Illich's Late Critique of *Deschooling Society*: "I Was Largely Barking Up the Wrong Tree"', *Educational Theory*, 62/5 (2012), 573-592, 573. See also *The International Journal of Illich Studies* which has recently been publishing work on Illich in a convivial manner.

<sup>4</sup> Illich often referred to his works in the 1970s as 'pamphlets' which were less systematic and in-depth than they were intended to 'make people discuss the question' they elicited. Ivan Illich, *Ivan Illich in Conversation* (Concord: House of Anansi Press, 1992), 108. However, even though Illich self-described the books as such they are nevertheless works that show considerable intellectual rigour.

This thesis seeks to develop an Illichian notion of learning. This is attempted based on the terms and concepts that Illich has produced. Although a developed understanding of learning is the objective, this thesis posits, here initially, the idea that an Illichian learning cannot be ascertained only through his educational work. That to move towards an idea that Illich never explicitly worked out himself requires an evaluation of Illich's fundamental ideas. These ideas relate to his interpretation of the Greek myth of Prometheus and the Christian parable of the Good Samaritan.<sup>5</sup>

Basing itself on Illich's reading of these two stories, this thesis seeks to retrace the steps of Illichian thinking, from its fundamental considerations, towards a speculative development regarding what may be described as an Illichian 'notion of learning'. Being an interpretation of Illich, this work attempts to justify its positions through three stages of Illich's thinking. The first relates to a set of definitions in which the rest of the thesis will be grounded. This set of definitions is produced out of Illich's reading of the myth of Prometheus in Chapter One.

The second stage refers most directly to how Illich's theology is considered central to our speculative attempt at interpreting Illichian thinking. Based upon Illich's reading of the Samaritan story, this stage seeks to recognise the essential elements of Illich's thinking and to evaluate its concerns towards his use of the Latin proverb *corruptio optimi quae est pessima*: the corruption of the best is the worst. This adage, which Illich uses to characterise his theological concerns of modernity, is the attempt to describe the situation out of which modern schooling arises. And so, based upon a discussion of how Illich conceives of the development of modernity from Christian institutionalisation, Chapter Two further grounds itself in Illichian thinking in order to prepare the discussion of schooling, education, and learning.

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<sup>5</sup> In Todd Hartch's biography of Illich, Hartch makes the claim that Illich's 'writing had a hidden purpose', one which 'camouflaged' his theology. Todd Hartch, *The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 145. David Cayley, on the other hand, would suggest the opposite. That Illich's works in the 1970s are not the ends of his thinking, that education or medicine or the economy are not the fundamental issues of critique for Illich. Rather, that Illich's theology is the core of his thinking, and that the thematic concerns discussed in his books are the means in which Illich had expressed his essential ideas. See Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2005). Furthermore, Charles Taylor, in his foreword to *The Rivers North of the Future*, states: 'We all owe a debt to David Cayley for bringing to the public this statement of the core thinking of Ivan Illich. It is an understatement to say that those who have read the books for which Illich is best known, even those most enthused by them, have rarely seen into the rich and complex position which underlies them'. Ibid. Charles Taylor, Foreword, ix.



The final stage of retracing Illich's thoughts, where this thesis attempts to think through Illich, occurs in its discussion of his educational work. As stated, Illich's work regarding schooling was not intended to be a systematic analysis of the institution, but rather a 'polemic' in which wider conversations regarding his critiques were had in the 1970s. This understanding, alongside Illich's own statement that his work is intended to contribute 'concepts' for future research, is taken in this thesis as the impetus for its own contribution.

This third stage is then the explicit discussion of what it is that Illich did have to say regarding learning. As part of his critique in *Deschooling Society*, Illich makes the claim that the institutionalisation of learning obstructs rather than promotes this central concept of education. Chapter Three discusses Illich's analysis of the ritual of schooling, his educational turn to the concept of alienation, and his referral to the educational program *Title One*. This chapter seeks to recognise the concerns found in Illich's reading of Prometheus, and in how the institution of schooling manifests in parallel to the effects of the institutionalisation of Christianity. By these terms, this third chapter attempts a conceptualisation of these three stages. That the terms of Prometheus, the history of Christian theology, and the modernity of schooling all provide a contextual basis in which the concept of learning may be approached in an Illichian way.

The fourth chapter begins the speculative attempt at developing a more fully realised understanding of learning. It is a notion of learning that is entirely Illichian, and one that Illich had not taken on as a project in his own time. Thus, Chapter Four conducts an original interpretation of Illichian thinking as its contribution to the literature. As the thesis has retraced Illich's thoughts through the first three chapters, Chapter Four attempts to justify the validity of its interpretation based upon the foundation in which the retracing of Illich's ideas are grounded in an appreciation for the essential considerations that find themselves a part of Illich's thinking.

This justification, however, does not attempt only to reinvigorate the theology found apparent in Illich's ideas. On the one hand, the interpretation grounds itself in Illich's essential thinking, his theological concerns, and on the other appreciates his statement that his theology 'can be investigated historically, and, for this, neither faith nor belief is required'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 60.

Thus, this thesis seeks to move beyond the category of theology, and to universalise Illich's concerns to a position where a reader requires neither 'faith nor belief' to appreciate Illichian ideas. This attempt is conducted by the terms of a philosophical approach to its interpretation. In doing so, the philosophical notions of Illich's ideas are first and foremost represented by his theology. For example, Robert McGurrian states:

Illich's analysis of the nature of man in relation to contemporary institutions emphasizes the integrity of the individual [...] His caustic criticism of society are understandably religiously and theologically inspired. Illich's vision of a convivial society and the role of man within his milieu is based upon the theological view of Christian humanism.<sup>7</sup>

Based upon Illich's assumptions about human agency, the philosophical approach seeks to develop a phenomenology in which his theology may be universally recognised.<sup>8</sup> The human agency at play is taken to be from the perspective of Promethean knowing. This thesis suggests that there is a revolutionary potential in the relationship that Illich endorses in his reading of the stories of Prometheus and the Samaritan. And as the phenomenological method is to reconstruct this potential – by beginning with an explication of Illich's critique of the thinking that underlies modern institutionalisation. The phenomenology of Prometheus is then described to appreciate Illich beyond his theological terms. It is to describe the experience and agency of Promethean knowing as a philosophical method of thinking, one in which a reader may recognise Illich's concerns without having first needing to accept his theological ideas.

As this thesis works as an interpretation, the development towards an Illichian notion of learning moves through the phenomenology of Prometheus to achieve a stage of an a-theological recognition. And it is this achievement in recognising Illich's own thoughts about the universal and philosophical potential of his theology, that this thesis

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<sup>7</sup> Robert McGurrian, 'The Sociological, Philosophical, and Educational Thought of Ivan Illich and Adam Curle', Ph.D. thesis (University of Southern California, 1978), 71-72. Erich Fromm would agree with McGurrian's categorisation of 'Christian humanism', although Fromm's own term is 'radical humanism'. See Ivan Illich, *Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973).

<sup>8</sup> The phenomenological approach is itself attempted as an interpretation of Illich. In *Deschooling Society*, as a precursor to the main analyses of the book, Illich writes a brief chapter titled 'Phenomenology of School'. This philosophical preface is itself not a systematic method, but rather Illich's attempt to 'develop a language in which we can speak about school without such constant recourse to education'. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 38. And so, the philosophical method in this thesis is the attempt to develop a universal language in which we may be able to speak about Illichian ideas without constant recourse to its theological basis.

seeks to re-read Illich's most Christian argument drawn from a close reading that of the Samaritan parable. It is to say that the philosophical work moves our thinking towards a position of a non-fideist or agnostic appreciation, and it is from this position, that to move back towards Illich opens the potential for appreciating his theological argument by using analogous non-theological terms. And it is only in this revisiting moment where I posit that Illich's theory of learning can be usefully understood by Christians and non-believers alike.

## Chapter 1: Defining an Illichian Set of Terms

### a. On Technological Positivism

#### i. Common Ground Amongst Illich's Various Strands of Thought

Bookstores tends to file Illich in sociology, but he neither had nor accepted any comfortable academic niche, and his works range across a dozen conventional categories from anthropology and economics to philosophy and theology.<sup>1</sup>

The idiosyncratic ways in which Illich expressed his various ideas locate him in a unique albeit categorically nebulous position. As this thesis contextualises its study within Illich's educational theme, it also at the same time recognises that such a context is ultimately unable to contend with Illich's thinking, if the attempt hopes to reach an essential core of Illich's thinking. The solution presented is to begin this thesis with a development of a set of terms which unify the relevant concepts that are to be used.

The set of terms consists of two ideas. The first is to attempt to describe the various concerns found in Illich by a *technological positivism*. The second is to substantiate this idea by interpreting how such a term is found to be relevant to Illich, this is conducted by the intention to read technological positivism in Illich's interpretation of the Greek myth of Prometheus. In doing this, the intention is to ground this thesis in an idea that remains central to Illich, and at the same time is able to find a scope in the various discussions that Illich was involved in.

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<sup>1</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, David Cayley, Footnote 68, 236.

## ii. Technology

I will detail and define technological positivism through two approaches to Illich's thinking. The first being his treatment of technology<sup>2</sup> and the second being his discussion of the institutionalisation of values. Firstly, Illich's discussion of technology is a thread that runs throughout his life's work. His main conception concerns how '[a]dvanced technological tools [...] were at odds with autonomous human development and the culture of friendship'.<sup>3</sup> However, this conception of the adverse effects of technology does not relate to a dismissal of the use of technology altogether. As akin to how Illich describes schooling's monopoly on learning, it is rather that technological progress has found itself to also create a demand for a monopoly on the lives of modern individuals. This is the significant concern proposed by Illich as a warning to what he terms the *age of systems*.

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<sup>2</sup> A more extensive discussion of Illich's thoughts on technology is beyond the scope of this thesis. For an in-depth exposition refer to Chapter 2 of Dana Stuchul's Ph.D. thesis. Dana Stuchul, 'Schooling as Ritual and as Technology: Explorations in the Social Thought of Ivan Illich' (The Pennsylvania State University, 1999), 64-128. See also Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner, 'Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich: Technology, Politics and the Reconstruction of Education', *Policy Futures in Education*, 5/4 (2007), 431-448.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Mitcham, 'In Memoriam Ivan Illich: Critic of Professionalized Design', *Design Issues*, 19/4 (2003), 26-30, 27. There is an elaboration to be made here regarding Illich's thoughts on technology. That '[Illich] always preferred the old English word *tools* to the Latinate *technology* but he used the word in the same comprehensive sense in which Martin Heidegger spoke of technology or Jacques Ellul of *la technique*'. Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, David Cayley, Introduction, 17. There is further literature on Illich's thoughts on tools as part of the wider discourse on the philosophy of technology. See Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner, 'Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich: Technology, Politics and the Reconstruction of Education'; Babette Babich, 'Tools for Subversion: Illich and Žižek on Changing the World' in Sylvie Mazzinie & Owen Glyn-Williams (eds.), *Making Communism Hermeneutical: Reading Vattimo and Zabala* (Frankfurt: Springer, 2017). Illich's preference to using the term tools with technology provides us with an insight into how he conceives of its interaction with the individual. Relating to the shift in the human-tool relationship, a shift which Illich perceives to have occurred in his lifetime, Illich speaks of the manipulative difference that this change has caused. '[W]hen Plato or Pliny talk about tools, or devices, they call them *organon*. They call the hand an *organon*, the hammer an *organon*, and the hammering hand an *organon*. The tool is an extension of the human body. In the twelfth century we notice that an increasing awareness appears, partly under Arab influence, that certain material objects can incorporate, can be given human intentions. [...] I believe this distinction between tool and user is characteristic of the epoch which I claim came to an end in the 1980s. There is a distance – I use the specific term "distality" – between the hand, the operator, and the instrument that performs the task. This distality disappears again when the hammer and the man, or the dog and the leash held by the man, are conceived as a system. You can no longer say that there is a distance between the operator and the device, because according to systems theory the operator is part of the system within which he operates and regulates'. Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 225-226. This is quoted at length due to its concrete statement on Illich's perception of the modern human-tool relationship, and its wider involvement in a technological and systematised epoch. The implications of this for education is discussed more specifically in terms of Illich's history of the gaze and its historical transformations in Chapter 3.

If it is true that “tool” is an age or epoch-specific concept which is characteristic of a certain period, a period during which the concept of tool, or technology, as one more often says, becomes perhaps the most unquestionable of everyday certainties, then the possibility is opened of doing what I have been trying to do during the last fifteen or twenty years: to claim, or, at least, establish the hypothesis that sometime during the 1980s the technological society which began in the fourteenth century came to an end. Now I recognize that dating epochs involves interpretation and perhaps some fuzziness in assigning beginnings and endings; but, nevertheless, it appears to me that the age of tools has now given way to the age of systems, exemplified in the conception of the earth as an ecosystem, and the human being as an immune system.<sup>4</sup>

This technological transformation, and incorporation, of the individual as a co-operative of the tool is here found by Illich to find its stage in the modern day in a totalised form. The individual loses a significant sense of agency in relation to their interaction with the modern epoch-world. It is to say that in the move towards the age of the system, the individual, who's incorporation into the system itself, has become delimited to their own human capacity, and has their potential identified with technological progress. This can be understood through Illich's thoughts on the matter regarding the advances in automobile speeds.<sup>5</sup> It is Illich's idea to present a modern world, which despite its self-advertisement, regards its own progress as the unquestioned improvement of all human well-being everywhere. What Illich sees instead is that 'by swallowing the car you paralyze your feet and have to jump into the driver's seat to go to a supermarket'.<sup>6</sup> The essence of this argument contends that in the movement to the epoch of systems the tool's relationship to the individual becomes not only manipulative but also involves the transfiguring of that same individual into a part of the systematised mechanism.

Technology, as understood by this argument, relates to how the conception of tools is recognised in a certain period. Here, I would like to make one further elaboration regarding Illich's discussion of technology. That by tool Illich is referring to something that is beyond the general conception of the instrumental object. As part of the move to attempt to understand the age of systems the institutions of modern life are deemed by Illich to be, also, *tools* in the sense that has been so far discussed.<sup>7</sup> By conceiving of institutions as part

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<sup>4</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 77.

<sup>5</sup> 'Beyond a certain speed, motorized vehicles create remoteness which they alone can shrink'. Ivan Illich, *Energy and Equity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 30-31. It is to say that the possibility of travel becomes subservient to technological means, in a way that attempts to identify itself with human potential.

<sup>6</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 161-162.

<sup>7</sup> 'Tools are all means or instruments with which modern humans try to realize their goals; thus, [Illich] includes simple devices such as knives or plows as well as complex systems and institutions

of the system of tools Illich also entails in his critique a description of the manipulative effect that such institutions impart on individuals who succumb to them.<sup>8</sup>

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such as universities or medical systems'. Silja Samerski, 'Tools for Degrowth? Ivan Illich's Critique of Technology Revisited'. Illich contends for this through a historical study of the understanding of tools. See the chapter 'Contingency, Part 2: The Origin of Technology' in Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*.

<sup>8</sup> Again, there is a subtlety to this argument. Illich is not describing how institutions *per se* are manipulative or destructive of the human agency for which he strives, rather, it is the modern orientation towards an extreme technological instrumentalisation, the notion that the tool engenders the user into its systematic function, that Illich criticises. In opposition to what Illich describes as manipulative tools, his book *Tools for Conviviality* is a detailed treatment on this topic and its hopeful alternatives. See Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

### iii. Positivism

The reason the term positivism is chosen is to refer to how Illich orients the reader through his discussion of values. For Illich, the institutionalisation of values occurs numerically. And as a quantitatively positive notion it is directly informed by his thinking regarding technological development. However, it is not that Illich is attempting to describe how values are positivist<sup>9</sup>, instead it is how Illich defines what occurs to these values in the age of systems that describes the use of the term.

Institutional value can be defined as the level of output of an institution. The corresponding value of man is measured by his ability to consume and degrade these institutional outputs, and thus create a new – even higher – demand. The value of institutionalized man depends on his capacity as an incinerator. To use an image – he has become the idol of his handiworks. Man now defines himself as the furnace which burns up the values produced by his tools. And there is no limit to his capacity.<sup>10</sup>

This institutionalisation of human values is specifically defined by its quantification, and its consumption.

Once people have the idea schooled into them that values can be produced and measured, they tend to accept all kinds of rankings. There is a scale for the development of nations, another for the intelligence of babies, and even progress toward peace can be calculated according to body count. In a schooled world the road to happiness is paved with a consumer's index.<sup>11</sup>

This positivisation may be considered in further detail through the context of Illich's educational work. In the claims made by institutional schooling Illich finds a significant concern regarding both its aims and procedures. For one, Illich criticises the idea that 'certification' produces learning.<sup>12</sup> That the aim of schooling is not to endorse learning itself, but the procedure in which certificates are attained.

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<sup>9</sup> This thesis attempts to construct a definition of what Illich's own idiosyncratic idea of positivism would describe. There is also literature which mentions Illich's thinking as part of the wider discourses of the historical trends of positivist thinking. See Mary Manjikian, 'Positivism, Post-Positivism, and Intelligence Analysis', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 26/3 (2013), 563-582; Kevin White and Evan Willis, 'Positivism Resurgent: The Epistemological Foundations of Evidence-Based Medicine', *Health Sociology Review*, 11/1-2 (2002).

<sup>10</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 164.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 58.

<sup>12</sup> 'Neither learning nor justice is promoted by schooling because educators insist on packaging instruction with certification. Learning and the assignment of social roles are melted into schooling.



Illich's notion of schooling is then informed by his analysis which finds the institution as adhering to positivist thinking. That, much in the same way that technological progress is considered a modern good, its failures are found in their same forms in schooling. I will approach this connection between schooling and the age of systems through how positivism becomes the term which defines Illich's consideration of development.

'Illich saw "development" as "a war on subsistence" that would replace a tolerable absence of goods and services by a much more painful condition which he named "modernized poverty"'.<sup>13</sup> As a historical example, the critiques that Illich provides in his early work are directed at what was deemed the 'development decade'. The idea that by founding and funding institutions social issues such as poverty could be eradicated. More prescient, of course, is the failure in which this 'development mania' was able to contend with its concerns. In referring to the institution of welfare, Illich would indicate that this idea of development would make 'the discovery that no amount of dollars can remove the inherent destructiveness of [institutionalisation]'.<sup>14</sup> In the context of schooling, this would refer to how Illich perceives the same 'war on subsistence', that is, the institutional attempt to dictate away from the individual their own capacity to learn.

The development that Illich finds in schooling can then be described by the same terms in which the 'development decade' facilitated its aims and procedures. The reason that this development is constructed as positivist is due to its notion of unending upward progress. In discussing schooling's wider link to the market economy, Illich's criticism of schooling's positivism can be denoted to his understanding of how learning is commodified into a consumable object.

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Yet to learn means to acquire a new skill or insight, while promotion depends on an opinion which others have formed'. Ibid. 16. This illustrates for us also a clear insight into how Illich may contextualise his educational critique to his idea of the age of systems. The 'promotion' that Illich refers to is the movement of students through their education. That the promotion of students through the grades and degrees are assessed through the opinion of the educator who grants the student the grade-score that defines the student's success or failure regarding the status of their learning. As a connection to the idea of systems this would refer to the attempt of schooling to 'school' the student 'to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new'. Ibid. 1. To follow in Illich's thinking, this schooling would refer to the incorporation of the student – in which their thinking becomes identical to the logic of the institution – as a recognisable moment of the institutionalisation of schooling.

<sup>13</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, David Cayley, Introduction, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 6.

School programs hunger for progressive intake of instruction, but even if the hunger leads to steady absorption, it never yields the joy of knowing something to one's satisfaction. Each subject comes packaged with the instruction to go on consuming one "offering" after another, and last year's wrapping is always obsolete for this year's consumer. The textbook racket builds on this demand. Educational reformers promise each new generation the latest and the best, and the public is schooled into demanding what they offer. Both the dropout who is forever reminded of what he missed and the graduate who is made to feel inferior to the new breed of student know exactly where they stand in the ritual of rising deceptions and continue to support a society which euphemistically calls the widening frustration gap a "revolution of rising expectations." But growth conceived as open-ended consumption – eternal progress – can never lead to maturity. Commitment to unlimited quantitative increase vitiates the possibility of organic development.<sup>15</sup>

By this critique, schooling's institutionalisation, rather than promoting the 'organic development' of individual learning, construes the procedure of education along the lines of a 'technocratic' form of commoditised learning.<sup>16</sup> In this way, Illich's critique of schooling describes how the positivist tendencies of institutionalised learning follows in accordance with the development decade's own failures.

I will explore in this initial chapter one facet of this perceived failure in order to provide a justification for the use of positivism as a description for Illich's critique of schooling. This takes shape through the link between the developments of a general field of technocratically-oriented educational research and the formulations of curriculum learning.

In describing schooling's claim regarding the production of learning (through certification) Illich is attempting to analyse how the educational institution's claims are activated, and how these claims regularly fail in schooling's procedure. The claim of institutional learning is then the focus of Illich's critique of schooling. It is that schooling

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 61-62.

<sup>16</sup> I wish to emphasise the point that Illich does not make a blanket critique of technology, and thus would lead to the objection that Illich is an anti-technologist. Instead, it is that in the age of systems the overall orientation of thinking finds itself adherent to the doctrines of technological development, an adherence which does not consider the possibility of its own fallibility. This distinction can be found in Illich's referral to educational research and the curriculum: 'The blind spot of educational research reflects the cultural bias of a society in which technological growth has been confused with technocratic control. For the technocrat the value of an environment increases as more contacts between each man and his milieu can be programmed. In this world the choices which are manageable for the observer or planner converge with the choices possible for the observed so-called beneficiary. Freedom is reduced to a selection among packaged commodities'. Ibid. 102.

makes the claim that it is the central location in which all recognisable learning<sup>17</sup> is to take place, that Illich finds the developments of educational research a technocratic endeavour. By packaging learning as curriculum commodities the constant arrival of new packages determines the increasing value of each new year's educational research.<sup>18</sup> By doing this, the manufacturing process of educational packages constricts the conception of learning to the procedure of schooling, and so in the case that Illich criticises 'technocratic' educational research, it is in these terms that learning is positivised into a technological notion.

In the way that Illich conceives of schooling, he finds that the institutional process convinces the student to 'confuse process with substance'. That the procedure of schooling, the mandatory attendances of classes, and the professional ministration of the pedagogue, by themselves construct the notion of learning in the mere process by which schooling takes place. Regarding the institutionalised student-teacher relationship, such a learning would be understood as coordinated within the sole responsibility of the educational administrator, a single-directional process whereby the content of learning is transferred to the student by their certified educator. This defines schooling's conception of learning, that the institutional process as such is identical to learning, and that this is evident in the resulting certificate. The reason this procedure is described as positivist is due to the mechanism in which the positive accumulation of the student's experience in schooling is collected and defined as the instantiation of learning proper.

The universal structure of modern institutional education, as assessed by Illich, makes this fundamental aspect of schooling a widely accepted notion. The critique of this positivist collection of student experience – an experienced defined by the consumption of curriculum packages – is Illich's critique into how schooling fails to promote learning, the

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<sup>17</sup> In the institutional conception of learning, it is only what can be proven that is recognised as having been learned. In discussing skill-learning Illich describes how only the certified 'pedagogue' is qualified to impart their knowledge, and that by restricting the teaching of skills in this way, schooling's market economy 'makes skills scarce [by] the institutional requirement that those who can demonstrate them may not do so unless they are given public trust, through a certificate'. Ibid. 127. Thus, the learning that is recognisable is found to impact both students and teachers who seek recognition of their knowledge and can only find it in the object of their certificate.

<sup>18</sup> Illich refers to the 'textbook racket' where educational research and manufacturing develop new products (curriculum commodities) which are not developments to its own educational value, but rather to indoctrinate the student into the need for the 'latest and the best'. It is also an indication of the positivist orientation of the educational research that Illich is criticising, namely, that its developments and technocratic power are aimed at incorporating the student into the system, rather than developing the educational potential of learning materials.

objective of its institutional claims. Illich then proposes that not only does schooling in this way fail to allow learning, it instead actively causes learning's obstruction.

This leads us to a definitional understanding of how Illich's critiques of schooling may be conceived as a 'technological positivism'. That by situating our discussion in Illich's idea of the age of systems, and its technological orientation, we may perceive the procedure in which the institutions of the modern epoch proceed towards its objectives. That although the developments of technology lead to certain observable material gains in the comfort of human life, it is nevertheless perceptible to an Illichian critique that such developments are hindered by fundamental problems that arise out of its essential notion of growth. And it is this type of growing, of a delimited progress, that informs the positivist orientation of such technology. From this definition, we now proceed towards an attempt to substantiate this idea through Illich's interpretation of the Greek myth of Prometheus.

## b. Prometheus and the Unknown

This institutionalization of substantive values, this belief that a planned process of treatment ultimately gives results desired by the recipient, this consumer ethos, is at the heart of the Promethean fallacy.

Deschooling Society, Ivan Illich<sup>19</sup>

The final chapter of *Deschooling Society* moves away from the general orientation in which the rest of the book was written. It neither furthers the critique of schooling nor does it provide more concrete alternatives in which Illich had envisioned a deschooled society. Its intention, at the very least, seems to attempt to correlate the book's assertions with the Greek myth of Prometheus.<sup>20</sup>

The reason for discussing at length Illich's interpretation of Prometheus is the ease in which we can understand his idea of the limits to technological positivism. It also begins to provide our study the wider scope in which his thinking may be recognised beyond their thematic approaches, and thus hopefully grant us signposts towards to the essence of his thinking.

Illich's reading posits that 'the history of the Promethean endeavor [is] to forge institutions in order to corral each of the rampant ills [released by Pandora]. It is the history of fading hope and rising expectations'.<sup>21</sup> Prometheus, modernity's cultural hero, here represents the attempt to capture what remains elusive to institutionalisation. In this reading Illich finds that modernity's veneration of the Promethean act lies in the symbol of the technological gift. Prometheus, who defied the gods, and brought to humanity their fire, suffered wanton torture for the ignition of a scientism within the ancients. However, it is not that humanity received fire and so technology itself is that which Illich claims to

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<sup>19</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 164.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Kahn explains that Illich's study of Prometheus can be read to parallel that of the ideas his contemporary, Herbert Marcuse. See Richard Kahn, 'Anarchic Epimetheanism: The Pedagogy of Ivan Illich' in Randall Amster (ed.), *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy* (London: Routledge, 2009). Another case is Jean Houston's article on technological Prometheanism, which although does not discuss Illich, refers to Jacques Ellul's thinking on technology. See Jean Houston, 'Prometheus Rebound: An Inquiry into Technological Growth and Psychological Change', *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 9/1 (1976), 241-258. However, this connection between Ellul and Illich is not only referential, and is appreciated in Dana Stuchul's exploration of their ideas regarding technology. See Dana Stuchul, 'Education as Technology: The Modern Deception', *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 17/5-6 (1997), 291-296.

<sup>21</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 151.

be the error of modernity. Rather it is the addiction to Prometheus' gift which concerns Illich as being the 'source of modern fears: the new darkness'.<sup>22</sup>

The concern of addiction lies in the sentiment that the technological orientation of modernity becomes the encompassing focus of positivism's aims. As the fire provided by Prometheus is the genesis of technology it is also at once the gift of seeing. The vision created out of Prometheus' fire is a positive vision. It is a seeing which gathers sight as only possible within the place of the fire. Thus, the Promethean disposition characterises a within and a without. What lies within the gathering of fire-light becomes the place of human vision enabled by technology. As such, what lies outside the fire's light encompasses the unknown encroaching darkness. From this the Promethean sentiment is understood to lie in the development of fire as the act which attempts to corral the unknown and bring human vision upon the darkness of an un(der)developed world. This mode of thought can be observed by the Promethean attempt to increase the space in which the fire's light positively expands. As this method of development, the Promethean understands the within-without distinction as the command to extinguish the without.

The attempt to understand technology in Illich's work is also an analysis of Promethean thinking. The thought of expectation, symbolised by the fire, and manifesting as the technological logic, depicts the activity of modernity's yearning to capture the unknown by its own terms. The Promethean's tool of fire provides the activation of the colonising act of bringing vision upon the unvisioned. It is this act which is the momentum of visioning that characterises the developmental tendency of Prometheanism. The development of the technological fire is the expansion of expected knowing upon the place of unknownness. Expectation transforms the unknown possibility, which lies outside fire-light, into that which can be determined as known. This describes the Promethean act of expectation that in turn captures the Pandoran unknown.

The Promethean's life then consists of encountering all means and matters by expectation. The encounter in which the Promethean solicits interactivity reveals the dominating procedure of expectation. This becomes defined by the Promethean's recognition of the other only by the terms of their own conceptions. The interaction is the Promethean attempt to understand what has been brought within its purview by only the expectation of its knowing. In the general matter of modernity this Prometheanism depicts the captured state of the future by the technological addict.

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<sup>22</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 99.

In schooling, it is then the attempt to capture what remains unknown and intimate in order to reproduce such unknownness as a determinate institutional procedure. Illich states this in terms of schooling's own addiction to the Promethean thought. Illich here refers to the positivisation of learning by the institutional procedure of the *curriculum*. That the Promethean ethos, found in technocratic educational research, is evidently expressed in the form in which the curriculum is posited. In this case the curriculum is the capturing of the content of learning, understood by Illich as the encounter with the contingent unknown, into a categorised and expected form. The curriculum demands that the conduct of learning is to be reproduceable only as the consumption of such commodities of knowing.<sup>23</sup>

The whole of positive learning is described, and as mentioned above, as not only the gathering of experience within positive schooling it is also the accumulation of commodified knowledge. Illich's analysis places the positivism of educational research as the progenitor of schooling's treatment of such knowledge acquisition. The tracing of this lineage becomes explicit in the terms of an exposition of positivism through its involvement in schooling. And so, we can begin to approach a Promethean conception of positivism through its supreme command: 'Measure what is measurable, and make measurable what is not so'.<sup>24</sup>

Here the within-without distinction is clarified, and the proof of the Promethean command is appreciated. The vision of positivism marches in the order of the elimination of the without, the unmeasurable unknown. It is the attempt to characterise its vision by measurement and it is the attempt to re-categorise what lies outside its sight as being subservient to the power of positivity. The understanding of positivism is that the world is entirely within the possibility of being positively known, and as such is always

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<sup>23</sup> Although Illich discusses the Marxist conception of alienation, there is no extended discussion of the use of the term *commodity*. However, in the way that Illich discusses the commodification of learning, it can be interpreted that there is a distinct referral to the Marxist idea. 'The city child is born into an environment made up of systems that have a different meaning for their designers than for their clients. [...] He knows how to operate the TV or the telephone, but their workings are hidden from him. Learning by primary experience is restricted to self-adjustment in the midst of packaged commodities. [...] Learning thus becomes a commodity, and, like any commodity that is marketed, it becomes scarce'. Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, 73.

<sup>24</sup> Andreas Kleinert addresses this command's false attribution to Galileo as popularised by Hermann Weyl's translation of the Italian's work. The unquestioned adherence by modernity to positivism raises its prominence to proverbial status, and a cursory search in any significant research database will reveal studies which include the mistranslation in its title. See Andreas Kleinert, 'Der Messende Luchs', *NTM Journal of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine*, 17/2 (2009), 199-206.

characterised by its measurability. The progress of an unabated technological sentiment is then the forced measurement of all things.

In positivism's Promethean attempt to corral the darkness of the world is a conception of its knowing-light as all that is and all that can be. In this positivity of knowing what is questioned is simply the external. It conceives of all notions by this distinction and its inability to recognise negativity explains the Illichian concern of educational research's 'blind spot'. The blindness of the vision of positivism is found to be located in that which it attempts to bring light. For the positivity of the expanding vision relies upon the secondary measure of its command, the intent to make certain and legible what resists such measurement.

The attempt itself predicates the form of the world as entirely consisting within the within-without distinction. As this disposition towards experience the Promethean's knowing only comprehends that which is categorised as measured and known. The interaction between the Promethean and the unknown is thus co-ordinated as the activity of a re-categorisation of the latter into the former's territory. The combative aspect of this approach is the colonising effect of the annexation of the unknown into Promethean knowledge.

In the attempt to capture the unknown, the torchbearers of Promethean thinking delve further and further upon the plains of unknownness. Their depth of exploration remains the extent of the power of their torch-light. In subsisting by the positivity of technology the colonisers of positivism demand of the unknown to be known by the light of positivity; its measurement. The appearance of the unknown is then appreciated only in the light of its measurability. In their return the conquistadors present to Promethean knowing what Prometheus can only know, positive and measured knowledge. Without their consent the unknown remains hidden within their captured states. And it is the immediacy of this captured state which is accepted by Prometheus as a complete determination. The command of measurement is fulfilled by these Promethean terms.

Here, Illich's critique of schooling pertains to positivism's claim to knowing. That Prometheus' within-without distinction pre-determines the categorisation of the cosmos, and that the progress of positivism is the emptying of the cosmos into positivised knowledge. In this understanding, Prometheus' objectives toward a completely determined set of knowledge, as the measurement and re-categorisation of the unknown, asserts a claim to all-knowing by the method of its procedure. Prometheus' self-



expectation of the result of the encounter deems all engagements as being subservient to its power.

For Illich, this monolithic approach to the conception of learning leads to the crisis of failure in schooling.<sup>25</sup> Positivism conceives of knowledge as the mere positive accumulation of determined content, and in conceiving of learning as such a process, schooling's institutional procedure entreats the delivery of such a process in the same manner. The failure of schooling would then relate to an Illichian critique of the internal insufficiency of positivism's claims. This insufficiency would then be read as the collapse of positivism.

The appearance of positivism's collapse provides the proof for the clairvoyant moment in which Illich's critique expresses the blind spot of a Prometheanism. As discussed above, Promethean knowing's positive expansion, being the movement of light over and above the dark, would be described as the act of colonising the dark in order to re-categorise it as light. The sights of Prometheus now understands its vision as encompassing that which was before unknown. This new definition, a measurement of the unknown, totalises what has been brought within the place of positivity. The blind spot is itself unforeseeable from the perspective of the Promethean and the eruption of the unknown from within positivism is the collapse of the light, within its own space, giving way to the unmeasurable.

What is essentially the aspect of Promethean knowing's blindness is the fact that the dark unknown, in having been categorised as light and brought within the field of Promethean positive knowing, is shown to not have been annihilated in its re-categorisation, rather, the opposite is apparent. The unknown continues to exist free from the intervention of technological positivism, its categorisation being now the external formal object, which is separate from its actual being, and so positivism concerns itself with only this object in order to control it.

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<sup>25</sup> The crisis of schooling mentioned here refers to the proposal of this thesis in attempting to uncover the essence Illich's educational thought. Although it cannot be stated beyond a superficial claim in this moment, and is rather intended to be proved in the course of the thesis, the claim that the idea of schooling collapses is predicated on the idea presented that a pure Promethean orientation to knowing cannot sustain itself by virtue of its declarations and presuppositions. This is to suggest that the positivism of a Promethean method to determining the unknown is internally insufficient. Chapter 3 attempts to substantiate this claim through an assessment of the developments of the educational program *Title One*, whilst Chapter 4 attempts a philosophical outworking in which the claim is traced.

The erupting unknown is here found to be the negation of positive knowing. It is the revelation of the that-which-remains-unknown within the space of Promethean knowledge. For this to be the case Prometheus' annexation of the unknown, the re-categorisation as the measured, is therefore understood as an act which is unable to comprehend the reality that its own thinking has contended as a completed whole. This illustrates the understanding which evades the axiomatic notion of Prometheanism. Pure positivity is shown to lack the notion of negativity. The collapse predicates upon its inability to come to terms with the actual, the relativity of the unknown, and any evolution of the unmeasurable causes a crisis in the moment that positivity finds its notion of measurement undermined.

This inability to address the insufficiency of its own axiom provides the Illichian case for a consideration of the moment of crisis which precedes. The claim to all-knowledge is proved to lack such a self-professed capability. Specifically, Illich's critique focuses on the blindness to self-limitation and the idea of 'eternal progress'. In terms of expectation, Prometheanism seeks only that which is certain, and what is outside this purview requires institutionalisation in order to formalise it as measurable in order to create the living space for positive technological thought.

In this way we can describe educational research's orthodoxy, in Illich's terms, as being the expression of positivism in the Promethean ethos of expectation. This aspect of positivism's claims which Illich traces to educational research is the assertion that learning can only be conceived as the modular assembly of piecemeal content and that such a conception is constituted as the whole of learning.

This conception of learning and the institutional structure of schooling, which holds within itself the internal collapsing of Prometheanism, leads to the crisis of the educational moment. The moment of crisis being the eruption of an educational unknown within the institutional school. That is, the socio-political considerations regarding education are interrupted in their everydayness and are brought towards an immediate concern.

To illustrate a historical moment of this crisis I present the Illichian critique of measurement by the Promethean adherence to valuation. Valuation, a substrata of measurement, places a judgement upon the measured and re-organises it into a hierarchical ordering. This being a sub-categorisation of measurement. The Illichian critique of the eruption of valuation lies in his discussion of the collective experience of Americans and Vietnamese during the American-Vietnamese War. Illich states that the

conflict '[...] is both revealing and concealing [...] The conduct of the war proves that a convivial army limited to bicycle speeds is served by the opponent's escalation of anonymous power [...] While evidence shows that more of the same leads to utter defeat, nothing less than more and more seems worthwhile in a society infected by the growth mania'.<sup>26</sup>

This understanding of the manifestation of Prometheanism in the conduct of warfare is implicitly construed by Illich to refer to the conduct of Robert McNamara, the U.S. Secretary of Defence, leading up and into the midst of the conflict. Rising to prominence due to his implementation of *systems analysis* McNamara was called upon by the U.S. President to apply the same positivist methods to warfare.<sup>27</sup> The reflection regarding McNamara refers to the obsession with a positivist mathematical conduct. Such obsession manifests as the Promethean addiction to the metrics of warfare as the only possibility of victory (and thus positive knowing's justification).<sup>28</sup> This illustration of valuation presents the Illichian critique to the failure of the U.S. strategy as being the attempt to conceptualise the world by the value measurement of positivism.

This technological positivism is the attempt to expand the vision of Prometheus from his gift of fire. Illich's critique is the insight that such a knowing blinds itself and limits its own vision. That this conceptualisation of Promethean knowing immanently encroaches its own light by its hubris in the face of the unknown. As limited to the notion of unending positive progress schooling is denominated by this Promethean myth.

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<sup>26</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 21.

<sup>27</sup> McNamara catalyses the notion of positivism as a concrete strategy for the American involvement. In this referral to the implementation of *systems analysis* we can recognise Illich's thoughts on McNamara's role in the expression of the U.S.'s Promethean culmination. It is also worthy of note that Illich's optimism regarding the possibility for a watershed moment of deinstitutionalisation may relate to the eruption of McNamara's positivist approach and his withdrawal from his position. In this sense, McNamara is the representation of Prometheus who apologises for not having captured enough of the unknown. For Edward MacNeal, McNamara's memoir would serve as a seminal chapter to the genre of historical-biographical apologetics, '[...] the world owes at least a small thank-you to Robert Strange McNamara for his memoir [...] No recent book more tellingly reveals the dangers of a mathematical approach to decision making'. Edward MacNeal, 'Looking Ahead: Why the Real Lesson of Vietnam Eludes Robert Mcnamara', *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, 52/3 (1995), 255-267, 255.

<sup>28</sup> Illich presents the metric of body count as an instance of an erupting moment within the positivist approach to the conflict. The addiction to counting dead bodies led McNamara to consider the U.S. victory conditions as being continually satisfied. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 21.

## Chapter 2 Illich's Theological History

### a. The Prometheanism of the Institution

Illich's analysis of institutionalisation acts as the fulcrum for his critique of schooling. However, from this the institutional school itself is to be recognised as expressing only the educational theme of Illich's thought. Precedent to the critique of schooling lies the Illichian development of a theological-historical notion. This development is presented here to position the reader for an appreciation of the context in which Illich provides his thoughts on schooling. This study of the theological-historical notion is an exposition of the technological positivism of institutionalisation's blind spot to the unknown.

The institutionalisation of early Christianity is here the foundation for our account of Illich's notion of learning. What is posited is the idea that institutionalisation is the historical trace in which the theological-historical notion appears in modernity. It is by finding institutionalisation, as process and procedure, that this thesis describes the contextual nature of the development of modern Prometheanism as an uncovering of the meaning of learning found in Illich.

Technological positivism as it remains the central dogma of institutionalisation is grasped by its expression in Illich's development of this theological history. The institution, as it is a structure of organised activity, attempts to corral the antipathy of Prometheus by proceduralisation. Within the institution lies the formation of a pre-determined thought. In the school this thought is provided by the thinking of what Illich deems as the orthodox of educational research. From such pre-formulated concepts, the institution gathers its mandate as the only place in which such ideas may be disseminated.<sup>1</sup> The institution is then the provider of service and at the same time also the controller of the distribution of such designated resources. Institutionalisation is thus the process in which designated goods and services are provided through organisation. The idea of the

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the training of apprentices, Illich refers to the monopoly in which schooling claims upon other industries. 'The educational profession now claims a comprehensive monopoly; it claims the exclusive competence to apprentice not only its own novices but those of other professions as well'. Ibid. 147-148.

institution is then the attempt to capture the needs of those designated as the needy and to satisfy those needs through the goods and services of its measures.

The Prometheanism of institutionalisation lays bare upon this idea. It is the Promethean endeavour to expand the human capability through the power of categorisation. In doing so the institution corrals the unknown through its methodology. It is the re-categorisation of the unknown which appears (the individual who stands before the institution), into the known element of its mandate (the category of the needy). In capturing the need of the needy the institution re-categorises the intimate unknown as now publicly available, and most particularly stressed for our context, what has been diagnosed and is now considered in its treatable form. Through the abstraction of this intimate unknown, the subjectivity of the individual categorised into measured data, the institution acts upon the measurement through its mandate of service. The result of the institution is then the success of the re-organisational process in which the unknown becomes known and its re-categorisation its transformation. The thought and activity of this positivity is the definition of the approach of institutionalisation here described.

Furthermore, the institution defines the aims and the process in which these aims are to be achieved. In doing so the institution becomes implicated in the self-incentivisation of positive procedure. Through the abstraction of the unknown the institution asserts its claim to all-knowing and all-power. Its knowing thus constitutes the long march of the boundary of the known upon the unknown, the overcoming of the unknown being the completion of its absoluteness, with each encounter succumbing to the power of measurement. The completion of the annexation of the unknown being the aim of positive knowing, with the institution as its tool.

From the perspective of the Promethean this increased production of knowing-light is an assumed truthful procedure. And so, at this moment a recognition of the eruption of positive knowing refers to the positivist sensibility which cannot perceive its own lack. That the crises of institutionalisation are responded to by the institution as a call for further institutionalisation. The universalisation of knowing into positivity here represents its attempt to homogenise the process of knowing.

Prometheanism, whose measurement of the captured unknown is its re-categorisation, takes such measurement as the supreme authority upon which knowledge is capitalised and commodified. The institution, as the structure of positivity, finds itself the infallible expression of such a Promethean way of thinking. It is this self-understanding as complete that Illich criticises as the inability to recognise the depth of its blindness. The

erupting unknown within institutionalisation is now presented by the theological history of Illich's thinking.

## b. The Institutionalisation of Christianity

For Illich, the Christian Incarnation represents the historical significance of the possibility 'of love and knowledge' incarnate in human society, which at once represents the danger of institutionalisation.<sup>2</sup> The fall to the temptation of Promethean institutionalisation is the Christian moment in which the Word of the Gospel becomes formalised as a general universal. This is the beginning of the Church's 'first steps towards becoming a social machine [...] Once the Church becomes a social corporation, it commits itself to using power to "ensure the social presence of something which, by its very nature, cannot be anything else but the free choice of individuals who have accepted the invitation to see in everybody – whom they choose – the face of Christ"'.<sup>3</sup> This free choice is the openness of an undictated notion. The exposition of this open choosing lies in Illich's reading of the Parable of the Good Samaritan.<sup>4</sup>

Illich finds the Samaritan as the individual who has 'gone outside his ethnic preference for taking care of his own kind [and] [i]n doing so, he exercises a freedom of choice'.<sup>5</sup> For Illich, the burden of the institutional command dislocates the individual from their self-incentive to make these choices. As a free choosing the Samaritan encounters the wounded Jew in a singularly particular encountering moment. The choice of the Samaritan to provide aid is the acceptance of the Jew's call for help. A contingent moment within the encounter. The institutional command to 'love thy neighbour' becomes activated here only by the foreign non-believer, the Samaritan who is an outsider unburdened by the institutional ideal.<sup>6</sup> The institutional command extracts the individual nature of such

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<sup>2</sup> The Incarnation that Illich uses as central to his thinking is a core Christian theological concept that determines Jesus of Nazareth as being God made flesh. The possibilities that this unveils relates to the radical solidarity of the common being between humankind and the divine.

<sup>3</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 47.

<sup>4</sup> Illich's Samaritan reading is well noted in the literature. See Susan Babbitt, 'Secularism, Ethics, Philosophy: A Case for Epistemic Humility', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 31/1 (2011), 4; Richard Kahn, 'Critical Pedagogy Taking the Illich Turn', *The International Journal of Illich Studies*, 1/1 (2010), 37-49. See also Jesse Perillo who conducts an analysis of the shaping of modern cities by the terms of the Samaritan. Jesse Perillo, 'Ignoring and Encountering the Tragic Neighbor Through the Built Environment'.

<sup>5</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 51.

<sup>6</sup> 'This doctrine about the neighbour, which Jesus proposes, is utterly destructive of ordinary decency, of what had, until then, been understood as ethical behaviour. [...] In antiquity, hospitable behaviour, or full commitment in my action to the other, implies a boundary drawn around those to whom I can behave in this way. The Greeks recognized a duty of hospitality towards *xenoi*, strangers who spoke a Hellenic language, but not towards the babblers in strange tongues whom they called *barbaroi*. Jesus taught the Pharisees that the relationship which he had come to announce to them as most completely human is not one that is expected, required, or owed. It can only be a

intimate care and is understood by Illich to represent the fallenness of the priest and the Levite, who encounter the Jew and choose to pass onto the other side. The reading here interprets this institutional command as being denied and deactivated in the presence of those subservient to such commands when such an activation is possible outside the institution.

The care offered by the Samaritan is the welcoming of the Jew as a pure other. The Samaritan does not approach the wounded by the expectation in which the Jew is categorised as an enemy, rather, the Samaritan's approach is the radical unknowing of such pre-formed knowledge.<sup>7</sup> It is also to say that the Samaritan trespasses upon the boundary of the unknown, the gathering of the encounter of otherness, as themselves unknown to the gathered moment. This gathering of otherness is itself not pre-determinate as to the emergence of the encounter, that is, the Samaritan's aid is not pre-ordained, it is in this Illichian reading of the Parable that which is open to the welcoming of the Samaritan act as the trespassing of the boundary of expected knowing, an act unknown unto itself. Only from within such a gathering is it possible for the Samaritan to activate the possibility of love emergent from the Incarnation, a possibility recognised in Illich's Incarnational Christianity as made open by the recognition offered to the other who appears as an unknown. The new horizon of love between the Samaritan and the Jew escapes positive definition, the expected knowing of the encounter's cultural history. The love of the Samaritan is then interpreted here as the negation of expectation.

The meeting between the Samaritan and the Jew although eliciting from the Samaritan a personal choice cannot here be denoted by a single-sidedness. The Samaritan encounter refers to a mutuality in which the mutual call for aid garners the possibility of its response. This mutuality is the openness of the transgression of positive knowing. The Samaritan moment resists the formal universal command 'provide aid to all those who ask'.<sup>8</sup> Such an institutionalised universal denies the moment of possible love and in its

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free creation between two people [...] It is not a relationship that exists because we are citizens of the same Athens, and so can feel a duty towards each other [...] but because we have decided'. Ibid.  
<sup>7</sup> Illich finds that this radicality is lost in the modern retellings of the parable. 'The story is deeply familiar. [...] This familiarity disguises the shocking character of the Lord's tale. Perhaps the only way we could recapture it today would be to imagine the Samaritan as a Palestinian ministering to a wounded Jew. He is someone who not only goes outside his ethnic preference for taking care of his own kind, but who commits a kind of treason by caring for his enemy. In so doing, he exercises a freedom of choice, whose radical novelty has often been overlooked'. Ibid. 50-51.

<sup>8</sup> When asked about his personal commitment to the starvation of the African child Illich states: 'My immediate reaction is, I will do everything I can to eliminate from my heart any sense of care for them. I want to experience horror. I want to really taste this reality about which you report to me. I



place activates the expectation of the encounter. It would be that the Samaritan act is the 'untelling of the human story'<sup>9</sup> which 'holds out the possibility of its retelling or re-creation'<sup>10</sup>, or, is that which contains 'the light of this new glimmer of mutuality'<sup>11</sup>. The openness which the light of mutuality exposes is the transgression of the historical meeting upon which the Samaritan overcomes the cyclical state of the recurring encounter between the categorical 'Samaritan' and 'Jew'. It is the Samaritan, the Samaritan of the parable, as the response of Christ to the query of the Lawyer<sup>12</sup>, whereby the radicality of the love of the neighbour is activated in the choosing of the Samaritan to become aware of the Jew as the recipient of care. It is the determination of the choosing as autonomous which denotes it as the parable which answers the call 'who is my neighbour?'.<sup>13</sup>

In opposition, the positivity of definition is expressed in the act of the learned priest and Levite who would pass over the wounded Jew. The extraction of the intimate possibility of care is read in the priest and Levite who hold admired religious positions, and yet, act to deny the call for aid. For it is in the formalisation of the religiosity of the Christian sentiment, the institutionalisation of such, that the extraction of Incarnational love is attempted as the capturing of hospitality and care. It is this capturing of personal love in which the Incarnation is to be denied by such institutionalisation. The denouncement of love, in the denial of the response to the call for aid, is the husk of Christian sentimentality in which the Christian is no longer Christian and yet persists as Christian by formal definition. Illich discusses the formalisation of this Christian mood as

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do not want to escape my sense of helplessness and fall into a pretence that I care and that I do or have done all that is possible of me. I want to live with the inescapable horror of these children, of these persons, in my heart and know that I cannot actively, really, love them. Because to love them – at least the way I am built, after having read the story of the Samaritan – means to leave aside everything which I'm doing at this moment and pick up that person. It means taking whatever I have with me [...] and bringing the guy to an inn [...] Why pretend that I care? Thinking that I care, first, impedes me from remembering what love would be; second, trains me not to be in that sense loving with the person who is waiting outside this door; and, third, stops me from taking the next week off and going and chaining myself to the door of some industry in New York which has a part in the ecological disaster in the Sahel'. Ivan Illich, *Ivan Illich in Conversation*, 216-217. Thanks to Richard Kahn's article where I first came across this quote. See Richard Kahn, 'Critical Pedagogy Taking the Illich Turn'.

<sup>9</sup> James Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through Easter Eyes* (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 1998), cited in Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 32.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 52.

<sup>12</sup> Chapter 4 discusses the parable's framing as itself a response to an institutionalised demand. That the parable of the Samaritan is solicited from Christ's encounter with the Lawyer and is understood as a parable that exists within another story.

<sup>13</sup> Luke 10:29. References to scripture in this thesis are from the King James Version.

being grounded in an assessment of the theological-historical moment in which the Roman Emperor Constantine converts to Christianity.

In the early years of Christianity, it was customary in a Christian household to have an extra mattress, a bit of a candle, and some dry bread in case the Lord Jesus should knock at the door in the form of a stranger without a roof [...] Then the Emperor Constantine recognized the Church, and Christian bishops acquired the same position in the imperial administration as magistrates [...] They also gained the power to establish social corporations. And the first corporations they started were Samaritan corporations which designated certain categories of people as preferred neighbours. For example, bishops created special houses, financed by the community, that were charged with taking care of people without a home. Such care was no longer the free choice of the householder; it was the task of an institution.<sup>14</sup>

The Christian charities which provided shelter homes in the aftermath of the institutionalisation of Christianity, is Illich's notion of the extraction of hospitality. The hope to witness and respond to the appearance of the Incarnation at one's door is captured in order to be reproduced within the institution. As Illich claims, the newfound position of Christianity enabled the institutionalised Church to make demands of the Roman state. This demand came in the form of funding in order to operate its social organisations. For if the Roman state now acknowledged and thus placed its might behind the force of Christianity the dissemination of such force is then conceived as the institutional work of providing commodified services. The services of the established institutional charities are then the capturing, extraction, and reproduction of the Samaritan act. The institutional work has the effect of making public and known the Christian sentiment of hospitality that beforehand remained intimate and private.

For this to occur the Church required the abstraction of the intimate concern available to Christian hospitality. The position of Christian leaders within the imperial administration made worldly the Word of God. The church fathers themselves became institutionalised and justified their institutionalisation by the formation of institutions which in turn acted to justify their positions. The proactive formation of the Christian charity organisation were then the justifications for the reproduction of that which remained unknown to institutional Christianity, the Christian sentiment itself. As such the institutionalisation of Christianity fortified what became evident to Illich as the distinction between the Church and the Christian. That the extraction of the Christian, into their institutional form, became the idea of the measurement of Christianity.

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<sup>14</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 54.

This measurement came in the form of the Church's recognition of the Christian by their adherence to institutional procedure.<sup>15</sup> The Christian Church had come to wield its worldly power by institutional means. No longer was Christianity the deeply felt intimacy of being which Illich is attempting to recover. Christendom was to be the place in which one's citizenship was only provided by the certification of Christian sacrament.

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<sup>15</sup> Illich describes a moment in ecclesiological history regarding this institutional effect on both the clergy and the lay Christian. 'The Church made attendance at various rituals compulsory. It set out schedules of specific days when attendance was required and defined the violation of such prescriptions as sin. For the clergy the *breviarium*, the shortened form of monastic prayers, was made obligatory by the Council of Trent. For the simple Christian there was the requirement of going to Mass every Sunday – otherwise you go to hell – or of going to confession once a year'. Ibid. 144.

### c. *Corruptio optimi quae est pessima*

The institutionalisation of the early Christian sentiment, described so far in the terms of the extraction of the Samaritan act, is the created separation between the liveliness upon which the Christian conducts their life and the guarantee upon which Christian love is activated in the charity organisation. What is the matter of grave concern for Illich rests here in the moment of separation. That what has become extracted from the Christian, essentially the moment of intimacy, relieves the individual subject from the quality in which Christianity recognises itself in individuality. The institutionalisation thus being a universalisation of the subjective into its general formality.

This extraction of Christianity, into such a formal universal, is illustrated by Illich in the Latin proverb *corruptio optimi quae est pessima*: 'the corruption of the best is the worst'. It is to say that for Illich the Samaritan act is an exemplar of the Christian sentiment which has become inverted in its institutional form.

As a possibility, the Samaritan response is an open embrace with the other who appears as an unknown. It is a loving embrace which activates a witnessing that goes beyond the self-expectation of the other's category. The Jew becomes the unknown appearance itself. The wounded is encountered in the gathering as that which is encountered in the meeting place of otherness. It is by the Samaritan's free choosing, here being towards the light of mutuality, which opens forth the unknown moment as a possibility of activating Incarnational love. This is not to say that such mutuality overencompasses the encounter, thus merely reformulating the expectation of Prometheus, it is rather to express the possibility of the Samaritan recognising the Jew through the way in which the Jew is themselves able to similarly recognise the Samaritan. It is a co-solicitation, the *kenosis* of each for the other, which opens the encounter's mutuality.

For Illich, this Samaritan encounter, guaranteed in the charity as the activation of its aiding, is found in modernity in its institutional form. The reproduction of the Samaritan losing the contingency of its original activation. By referring intently upon the possibility of the contingency, Illich denotes its institutional reproduction as opening on the side of its inversion. This inversion is expressed by Illich's referral to Paul the Apostle's warning to the Thessalonians.

The Church had gone pregnant with an evil which would have found no nesting place in the Old Testament. Paul in the second chapter of his second letter to the Thessalonians calls this new reality the *mysterium iniquitatis*, the mystery of evil. He says that something unbelievably horrible has come into being and begun to grow with his foundation of communities around the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>16</sup>

This *mysterium* appears for Illich as the indeterminate which expresses its being in the institutional inversion of Christianity. In referring to Paul, the *mysterium* described nurtures itself in the body of the institutional Church. It is Illich's intention to reference this in order to allow a disposition regarding an intimate recognition of that which remains unmeasurable. On the one hand, this unknown immeasurability refers to the open possibility of the Samaritan act as a contingent activation of personal ethos. On the other, in relating to this *mysterium*, it is the open abyss upon which the denial of love is an unknown appearance of evil.

In denying the Samaritan act, a denial made possible in all encounters thereafter the parable, and becoming a possibility in the mind of the Christian, is the act which betrays the other who has called out for help. It is a new relationality co-possible from the same moment of the gathering of otherness. For Illich, this co-possibility is the *mysterium* of an unknown appearance, that of the activation of sin.

Sin is refusing to honour that relationship which came into existence between the Samaritan and the Jew, which comes into existence through the exercise of freedom, and which constitutes an "ought" because I feel called by you, called to you, called to this tie between human beings, or between beings and God. [...] It is not in any sense offensive of a law. It is always an offence against a person. It's an infidelity.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 59-60. With the introduction of Illich's reading of the *mysterium iniquitatis*, I can now attempt a definition of the term 'unknown' as it is used in this thesis. Unknown is used to contain a meaning that Illich expresses in two different ideas. The first is that through Illich's Christian theology, the concept that one completes oneself in the surprising other, exemplified in his reading of the Samaritan, denotes the unknownness of the other and the orientation in which the individual engages in the encounter. The second refers to Illich's understanding of the *mysterium iniquitatis*. It is the mystery of an evil that is understood by Illich to be apparent in the appearance of the institutionalisation of Christian sentimentality. By using the term unknown, I aim to refer to these central aspects of Illich's thinking in another unified conception that expresses the idea underlying his essential concern. The unknown, in this Illichian context, is the contingency which involves a recognition of the other and the importance of their subjectivity to the mutual encounter. Tangent, although also relevant to this notion, is Illich's intention to highlight the radicality in which this unknown – this surprising otherness and appearing *mysterium* – is found to be obscured in modern life.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 189.

In describing sin by the terms of the Samaritan Illich continues to develop the notion of individual contingency as the height of Christian sentimentality. That the moment of the Samaritan embrace is the life in which Christians thenceforth have come to live. The world-historical moment of such a radical possibility becoming the essence of Christianity proper. It is then notwithstanding such a loving that the openness of the Samaritan is thus also opened to its own denial. This denial, a turning away and passing over of the wounded, is here described as sin. Illich further notes that this sin, in much the same vein as the Samaritan, finds itself extracted and reproduced in a Promethean modernity.<sup>18</sup>

Yet, it is not sin which describes the corruption of Christianity. For Illich, sin in the Samaritan understanding provides the denial of Incarnational love the possibility of encountering their own betrayal. As much as the Samaritan sees in the wounded the Incarnation, so even in the sinner is their turning away an opening towards their redemption, in which their forbearance is made possible by the contingent relationship

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<sup>18</sup> 'But, with criminalization, the sense of sin of the first millennium changes. It becomes the transgression of a norm because I must accuse myself before a priest, who is a judge, of having transgressed a Christian law. Grace becomes juridical. Sin acquires a second side - that of the breaking of the law. This implies that in the second millennium the charity, the love of the New Testament has become the law of the land and has put into shadow the more horrible side of sin which is that of the personal offence'. Ibid. 189-190. Illich develops an understanding of Christian sin here by the terms of its institutionalisation, the Church's criminalisation of its notion. In this institutionalised sin the Church has guaranteed divine vengeance and absolution through its judicial power. In conducting itself in such a manner the Church has committed itself to the Promethean endeavour of expanding its worldly power in order to reach into the Christian cosmos. For this to occur the Church required an extraction of intimate sin into its measured and malleable form. This refers to the valuation of sin. 'Now, in the tradition within which I'm speaking, sin allows a heightened understanding of evil [...] the replacement of good and evil by value and disvalue has destroyed the basis on which sin was predicated'. Ibid. 63. The idea of sin became valued upon its positive quantification. Sin's judicality accorded it with a corresponding measured punishment. This measurement simply concerning itself with the 'positive and negative values proceeding from an assumed zero point'. Ibid. 167. The Christian already being born with a debt to the institution, a negative value, their original sin initiated from birth requires immediate institutional care. From this moment the Christian is at the hands of an institution which defines the need of the individual and at the same time offers the service which treats such a need. This institutional care, being the extraction of the intimacy of Christianity, onto the Cartesian plane, is then referred to by the institution as the complete determination of sin's wholeness. That sin, in being measured, in being judicially processed, and in being accorded its appropriately measured punishment, has been contended with in its totality by the Church. For Illich, this institutionalisation of sin rather finds itself unable to see that which it has concerned itself. That the *mysterium* 'is hidden from those who think only in values'. Ibid. 168. Here, we can recognise Illich's attempt to position the reader for an appreciation of the indeterminacy upon which the unknownness of the Christian sentiment is found expressed. That in the critique of institutional Christianity the attempt to capture and re-define sin by judicial terms finds such an attempt as only signifying the positive knowing of the unknown's re-categorisation. And that in doing so the actuality of the contingent moment evades the self-described all-knowing institution.

opened between themselves and the other. The act of denial bounds the sinner to their infidelity and activates the possibility of their forgiveness through the other who has been denied. It is then the case that what Illich refers to as the corruption is the intervention into such mutualities as the attempt to undermine their contingency.

In the institutionalisation of Christianity, the sentiment of the unknown possibility is captured and reproduced as a guaranteed activity. The Samaritan charity deems its mandate the command to act as the Samaritan has acted. In this measure the charity organisation enforces the procedure of its institution to conform to such a premise. And it is here that the corruption of Christianity, the appearance of the *mysterium*, is found by Illich to have become activated in such an institutional process.

In appearing before the charity, the individual in need of aid cries out for help. The institution which receives this call responds immediately with a denial. However, the denial of the institution is not the denial of the provision of aid. It is not a sinning as new a relation between the institution and the one in need of help, it is rather a denial of the call itself as that which calls out for a replying response. In other words, it is a silencing of the other. What occurs is that the institution does not provide aid as a result of its response to the call, rather, the institution, upon receiving the call, negates its appearance by positing the command to self-categorise. This imposition is the institutional demand of its Prometheanism. The institutional mandate of the Samaritan organisation provides its aid only in the correspondence between the categorisation of the individual and the definitions of its mandate. That is, the institution of the Samaritan charity requires the call for help to posit themselves as a category, as an individual who is pre-measured, as one who corresponds to the category deemed worthy of institutional aid. In receiving such a self-categorisation, the institution corresponds such a self-definition to its own corpus of knowledge, its repository of categories. In the matter of this correspondence if the self-categorisation of the call for help is found outside the institutional mandate then the institution formally denies the call for help. In this denial, the institution's procedure removes any trace of relationality in the encounter between individuals and the institution. For in either case of an institution providing or denying aid the result is merely the activation of a formal category. Thus, the concern in Illich's analysis of institutionalisation can be understood by two factors. The first refers to the institution's aid, which, in our context of schooling, is found by Illich to obstruct learning itself. The second refers to the denial of institutional aid, in which case, due to the removal of relationality, the denial no longer offers an opportunity for the denier to recognise their own betrayal of the other,

and so the institution contains no immanent possibility for its own development, rather, it changes only in accordance to positivist assertions which enter it externally via Promethean research.<sup>19</sup>

In demanding of the unknown other a self-categorisation, the institution corrupts the possibility of Incarnational love. For the activation of Incarnational love is found by Illich in the open contingency of the encounter with others, thus the response to a call for help occurs in the mutuality of the call itself. In the institution, however, this mutual contingency is denied, and in its place is the mere correspondence of formal categories. The institution has not, in its denial, bounded itself to the other who has appeared, as would the relation between individuals would afford. The Samaritan formalism, in its preaching of itself as the place of aid, closes itself to any such relationships. The call for help cannot forgive their denial as there is no forbearance possible without the creation of the denial's relationship.

The institution has merely attended and treated or dismissed those that appear before its gates. In this mere attending the institution measures its 'relations' to service-clients as the total sum of those treated and those turned away. Its concern being only the categorisation. The institution only acts in accord to its own knowing. The institution denies otherness itself and sees its own being in all that it encounters. This orientation of the being of the institution transforms the Samaritan idea into a single-sided referentiality, in opposition to Illich's reading of the essence of Samaritan mutuality.

This denial of otherness, not as the intimacy of sin, rather, as the imposition of a self over all encounters with the other, is the Promethean endeavour which seeks to expect itself in all that it meets. For Illich, the conduct of this behaviour expresses the *mysterium* upon those who cry out for help. Although the aid provided by the charity organisation may correspond in material value, that is, although it may be the case that the call for help has been met with by institutional salvation, the individual who is processed through the institution has begun an interiorisation of its procedure. The self-categorisation required as the pre-requisite to institutional aid is the effect of the institutionalisation of the Samaritan act, as it not only afflicts the institution and the Samaritan essence of its activity, it also involves the violence of its forced categorisation. The individual who has called out for help does not meet an other who sees in them a mutuality. The institution, in their

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<sup>19</sup> There is an implicit criticism here in Illich's work regarding Promethean institutions. That the institutions change only when commanded by positive thinking, and so when the institution exists in the world it never experiences its own life, but rather lives in the shadow of Promethean thinking.



formal activation of institutionalised love, commands the unknown individual to find their completeness in the absolute quality of their formal category. It is a re-categorisation of the encounter, the other with the institution, as the former's subservience to the all-defining power of the Promethean. For the unknown who calls for help, their call requires them, when meeting the institution, to self-compel themselves to the command know thyself as the institution.

The self-knowing of the institutionalised individual is held in place by their category. The formalism of such a general universal demands of the individual subject to shed their subjectivity in light of the institutional gaze. The individual becomes objectified and finds themselves without their own contingency within the institutional process. The institution deems its process only eligible to those who have committed themselves to the initiation of the procedure. That beginning with the imposition of the command to self-categorise, the individual must deny their subjectivity as an internality. The imposition of the external category being the self-compulsion to self-define oneself as the category which corresponds to the institution's mandate of aid. For if the individual subject, who has appeared before the institution, speaks to the institution in the moment of the contingent call, such a calling is immediately negated by the institution. It is from the perspective of the individual, who appears as themselves, that they must silence the qualities of their being that contain a discord with the institutional definition, if they are to seek eligibility for institutional aid. The effect of this institutional categorisation describes one instance of the self-compulsion upon which the individual must perform in order to receive the material care of the institution.

In the instance in which the Samaritan act of love (or its denial) is activated as such an institutional guarantee, that same love is corrupted in its emergence. For the opening of the Incarnation's love occurs not in the single-sided imposition of a self-expectation. It is rather the mutuality in which the gathering of otherness creates the co-possibility of the relation which may emerge. In the case of the institution, Illich's theological-historical notion is the attempt to recognise such an extracted guarantee as the fulfilment of a Christian prophecy. That of Paul's *mysterium*.

Illich's attempt is to recognise what he perceived as the incomprehensible appearances of the *mysterium* in modernity. That such a *mysterium* could be recognised in the institution and that its unveiling requires the fulfilment of the institution's process. The re-opening of Incarnational love, from within its institutionalised state, occurs in a tracing

of Illich's reading of Paul. This re-opening is the possibility of a divine that finds itself in the moment of its own revelation.

Let no man deceive you by any means: *for that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.<sup>20</sup>

The institution is critiqued by Illich to make the claim that its procedures are the divine manifest. It is then in referring to this passage in Paul's letters that Illich is highlighting the falling away – or *katechon* – of Promethean thinking, which makes possible the recognition that whilst the institution has posited itself as the divine it is in actuality antithetical to the Incarnation.

And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.<sup>21</sup>

The revelation of the *mysterium* may not be revealed, here in Paul, or in Illich, until the *katechon* opens the possibility for such an unveiling. The work herewithin attempts to recognise the falling away of the deception of institutionalisation by the terms presented in Illich's Christian history. In this way it is the absolutisation of institutionalisation, the accumulation of institutional procedure towards its own collapse, as the re-opening of the Samaritan act as a contingent uncaptured possibility. The possibility of re-activating Incarnational love outside of the institution finds its possibility in the moments of institutional crisis. The attempt to trace this as a historical practice is now described through Illich's study of the history of perception.

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<sup>20</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

<sup>21</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8. The *mysterium iniquitatis* is Illich preference for the Latin term translated as the mystery of iniquity.

## Chapter 3 Schooling

### a. Illich's Modernity and The Disembodiment of the Gaze

In our move now to Illich's educational theme, I first wish to preface such a discussion with the ideas in which Illich conceives of the modernity where his critique of schooling takes place.<sup>1</sup> It may seem strange to attempt to describe the theological aspects which underpin Illich's ideas, and then to apply them to what may be considered a secular age. If conducted only in this way, the theological foundation may seem arbitrary and superficial to any attempt in reconciling the modern and the theological. However, in following Illich, as this thesis is conducting an immanent study, it is that modern society, albeit displaying a secular trend, is nevertheless conceived of by Illich to be an era of 'corrupted Christianity'.

Scholars agree that the Christian church which arose in the ancient world was a new kind of religious association, that it created around itself new "service" institutions, like hospitals and hospices for the needy. [...] This kind of activity remained important throughout the long centuries of Christendom, until in the modern era, these institutions have been taken over by secular bodies, often by governments. Seen within the history of Western civilization, the present-day welfare state can be understood as the long-term heir to the early Christian church. Now most people, whether Christian or not, would see this as a positive credit to Christianity, as a "progressive" move in history for which the Church is responsible. Without necessarily denying that good has come from this, Illich sees also its dark side. In particular, he sees in the way this has worked out a profound betrayal of the Christian message.<sup>2</sup>

The betrayal of the Christian message is described by Taylor as being Illich's concern with the *mysterium*. It is this concern about institutionalisation, whereby the modern moves further away from the early sentiments of Christianity, that we are able to recognise how it is that Illich orients his discussion of schooling. The extraction of the

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<sup>1</sup> As this connection between Illich's modernity and study of history are described in this thesis, it is again clarifying that the discussion on this topic is only to be brief to provide context. In regards this idea, see Illich's work on the development of technology and texts. Ivan Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text: A Commentary to Hugh's Didascalicon* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996). In fact, David Gabbard states that *In the Vineyard of the Text* may be considered a second volume to his work on the 'archaeology of the technology of the text', and indicates at a watershed to Illich's thinking. David Gabbard, 'Sensual Literacy: Ivan Illich and the Technologies of the Text', *Interchange*, 26/3 (1995), 297.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 737.

intimacy of Christian ideals becomes traced here explicitly through the thread of Illich's thinking as it relates to his study of the historical transformation of the eye.

This attempt begins with the watershed in the turn of thematic attention in Illich's work where he 'turned away from what he called "an aggressive critique of the degrading ceremonies ... of development" and began to devote himself to historical research on the history of perception'.<sup>3</sup> Here, this thesis works to recognise how Illich's descriptions of the historical shifts to the gaze may be understood in relation to the similar ideas found in his critique of schooling.

In my quest for a clearer understanding of what "body" once was, the history of the gaze proved particularly propitious because of the way in which seeing was once felt to be an act of bodily intercourse with the object of my gaze. This study also provided me with a way of reflecting on the disembodiment which seems to me characteristic of more modern times. [...] I realize that an historian working on that scale is as much a poet or a novelist. And, like a novelist working out chapters as he turns his psychological intuition into a book, I have to define epochs within this progression. So the first chapter in my study deals with the age of *opsis*, the age of the erectile *pupilla*. The next epoch is well-described by Johannes Kepler [1571-1630], who speaks about light as a postal courier [...] each light ray bringing the news of the world into my eyes. And now we are in a third epoch, which I have to struggle to find words for. In this new world I am constantly faced by images, TV images [...] and so forth. And I would argue that during the last fifteen years seeing has become something different than the reception of images along the lines of Kepler [...] It has become rather a form of participation in virtual worlds, where one actually steps into moving images, and virtuality becomes the real form of objectivity. These are the steps in the disembodiment of the gaze.<sup>4</sup>

This 'disembodiment of the gaze' is interpreted to relate in the same way that learning is disembodied, or objectified, from the individual. However, I now work to justify this assertion. In much the same way that Illich contends that the motor vehicle creates distance, and so cripples human walking, we can portray how the same innovations to the conception of the gaze cripples the seeing of the individual.

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<sup>3</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, David Cayley, Introduction, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 107-108. Illich details more specifically the historical instances of change in which the gaze is understood by the various epochs he has defined. Although the various historical instances of this is an interesting factor to our discussion, what is of more immediate relevance is how Illich is describing the modern epoch's conception of the human gaze. It is this latter consideration in light of its Christian history that is discussed in more depth.

The seeing that Illich portrays in the modern epoch is denoted by its extraction of the individual's contingent awareness<sup>5</sup> into a form of technological perception.<sup>6</sup> It is that the modern eye has become 'a binocular camcorder in [our] skulls, and [the modern understanding] can only conceive the training of the gaze in terms of technical improvements in their rate of digital digestion'.<sup>7</sup>

This technological objectification of seeing is evidently a concern from the perspective of the Promethean criticism that Illich has laid out. However, I wish to articulate this idea more specifically by the Christian history that allows us to commit to an Illichian conception of modern living.

In relating to the debates that occurred as a result of recognising Christ as the Incarnated divine, Illich refers to the difficulty in cognising the theological appropriateness for the worship of icons. 'Christianity, in its origin, enters [the] world [...] as a sect of Judaism, a crucial point because the Jews maintained an extraordinarily radical attitude [against] images'.<sup>8</sup> As coming out of this tradition, worship 'presented a major difficulty to the disciples and early followers of Jesus. They felt they had seen the Son of God [...] that he was God in the flesh. And, as such, they said, he was the image of the father'.<sup>9</sup> The Incarnation then came to be at odds with the theological conceptions of worshipping and idolatry, out of which the precedent attitudes of belief had attempted to remain faithful to the divine. How this relates to what is attempted in this thesis occurs in how Illich describes the solution to this theological crisis.

John of Damascus expressed [...] that an icon is a threshold. It is a threshold at which the artist prayerfully leaves some inkling of the glory which he has seen behind that threshold. In John's language it is a *typos* of the *prototypos*, which is in heaven. The icon is a window into eternity [...] The prayerful person, who bows before the wall of icons which separates the people from the mysterious altar, uses the beauty created by the artist in prayerful painting, in order to step devoutly through the *typos* to the *prototypos*. So although he bows before an image, it is an image which reflects the real flesh of those who have already been incorporated in the body of Christ. By engaging in this devout and pious expression of respect, John explains, the worshipper not

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<sup>5</sup> In discussing the gaze in the 'age of *opsis*' Illich refers to how seeing was 'a willed action, it was seen as subject to moral decision, and as capable of being trained as speaking or hearing'. Ibid. 108.

<sup>6</sup> This objectivity of the modern eye comes about for Illich 'in the early nineteenth century [...] The image comes to represent what is really out there, and not just what the anatomist or the draftsman sees. In scientific treatises, the demand for perspectival representation, for perspectival objectivity is abandoned, and objects are represented as measured, or as mapped'. Ibid. 118.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 120.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 111-112.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 112.

only touches, with his eyes, what is beyond the threshold represented by the icon, but he also brings back the mingling of his gaze with the flesh of the resurrected.<sup>10</sup>

The gaze in John of Damascus' solution occurs as a mutual discovery which sights the possible appearance of the divine and co-mingles with it in the back-and-forth movement wherein the individual's sight moves out into the unknown and returns with the apparent recognition of what it has encountered. It is not dissimilar to how Illich interprets the interaction between the Samaritan and the Jew.

As this way of conceiving of the gaze, Illich is constructing a theological-historical conception as the antithesis of the modern notion of seeing that is denoted by its technological orientation. That is, that despite advances in technology, the possibility of participating in a gazing that is impossible in the bodied experience of human life – e.g. seeing fantastical images through the television screen from multiple and simultaneous angles – occurs as the objectification of the gaze. The gaze has become external to the individual in which the individual is no longer a part of the moral decision-making of the age of *opsis*, nor is the individual a co-collective to the intermingling of the possibility of bringing back from the threshold of the image, the divine appearance, rather, in the modern epoch of the gaze the individual is incorporated as part of the system of the representation of images. The mechanical gaze outreaches from the technological concept of the eye, in which the individual is institutionalised into the systematic reproduction and consumption of these same images.

This modern way of seeing, as now understood through Illich's theological history of the eye, is understood as applicable to the same way that learning is objectified and made systematically involved with the student. In the following chapter, I will attempt to appropriate the theological-historical considerations presented above into the explicit educational theme that Illich develops.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 114-115.

## b. Ritual and Alienation

As stated, this thesis attempts to gain access to a philosophical understanding of Illich's notion of learning. As related to this endeavour Illich's thinking regarding the institutional school becomes the context of any such study. Being the case in this work, the critique of modern schooling is found substantiated by an appreciation of the theological-historical notion that Illich develops in his thinking.

It is by this account that such a conceptualisation of modernity becomes the foreground for our own work now regarding schooling. For Illich, schooling is the institution that has most benefitted from the development of Western modernity, not least because schooling, in its esteemed position, attempts a gathering of universal power never before witnessed.<sup>11</sup> What Illich is attempting to convey is that schooling expresses the need for a 'universal obligatory education', that this proclaimed need has become widely accepted, and that this need can only be satisfied by the structure of the institutional form of learning.

In accordance to this claim Illich perceives the success of such a proclamation by the ritualisation of schooling's process, that is, that the institutional form of schooling initiates the individual into the system of a Promethean modernity. The procedure of schooling, here being the interiorisation of categorised needs, is for Illich represented by the 'ritual game of graded promotions'. Thus, Illich contends that such a process, rather than promoting the idea of learning, as schooling would claim, instead convinces the initiate into the necessity of schooling's certifiable proof, and that such proof is only attainable from within schooling's institutionalisation. The idea of this certification being the notion that the instantiation of learning is only possible through the process of schooling. As such, the certificate is found to be the external object produced out of schooling and which signifies the achievement of certain categories of learning.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> That everywhere 'basic institutions might differ from one country to another: family, party, church, or press. But everywhere the school system has the same structure'. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 105-106.

<sup>12</sup> This ritualisation develops an aspect of schooling's template from the corruption of Christianity. That schooling, in its claim as the place in which the ideals of the Good are produced, such as citizenship, work ethic, environmental sensibility, etc., instead has come to corrupt such notions. In gathering its universal mandate schooling extracts learning from the intimate moments of subjective life and replaces its activation to being only located in the institution of learning. In much the same way that the gaze is instrumentalised as a 'camcorder', learning is here paralleled in its objectification into the material certificate.

This ritual of schooling is then understood by Illich to be the process in which institutionalisation is the creation of a self-compulsion. Illich describes this effect by the creation of manipulative myths, that schooling engenders into the nature of learning the Promethean ethos. In the institutional school, the moments of learning are conducted by the appearance of the curriculum, which be described as packages of pre-formulated knowledge. In conducting the organisation of learning by this manner, by the process of institutionalising the encounter between the subject and the object of knowledge, the institutional school ritualises the activity of learning by the method of in which this encounter unfolds. This method, later discussed as the positive accumulation of knowledge, is defined by schooling to be the instantiation of learning as identical to the institutional process. When Illich uses the terms of a market consumerism he is attempting to relay the notion that the institution of schooling's mythology activates an interiorisation of the process of positivisation.<sup>13</sup>

This extraction of learning from individual possibility, as being relocated to the school, and in schooling's institutional obligatory structure, is critiqued by Illich's contention that 'learning is the human activity which least needs manipulation by others. Most learning is not the result of instruction'.<sup>14</sup> In the process of such an extraction, and the institutional reproduction of learning, Illich attempts to recognise schooling's disengagement of the student from their curiosity. This disengagement refers to Illich's educational turn to alienation.

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<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Illich's notion of this institutional learning is understood to achieve its influential power through the artificial scarcity of certification. 'The man who has the skill [and learning] profits from its scarcity and not from its reproduction [...] The job market depends on making skills scarce and on keeping them scarce, either by proscribing their unauthorized use and transmission or by making things which can be operated and repaired only by those who have access to tools or information which are kept scarce'. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 128-129. This discussion of the scarcity of skills refers to the institutional process of certification. That in certification, a standardisation of the measurement of skill and knowledge, is the artificiality of a distinguishing between the certified learner and the uncertified. Modern institutionalisation thus confers upon the certified the appropriateness of their activity and places a distrust upon the unprofessional endeavours of those who are uninitiated into the ritual of schooling. For Illich, this scarcity of certification describes the initiation of entire societies into the belief of the institution of schooling. Illich claims that '[t]he fewer university graduates there are in a country, the more their cultivated demands are taken as models by the rest of the population'. Ibid. 50. And so, '[a] whole society is initiated into the Myth of Unending Consumption of services. This happens to the degree that token participation in the open-ended ritual is made compulsory and compulsive everywhere'. Ibid. 63.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 56. To clarify this explicit statement on learning, Illich is not attempting to dislocate learning from instruction, rather he is critiquing the institutional notion that *all* learning is to be sourced from within the professional pedagogue.



Alienation, in the traditional scheme, was a direct consequence of work's becoming wage-labor which deprived man of the opportunity to create and be recreated. Now young people are prealienated by schools that isolate them while they pretend to be both producers and consumers of their own knowledge, which is conceived of as a commodity put on the market in school. School makes alienation preparatory to life, thus depriving education of reality and work of creativity. School prepares for the alienating institutionalization of life by teaching the need to be taught. Once this lesson is learned, people lose their incentive to grow in independence; they no longer find relatedness attractive, and close themselves off to the surprises which life offers when it is not predetermined by institutional definition. School either keeps people for life or makes sure that they will fit into some institution.<sup>15</sup>

What Illich states in this reading is how his analysis of the school's relationship with other institutions, here referring to the market, reveals its alienating disposition. Illich's assertion is that the school, who claims to be the source of learning, rather extracts the creative subjectivity of learning into the institutional procedure. Thus alienation, as the force which separates the individual from themselves and others, is understood by Illich to stem from a Promethean institutionalisation of schooling.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 67-68. Illich's concern relating to schooling is not only restricted to the effects on the student. In referring to educational research's impact on the teacher, a demand for the application of technocratic research-based teaching strategies, Illich notes the irrational position in which the educator must 'bow to both Summerhill and Skinner'. Ibid. 94. In following Burrhus Skinner, known for his development of 'operant conditioning', educational research's attempt is to reproduce learning as the solicitation of the object in which the subject's behaviour induces conformity to that same object. For an interpretation of Skinnerian ideas for its educational purposes see Baldwin Bergenhahn and Matthew Olson, *An Introduction to Theories of Learning* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1993). In the same breath, Illich's insight is to also note that schooling at once demands of the teacher to conceive and reproduce learning in its opposite formulation. In following Alexander Neill, the author of *Summerhill* and its associated educational theory, learning is conceived through the subject's solicitation of the object's perceived value. As opposed to Skinner, whereby the student may be conceived as the animal who acts this way or that due to their environment, Neill's theory would be to conceive of schooling as the democratic self-principing of the student who solicits from their environment the conduct of their own learning. 'Summerhill School was selected because we anticipated, on the basis of previous research experience in the school, that it could be seen as being at one end of a continuum, a school generally thought to be less "regulated" and where pupils were part of a self-governing community'. Ian Stronach and Heather Piper, 'The Touching Example of Summerhill School' in Philip Woods & Glenys Woods (eds.), *Alternative Education for the 21st Century: Philosophies, Approaches, Visions* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 50-51. What Illich is referring to when mentioning Summerhill and Skinner is an alienated position in which the teacher may find themselves in their roles. That educational research confounds the educator, positing to them the pedagogical values of opposing ideas (which are presented in an unmediated form, that is, that each theory is in themselves the whole idea of learning without presenting the possible conflict that may arise when attempting to enact both opposing theories simultaneously). As such, this is Illich's expression that the teacher is, alongside their student, placed in a position which alienates them.

<sup>16</sup> This educational turn describes a counterargument against the Marxist proposal of understanding alienation as the justification for the primacy of 'an economic and political revolution'. However, what Illich does retain in his reading is of the relationship between the individual and their labour and the relationship between the individual and the institution. As such, Illich's situating of the

This is to say that what Illich concerns himself with is the implications of alienation's effect in schooling. What is lost in schooling is the possibility of surprise as the contingent opening of learning. In its place, a reproduction of the institution, or, an incorporation of the student, is the replacement of such hopeful surprising with the expectation of a Prometheanism. It is that schooling universalises learning by its positivist curriculum. This, for Illich, is an alienating procedure, which extracts from the subject the openness of their experiential encounters with possibilities and reproduces within the student a need and demand for pre-formed knowledge.

In relating to Illich's hope for surprise is the openness of the possibility of learning's contingent nature.<sup>17</sup> In Samaritan terms, the Samaritan has manifested the activation of this surprise as that which becomes a possibility, as that which opens itself to an Incarnational love absolutely particular to the moment, in the moment of the gathering of otherness. It is the Samaritan's own reckless subjectivity, an active self-consideration towards transgressing the boundary of the other, which is the possibility of the opportunity for an undefinition which allows himself to 'create and be recreated'. The Samaritan is surprised by the encounter. He does not expect there to be a wounded on the side of the road. And it is only through the openness to this surprise, an openness which activates the surprise as an overflowing *kenosis*, which instantiates the Samaritan act as a historical moment of Incarnational love. The surprise itself is the possibility of undefining the expected encounter. In the case of the priest and the Levite, who are alienated by their institutionalisation, are those who live in accordance to their expectations. The encounter with the wounded is a closed moment, they have witnessed a call for help and responded in the institutionalised manner: 'You have not appeared before the institution, therefore you are not upon the holy ground whereby you may be graced by the divine'. In doing so the priest and the Levite have closed themselves off to the surprises of their life.

From this perspective I introduce Illich's descriptions which may concretise an appreciation for the notion of schooling's alienation of learning. I use two contrasting examples from Illich's work: The first is of the teacher and student who have their position

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alienating power of institutions stems from the same concern regarding the involvement of the individual to the meaning of their activities.

<sup>17</sup> This surprising contingency does not refer to a whole conception of learning. Illich discusses various activities of skilled learning as being attained through the act of drilling. 'School has now made this kind of teaching rare and disreputable, yet there are many skills which a motivated student with normal aptitude can master in a matter of a few months if taught in this traditional way'. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 19.

in schooling guaranteed by the wealth of their nation. In this case, 'both are frustrated and both blame insufficient resources – money, time, or building – for their mutual frustration'.<sup>18</sup> The second is of the student who has participated in schooling's process and possesses the unfortune of being born into a nation where the available resources for schooling only obliges them to its manipulation for several years rather than the extensive period comparatively provided to their wealthier counterparts. In such a case, Illich senses within the poor a guilt for missing out on what wider society holds to be of paramount importance.<sup>19</sup> In either case of frustration or guilt schooling causes an inner turmoil that Illich attributes to alienation.

The ritual of schooling is then Illich's achievement in fathoming the depths of its institutionalisation. It is the perspective that uncovers the underlying religiosity of a proclaimed secular process. Promethean modernity has created an institution which treats its subjects as sinners and posits schooling as their only salvation. Schooling's ritual, from this Illichian perspective, imbues its graduates with the sense that the process of their learning is valuable and needed on the market, and with the graduates leading the cultural veneration of a manipulated learning so a 'whole society is initiated'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 103. This refers to Illich's contention that even in the situation where schooling is afforded relatively high funding, learning is corrupted and those touched by schooling are thereby alienated. This alienation emerges from a study into the most expensive educational program in history. A discussion into this program, *Title One*, is conducted in Chapter 4c. iii..

<sup>19</sup> 'Even those who spend at best a few years in school – and this is the overwhelming majority in Latin America, Asia, and Africa – learn to feel guilty because of their underconsumption of schooling [...] They are excluded from Heaven because, once baptized, they did not go to church. Born in original sin, they are baptized into first grade, but go to Gehenna (which in Hebrew means "slum") because of their personal faults'. Ibid. 64.

<sup>20</sup> In contrast to this view Ivan Dimitrijevic defends the ritual. Dimitrijevic places the thought of Thomas Hobbes at the centre of his response and asserts that '[...] men become men only within society, namely in virtue of socialization. It goes without saying that Hobbes did not theorize the necessity of compulsory schooling. Yet, if we start reasoning from the very same scientific premises, we shall make a convincing argument for its necessity'. Ivan Dimitrijevic, 'Schooling as a Rational Rite of Passage', *Policy Futures in Education*, 15/7-8 (2017), 891-899, 892. As a way of describing the individual's relationship to their learning, in which they overcome alienation, and how 'men become men', this perspective holds that from a Hobbesian political premise the presupposition of schooling regarding 'the practical actualization of the scientific interpretation of nature' lies in the justification for the institutionalisation of learning. Ibid. 896. This call for further scientism in schooling is construed in this thesis by the described term, technological positivism. The next part discusses the implications of this in terms of educational research.

## c. On Educational Research

### i. Institutional Learning

This thesis works in the contention that institutional schooling is ‘the reproductive organ of a consumer society’.<sup>21</sup> In the manner of conceiving of schooling by ritualised alienation Illich has responded to the objection which would describe institutionalised learning as the method to freedom.<sup>22</sup> The institutionalisation of schooling, now describing the replacement of the individual’s surprise with expectation, is understood by Illich to be granted its mandate by educational research. The positivism of this research describes the movement in which Promethean thinking attempts to gather its power in the process and procedure of schooling’s method.

This becomes explicit in a detailing of Promethean educational research. I present an example where this form of positivism appears in the literature. Lorraine Ling’s work, *The Power of the Paradigm: Methods and Paradigms in Education Research*, reflects upon positivism and its development in the context of educational research.<sup>23</sup> Ling announces a development to positivism termed *supercomplexity*. It is explicit in the work that Ling intends for supercomplexity to be the mode of educational research that should supersede positivism. However, Ling develops the newfound conception only in positivist terms and in this reveals that her work is entirely within the purview of Promethean thinking. In the work, Ling provides a hypothetical case study whereby the paradigm of supercomplexity

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<sup>21</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 107.

<sup>22</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau writes *Emile* as a conceptualisation of learning, and in many ways his work, as an aspect of the French Enlightenment, is a watershed to the birthing of modern education. The educational philosophy of *Emile*, and thus Rousseau, is taken by Revolutionary France to be the model of its new educational system. See Jean Bloch, *Rousseauism and Education in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1995). Despite Rousseau’s intent, and the institutional support by the new French regime for ‘the formation of free men and free communities founded on egalitarian principles’, modernity finds itself opposed to such declarations. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: or On Education* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), 5. Byung-Chul Han refers to ‘[t]he neoliberal dictum of freedom [which] finds expression in the paradoxical imperative, *Be Free* [...] *You can* produces massive compulsion, on which the achievement-subject dashes him- or herself to pieces. Because it appears as freedom, self-generated compulsion is not recognized as such. *You can* exercises even greater constraint than *You should* [...] The neoliberal regime conceals its compulsive structure behind the seeming freedom of the single individual, who no longer understands him- or herself as a subjugated subject (“subject to”), but as a project in the process of realizing itself’. Byung-Chul Han, *The Agony of Eros*, tr. Erik Butler (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 10. From this, the freedom espoused by Rousseau’s French Enlightenment appears in modernity as an internalised inversed form. It is that the student is no longer ‘free’ in the romantic sense, rather they are now free only insofar as their being and potential is identical to the schooling system.

<sup>23</sup> Lorraine Ling, *The Power of the Paradigm: Methods and Paradigms in Education Research* (Hershey: IGI Global, 2017).

is applied. The case expresses a researcher's supercomplexity by their ability to receive 'the unlimited imagination' of the matter of their research, and in doing so 'discern some themes' which lead to the ability for 'interpret[ation] against the theoretical underpinnings that support the [research] question'.<sup>24</sup> The supercomplex method is attempting to measure that which is unmeasurable, that is, to make a 'represent[ation] [of] the findings'.<sup>25</sup> Here, positivism by itself cannot access its own limitations due to its axiom regarding its own limitless nature, and that what it holds to be outside, or developed past itself, is rather encountered as merely the same of itself rather than a surprising other. This Promethean expectation categorises the content of its experience as content to be wholly categorised by pre-formulated ideas. The concern also lies in what seems to be on the surface a treatment of open surprise, here, as Ling expresses it, the 'unlimited imagination' appears on the surface to refer to the essence of individual subjectivity. However, this positivist expression only deems such subjectivity to be subservient to the power of measurability. In this case, it appears that even when the Promethean speaks explicitly to the case of immeasurability, they nevertheless deem all experiences to be reducible to a measure.

For Illich, the orthodox of educational research finds itself entirely within this model, and that the notion of Prometheus, which underlies its positivism, conceives of schooling and learning by such an understanding. From the perspective of this positivism learning is constricted by schooling in its positivised form. As schooling is the tool in which such positivised learning is disseminated, so Illich's notion of the consumer-student is recognised.<sup>26</sup> In this way learning's institutional state lies in its categorisation. The curriculum has become measured by the educational research which deems the content of learning appropriate for its corresponding audience.<sup>27</sup> This categorisation of learning into subject-matter is further categorised by its place in succession and precedence to other

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 37-38.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 38.

<sup>26</sup> 'School sells curriculum – a bundle of goods made according to the same process and having the same structure as other merchandise. Curriculum production for most schools begins with allegedly scientific research, on whose basis educational engineers predict future demand and tools for the assembly line'. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 59.

<sup>27</sup> What is mentioned here simply refers to how the curriculum demarcates content into age groups, and how students must follow the assembly line in which the curriculum sets out the student's entire progress of learning. Furthermore, connected to this idea of age, is Illich's argument regarding schooling's effect on the reinforcement of the modern concept of the *child*. See Jared Gibbs, "'For Tomorrow Will Worry About Itself': Ivan Illich's Deschooling Society and the Rediscovery of Hope (Radical Nemesis: Re-Envisioning Ivan Illich's Theories on Social Institutions)", *Western New England Law Review*, 34/2 (2012), 381-403.

categorised contents. This is to say that the curriculum divides and subdivides not only the content of learning, rather also the temporal adjudication upon which such categorisations are expected to appear in the student's educational encounter. Schooling's process is the activation of this curriculum whereupon the student meets the curriculum only in correspondence to the categories which Promethean educational research has deemed appropriate.<sup>28</sup>

Through the model in which the curriculum is the structure of schooling, so it is that the student is here seen to be incorporated and at once objectified. It is that the positivisation of learning, evident in the categorisations of the curriculum, proceeds forth from the notion that learning itself is the conducting matter of pure positivity. In the student's march through the curriculum, the curriculum posits itself as learning manifest. That the curriculum's subject-matter and temporal categorisations denote the process of learning *as such*. The individual who undergoes the curriculum engages with the particularity of the curriculum in the everyday moments of its positivism. A leads to B and B, necessarily, leads to C. Each moment of learning (A, B, and C) is characterised by its determination in the moment of the student's encounter. Initially, this is conducted through the professional educator. That through the professional, who's place is certified by the proof that they have already undergone the ritual, the curriculum manifests learning in the mere appearance of content. The curriculum's denotation of such learning is thus the positive accumulation of student experiences before the appearance of the curriculum's content, a consumption of the content of learning, in the order in which they have been categorised to appear. The student must proceed directly to B once A has been completed. And without the completion of A, a completion denoted by standardisation<sup>29</sup>,

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<sup>28</sup> Illich refers to Jorge Luis Borges in reference to an unsuspecting subject's interaction with these forms of categorisation. '[Borges] tells us that animals are divided into the following classes: "(a) those belonging to the emperor, (b) those that are embalmed, (c) those that are domesticated, (d) the suckling pigs, (e) the sirens, (f) fabulous ones, (g) the roaming dogs, (h) those included in the present classification, (i) those that drive themselves crazy, (j) innumerable ones, (k) those painted with a very fine brush of camel hair, (l) et cetera, (m) those who have just broken the jug, (n) those who resemble flies from afar'. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 98. It is, perhaps, Illich's reason to list at length Borges to attempt to allow the reader to appreciate more intimately what the student experiences in the encounter with schooling's categorisations. It is to denote the ethos of those who deem themselves possessing the 'responsibility for the education of the new generation, and this inevitably means that some men may set, specify, and evaluate the personal goals of others [and justify the] belief that man can do what God cannot, namely, manipulate others for their own salvation'. Ibid. 98, 73.

<sup>29</sup> Standardised testing, a universal element to institutional schooling, is here mentioned. This form of testing, where the student proves to the institution that they have 'learned' the content of the

the student has not yet completed the sacrament of their category. Without the ordination that blesses the student with the proof of their institutionalised learning the student is condemned to remain at the content in which they have failed to complete. This describes one rung of the many layers of schooling's Promethean and often bureaucratic ritualisation.

In conceiving of this procedure of learning the curriculum does not allow itself to suffer at the hands of student subjectivity. For the appearance of content is its complete objective determination, so learning is the incorporation of such content into accumulated knowledge. This methodology of conceiving of learning being adherent to the positivist mode. The student is deemed the subject-object which must, for their own salvation, accumulate more and more of these scientifically pre-formulated curricular packages. In the status of the curriculum certain grouped accumulations are categorised as achievements. These accumulation-achievements belonging to the categorisation of the proof of learning. The student who has accumulated A, B, and C, and has submitted the proof of such accumulated success, becomes blessed with succeeding onwards towards a more exclusive category of learning, in which they are privy to a higher valued level of certification.

This positivity of the ritual, mimicked in the positivity of the curriculum as the onward and upward direction of learning<sup>30</sup>, succeeds in its internal structure through the positivisation of the student-learner. For the subjective individual, the possibility of encountering the contents of learning does not find its completion in its mere apprehension. That is upon coming across that which appears, the individual, in active subjectivity, does not draw from the encounter only that which is expected. In Illich's thinking the individual is to be surprised by the encounter, and by the Samaritan terms, their openness to the encounter is deemed as the activation or the denial of that which is encountered. In either case of accepting or rejecting the content of learning such subjectivity lies on the side of the individual. The development of the content becoming the intimate relation in which the individual embraces that which has appeared, initially in their apprehension of the content, and in this apprehension the open surprise which accepts or denies the encounter. In following this course, as individual subjectivity

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curriculum, proceeds along the processes that are described above. It is a process which only recognises a learning that has first been measured.

<sup>30</sup> This upward direction refers to Illich use of the imagery of the pyramid to illustrate the market scarcity of certification.

encounters and activates on the side of acceptance, the development of the content follows in the *tarrying* which describes the newfound mutuality between the student and the content.<sup>31</sup> It is to say that in the moment of acceptance what simply emerges from the encounter is that the subject *stays with* the content. At this moment it is not prudent to attempt a speculative expectation upon which such a tarrying manifests its determinate form.<sup>32</sup> It is rather to illustrate the limited nature in which the curriculum's posited positive content appears only in its surface. The obligation, in which the student is obligated to tarry in schooling, as the obligation of institutionalised learning, deems the encounter, between the student and the curricular content, as subservient to the structure of schooling, rather than at the behest of subjective curiosity and willingness. This going-under in which the student and the content are submerged in their encounter is kept in place by the management of the institution. That is, schooling's structure produces such an educational encounter only through the obligation of its institutional form, thus subordinating the student to institutionalisation. The moment-to-moment life of the meeting between the student and the content in schooling conceives of itself only by such an obligatory command. As such, in the obedience to the command the silence of the student denotes the closedness upon which the expectations of their learning are produced.

It is further to state that the meeting of the student with the content-at-hand deforms the sensibility upon which the subjective ascertaining of experience is recognised. That schooling's premise of universal obligatory education manifests these moments of learning as the completeness of its infallible procedure. From this positivity is the intensification of the objectivity of the moment of learning as it appears in the institution. That upon the ground of the submerged encounter, the place of the institution, the student themselves encounter the institution in its absolute form. The meeting-place, the encounter between student and curriculum, becomes the instantiation of the expanding Prometheanism of schooling. That school attempts not only the external obligation, rather, it also compounds upon the student the institutional ideal. It is the propaganda of such an institutional idealism that the positivity of learning remains oblivious to the subjectivity of the student. In conducting its procedure only through its own self-accord, the institutional school never meets the student and finds their treatment of learning, schooling, teaching,

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<sup>31</sup> This relates to Illich's thoughts on the central importance that the individual learns best when their interests are at the heart of their interactions.

<sup>32</sup> Such an attempt is made in Chapter 4.



and education to be evident only in the positivism of its conduct. For Illich, it is here that the *mysterium* may be sensed in its possible appearance. That institutional schooling, in this Prometheanism, does not yet prohibit learning. However, it begins a process which infers the student to their transformation as an interiorisation of the positivity of institutionalisation.

In the obligation of encountering the content of learning the student is alleviated from their subjectivity towards surprising encounters. It is that the curriculum has pre-ordained the necessity of the content, judged upon an assessment of the need of the student, which provides schooling its obligatory power. The curriculum, and the Promethean research which grants it its mandate, attempts a two-pronged approach to the positivisation of the student. This procedure is the attempted objectification of learning as it relates to a transformation of the being of the student. In the method described above schooling instantiates the curriculum in which the world of the student makes the demand for the subject to conform to its structure. That the student, if they are to be granted educational deliverance, must adhere to the rituals of schooled learning. Yet, this aspect appears as an external command. And the external command is found by the school to be less conducive than an interiorised self-commanding.<sup>33</sup>

In the manner of this description I refer to the educational research which attempts to provide an institutional definition to the idea of 'lifelong learning'.<sup>34</sup> This idea, in the

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<sup>33</sup> Illich refers to the institutional school's attempt to expand its power. That this expansion, an attempt to externally cover the life of the pupil is neither possible nor ideal. 'Neither new attitudes of teachers toward their pupils nor the proliferation of educational hardware or software (in classroom or bedroom), nor finally the attempt to expand the pedagogue's responsibility until it engulfs his pupils' lifetimes will deliver universal education'. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, Introduction, v.

<sup>34</sup> There is a current attentiveness in educational research to the concept of lifelong learning. As opposed to Illich's own conception, that learning consists of the intimacy of the individual, and thus evidently is always lifelong to the individual's lifespan, the 'lifelong learning' of Promethean research remains on the side of its institutional definition. For example, 'Ingleby and Hunt (2008) refer to the [lifelong learning] sector as being characterised by a range of educational institutions [...] offering an even more varied range of formal and informal educational programmes'. Ewan Ingleby and John Hunt, 'The CPD Needs of Mentors in Post-Compulsory Initial Teacher Training in England', *Journal of In-Service Education*, 34/1 (2008), 61-75, cited in Jonathan Tummons and Ewan Ingleby, *A-Z of Lifelong Learning* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2014), 2011. In this case, we can see that lifelong learning has become institutionalised into an economic sector, supported by educational research and the institutions of schooling. Learning has been institutionally expanded to cover the life of the student, rather than to recognise that learning is itself a personal endeavour on behalf of the individual who seeks for themselves the interactions of their own life. In another example, Julia Preece would consider schooling's expansion in the African context to be a strong determinant to the factor of eradicating poverty. See Julia Preece, 'Lifelong Learning: Its Meaning and Scope' in Wapula Raditloaneng & Morgen Chawawa (eds.), *Lifelong Learning for Poverty Eradication* (Cham: Springer, 2015). On this note, Illich has critiqued extensively the opinion that

mode of positivist research, denotes the institutional attempt to expand its influence to the entire life of the student as an interiorised self-command.<sup>35</sup> It is that the curriculum, the structure of positive learning, is found by the institutional to only subject the student to its obligation in the years in which the student is obligated to schooling. Promethean schooling, then, even with its mandate for universal obligatory education, seeks further influence and power. The externality of a social initiation of the student after their graduations not satiating the institution. The imposition of a replacement of the student's subjectivity, with the objective form of the curriculum, self-commanded by the notion of 'lifelong learning', denotes this attempt at internalisation. In the case of its success, the student's self-compulsion loses sight of the surprising subjectivity of their encounters, and in its place is the closedness in which Promethean expectation has become instinct. The life of the student is then institutionalised by the interiorisation of the command learn in life as you learn in school.

In so doing the institution categorises the student as not only a category which is processed through schooling, the student themselves are committed to the interiority of the category. This being the case the institutionalisation of the individual into the category of the student defines the objectification of the process of learning. For the positivity of curriculum learning to become accountable by measurement, institutional schooling cannot permit the subjectivity of denial to take place in the process of learning. The accumulation of content, and the achievements of signified stages-of-learning, denote a course of developmental growth that fails only in the case when it ceases to accumulate. A student who enacts the response 'no, I am not interested in this', is treated by schooling to be categorised as 'disengaged'. As opposed to the form of learning whereby the student's own interest would always find them engaging in activities of personal interest, schooling's procedure would dictate that this response requires treatment in order for the student to become more docile to their own institutionalisation.

The student, whose life consists of this institutionalisation, has found themselves at the mercy of an externality which seeks to overcover their experiences and to re-categorise their being as the object of learning. This begins our development towards an

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schooling is a significant method to the equalisation of social demographics. This relates more significantly to how Illich analyses the economic concept of development and its production of modern 'needs'. Illich has collected five essays into a book on this topic. See Ivan Illich, *Toward a History of Needs* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

<sup>35</sup> This self-command is a function of schooling's attempt to identify the student with the institutional procedure of learning.

explication of the objectification of the student. In describing the interiorisation of positive learning, it is a recognition of a violence upon the student whereby their being is incorporated in the system of schooling.

The interiorisation of institutional schooling is the effect upon which the individual is incorporated as an object into the process of the manufacturing of learning. That is, the student is necessarily objectified by institutional schooling as the place in which learning is conducted and produced onto them.<sup>36</sup> The student is the object of learning inasmuch as the object of learning is the positivity of content. In this way the violence of institutional schooling demonstrates its proclivity towards Prometheanism in the manner in which it seeks a silencing of the student's subjectivity. In the endeavour of expansion, Promethean educational research seeks to categorise that which lies outside itself as now known and same as itself. The student, the object of schooling's intention, is the unknown which appears en masse and is deemed the content requiring categorisation. The encounter between Promethean schooling and the student is the re-categorisation of the particularity of that which has been encountered into a known and measurable form, the category of student. It is then, the categorical student, which is contended by schooling as the known category upon which its curriculum may succeed. Here, the categorisation is described as the positivisation of the subject into their categorical objective form.

The student is then incorporated and lives within the realm of the institution. Their categorisation being a determination by schooling of their subjectivity. The school has now replaced such a subjectivity with the sameness in which all positive categorical forms concur. The category of the student is merely distinguished by its relation to other categories of vocation; the category of the teacher, the category of the dropout, etc.. In such an organisation the categorisation becomes the place in which the individual themselves are the same as the descriptive of their category. The rejection of such a category, an activation of subjectivity in the form of a denial, falls upon unlistening ears, as the

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<sup>36</sup> This can be seen in parallel to how Illich perceives of the modern city's incorporation of the Brazilian favela. 'The bulldozer incorporates the *favela* into the modern metropolis. It breaks down the distinction between outside and inside. It incorporates discrete vernacular space *sui generis* into non-discrete, in-discrete, homogenous, commercial space'. Ivan Illich, *H<sub>2</sub>O and the Waters of Forgetfulness* (London: Marion Boyars, 1986), 20-21. Schooling is then the same bulldozer which makes the attempt to remove the distinction between the individual and the process of institutional learning. As much as the modern eye is objectified, so too is the modern student made an objective aspect, and thus becoming identical to the system of schooling. This idea follows Illich in the concern that institutional schooling is opposed to the hope for a learning that is surprising and contingent to the individual.

institution has deemed itself the disseminator of the categorisation and delivery of educational salvation.<sup>37</sup>

For Illich, schooling has been witnessed as attempting a universalisation of its power. That such an attempt positivises the student and creates a Promethean world which identifies the individual with the system. That what consistently appears outside positive knowledge must be captured and categorised. In schooling this categorisation demonstrates the procedure in which the activity of learning, the process of schooling, is the interiorisation of the categorical student. In this conceptualisation of the student, the student is denied their subjectivity, and is treated as an 'object' of learning.

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<sup>37</sup> This refers most intently upon schooling's obligatory mandate of attendance. However, the universal expanding power of the institutional school has found itself also attempting to reach all corners of social reality. This is to claim that even those who are not initiated into schooling still experience its institutional power. 'Half of the people in the world never set foot in school. They have no contact with teachers, and they are deprived of the privilege of becoming dropouts. Yet they learn quite effectively the message which school teaches: that they should have school, and more and more of it. School instructs them in their own inferiority through the tax collector who makes them pay for it, or through the demagogue who raises their expectations of it, or through their children once the latter are hooked on it'. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 43.

## ii. The Object of Learning

Conceived as an object the student's position in schooling is recognised by positivist research as that which may accumulate knowledge.<sup>38</sup> In this way the student's unknown, the internality which possesses their process of inquiry, is formalised into its positive form. The student's progress as a category is measured, both the general measurement upon which they are proceeding through the stages of schooling, and the specific measurements upon which their achievements are described by letter-grade and numerical-value. Upon this field of categorisation, the institutional defines educational success and failure by a formal standard. That is to say that it is the standardisation of the measurement of commodified learning which pertains to the ritualistic performances in which the student must conform.

The incorporation of the student, as the interiorisation of the curriculum, denotes the Promethean ethos of an educational research that conducts itself in the positivist mode. It is in the attempt to trace this development where this thesis now finds its concern related to the alienated student.

The student whose life consists of the accumulation of curricular knowledge finds their being re-categorised and defined by the institutional form of schooling. As such is the educational command obligatory – not only consisting of the external boundaries upon which life is inaccessible to the unlearned, rather also involving the internalised command of schooling – so it is that the process of learning adheres to this positivist concept. In Illich's hope for unmanipulated learning, the positivity of this structural learning denotes not the formal universal, rather, it is the element of necessity in which the individual

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<sup>38</sup> Paulo Freire would deem this the 'banking model of education'. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985). Whilst Freire's project is more intently a development of the pedagogical gathering as a political encounter, it is noted that from this perspective the accumulation of knowledge is found also to be the single-sided delivery of packaged information from the curriculum into the objectified student. Regarding this interpretation of the student's objectification, and the system's consumption of their being into the schooling system, what is implicitly attended to is Illich's ecological sensibilities. This has been referred to previously in this thesis when discussing the scarcity of educational certificates, although Illich himself does make explicit statements on this topic. This is noted here to clarify that Illich's ecology is another aspect of his thinking, and that a more in-depth discussion is outside this thesis' main contention. For someone who recognises this ecological aspect refer to the works of Richard Kahn. Richard Kahn, 'The Ecopedagogy Movement: From Global Ecological Crisis to Cosmological, Technological, and Organizational Transformation in Education', Ph.D. thesis (University of California), 2007.

attempts to ascertain knowledge.<sup>39</sup> It is to say that the positivised learning in schooling, as the separation of the unknown from the institutional procedure, an attempt to remove negativity, conveys itself upon a model of unending consumption. That learning, in such a form, may perform a growth not unlike that of the appetite of the consumer society. In this description, what positivised learning conduces is violence distinguished from that of the Promethean encounter with the unknown. It is a violence of the Promethean encounter with itself.

The positivity of schooling, in its expansion, attempts to overcover the experience of life by the notion of curriculum learning. In such a learning the individual no longer conceives of the new encounter by surprise, a negativity of experiential being, rather, the encounter's denotation by expectation, a self-limitation to the expectation of that which one already knows, inhibits self-reflexivity. It is an encounter which merely *adds*. An accumulated piece of information which is stored into the memory of the student. No longer is the student allowed to be capable of a negativity which opens itself to denial. All encounters henceforth from the positivisation of the student is to be accumulated and documented within the measuring capability of their newfound positivised self.<sup>40</sup>

In that the student has become identical to the system of schooling, and that their encounters are denoted by the same positivity, thus their illnesses<sup>41</sup> are also to be categorised into the institutional form. The violence of schooling is then the intensification of the procedure of positivity, an obligated accumulation of packages, until the student collapses from the exhaustion of a lack of rest.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> This refers again to Illich's notion of drilling. It is not to make the claim that the positivity should be excluded, for drilling involves the positive structural form of a repetitive action. It is that Illich's critique attempts to convey the insight that positivity's formalisation, in the institution, and demanded as a universal, fails to recognise learning's contingent nature.

<sup>40</sup> In other words, the student's learning is no longer evident in their being, it has been extracted to their report cards, and it is this external object (which comes to take the place of the being of the student) which is found by schooling to be identical with the student's actuality. It is a measurement of the student which takes the place of the student themselves. And instead of contending with the actuality of the student, it is rather the report card which is treated and determined as requiring further institutional aid to improve its measure.

<sup>41</sup> In the medical theme of Illich's early work, he develops a use for a highly specialised term *iatrogenesis*, meaning illnesses that have their origin in the doctor. This term is used by Illich to highlight the institutionalisation of medicine and its effect on the individual. I will suggest that my own use of the term illness is meant to allude to the similarities in which the effects of institutionalisation work towards the incorporation of the individual into the age of systems. Illich writes: 'Built-in iatrogenesis now affects all social relations. it is the result of internalized colonization of liberty by affluence'. Ivan Illich, *Limits to Medicine: Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 15.

<sup>42</sup> In relating to rest, although David Schwartz's chapter refers to Illich's metaphorical transformation of water as the base of its storytelling, he nevertheless alludes to Illich's own

For schooling, positivity conceives of this student illness<sup>43</sup> by its own terms. Its measures, which are its positivist response to the collapse of positivist learning, follow in the course of a Promethean world. In the case in which the student slips from the grip of schooling's incorporating power, e.g. the student who is not adhering to the banking model, and rather wanders their gaze through the window, is found to need a measure which may force their obligation. I here present a *mysterium* of schooling currently committed on an industrial scale. The technological sub-categorisation of the student by the terms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).<sup>44</sup>

The stream of educational research attending to ADHD is the attempt to reconcile the increasing number of students who are resisting the positivity of institutional schooling. The categorisation of these students into the category of ADHD are defined by Promethean science as thus:

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the current diagnostic label for children presenting with significant problems with attention, and typically with impulsiveness and excessive activity as well [...] The disorder represents one of the most common reasons children are referred for behavioral problems to medical and

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thoughts on the technological transformations which remove the individual's ability to 'rest' and 'dwell in a place'. 'Purifying the eye to see remnants, to detect the riches of tradition, offers three gifts. [...] [The second gift], seeking out and embracing remnants can give you a place to stand in the modern world. Like stepping-stones across a creek, each rest can give you some place to plant your feet in the quest to actually dwell in a place.' David Schwartz, 'Ivan Illich's Concept of "Rests": Glimpses of a World Past' in Lee Hoinacki & Carl Mitcham (eds.), *The Challenges of Ivan Illich: A Collective Reflection* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 108. Here, the rest which Schwartz alludes to, the self-gift of dwelling, is interpreted towards an educational context. That the student, who lives their life in the school, much akin to Schwartz's individual who lives in the modern world, may struggle in their effort to overcome how their life is superimposed upon by the institutional demand. And yet despite this, the will to perceive the vernacular, the convivial, and the mutual, is possible in the moment in which the student rests in their place of learning. It is not a place denoted by the time-space conception of schooling – the schedule of the class and the space of the classroom – rather, it is the internal landscape wherein the student finds their learning not as an external curricularised procedure, instead, an internal contingency that is linked to the necessity of their self-discoveries as an individual. This resting would be understood by the institution as mere loitering, a wasteful use of productive time, rather than what Illich would find it to be, the moments which are open to the surprising encounter.

<sup>43</sup> The term illness is further used to indicate at the institutional conception of the individual in need of schooling's aid. It is to suggest that the concerns raised by Susan Sontag are found to be the same presuppositions accepted within institutional schooling. See Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983).

<sup>44</sup> There is a wide discourse, indeed a controversy, regarding ADHD that goes beyond the scope of the educational context found in this thesis. The controversy regards the potential 'myth' of ADHD and its prevalence. For an argument that the term is a myth see Warren Weinberg and Roger Brumback, 'The Myth of Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder: Symptoms Resulting from Multiple Causes', *Journal of Child Neurology*, 7/4 (1992), 431-445. For an argument that the categorisation is 'overdiagnosed' see Julian Haber, *ADHD: The Great Misdiagnosis* (Lanham: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2003).

mental health practitioners in the United States and is one of the most prevalent childhood psychiatric disorders.<sup>45</sup>

In schooling the student who is found to be unable to activate the self-compulsion of positivised learning, the command be free and learn as schooling instructs, is met with the institutional measure of further categorisation. This categorical measurement deems the student as requiring further manipulation for their own needs. Generally speaking, the treatments of this sub-categorisation are contended by Prometheanism in the terms of two approaches: (1) behavioural and (2) pharmacological. In referring to these two measures, Promethean research finds itself attracted to the approach more conducive to certainty. For Forness and Kavale the behavioural plans and treatments measured against the categorised ADHD student are useless.<sup>46</sup> It is to say that the Promethean strand of educational research finds the collapse of institutional schooling, in the recognition that the student is not attentive, and deems such an actuality to be requiring the injection of further positivity. The attention of schooling finds itself concerned with only the reason why its control is not all-powerful. It seeks within itself for further measures upon which its power may become intensified. In the matter of this research Forness and Kavale find that:

Evidence both from a recent meta-analysis of 115 studies and from the MTA study referred to earlier suggests that, for ADHD, psychopharmacologic treatment is both statically and clinically more effective than comprehensive behavioural intervention.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Russell Barkley, *Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Handbook for Diagnosis and Treatment* (New York: Guilford Press, 2006), 3. This definition of ADHD informs a literature generally intent on discussing children and their inability to 'concentrate' in school. However, the pharmacological idea also finds itself applicable to university students. See Matthew Varga, 'Adderall Abuse on College Campus: A Comprehensive Literature Review', *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 9/3 (2012), 293-313.

<sup>46</sup> 'Not only were there both statistically and clinically significant gains in children treated with medication and behavioral interventions (the combined treatment group) and in children treated with medication (medication only group); but there were also *no* differences in gains between these two groups. In other words, adding a comprehensive behavioral intervention to careful medication management did not significantly improve gains made from just using medication management alone'. Steven Forness and Kenneth Kavale, 'ADHD and a Return To The Medical Model of Special Education', *Education and Treatment of Children*, 24/3 (2001), 224-247, 237.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



Behavioural intervention, the approach that opens an encounter between living people<sup>48</sup>, between the student and the teacher or parent or researcher, is found by positivist science to be a nullity in comparison with medication. From this perspective educational research is attempting a mass pharmacological control of the student. It insists that if students are unable to self-compel themselves into their institutionalised form then, for their own benefit, they must become medicated. This contention is accepted in Promethean modernity, and for the Promethean, the attempt is made to trace and solidify this position as a science-based educational certainty. For Elia, Ambrosini, and Rapoport:

Psychostimulant drugs have been the drug treatment of choice for children with ADHD since the report was made, 60 years ago of immediate and often dramatic improvement in the conduct and academic performance of children [...] when they were treated [...] These findings have since been confirmed in many controlled, short-term studies (last a few weeks) of children, adolescents, and adults; an estimated 70 percent of the patients responded to the stimulants drugs. [...] The use of stimulant drugs results in an immediate and often dramatic improvement in behavior. [...] Teachers do not need to work as hard to control the children and are more approving of their behavior. Academic improvement improves, but not as dramatically as behavior.<sup>49</sup>

What Promethean educational research here declares triumphantly is that the pharmacologically-induced student is managed behaviourally. It is that the academic improvement is the mere side effect of what is essentially the final solution to institutional schooling. The control of the student, here openly posited, being the central factor upon which schooling utilises its methodology as the instance of its incorporating power. That learning requires the docility of the object of learning, and that such learning must be administered through the professional educator. If the external and internal commands of the institution remain inadequate in the control of the student so it is that educational research deems the technological idea to intensify schooling's institutionalisation.

In conceiving of learning through this pharmacological docility the treatment of medication refers to the 'promise to make man into something else: genetically planned, pharmacologically sweetened, and capable of more protracted sickness'.<sup>50</sup> The illness of such a positivist learning is found in the moment of the student's collapse. It is that the

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<sup>48</sup> Although 'behavioural intervention' allows this human interaction, in the way that Forness and Kavale conceive of it, it is ultimately a measure used to further convince the student into their need for schooling.

<sup>49</sup> Josephine Elia, Paul Ambrosini and Judith Rapoport, 'Treatment of Attention-Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder', *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 340/10 (1999), 780-788, 782-783.

<sup>50</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 158.

objectified student, in each moment of their curricular accumulation, progresses through schooling in the activity of bearing the weight of the curriculum that they must accumulate. That is, the Promethean expectation, a learning conceived by an unending consumption, demands of the student to contain an internal boundless inventory. So, it is in the curriculum to contain pre-packaged information, so it is to be in the student that such information is to be stored in like fashion. The incorporation of the student not occurring as a mere labelling, a surface categorisation, in which the student may resist at will. Its interiorisation here describing an internality of the student conceived in purely positivist terms. It is the hollowing of the subjective to allow space for the installation of the object-that-learns. Institutional schooling attempts to remove the otherness of the student's individuality, and to create a self-compulsion within the created object-student which performs the act of schooling without resistance. As posited, the Promethean cannot sustain negativity and must extinguish such in all encounters. These means define how schooling incorporates the student into the system of institutional education, and how this is achieved through their transformation into an object.

In the case whereby the incorporation of the student occurs as the interiorisation of positivity, their re-categorisation, thus schooling commits an institutional violence. It is neither the violence of negativity nor indifferent neglect. Its formal categorisation being the violence of positivity which holds the student prisoner in the place of their category, subservient to its measurement. In such a conduct the student becomes object to their categorisation, and the treatment of the student in the procedure of schooling restricts the developments of learning to the categorisations based upon Promethean science. No longer is learning appreciated as and within being, to wear what is learned with the weight of a flower<sup>51</sup>, its extraction, and its positivisation, has led to the understanding of learning as being the bearing of the weight of commodified packages.

For Illich, this process of institutionalised learning is the exhaustion of the student and the consumption of their being into the needs, interests, and reproduction of the institution. The student's collapse is the moment in which the crisis of the limits of their humanity are extended by the demands of the institution. In schooling's demand for the

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<sup>51</sup> '[...] wearing all that weight Of learning lightly like a flower'. Alfred Tennyson, *Alfred Tennyson: In Memoriam, Maud and Other Poems* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1974), 151.

student to learn unendingly, in pure positivist accumulation, the collapse of its positivity occurs in the being of the student.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> This claim, that the collapse of institutional schooling can be witnessed in the student, cannot be proven here. It is intended to be developed in Chapter 4 with the discussion of the collapse of Promethean knowing. However, the following part attempts to convey a reading of Promethean development as interpreted through the trajectory of the educational program *Title One*.

### iii. *Title One*

This part of Chapter 3 now attempts to describe the trajectory of the development of an instance of Promethean educational thinking. The intention in conducting this study is to attempt to provide a basis for the claim that Prometheanism attempts an accumulation of power and can lead to its immanent collapse.<sup>53</sup> The focus on *Title One* follows in Illich's own thought regarding the program. Produced out of the U.S. 'War on Poverty' the 1965 legislation for this program is titled the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA).

As a case in point, between 1965 and 1968 over three billion dollars were spent in U.S. schools to offset the disadvantages of about six million children. The program is known as Title One. It is the most expensive compensatory program ever attempted anywhere in education.<sup>54</sup>

ESEA was argued to be the planned institutional response to what was perceived as the gap of educational achievement between categorised demographics:

This bill represents a national determination that this [injustice of poverty] shall no longer be true. Poverty will no longer be a bar to learning, and learning shall offer an escape from poverty.<sup>55</sup>

In this manner, *Title One* was imbued with the imprimatur of state authority to address structural injustice and inequality in the educational system. Pertaining to its effects, *Title One* provided itself the mandate of raising the formal education levels and successes of students throughout the country. The procedure of this attempt came in the form of 'a funding source for categorical – fiscally compartmentalized – programs'.<sup>56</sup> The main thrust of *Title One*, in its ESEA form, was to define 'educationally disadvantaged' students and to fund institutional learning programs to lift those categorised as such out of socio-economic immiseration and marginalisation.

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<sup>53</sup> Although assessed in its current state, the term collapse would be too much of a prophetic description for a discussion of a situation which is currently still underway. The collapse is meant to refer more closely to the philosophical notion related to the crisis of Promethean knowing's more abstract state, later discussed in Chapter 4, rather than its concrete form found in *Title One*.

<sup>54</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 6.

<sup>55</sup> George Farkas and L. Shane Hall, 'Can Title I Attain Its Goal?', *Brookings Papers on Education Policy*, 3 (2000), 59-123, 59. Farkas and Hall here references the U.S. President Lyndon Johnson's speech in support of ESEA.

<sup>56</sup> Gregory Fritzberg, 'Revise and Resubmit: A Critical Response to Title One of the No Child Left Behind Act', *Journal of Education*, 184/1 (2003), 69-85, 70.

From the perspective of *Title One* the categorisation of educational objects was necessary from its initiation. As the basis for the program was founded upon the categorisation of those in need of educational support, and that such a categorisation found itself aligned with the category of economic poverty, so the institution deemed that only in further sub-categorisations would it be possible to diagnosis such a maleducation. This diagnosis led to a consensus amongst policymakers that its treatment consisted of further schooling, intensified by the surgical precision of its categorisation. Those deemed to fail in school were treated as institutionally malnourished, in which case they were deemed to require more and more institutional salvation.

Despite the economic and institutional support for this program:

[N]o significant improvement can be detected in the learning of these "disadvantaged" children. Compared with their classmates from middle income homes, they have fallen further behind. Moreover, in the course of this program, professionals discovered an additional ten million children laboring under economic and educational handicaps. More reasons for claiming more federal funds are now at hand.<sup>57</sup>

What Illich notes is that what emerges in the Promethean light of *Title One's* institutionalisation is the further categorisation of those who before remained uncategorised as 'educationally disadvantaged'. That such a categorisation, and its institutional treatment, has caused an inverse effect upon the student<sup>58</sup>, and that the categorisation has instead posited that its failure is due to its mere lack of funding.

The history of *Title One* is found to be aligned with an interpretation of Prometheus' attempt to expand the light of positive knowing. Each iteration of *Title One* continues to develop provisions that call for further certainty to its categorisations.<sup>59</sup> That each iteration

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<sup>57</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 6-7.

<sup>58</sup> At best, the vast amount of funding, and the specialised categorisation of students, were found to show that 'the overall program [is] helpful in the short term for children that were near the income cut-off point (but not the severely disadvantaged)'. Ibid. 70-71. The positivism of this thinking is evident in that the consideration of such a lacklustre institutional effect is accorded to the failure of a lack of more specific categorisations. This refers to the later revisions of *Title One* that call for 'a stronger focus on judging schools in terms of student outcomes [by] creating strong accountability requirements'. Brian Stecher, Georges Vernez and Paul Steinberg, *Reauthorizing No Child Left Behind: Facts and Recommendations* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2010), 58.

<sup>59</sup> I highlight here several further iterations to *Title One* that merely adjust the intensities in which institutional schooling attempts to manufacture learning. The 2002 revision, *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), found itself enacted due to the concern that *Title One* was unable to guarantee that the standards of learning that were institutionally achieved. Thus, NCLB was, at the time, the creation of an educational intensification of a measurement of certainty termed 'accountability'. This measurement attempted to ensure that the funding provided to schools corresponded with the

of *Title One*, and the accompanying research into its effects, continue to posit that its current categorisations do not, in fact, overcover the educational experience of the student enough<sup>60</sup>, and that the newest forms of *Title One* never contain enough funding to adequately achieve its institutional intent.

The student who has undergone each of the procedures of each iteration of *Title One* finds themselves further initiated into the process of institutional schooling. As *Title One* expands and fluctuates its influence we find that what is most inordinately concerned is the student: *What is it that the economically disadvantaged child lacks? What is it that the minority does not receive? What is wrong with the failing child?* In the instances whereby Promethean educational research contends itself with approaching an understanding of the individual, these understandings are all achieved through categorical terminology. And as it is the category which is defined, measured, and treated, so it is that the extraction of an educational subjectivity into objective form cannot ever sight the being of the student.

Each moment of institutional learning becomes measured and is allocated an educational strategy. It is the attempt to formulate such a strategic approach in which the

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success of their *Title One* programs. Although this accountability was legislated into the program in ESEA's 1988 iteration, '[NCLB found] new ways of holding schools accountable for student achievement'. Sarah Sparks, 'Highlighting No Child Left Behind Act-Era Research', *Education Week*, 35/16 (2016), 8. The intensification of accountability in NCLB began a watershed moment for the educational expansion of standardised testing. NCLB had dictated that for educational institutions to become eligible for funding there must be proof of student academic success in *Title One* programs. The proof of this was founded on a re-invigoration of a measurement from ESEA's 1994 iteration – *Improving America's Schools Act* – called the 'adequate yearly progress' (AYP). This led to an educational fervour around the U.S. regarding the ubiquity of standardised testing. That the AYP became the measurement of student learning, and that if this measurement were to show success then schools which instituted this success were to receive beneficial funding. This led to an expansion of standardised testing, across age groups that before had not received such measurements and were seen as the proof of the accumulation of curricular packages. These various developments in which *Title One*'s original program were expanded and adjusted are denoted by the fact that they are all unified in their attempts to 'engulf [the] pupils' lifetimes [in order to] deliver universal education'. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, v.

<sup>60</sup> 'In the following discussion, we offer a series of suggestions derived from [previously mentioned] studies [as improvements to NCLB]. [...] Promote More-Uniform Academic Standards [...] Promote More-Uniform Teacher Qualification Requirements'. Brian Stecher, Georges Vernez and Paul Steinberg, *Reauthorizing No Child Left Behind: Facts and Recommendations*, 59. Stecher, Vernez, and Steinberg offer more recommendations, however, for the case in point these suggestions represent the Promethean call for a universalisation of institutional measurement. The call for a 'more-uniform academic standard' attempts to homogenise the not-universal-enough standards of measured learning. It is the attempt to increase the specificity of the language of institutional learning. In the case of the homogenisation of the requirements of the teacher, it is the attempt to further create exclusivity for the role of the categorical teacher, as a further educational pre-requisite for a certification of the teacher. Illich would describe this as a process of further alienating the teacher (who must undergo more institutionalised learning) into the pedagogue who is more and more efficient at delivering schooling.

unknown individual is hidden from Promethean thinking as the unknown. That what is required in all these approaches is the abstraction of what is *sensed* about the student. The student being the manifestation of the entirety of the list of definitions and treatments upon which Promethean educational research has conducted. The encounter with the unknown student being treated one and the same by the institution in all such encounters.

In this way the student in schooling can no longer live their own life. Each moment of the life of schooling representing an aspect of the category of the student as being treated by Promethean research. For example, the structural categorisations of the curriculum becoming sub-categorised into the allocation of learning through the timetable of schooling. It is to admit the student into a temporal categorisation, which adjudicates the *absolute moment of learning* and the *absolute moment of rest*. As an object, the student finds themselves committed to this temporality of schooling. As such, institutionalised learning becomes located to the moment of the class. And the time out of the class designating the 'rest-period'. Here, the accumulation of learning in schooling is not only the gathering of packaged learning, it is also the gathering of the moments of rest as a positive activity.

In the expansion of positivity, as described so far by the terms of *Title One*, we find that the student has their individual contingency replaced with the Promethean positivity of their categorisation. That is, the student is encountered by schooling only through their measurements and definitions; the autonomous subjectivity of the student's human life being the unessential element. In this way the object's passive *Yes, I Can* inflects the *No, I Will Not and Yet I Will*. The positivisation of learning determines this hyperactivity of the student as the object which can and must learn in all the allocated moments of schooling. Even in the periods of time designated as being 'outside class' become determined within schooling as moments of accumulation. These 'rest-periods' do not denote rest *as such*. Alongside the allocation of a table of determined time as another instance of measured categorisation, the rest in schooling is denoted by its positivity. The in-between of the *absolute moments of learning* is merely the accumulation of one moment after another. Each designated period of learning, these *absolute moments*, contain within them the necessity of the appearance of curricular knowledge. In the positivity of such a learning, the mere apprehension of rest is itself identical to the system's procedure. The rest afforded the student is merely the purgatory in which the student awaits their further schooling.

As the student is incorporated into the system of learning periods of non-learning cannot be found to contain the negativity of sovereign autonomy. The incorporation of the student being the cause of their passivity. As Illich's notion of learning involves the open

contingency of surprise, so it is that such a negativity is attended as a possibility of autonomous knowing. However, in the case of institutionalised schooling the student must adhere to the complete positivity of the curriculum. This being the inability to say *no* to the incoming stimulus of curricular packages within organised periods of learning.<sup>61</sup>

The development in this part has intended to describe a horizon which recognises an outline of *Title One's* Promethean state. In doing so, the explication of *Title One* has also intended to provide a base reading of how the incorporation of the student occurs as a result of the systematic procedure of schooling, from education research, to political policy, and then reinvested into the conduct of schooling. It is found that the incorporation occurs with the intent to reduce the student's autonomy, in which their behaviour in schooling is equivalent to the inability to pronounce a sovereign *no*. Their learning is not only passive in the sense that they are undergoing a systematic and external process, it is passive in the notion that the student's being has become objectified in the procedure itself. In this moment, we have reached a stage whereby the student's collapse is recognisable in the resistance to schooling, in the form of the disengagement which results in the call for pharmacological control. As the collapse is predicated in the being of the student, it is intended that the unknown is exposed here by a philosophical approach.

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<sup>61</sup> Institutional schooling necessarily conceives of this positivity due to the mandate of student-achievement growth. For the standards and accountability of educational research continue to demand yearly progress, the proof of such is most expressed in the students who are most able to simply *retain* what is apprehended in schooling. Learning in schooling is then merely the docile act of a mechanical retention.



## Chapter 4 The Embrace

### a. Introduction to the Philosophical Attempt

This thesis has so far treaded through the various aspects that have been deemed most relevant to a topic attempting to understand Illich's notion of learning. The contention is that an appreciation of the critiques of schooling cannot be brought to account without first an acknowledgement of the Christian theology that is the basis of Illichian thinking.<sup>1</sup> As these expositions have thus far been made, in which Illich's thinking is engaged, it is the proposal that in this final chapter is a development which attempts to recognise the philosophical core at the centre of Illich's idea.

The philosophical approach is here recognised in the difficulty of ascertaining how it is that Illich's thinking may be philosophical. As such, I attempt to define the method in which this approach conducts itself. This chapter seeks to produce a phenomenology of Promethean knowing. It is to begin with the certainty of Promethean thinking, and as an immanent outworking, to develop from this position towards the moment in which such a knowing reaches its speculative stage of crisis. It is to recognise the validity of the self-knowledge and expectation that characterises Prometheus, and in each movement in which this form of thinking takes shape, the philosophical approach attempts to trace the development through the experience of a Promethean consciousness. In much the same way that the scheme of this thesis is an immanent study of Illich, so it is also engaged in the same project when concerning Prometheus. Furthermore, this phenomenology is qualified by its dialectical nature. It is to take into account the clear dialecticism which Illich contends with throughout the various ideas that he posits, e.g. Prometheus with Epimetheus, the Samaritan with the Jew, and hope with expectation.<sup>2</sup> And it is not that

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<sup>1</sup> In one description of Illich, Lee Hoinacki places his thinking in the area of 'apophatic theology'. Apophatic theology is the attempt to approach the divine through negation, to describe God not by positive definition but rather by what God is not. 'For example, the critical outline described in *Deschooling Society* (1971) enables the perceptive reader to see the structure and myths that drive the beliefs of modern society. Those unfamiliar with the tradition of apophatic theology mistakenly view the book as only about schools. [...] The first difficulty in approaching him is that people look in the wrong direction – they look toward Illich'. Lee Hoinacki, 'Reading Ivan Illich' in Carl Mitcham & Lee Hoinacki (eds.), *The Challenges of Ivan Illich: A Collective Reflection* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 1.

<sup>2</sup> There are Illichian concepts that are inferred in this thesis that are not explored in detail. One significant term not used explicitly is *conviviality*. Although this is the case, the meanings and intentions of these ideas are implicit throughout this thesis. In another example, the dialectical

Illich simply places each opposed to the other. What is crucial to this dialectical phenomenology is that despite Illich's radical critiques, his thinking is predicated upon a speculation regarding the reconciliation between these oppositions.

The attempt to conduct this philosophy of Illich is a clear departure from his explicit theology. Despite this, Illich's theology plays a central role to the approach. As the move towards the essence of his educational thinking is a speculative project, in this move, from theology to philosophy, I am attempting to substantiate Illich's own belief that his claims and concerns, despite being developed from a theological basis, is nevertheless able to be appreciated by the non-religious reader<sup>3</sup>, and so the philosophical approach is qualified further as the speculative and the historical.

The second aspect for the reason that a philosophical exposition is attempted, is a justification for the notion that Illich expresses philosophical thinking in his work. As mentioned in referral to Fromm's own difficulty in allocating a definition, and Cayley's own statement of Illich's academic category, is the idea that Illich has been described in many terms. One of these terms is as a philosopher, and in this chapter this term is put to account.

As Illich's early work present a thinker who is a social critic, who's analyses take on clear political, sociological, and economics forms, it is in these works themselves that Illich notes that they are often 'pamphlets' only meant to induce conversation. And that although these works introduced concepts and critical analyses, Illich did not intend to produce at length any unified theory regarding his essential thinking. The scope here is intended to attempt to recognise one expression of what may be considered an Illichian way of thinking, that which relates to his educational theme. And even more specifically, as learning is deemed to be evidently essential to any discussion of education, so it is that by attempting to develop an understanding of Illich's notion of learning I am intending to

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relationship between oppositions, here, is drawn from Illich's development of *proportionality*. It is that Illich is attempting to recognise asymmetrical relationships and how these relations in turn inform the expressions that we as observers may perceive. To take a case used in this thesis, the relationship between Prometheus and Epimetheus is asymmetrical in the sense that Promethean thinking has taken the role of the general consciousness of modernity. This occurs as Epimethean thinking – the thinking which Illich hopes to revive – is forgotten. Despite this, Epimethean thinking confers a crucial element of knowing that escapes the Promethean senses. This Chapter 4, although not using the term proportionality explicitly, is indebted to this Illichian idea, and draws upon it to describe a non-positivist recognition of the colonised.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to Illich's claim that his thoughts concerning the *mysterium* do not require Christian belief and can be appreciated as a historical instance. That the *mysterium* can be 'investigated historically, and, for this, neither faith nor belief is required'. Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 60.

produce a foothold for further studies which seek to study Illich in greater depth beyond his educational thinking.

In this philosophical approach, it is not the suggestion that I have simply preferred one pathway to the other, in which the dialectical back-and-forth is simply the convoluted choice. It is still, as ever present throughout this thesis, that this decision has been made in accordance with the objective of conducting this study immanently from within Illich. From his analysis of the valuation of the unknown, and treated in its educational context, to proceed purely positively is antagonistic to any attempt of understanding Illich on his own terms, and to do so would achieve only a Promethean result. In doing so, the attempt to uncover the core of Illich's learning is to proceed to the moment of a Promethean collapse, a moment which offers us, the reader, a continuation of Illich's thinking where he himself had left off.

The structure of this chapter begins with Illich's reading of the antithetical relationship found in the Greek myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus. The approach is made to interpret Illich's notion of hope towards its radicalisation found in the Samaritan parable. In reaching the stage whereby Illich's Greek myth and Christian theology are paralleled, the development is conducted within the framing of the Promethean terminology. This decision is made in order to stay central to the general vocabulary in which the previous chapter has attended to the Promethean qualities of schooling.

The main work of this chapter occurs in the outworking in which the Promethean case for knowing is phenomenologically developed, beginning with the certainty of its expectation, and traversing through the various stages in which it accumulates its knowledge. The intention is to achieve an observable position in which Promethean knowing reaches a stage of crisis. Here, the notion of collapse predicates the ideas of surprise and otherness that is denoted by Illich's interpretation of Epimetheus.

However, although this is the main case, the idea of an Illichian learning is assessed as being found in its most describable form through the Samaritan parable. And it is the strategy of co-reading Illich's Greek myth and Christian theology, as the attempt find their fundamental claims in each other's stories, that this thesis concludes as the position which recognises their unity, or, their philosophical essence as being found in an Illichian orientation of thinking as it relates to the idea of learning.

## b. Naming Epimetheus

Illich's reading of the mythology of Prometheus has led him to a rediscovery of what he believes has been forgotten.<sup>4</sup> Epimetheus as the classical Greeks knew him, and as modernity would judge, is deemed to 'mean "dull" or "dumb"'.<sup>5</sup> This brother, whose name refers to hindsight, ignores, or as variations will portray, forgets or neglects, the forewarning of Prometheus to avoid Pandora, who had released the world's ills, and instead, Epimetheus falls in love and marries her. This moment portrays an initial understanding of what Illich intends by referring to the Promethean myth. That in Prometheus' warning to his brother is the expression of a complete determination, of an understanding of Pandora, as an assessment of her act of releasement. In doing so, Prometheus has adjudicated a final judgement in which Pandora has become fully realised in the Promethean mind, and so all encounters with Pandora are to correspond with such a Promethean expectation, that is, avoidance. However, in this conduct Prometheus loses sight, and here illustrates an aspect of the Promethean blindness, of what remains in Pandora's possession. The 'box', or amphora, was sealed before the last element had escaped, Hope.

In Illich's reading, by foregoing his brother's warning, the Epimethean act is the negation of Prometheanism by the embracing of hope. What this hope represents is a call for Epimetheus is the contradiction to a Promethean expectation. This being the case, when Illich refers to Epimetheus he does so in the context of a rebirth.<sup>6</sup> It is to further say that the call for a remembrance of Epimetheus is not the attempt to simply overcover the Promethean, in order to recreate the world in the image of the former. The rebirth is a resurrection out of what lays dying. The rebirth of the Epimethean is Illich's attempt to think through the revival of a hope lost to a world of expectation.

'[...] we must rediscover the distinction between hope and expectation. Hope, in its strong sense, means trusting faith in the goodness of nature, while expectation, as I

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<sup>4</sup> Donald Kelley treads through the various tellings and re-tellings of the Promethean tale, which although depict variations to the mythological story, all present an adoration for the fire-stealing brother at the expense of the other. Kelley also shares in Illich's concern for the forgotten Epimetheus. See Donald R. Kelley, 'Epimetheus Restored', *History of the Human Sciences*, 6/4 (1993), 97-107. See also Les Amis, *Commemorating Epimetheus*, tr. Stephen Pluháček (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 152.

<sup>6</sup> The last chapter of *Deschooling Society* is titled the 'Rebirth of Epimethean Man'.

will use it here, means reliance on results which are planned and controlled by man. Hope centers desire on a person from whom we await a gift'.<sup>7</sup>

In this definition of hope we find an implicit referral to what is developed in Illich's Christianity. The hope which arrives as a gift from the other is the openness to the surprising encounter which may activate and sustain the divine gift of love. This is the gift of otherness in which the Samaritan and the Jew share with each other. Furthermore, this is emphasised by Illich's referral to the historical notion of 'we' which established an ethical boundary around a predetermined community in which the Samaritan has trespassed.<sup>8</sup> The intention to read the Epimethean tale is then the attempt to recognise Illich's belief that Christian vocation may be perceived outside Christianity.

The Parable of the Samaritan, then, parallels Illich's reading of Prometheus and Epimetheus. This is to say that any reading of Illich as suggesting the imposition of Epimetheus over his brother is a failure to also consider Illich's reading of the Samaritan. The hope, which is found in the openness to otherness, is the Epimethean foregoing of any instinct or warning in order to embrace the fallen Prometheus. The embrace of the brothers finding in each other mutual affirmation, a gift freely offered as the overcoming and unknowing of their determinations. Although the openness to this newfound mutual determination has been described through the Samaritan parable, it is the intention of this part to undergo the development also by these mythological terms in order to gain a deeper insight into Illich's essential thinking. This development intends for the reader to reach a recognition of an internal logic to Illich's thought, that whether his thought contends with modern institutions, or Christian history, or Greek mythology, the thinking remains consistent. And so, to finalise the preparation in order to reach an understanding of the Promethean myth, now we begin with the naming of the Epimethean.

'We now need a name for those who value hope above expectation. We need a name for those who love people more than products, those who believe that

No people are uninteresting.  
Their fate is like the chronicle of planets.

Nothing in them is not particular,  
And planet is dissimilar from planet.

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<sup>7</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 151-152.

<sup>8</sup> This refers to the historical context of the social boundary between *xenoi* and *barbaroi*.

We need a name for those who love the earth on which each can meet the other,

And if a man lived in obscurity  
making his friends in that obscurity,  
obscurity is not uninteresting.

We need a name for those who collaborate with their Promethean brother in the lighting of the fire and the shaping of iron, but who do so to enhance their ability to tend and care and wait upon the other, knowing that

to each his world is private,  
and in that world one excellent minute.  
And in that world one tragic minute.  
These are private.

I suggest that these hopeful brothers and sisters be called Epimethean men'.<sup>9</sup>

The Epimethean is then a willingness to work together with the brothers and sisters who have actively denied their recognition. Out of this willingness is the possibility of Prometheus' forbearance and the brotherly embrace. I put forward the notion that this embrace can only be fully appreciated in the light of the specific notion of the rebirth. That when Illich refers to the rebirth of Epimetheus it is not an atomic act, unmutual and distinct from relative determination. It is rather that Epimetheus is resurrected out of the forgetfulness of the Promethean mind, once that mind has collapsed. In other words, Illich's hope is that Epimetheus appears out of a Promethean dream as the only condition in which the collapsed brother is willing to accept the aid of the forgotten other.

What is intended in the co-reading of the Samaritan and Epimetheus is an illustration of their hopefulness. The embrace with Pandora, being the act of defiance against Prometheus, is the trespass of expectation and an open willingness to encounter the other in the true radicality of their otherness. It is that Epimetheus hopes to find in Pandora, not the understanding which Prometheus has determined, rather to find the other, and listen to them on the terms of their own expression. It is this act that Illich hopes to be also oriented towards the fallen Promethean, who has denied any Epimethean possibilities, and by this means the Incarnation is activated as the fulfillment of their mutual being.

'[...] we are creatures that find our perfection only by establishing a relationship, and that this relationship may appear arbitrary from everybody else's point of view,

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<sup>9</sup> To help illustrate his idea Illich depicts the poem *People* by Yevgeny Yevtushenko. Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *Selected Poems*, tr. Robert Rainsford Milner-Gulland & Peter Levi (Harmonsworth: E. P. Dutton, 1962), cited in Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 167.

because I do it in response to a call and not a category [...] this “ought” is not, and cannot be reduced to a norm. It has a *telos*. It aims at somebody, *some body*’.<sup>10</sup>

It is here apparent that Epimetheus’ embrace with Pandora can be recognised and affirmed by only those who consist as particular individuals within the moment of the embrace. For those who live outside this moment, such as Prometheus would, the marriage with Pandora is an incomprehensible risk. When Illich hopes for the embrace, from the perspective of Prometheus, even when that embrace is offered to the Promethean, it is a folly. And so only when Prometheus is themselves within the immediacy of the radical moment of the embrace, a moment opened by the vulnerability of their collapsed state, may the Promethean recognise the singularness in which Epimetheus has offered their deliverance. The reappearance itself, of Epimetheus onto the scene of Prometheus’ fallenness, describes a recognition of the meaning of Illich’s idea of the rebirth.

Here, this part has attempted to read together the idea of Epimetheus and the Good Samaritan. However, the moment in which Epimetheus appears and offers an embrace with Prometheus, the act of aid, cannot be appreciated with what has thus far been achieved. For the current development has only reached the exposition of a positive description, it is to say that at the moment, we the readers, still exist outside the moment of the embrace’s singularity, and cannot do any more than nod our heads in agreement or disagreement. The appreciation of this Illichian idea of the despised-other offering aid to their fallen foe is understood as being only possible if we the readers ourselves are within that moment. This acknowledgement itself stems from Illich’s own statement regarding the understanding of the embrace as folly for those who do not consist within it.<sup>11</sup> The next part begins the explicit attempt to recognise, through a phenomenology, the being of Prometheus and development of its positivism. It is the story of the rise and fall, and embrace of Promethean thinking.

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<sup>10</sup> Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, 52. We also see in this statement that singular being, albeit being affirmed by divine love, is activated and finds its ‘perfection’ in the other who is themselves the covenant for the Incarnation.

<sup>11</sup> This situation where the embrace with the other and the appearance of Incarnational love is apparent is found by Illich to be unrecognisable for those who perceive it from the outside. Illich describes this external perspective as understanding only the act of ‘folly’. ‘The Western Church, in its earnest effort to institutionalize this freedom, has tended to transform supreme folly first into desirable duty, and then into a legislated duty. It is a folly to be hospitable in the way the Samaritan is [...] [t]o make of this a duty and then create categories of people towards whom this duty is owing witnesses to a brutal form of earnestness. More than that, this inversion of the extraordinary folly that became possible through the Gospel represents a mystery of evil’. Ibid.

### c. Promethean Knowing

#### i. The Certainty of Prometheus: Expectation and Correspondence

The phenomenology begins here with the certainty of Prometheus. As Illich has described the veneration of the cultural hero, and as the work has so far detailed this expression in schooling, this part of Chapter 4 seeks to describe how Promethean knowing's self-expectation provides it with the certainty of its knowing.

For Prometheus, the accumulation of positive knowledge is the active forgetting of hope and surprise. It is to say that Prometheus attempts to shed himself of a surprise in order to guarantee that all activities in life are determined by expectation. So, it is described here, that the Promethean worldview is the subjectivity which instantiates its self-determination by way of referring itself to its objective and formalised form, that the Promethean's subjectivity is determined by its correspondence to measurement. This Promethean expectation determines knowledge by the sole factor of measurability, and that in the taking of measurements, Prometheus acknowledges (rubber-stamps) the captured content as a completely determined object. In doing so, the Promethean object becomes verified as certified knowledge by virtue of the fact that it corresponds to the ideal of measurement. It is also that the object is demarcated as atomic, due to the further instance of Promethean knowing which categorises measured content. This categorisation, which allocates measured objects according to their correspondence to previously measured objects (which share similar characteristics), seeks to accumulate knowledge by the collection of these objects. The way Promethean knowing deems itself to learn is by this very process. That by accumulating atomic entities, which have been measured, its collection of such objects is the act which expand its knowledge.

However, despite collecting measured objects into categories that are labelled either *this* or *that* – an attempt to bring together disparate objects into a synthesised unity – Promethean objects remain ultimately distinct, from one another and the category in which they belong, due to their measurements. The general description of this mediating process, in which objects are positively accumulated, is highlighted in order to bring attention to how Promethean knowing incorporates the unknown into its knowledge. The explicit notion is intent on revealing the atomic separation of each determined object to each other, irrespective of how their categories may superficially unify them together.



As this mediation occurs what is achieved in Promethean knowing is the transformation of the unknown into the categorial known. Specifically, this categorisation attempts to clothe the unknown into a Promethean form. This is the essential feature of Promethean knowing in which it attempts to capture the unknown. Insofar as the captured object has become categorised, what we may recognise in Promethean knowing, with all the certainty regarding its own ability to know, is that the Promethean in fact only comes to know what it has expected within itself. The unknown is here present only as its own superficial category, one that exists within the within-without distinction. In other words, Promethean knowing, even when referring directly through language to the unknown, never in actuality comes to terms with the unknown itself. It is that when the Promethean engages with the unknown, the term 'unknown' as understood by Promethean knowing as only itself another category within its expectation. It is only a nominal understanding of the unknown, rather than the unknown as recognised by the Samaritan.

What Prometheus intends when it refers to the unknown is then merely its own expectation of what such an unknown may be. In this manner, when Prometheus brings the categorial unknown<sup>12</sup> into its collection of knowledge, it treats only the category, and the unknown actual, what is captured and yet remains unrecognised, is able to live its own life, organically evolving, albeit within its captured state. A distinction is here made, that Promethean knowledge of the unknown operates only on the register of formality, and that what lies outside positivist formalism, in this case the living organic actuality, is where the Promethean blind spot lies.

It is to be noted that the Promethean recognises content only through this categorising power, thus it is in this relation where we can locate how the Promethean affirms its self-identity and reach a description of its certainty. In doing so, we can perceive, in Promethean terms, how Promethean knowing substantiates its own knowledge, and therefore claims itself to be an all-knowing entity. The way Promethean knowing self-achieves substantive being relates to how its identity is related to the universal whole. Promethean expectation conceives of its identity and knowing by the notion supplied by a presupposition of the unknown. Promethean knowledge attains the achievement of a self-proclaimed full determination in the moment that its own expectation corresponds to the measured content. In claiming that the capturing of content into its expected form is

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<sup>12</sup> The distinction is made between the 'categorial unknown' and the 'unknown actual'. The categorial unknown is the 'unknown' as it is perceived by Promethean knowing. Whereas the unknown actual describes the element that exists outside the Promethean perspective.

its full realisation, Prometheus emphasises the within-without distinction as substantially consisted of that which is determined by measurement and that which is not. In conceiving of expected knowledge by its formality, Promethean knowing substantiates its knowing as being identical with positive formalism. For the Promethean, this full realisation of content by its measurement activates the proof that Promethean knowing is itself the universal subject. This is due to how the Promethean claims its knowledge relies solely on the factor of the correspondence between its own subjectivity and the measured object.

The Promethean's claims are then understood to be the simple corresponding between the measured object and their self-expectation. In Promethean knowing, this correspondence is the logical proof that their knowing is identical to the actual. In deeming measurability as the supreme attribute Promethean knowing only requires the perception and assessment of such a measurement in order to recognise the content's complete determination. Here, the idea of correspondence, between the measured object and Promethean self-identification, falls entirely on the side of Promethean consciousness. The mediation of Promethean expectation, the process in which the unknown becomes captured as a measured object, centres the development of an absolute knowing in the being and outworking of the Promethean. It is to say that the central fire-light, at the core of Promethean consciousness, is the place in which these measured contents are brought forth in order to be corresponded with Promethean knowing. From the moment the Promethean's expectation is recognised by its consciousness, its instinct is to produce that same expectation in all encounters of its life. Promethean knowing, from this primordial moment, is already engaging in a project which attempts to capture all things that it deems to be 'unknown'. And as the Promethean consciousness begins in the Greek myth with only the lighting of a small fire, so it is that the Promethean project is to fuel such a fire so that its knowing-light encompasses the entire dark unknown, the cosmos itself.

It is crucial to recognise the implications for Promethean knowing in engaging in such a project. That in the instinct of this Promethean knowing is the essential character of expectation. This means that with expectation and the mediation of correspondence Promethean knowing already presupposes the entire cosmos, and that the growth of the Promethean fire is merely the formal symbolism of an all-knowing which is simply proceeding towards its absolute self-identity. This identity being achieved through the correspondence between its expectation and everything that exists outside its consciousness (the categorical 'unknown'). What is corresponded occurs not as an actual encounter, as would the encounter between the Samaritan and the Jew, rather, the

Promethean correspondence between its expectation and what it captures is deemed to already exist within the Promethean consciousness. This meaning that the distinction itself, the within-without conception of the world, is a totalising element of Promethean knowing's expectation. It is an expectation which seeks to capture not only the unknown other, but also the future as well.<sup>13</sup>

However, as Promethean knowing is self-construed as being all-powerful and its tool of measurement activates a colonial disposition, immeasurability itself becomes a category of measurement in the Promethean mind.<sup>14</sup> The Promethean exploration of the world, its research or attempts to capture the 'unknown', is then only a superficial endeavour. Furthermore, it is possible to recognise that such an exploration reveals to us how Promethean knowing self-expects itself in its encounters with the world. For if Promethean knowing determines its knowledge by its correspondence then the Promethean finds itself the only subjective entity in its conception of the world. This means that the other exists only in name, and Promethean knowing conceives itself as already the whole of all things. What is the case in this self-belief is that Promethean knowing is only the outworking of its initial moment of consciousness, and it is a moment in which Promethean knowing can see its own completion.

In this description of Promethean knowing, it conceives of the measured object as a mere stepping-stone towards the realisation of itself as a completed whole. This encounter with the categorical unknown being only the symbolic process in which Promethean expectation is in the process of coronating itself as the absolute whole.

In order to justify how this claim is developed I will provide an expression to how the Promethean conceives of its achievements. When the Promethean contends that an object is completely determined it posits this achievement as an example of the infallibility of its knowing. Due to the method in which the measured object is determined, through measurement and the correspondence to expectation, the determination of knowledge is found in Promethean knowing to only consist of this single-dimensional recognition.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This relates to Prometheus' name as being 'thought to mean "foresight"'. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 165. It is that by foretelling the future, as well as expecting all things in the present, Promethean thinking contends that it can control all aspects of its life. Promethean knowing construes itself as all-knowing and infallible due to the power afforded to a consciousness which predetermines all its encounters by expectation.

<sup>14</sup> Referring to how the 'unknown' is a category rather than an actual entity that exists outside of measurement.

<sup>15</sup> The mutuality of the aid the Samaritan offers would be an Illichian opposition to the notion that an understanding can be ascertained from only one side of the encounter. Here, Promethean knowing lives only within its own consciousness, which it has determined to encompass the whole

This single-dimensional recognition of the unknown portrays how despite the Promethean's contention that it engages with the unknown, it nevertheless does not do so. And the danger of this narcissism is that Promethean knowing engages in the act of ouroboros.<sup>16</sup>

In engaging with the world, what the Promethean achieves is only a self-referentiality between itself and the categorical unknown. This is the moment of correspondence where Promethean certainty tips over to self-deception. In capturing the unknown as a measured object, the Promethean has conceived of such an encounter as its dominating power over the unknown. And although this is the case in the moment that the unknown is captured as a measured object, what is the seed of Promethean downfall is the initiation into the measured object the identity of Promethean knowing. It is that the Promethean, when it captures the unknown, allows itself to do so only within the context of its all-knowing power. The fact that Promethean knowing conceives of itself as the total whole, so it is that when it engages with an entity that it believes is a mere element of its Promethean absolute, that the Promethean sees in the unknown only a microcosm of its totality. The unknown is captured as a measured object only due to the reasoning that Promethean knowing recognises itself in all its encounters.

The encounter, then, is the Promethean abstraction of its accumulated knowledge. Its expectation is found as an element of the content of the unknown. And as the unknown only requires such an abstraction through measurement, so Promethean knowing conducts such a violence upon its own consciousness. The act of capturing is deemed here to possess the same suffocations on Promethean knowing as it does upon the categorical unknown.

Promethean knowing reaches this same moment of recognition when its stage of development undergoes a shift of perspective. In referring to the history of *Title One*, the first moment of ESEA is the grand project that seeks to overcover the perceived problems in education. Promethean knowing conceives of *Title One* as its instrument to capturing the categorical unknown, in this case, the enemies known as 'poverty' and 'inequality'.

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world, and as such, everything it contends itself to know is founded only upon its own expectation and within its own mind. The Promethean is unable to reach beyond itself, and so what it conceives as total is limited to its own consciousness. In other words, despite having the language for the 'unknown', the unknown actual remains beyond Promethean reach in this moment of its certainty.  
<sup>16</sup> Ouroboros, the ancient symbol of the serpent which devours its own tail, is used here to describe the self-necessity that Promethean knowing enacts upon itself when it deceives its own consciousness.

Although this is a noble endeavour, by the virtue of Promethean knowing's self-referentiality, this poverty and inequality are nevertheless only the categorically conceived and measured notions as understood within the Promethean mind. And as *Title One* finds itself unable to accomplish its task, so Promethean knowing now engages with an immanent moment of crisis. It is not that the Promethean collapses here, nor does it give up its notion of measurability, it is rather that we are now perceiving how the Promethean cosmos shows cracks, and that what lies beyond is the unknown actual which reaches through.

However, to explicate this crisis in further detail, a crucial element of Promethean knowing is found in its reaction to this first encounter with the unknown actual. That the Promethean, when its knowing can sustain such a deception, guards itself against the unknown by intensifying its own procedures. In the case regarding *Title One*, the Promethean project of capturing the unknown other, the student, and treating the category of the student is found by Promethean knowing itself to have failed even on its own terms.<sup>17</sup>

This element of the Promethean reaction to sighting the unknown actual is posited here as the apparatus which Promethean knowing constructs in order to alleviate itself of its totalising self-consciousness. The crisis which emerges in the Promethean life, when its power of measurability is confounded, leads the Promethean to externalise its process of knowing into an *apparatus*. This apparatus is merely the form of Promethean knowing as an externalised object.

When the Promethean encounters this unknown actual it is faced with the consequences of a total collapse. That its entire self-consciousness, and all the accumulated knowledge that it has gained, is rather than being absolutely determined, is instead a farce. This is perhaps the most painful possibility when one faces the extreme limitation of one's own thinking. Although it is possible for instances of Promethean knowing to here accept its moment of crisis, and thus present our discussion here as being expedited towards the Promethean collapse, it is my intention to follow the Promethean mind in the case that it rejects the crisis as a mere obstacle to its absolute knowing. In doing this, our thinking

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<sup>17</sup> That the case for *Title One* relates to how its educational programs had intended to raise the performances of students. In the reassessment of these programs, even by the terms of measurement, it is found that the project was more failure than success. And by following the further iterations of *Title One* in political policies following ESEA, it is found that when students are not 'succeeding', what is produced by the policies and the general research is a need to further develop the specificity in which the program was to be enacted.

follows the Promethean in all the pathways that it takes, and convinces itself to take, in order to escape the reality of the unknown actual which appears before it. This is the next moment of our phenomenology, where we now attempt to trace how Promethean knowing digs its heels into the earth and seeks to justify its power of measurability and its self-belief regarding its own knowing.

## ii. The Accumulation of Promethean Knowing: Apparatus and Objectivity

The pooling of stores of information, the building up of a knowledge stock, the attempt to overwhelm present problems by the production of more science is the ultimate attempt to solve a crisis by escalation.

Tools for Conviviality, Ivan Illich<sup>18</sup>

The Promethean encounter with the unknown actual is now demonstrated as being only the empty symbolism of its engagement. And the intensification which is the result of this facade is recognised here as being only a mirage of its development, rather than being its attempt to solve a crisis. From this, the current part of Chapter 4 is developed in two halves. The first describes the split within Promethean knowing, whereby it attempts to retain both its subjective being and its claim to objective knowledge. This is the instance in which the certainty of Promethean knowing faces its fallibility. The second half describes in detail the function of the apparatus that Promethean knowing has externalised from itself as a result of its certainty being diminished. From these two developments, the intention is to move to the final discussion of the crisis and collapse of the Promethean.

To be of note, this superficial development is the overcovering of Promethean knowing's incapability to come to terms with the unknown actual. In Illich's terms, it is that the Promethean is blind to what lies outside expectation. It is also the case that the reaction against the unknown actual, being the intensification and escalation of its power, is here determined by the term *accumulation*. To be more precise about this feature of Promethean knowing, accumulation is the act of addition in which the measured object is gathered in the manner of a mere stockpiling. Thus, in this proposition of a Promethean reaction against the unknown actual, the process of accumulation is seen as no more actual than a Promethean propaganda.

To elaborate, an understanding of the emptiness of a Promethean accumulation is to describe the finality in which its consciousness has no other path to develop besides its own collapse. This accumulation relates to how Promethean consciousness conceives of its own all-knowing. That when the Promethean faces the eruption of its power, its world-conception is no longer the sublime notion of pure expectation. That when the Promethean's expectation gives way to the organic developments of the unknown actual,

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<sup>18</sup> Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, 22.

when the captured object's reassessment become misaligned with its original measurements, the Promethean's power of measurement is reckoned as no longer the tool which fully determines the categorical unknown.

In response to this crisis, Promethean knowing constructs an object which it deems as being external to its own knowing. In doing so, the apparatus of Promethean knowing becomes the third-party observer which accepts or declines the verification of Promethean measurement. The relationship between Promethean knowing and its apparatus attempts to provide an objectivity to the correspondence that before remained the subjective element of Promethean expectation and its encounter with the categorical unknown. It is the intention of this part of Chapter 4 to perceive the false objectivity of this idea.

In constructing the apparatus, the Promethean engages in an activity which finds its affirmation only in the element of formal procedure. Hence, the Promethean mistakes formalism for substance, and in this way Promethean consciousness constructs a worldview based upon superficiality. For the procedure of the apparatus, the form of content is what is deemed the essential element of measured objects. In accumulating knowledge by its formal measurements, the Promethean begins to engage with itself only by the categorisations that pre-existed within its expectation.

At this stage, the accumulating function of Promethean knowing is to be explicated through an exploration of its functions. It is to describe the apparatus of Promethean knowing as a self-positing externality and the transformation of Promethean subjectivity into a universal object. In detailing the first, the latter will emerge from its description.

As stated, the apparatus of Promethean knowing is the essential feature of its reaction to the crisis of its power. We have currently ascertained that the expectation in which the Promethean corresponds self and otherness is the attempt to measure the unknown. Further, in encountering the categorical unknown the Promethean's act of measurement is also the act in which Promethean knowing seeks what it has planted within the unencountered cosmos. This refers to the Promethean expectation which self-positing its own cosmos. In this way, the encounter with the categorical unknown is also the Promethean attempt to find within the other the Promethean themselves, that is, expectation as the attribute in the other that requires discovery. In the moment of the encounter with the unknown actual, Promethean knowing recognises the limitations in which its own subjectivity, even one engaging in the process of expectation, relies upon a



correspondence that is single-dimensional.<sup>19</sup> In order to alleviate this instability, and to sustain the foundation of its expectation, Promethean knowing attempts to intensify its possession of absolute knowing.

Promethean knowing seeks to sustain its own knowledge as developing towards its completion. And the moment in which the crisis appears, is only the moment in which the Promethean is to develop an escalation to its power that is able to overcome such a moment. In conducting itself in this way, Promethean knowing attempts to hold onto its subjectivity, as it is the singular consciousness in its world, and at the same time presents the apparatus as the function which justifies its own claim to objective knowledge.

Yet, in doing this, the Promethean submits itself to the limitation of its subjectivity. That in attempting to justify the apparatus as the neutral verification of its measurements, Promethean knowing has undergone a transformation of its perspective regarding its own consciousness. Its self-consciousness, which sustained its certainty in the previous part of this chapter, has now split into a separated unity. It is attempting to hold its absolute subjectivity within the same cosmos as the externalised apparatus of confirmation. In the objectification of its own power, Promethean knowing has implicated itself into a contradiction that exists solely within its consciousness. This contradiction is expressed here as the asymmetric state of this moment of Promethean knowing. That, despite holding within itself the self-expectation that its consciousness is the universal whole, and that its subjectivity is the outworking of its being towards its absolute knowing, it nevertheless limits this absolute being to one side of the equation of the determination of knowledge; the other side being the location of the apparatus.

This contradictory state of affairs is not unnoticed by Promethean knowing. This is its tragedy. That despite recognising within itself that it has created the conditions in which its collapse is possible, the Promethean instinct, as is the instinct of expectation, is to conduct itself as a vague synthesis of the separated unity. That Promethean knowing holds the contradiction of subjective being and objective knowledge in opposition to each other, and despite the non-reconciliation in the bringing-together of these opposing poles, nevertheless forges ahead on its path towards the measurement of all things.

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<sup>19</sup> To clarify this point, Prometheus even with the certainty of expectation, and its self-recognition, senses within its own experience the possibility of the unknown actual. This is to discuss to how Illich refers to Prometheus' forgetfulness of Epimetheus, and the possibility of the latter reemerging as out of the former's memory.

In highlighting how the Promethean is now continuing to engage in a project with an internal doubt we have witnessed the planting of the seed of unfettered escalation. Promethean knowing, from this moment, possesses the knowledge that its endeavour is paradoxical. And in order to sustain this dysfunctional unity, Promethean knowing must remain on the own side of its subjectivity. It must do this in order to retain any semblance of its self-recognition.<sup>20</sup>

And so, we begin to move to the moment in which this fleeting unity disperses. Promethean knowing realises that if it were to fall on the side of the apparatus, the objectification of all knowledge, it would lose its subjectivity, and its consciousness would dissipate as a suicide.

In the way that Promethean knowing engages this recognition, that its knowledge is presented to it as fallible, it simply reaffirms the unity of its subjectivity with the objective formulations of the apparatus. The difference, in the unity that follows the realisation of possible suicide, is that Promethean knowing simply prioritises now its subjective being in relation to the apparatus. It holds that its subjectivity, its self-consciousness which recognises itself in the correspondence between expectation and the categorical unknown, is deemed the majority of the whole, as rather than the absolute being. This is the positivist measure its re-categorisation of itself in order to escape from the engagement with the unknown actual. That by remeasuring even its own subjectivity, involving also a reassessment of its being, the Promethean contends that it does indeed hold as necessary the absolute status of its power of measurement. This is understood in the position that the apparatus takes in relation to Promethean subjectivity in this newfound unity of despair.<sup>21</sup> This unity of despair, which has affirmed its own existence against death, must still contend with the crisis that faced the dysfunctional unity, that of the appearance of the unknown actual. What the unity of despair has developed, and what the dysfunctional unity has lacked, is the notion of Promethean subjectivity that holds the primacy of being in relation to the objectivity of the apparatus. It is in this conception of a new totality of being that Promethean knowing is able to conceive of its newfound self-recognition despite the realisation that absolute knowing has been reckoned with. On the

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<sup>20</sup> Promethean expectation is the self-sustaining element which props up its self-recognition. This is a necessity due to the worldview where it posits itself as the absolute subject, and wherein lies its self-referentiality in all its engagements. The objectification of the unknown actual presents the case that the Promethean, even when meeting the other, cannot see anything else besides itself.

<sup>21</sup> I use this to describe the Promethean consciousness which has experienced the question of suicide.

other (now minority) side of the coin, Promethean knowing also holds onto its notion of objective knowing, that its power of measurement, externalised into the apparatus, possesses the self-same objectivity that the correspondence of Promethean knowing had ascertained in its initial moment of certainty.

The sleight of hand performed here is that the Promethean portrays itself as entirely the subjective being, whilst also holding onto the notion that the apparatus exists outside such subjectivity, and so is able to continue to produce the function of Promethean correspondence which no longer exists within the unity of despair's subjectivity.

In this way, all correspondences of the apparatus, and the proofs of objectivity, occur only in the mode of a Promethean certainty. The externality of the apparatus expresses itself as the neutral observer, who's objectivity is substantiated by its position in relation to Promethean subjectivity. However, the development now is to detail how the apparatus nevertheless is tied to Promethean thinking, and how its procedure expresses no more than a false objectivity. In fact, Promethean knowing never lets go of its claim to objectivity.

I now move to describe the function of the apparatus in detail. The reason for the creation of the apparatus is in response to the vulnerability mentioned above. That in the single-dimensional understanding of Promethean knowing, there lies the doubt regarding the power of correspondence. In establishing an apparatus of positivist knowing there now occurs a multi-dimensional aspect to the proof of accumulation. And thus, a triangularity<sup>22</sup> is formed which sustains its own method, and subsists in a more substantiated form than the single-dimensionality of the correspondence found in Promethean certainty. The external apparatus, having not yet been explicated, but so far described in its role in Promethean knowing, is here recognised as possessing qualities identical to that of Promethean knowing. This describes the apparatus as being no more other than itself a measured object. Even the self-positing externality of Promethean knowing ends up becoming internalised within the Promethean consciousness.

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<sup>22</sup> The Promethean, now with its apparatus, conceives of a multi-staged process in which correspondence gains validity. (1) Its self-expectation grants itself self-recognition, (2) self-recognition is discovered in the unknown other and corresponded to its own expectation, and (3) this correspondence is proceduralised through the apparatus of Promethean knowing. This triangle in which the Promethean self-consciousness comes to know itself achieves a self-proclaimed state of all-knowing, simply by virtue of the Promethean whole consisting of its subjectivity, and the process in which its expectation becomes formalised through the procedure summarised hence.

The accumulating function of Promethean knowing, and the method of the apparatus, is now to be described. In doing so, the attempt is made to make explicit the false objectivity of Promethean knowing as a fallibility of its accumulation. As the Promethean only gathers its own expectation what it learns is no more than what it already knows. The procedure of its knowing, (1) the encounter with the categorical unknown, (2) its capture through measurement, and now (3) its returning mediation through the apparatus, all exist as mirages of the accumulation of Promethean knowing. It is stated here that this form of learning, as accumulating measured objects, is an escalation which sees within itself no boundary besides its own completeness, the proclaimed goal of its absolute knowing. And so, with a presentation of the procedure of the apparatus, we now find ourselves within sight of the Promethean height of knowing.

The central tenet of Promethean knowing relies upon the power of measurement. That what is measured is fully determined. It then represents the actuality of the Promethean ability to determine the categorical unknown (although it contends to itself such an unknown is in reality the unknown actual). As such, what is known by the Promethean is universally conditioned by the very aspect of its attribute of measurement. From this, Promethean subjectivity comes to terms with the universal condition of measurement in the moment that its consciousness is incompatible with the formality of measured objects. This is to indicate that Promethean subjectivity perceives itself as an absolute being, in which its life consists not of the pure formality of the lifeless category, rather it sees within itself the lively cosmos. The expectation that lies at the centre of Promethean knowing demonstrates its own capability to capture its own being. And in this way, by way of correspondence, the Promethean seeks to be no more subjective than the actuality of measurement. Promethean knowing makes the claim that its subjectivity is identical with the category of the measured content, and that the proof of this identity lies in the objective assessment of the apparatus.

At this stage, I have described the Promethean subjectivity as a consciousness which identifies itself with the measured content's category. In doing so, we are prepared to recognise how it is that the Promethean accumulates towards its collapse, and we may perceive that such a conception, in the process of capturing the categorical unknown, never, in fact, appreciates any otherness in its consciousness. This is a first description of the limit of Promethean self-identity as a condition for its collapse.

For the Promethean, the role of the apparatus is to be the external object which enacts the correspondence that Promethean knowing has externalised from itself. The

apparatus, unsurprisingly, acts as only another expression of Promethean knowing. What is highlighted here is that the apparatus merely adds another stage to the process of Promethean knowing, and that for the Promethean, this additional stage, adding no more than a bureaucracy, contributes to the proof of Promethean consciousness' claim to all-knowing, and at once as a rebuke against the crises of the appearances of the unknown actual.

The apparatus, from the Promethean perspective is objective merely since its process exists outside Promethean subjectivity. Even though the apparatus operates purely by Promethean terms, the Promethean regards the externality of the apparatus as being the evidence for its ability to sustain both its subjective being and its objective claims to knowledge.

There is a relation here that requires further discussion. In the relation in which the Promethean consciousness requires its own knowing to be determined through the apparatus, it is recognised that what the apparatus offers is the sustainability in which Promethean knowing may dialectically transition *ad infinitum* between the dysfunctional unity and the unity of despair. This is the intention of Promethean knowing, and it is the critical function of the apparatus.<sup>23</sup>

That it exists external to Promethean subjectivity; that it operates on the register of a Promethean certainty; and that it offers Promethean consciousness measured objects which are corresponded to the Promethean notion of expectation. This bureaucratic process is required by Promethean knowing as the full manifestation of the possibility of the accumulation of measured object in the stages which tarry between the two unities.

There is a critical error here in the Promethean logic. Although from the perspective of the Promethean it is in fact its greatest strength. The fact that Promethean knowing has split from itself an external object, and that this 'other' is able to subsist externally from Prometheus, describes the self-belief that Prometheanism is the unification of subjective being and objective knowledge into an absolute entity. In order to appreciate how Promethean knowing justifies this idea, we can recognise from the relation between Promethean subjectivity and the apparatus that the relation exists completely on the side of its power of measurement and its function of correspondence, all central to Promethean knowing.

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<sup>23</sup> It is this function of granting Promethean consciousness the infinite loop between two stages of self-recognition, that Illich's critique of the Promethean endeavour for 'eternal progress' is substantiated.

The apparatus mediates the categorical unknown only by corresponding the such a measured object with Promethean expectation. Although the apparatus appears and describes itself as external, and thus neutral, we can perceive that its role in Promethean knowing is merely to correspond what the Promethean already accepts as expected. We can perceive this in how the categorical unknown arrives in Promethean knowledge as an accumulated object. The accumulation occurs once Promethean knowing has provided itself the proof for any such determinations. In accumulating knowledge, the Promethean claims the status of the outworking of its subjectivity, that what it gathers as its knowledge is a true learning, by virtue of its knowledge being *added to*. However, in respect to the centrality of self-expectation, what is added onto Promethean knowledge requires itself to be determined by Promethean terms. In this case, the vulnerability of the single strand of correspondence appears. The apparatus functions as the mediation of self-expectation and the encounter with the categorical unknown. It is that the apparatus facilitates mediation of accumulation, in which the unknown is not only recognised as that which has been expected, but also proved to contain within itself the objectivity that the Promethean has expected in the world. Promethean knowing requires what arrives in its knowledge as containing the attribute of objectivity, but an objectivity which is established by the correspondence to its own expectation and the mediation of the procedure of the apparatus. By requiring that all knowledge require these attributes, the Promethean believes that it has formulated a complete system of knowledge. That all categorical unknowns may become measured and determined through the processes of Promethean knowing.

The failure, and the errors in which the Promethean system builds itself upon, can be here witnessed in the accumulation of such a false objectivity. For the central understanding in this Promethean knowing is deemed to be objective by the idea of the apparatus. As this apparatus is not external, but rather an extension to Promethean knowing, the claimed objectivity of what is accumulated is no more than a self-deception. Promethean knowing cannot differentiate the actual to the categorical, and what it accumulates, what it takes into itself, is the falsity of its inability to contend with what lies outside its total worldview.

### iii. The Tragedy of Prometheus

The significant achievement in describing Promethean knowing is so far recognising the process in which such a knowing ascertains its own paradoxical position. As the apparatus is seen to function as a critical stage in the procedure of knowing, what we can understand is that the claims and beliefs of the Promethean are no more actual than its own notion of complete determination. In now having described Promethean knowing in this way, this current moment grants us the opportunity to perceive what is conducted upon the content which the Promethean deems as the measured object. The case has been to describe Promethean consciousness, and so it is nevertheless the claim that to recognise a Promethean collapse is to also to take into account the preceding moment, how it is that consciousness erupts.

What is meant by *eruption* is that the measured object, what has been deemed completely determined in its captured form, experiences a misalignment within the Promethean mind. When this occurs, the Promethean realises within itself that its transformation of the categorical unknown contains a fallibility. That when the Promethean reassesses and remeasures itself, when its current measurements do not correspond to its previous measurements, then it is found that measurement's determination has not, in fact, fully determined the content at hand. The path to this understanding is attempted to reach the stage in which Promethean knowing is no longer able to sustain its certainty. It is from a tracing of this Promethean thinking that I intend to highlight the unknown actual as never having been engaged by the Promethean, and in such a case, to move towards a description of the moment in which the eruption leads to a collapse.

In the claimed full determination of the categorical unknown what we find is that the content of all Promethean knowing is determined by the primacy of its measurable form. This is what the Promethean deems as the attribute of all knowledge. It is that instead of contending with the organic life of the unknown actual, the Promethean only regards itself with the lifeless category. In finding the measurement of the categorical unknown, the Promethean immediately loses sight of the unknown actual's particularity, instead, what the Promethean achieves is a definition of what it captures. The thing's being-in-the-moment is not recognised as an unknown actual, it is only understood by the captured definition that the Promethean has imposed over it. What is achieved in the categorisation of the categorical unknown is only the recognition of its non-living entity. In dealing only

with measurements and categories, the Promethean lives constantly in the past, as what is measured and categorised is lifeless, and by the virtue of its non-life it is expected to remain unchanging. This grants the Promethean the certainty of their thinking, that what they rely upon is eternally static.

For our context, there are two situations of note which arise out of this thinking. The first is that in contending with its world in this way, the unknown actual lives its life undetected after its measurement is taken. This is because the category, what the Promethean concerns itself with, is an only a non-threshold image<sup>24</sup>, in other words, the category describes only the formality of the actual, rather than contend with the actual itself. For example, although the category contains the formal qualities that may describe certain elements of an individual, i.e. their nationality, their date of birth, their address, it nevertheless fails to keep up with the individual as they live their lives. In the case that one of these measurements changes in reality, the immediate moment of that change requires the Promethean to remeasure their knowing through a reprocessing of the individual, again through its procedures of knowing. What I am attempting to indicate is the differentiation between the actuality of organic change, and the change apparent in Promethean knowing. The life of an individual, although containing itself the possibility of Promethean determinations (an individual has a date of birth), the individual is not themselves beholden, nor defined, by such a formality.<sup>25</sup>

For the Promethean, the actuality of the individual's life is the categorical unknown which continues to exist within its knowledge. What is about the individual is thus the true, and all else remains superfluous and non-existent. I now describe an educational situation whereby this engagement is conducted only in reference to the category. In schooling, a measurement may refer to the test scores that a student has achieved. The

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<sup>24</sup> Referring to Illich's discussion of the John of Damascus' resolution to the iconoclastic debates in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The image here is the image of the age of systems, which rather than offering the artistic and poetic interpretation of the unknown divine, is instead the technological concept which offers only the objectification of the image.

<sup>25</sup> There are cases which may occur that do not find themselves attached to by the primacy of their measurable states. A change in home address does not occur first by the factor of the address itself, a category does not provide the impetus for the development of itself into something else, rather the reason for the moving of a home is the organic reason *per se*. The individual lives their life, and in the day-to-day occurrences of their life the change in home address occurs first in the fact that the change is itself predicated by the life-situation. For Promethean knowing, the reasoning for this change is, by virtue of its formality, of no concern. Or, the concern is to be demarcated only by categorisation (the reason of career, the reason of displacement etc.). Thus, the life of the individual escapes from Promethean knowing, and what is found to subsist in their captured state is only their empty formal history.



institution contends that this measurement of an individual offers their categorisation. It then attributes to each categorised student their valuation, and thus produces out of its measurement the factors in which these attributions may describe the student. A student who achieves a high test score must necessarily have been a good student, whether by virtue of talent or work ethic, this student may be categorised by the achievement of certain awards, and this student may be attributed financial benefits due to the stature of their categorisation. On the other hand, a student who achieves a low test score must necessarily have been a bad student, or at least, one who struggles with the process of learning as produced in the institution. In this case, the student is to be categorised as a failing student, and thus have whatever attributions of educational reprimands or support are offered. By the Promethean, in this case of schooling, the actuality of the student, their life, is never contended with, and what is of final concern, is the lifeless category which is imposed upon them. It is the category of the achieving student who receives the scholarship, as the institution acknowledges only the category, and the individual who may receive the monetary funds, in fact, is unconsidered. To clarify this, I refer intently to the treatment of the category which receives the benefits. The student themselves, the organic life, must have first been measured and categorised as such to have been considered by the institution for their award. Even if the student were as they were, if they had not undergone educational measurement and categorisation, then they would be completely outside the contention for scholarship. Thus, the student remains the contingent element that merely offers the category the fulfillment of its measurement.

This is a significant moment in describing how Promethean knowing treats the content of its knowledge. That when the Promethean stumbles across a situation that requires attention it is here seen to deal never with the actuality, and thus the truth of the situation, and what it contends with is only what it has perceived by its own conceptions. First, the power of measurement has led the Promethean to a self-belief in the all-power of its determinations. And so, the crises that arise within the Promethean world are deemed to require only further measurement in order to discover the solution needed. When the Promethean engages with a crisis, the crisis is itself treated in the same manner as when the Promethean contends that it encounters the categorical unknown. The Promethean sees only itself in the crisis, and thus expects of the crisis to contain an objective solution. What is indicated here is that Promethean knowing deems itself to only require the activity of measurement in order to solve a crisis (as such measuring leads to a full determination of cause, effects, and solutions). To continue in the case of schooling, a struggling student

is categorised by the institution as requiring support or reprimand. Whatever the solution sought, institutional school deems the situation of the problem individual to require further measurements. In the case of support, the student is provided additional resources which manifest in the form of support teachers, extra educational materials, etc.. In the case of reprimand, the student's punishment is measured by the length of their detention, suspension, reduction of lunch break rights, etc.. And in either case, the success or failure of institutional schooling's solutions are determined by the measurements further taken. One way this is accomplished is the evaluation of the student's grade-score. An increase would indicate that their treatment was successful, whilst a student who continues to fail is continually moving closer to the category of the dropout.<sup>26</sup> And, most importantly, in all cases, the student themselves is never contended with, rather, it is their formality, the measurements of their being, which manifests as the test score, that assigns them their worldly value and the categories that Promethean knowing concerns itself with.

The Promethean, when contending with the concerns that appear in its life, nevertheless demand an intensification of its power. The concern is that when the Promethean deems itself to have solved a crisis, what we can understand is that it is only the superficial expressions of the crisis that is resolved. The actuality of the unknown actual continues to grow organically, and most importantly, it remains unnoticed to the Promethean gaze and its measurements.

From this, because we have witnessed how the unknown actual remains undetermined within Promethean knowing, we may now move to a more explicit description of what it is that is contained in the eruptions of Promethean knowing. Although the unknown actual has been processed through the Promethean determination, it finds itself completely unattended once its categorisation has been attributed to them. The categorical unknown, from the perspective of Prometheus, never again appears unless their categorisation is changed (leading to a need for their remeasurement), or the organic life causes a disturbance in the everydayness of the Promethean world. I will contend with both these occurrences in which the organic life reappears to the Promethean consciousness. In this way, and further acknowledging how the Promethean resolves its

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<sup>26</sup> There is current idea in educational research that the punitive measures of schooling, when implemented upon students who are not adhering to their education, create what is termed a 'school-to-prison pipeline'. See Christopher Mallet, *The School-to-Prison Pipeline: A Comprehensive Assessment* (New York: Springer, 2016). It is to further describe an argument that finds an immiserate category beyond the 'dropout' which Illich mentions, and discovers that failure in schooling can potentially lead directly to the category of criminal.

concerns, we may find ourselves at the moment in which Promethean knowing cannot uphold the veil of its self-deception.

Promethean knowing constantly attempts to assess and reassess its own determinations. This is one aspect of the paranoia of its claim to knowing. That in believing in its own all-power, its status of absolute being must be protected, and such a pre-emption of its own failure is protected against by the use of the same power that it seeks to protect, the tool of measurement. Because the Promethean recognises only itself, the appearances of others are to be determined as mere instances of Promethean knowing. I have previously referred to this as the attempt to capture and subdue the Epimethean as a forgotten memory.

In Promethean knowing, the categories which determine the categorical unknown are depicted as a unification of content. It is to say that the category is singular in its appearances. The Promethean perceives the truth as immediately mediated through the form of the category. In this way, what is deemed as fully determined is merely found in categorisation, the only differentiation being the categorical expressions in which the content takes shape. Thus, when the unknown is captured and categorised, the Promethean finds their actuality to be identical to their category, and when the Promethean gaze is lifted after the procedure of determination, the unknown actual's activity, having been undetected, remains outside Promethean knowing. Here, we find a critical failure of expectation. That despite the Promethean's attempt to self-discover themselves in all things, and to capture all possibilities in its being, the moment its attention is lifted, when the categorical unknown is measured, the unknown actual's first moment of life appears in the moment that the category is achieved. The unknown actual expresses its own organic life not when it is expected in the encounter of its categorisation, rather, its life is left to freely develop only when the Promethean welcomes the realised category and fails to recognise the unknown actual that appears alongside it.

In an airport, the judgement of a visitor is conducted by the customs officer only in accordance to the category in which the visitor has self-posed: work or pleasure. However, the visitor's actuality remains completely unrecognised to the eye of the officer, and what is only achieved is the category of the approval or denial of entry. This approval or denial is activated only by the correspondence of the measurement of the visitor to the rule and law of the destination, and the reasoning of acceptance or rejection never reaches into the truth of the reason of the visit. As such, in the moment of acceptance, Promethean knowing has believed that its measurement of the categorical unknown has reached into

its essence and has found its full determination. When the organic life is taken in alongside its category, the organic life lives unnoticed by the Promethean despite the Promethean's belief in its power to fully determine all that it encounters.

Although the Promethean, having determined that its process of knowing fully realises all content, here, we witness the unknown actual as finding itself within Promethean knowing. In detailing the evolution of the organic life that exists within its captured state, I posit that we will be able to reach a description of how it is that the eruptions are in fact crises to Promethean knowing. In the life of the unknown actual their everyday existence becomes subsumed by the normality in which their organic being corresponds to the same everydayness that is expected within Promethean consciousness. Although it is their measurement which is entirely of concern, the life they live continues despite their categorisation. In a situation which may describe a recognised eruption, the reassessment of Promethean knowing occurs in no novel fashion. It is merely the same representation of belief in its own power, now instead of being the tool which measures the categorical unknown, it is instead enacted against what it has previously measured and accumulated. This remeasurement is a universal instance in Promethean knowing. That in assessing itself, the Promethean recognises a complete determination, and so when it conducts its reassessment, it occurs in the manner of a hubris. It expects its reassessment to correspond to the same measurements as its original determination. Now, as we have discussed, what is accumulated into Promethean knowing lives its own life outside the category that has been imposed upon it. And so, in the reassessment, the Promethean engages with the categorical unknown once again. The difference between this encounter and the initial is that the Promethean now contains a formal history in which it corresponds the results of its reassessment.<sup>27</sup>

The radical eruption occurs here when this reassessment misaligns the data from its data-list with what is now being measured. This is the monumental crisis in which the collapse of Promethean knowing is predicated. For if the Promethean's categorisation is

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<sup>27</sup> This is to point out that Promethean knowing attempts to correspond the previous with the current, and in the success of this continues to provide proof for the objectivity of its measurement. However, what is attempted to be highlighted is the change which may occur in the results of such a remeasurement. Promethean knowing's static objectivity contains a boundary. In the case of a Promethean economy, it provides a space in which the rise and fall of currency-values are acceptable within a Promethean reassessment. So, when the Promethean remeasures its own value, and when it witnesses a change, the change is not the organic life that has been described, rather it is a change that is mediated through the expectation of the Promethean and accepted as an expected possibility. This is in opposition to the organic change which offers contingent surprise.

the complete determination of the categorical unknown, then what has been realised must then contain the objective possibility of its expectation. And within this determination, the Promethean would further expect that its measurements only expresses a change that is within the limits of expectation. Yet, in the moment that the reassessment reveals that the completely determined thing has, in fact, now become misaligned to any expectation, and thus is shown to have lived a life outside of its category, the Promethean now encounters the first moment in its life whereupon it engages with the unknown actual. It is a moment that is entirely Promethean, that can be achieved only through a pure Prometheanism and the process in which the Promethean comes to know what it knows. It is the revolutionary moment in which the certainty of Promethean knowing contends with the contingencies that Illich so endorses.

Because the Promethean has constructed an entire apparatus of knowing and lives solely within its self-recognition, any errors occurring from misalignments in reassessment indicate at fundamental contradictions between what is now appearing as the unknown actual and its own conception of the full determination of the categorical unknown. It is a contradiction with implications that are disastrous for the entire project of Promethean knowing. This is due to the fact that in the universalisation of the content into measurement and category, an intrinsic misconstruction in the process of knowing itself reverberates across all knowledges founded upon the same fundamental principles.<sup>28</sup>

In meeting with the unknown actual, the Promethean must contend in the only way it knows how, in Promethean terms and language. And it follows that by treating the unknown actual in much the same way as the categorical unknown, Promethean knowing contends with the crisis and the newfound encounter in the same colonising terms as its prior experiences.<sup>29</sup> In doing so, the Promethean overcovers the crisis, creating further measurements which fulfills the immediate concerns of the crisis, and yet, it is this

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<sup>28</sup> It would be to say that in trusting one's own measuring stick, when one finds out that the tool has not only been misconstrued, but that the concepts of the measurements itself are in question, then everything that that tool has been used to measure will now come under scrutiny.

<sup>29</sup> As Promethean knowing has developed a self-recognition based upon expectation and the unity of all experiences within its being, this appearance of an unknown actual, which is *truly* outside the Promethean's constructed worldview, begins an encounter where the the Promethean is to formulate for itself a way of engaging with a contingent surprise. Although, as we may understand now from our developments, the Promethean's insular subjectivity precludes it from any capability of approaching the unknown actual as a surprising element, and so, this encounter, even though it appears as a surprising possibility, is still deemed by the Promethean to be a moment that requires measurement.

overcovering that allows the crisis to develop, again until it remains unnoticed by Promethean knowing.

Here, I describe the development of the unnoticed crisis as it reaches its critical mass. In the initial eruption, the Promethean has encountered the unknown actual in Promethean language. However, the appearance is negatively self-positing. The Promethean has not achieved recognition of the unknown actual, rather, it is only that the Promethean is able to witness the unknown actual through the misalignment in its measurements. The unknown actual appears, albeit only through the mediation of measurements. Thus, in engaging with the unknown actual through its measurements, the Promethean now engages only with what it positively perceives, the misalignment itself. This misalignment is simply a rupture in its positive knowing and is only an expression of the unknown actual. These further measurements of the misalignment are the criticality of the intensification of Promethean knowing. That even in the case where the unknown actual appears on Promethean terms, the Promethean sees only itself in this other, and treats the unknown actual as an error to be resolved by Promethean power.

As the unknown actual is now seen to have become expressed within Promethean knowing, and finds itself remaining unengaged, its life continues to develop unfettered. And, as the life of the unknown actual encounters the other captured entities within Promethean knowing, those others who are themselves living their own unnoticed lives, the engagement occurs in obscurity to the Promethean. These encounters of the unnoticed organic lives manifest their own existence, and their own determinations continue to exist outside of Promethean expectation. The development of the unknown actual proliferates its own society and its own consciousness, all within the Promethean state.

In the eruption of the unknown actual, the collapse is predicated by the moment that the Promethean power of measurement cannot dominate the unknown actual's reappearance. This requires three facets of the eruption to manifest. The first involves the disruption of the belief in the power of measurement. This is the unknown actual which determines its own being outside of its measurements and categories, and thus reveals to Promethean knowing the possibilities that lie outside of its knowing. The second, as mentioned, relates to the fallibility of the apparatus. That in engaging with the unknown actual, the Promethean's accomplishment in determination through measurement no longer achieves the certainty of its previous states of knowing. This is to say, that the measures which are produced out of Promethean knowing, the conduct in which the Promethean attempts to eradicate the eruptions, are found to be no longer effective in

capturing the unknown actual. And the third, is the Promethean acknowledgement that the eruptions that are taking place are themselves outside of its own expectation. This third facet is the internal recognition, it is a realisation of the self-doubt found in the seed of its self-expectation, whereby the Promethean no longer recognises the omniscient power of its knowing. The Promethean now faces its deepest fear, the unknown actual on the other's terms. Because this unknown actual lies entirely outside of expectation, Promethean knowing can no longer retain its certainty, and thus its power evaporates. The Promethean recognises that its knowing has rested entirely on the side of the power of its tools, and it finds that if the tools are made impotent then the Promethean no longer has any capability to contend with its world.

This moment of internal recognition diminishes the belief in its power of measurement. The categories of its knowing unleashes the unknown actual from their measurements, and the Promethean cosmos collapses.

This stage of the collapse, whereby Promethean expectation has recognised the unknown actual, is the moment of the rebirth of the Epimethean. As the Epimethean has themselves been captured within their measurements, so it is that the Epimethean has lived their own life unnoticed, developing organically outside the knowledge of Prometheus. And here, our co-reading of Illich's Samaritan finds its expression in this moment of the Epimethean offering of aid. That, for Illich, in re-emerging from the Promethean consciousness, the Epimethean rebirth does not and should not take the moment as the opportunity to overcover their fallen brothers and sisters, and thus establish the world in an Epimethean way. It is rather to embrace the fallen, and to see in them what lacks in the self. The Epimethean, now encountering the unknown actual, the Promethean themselves, does not seek to determine the Promethean by Epimethean terms. In the moment of this offer of embrace, the Promethean's acceptance is the realisation of a determination in a co-mutual form. It is by only their own collapsing that Promethean knowing becomes themselves open to the recognition of the unknown actual. The Promethean, who accepts the aid of the forgotten, has now accepted the being of the other on their own terms, and significantly, in embracing Epimetheus, Prometheus has accepted knowledge without expectation.

## d. An Illustration of Illichian Learning

### i. A Proposal

The move towards a recognition of the crisis of Promethean knowing is thus accomplished in phenomenological terms. It is at this stage that this thesis seeks to imbue such an understanding with its interpretation of Illich. That although such an exposition was deemed crucial to any project of this kind, it is nevertheless important to recognise that Illich's own thinking is not tied to an abstraction of the concerns that he has witnessed. In this case, by the achievement of our development, I now posit a substantiation of our conclusion to Promethean knowing, and it is a conclusion that provides us with a re-reading of the Samaritan parable that posits a notion of learning in Illichian terms.

This aim at developing a reinterpretation of an Illichian reading of the parable, and so involving the attempt to achieve a position that recognises and uncovers the 'core' of Illich's notion of learning, is here depicted. As the current moment of understanding gains an appreciation for the possibility in which a Promethean knowing opens itself to the unknown actual, so it is that this moment will be explicated as an opportunity for learning. It is to involve the wholeness of the progress of a Promethean accumulation alongside the Epimethean embrace.

The depiction of this Illichian learning is radicalised as the reinterpretation of the Samaritan parable. However, this reading of a central Illichian understanding does not involve the parable as generally conceived. What I am suggesting is an attempt to recognise the essence of what Illich means when he refers to learning, not in the story of the Samaritan *per se*, rather, when the Samaritan emerges as a possibility. That is, the dialogue in which Christ and the Lawyer produces the Samaritan's existence.

As discussed earlier in this thesis, Illich's reading of the Samaritan involves a recognition of the cultural-historical situation whereby a Jew and a Samaritan's encounter is appreciated in its radicality, and that in following this understanding the Samaritan's act was a unique opening of love that remains unappreciated in institutional Christianity. I attempt to access this same appreciative recognition not only in the utterance of the Samaritan story, rather also to find the Samaritan's essence in Christ's dialogue. This presents an expansion to Illich's own reading of the parable.

In this description, I propose that such a reading grants us an opportunity to develop a clear recognition of an Illichian idea of learning. That the possibility of learning



can be expositied in the way that Christ responds to the Lawyer, and in responding to the Lawyer, Christ utters the nebula of a parable, one open to interpretation, and as so far recognised in Illich's own reading, a parable misunderstood by institutional modernity to this day. As this is the case, I attempt to unravel the possibilities for the pedagogical reasoning in which Christ may have acted in this way. This interpretation of the Gospel finds itself entirely indebted to Illich, as what is proposed is a development of Illichian thought to the content that Illich himself had not developed in depth. In following this, the illustration of an Illichian learning takes a distinct theological perspective – as a reinterpretation of the philosophical developments back into an immanent study of Illich and his central theological concerns – that is, a radicalisation of the notion of the rebirth of Epimetheus towards a secular and post-secular appreciation.

## ii. The Dialogue

As discussed in Chapter 2, Illich's reading of the Samaritan attempts to revive the radicality of the notion of love as expositied in the parable. Thus, Illich opposes the general reading in modernity regarding the Samaritan as a Christian expression for a 'code of conduct'. It is to further describe Illich's interpretation as attempting to locate love as an individual contingency, rather than as the formal activation of divine will through the institution. The reinterpretation in this work finds Christ's response as itself a loving appearance, in much the same manner as found in the Samaritan story. What I am proposing is that the dialogue that occurs between Christ and the Lawyer manifests a depiction of an institutional engagement with the unknown actual, and that the discussion grants us an explicit dialogical representation in which love is found to be a prerequisite to Illich's notion of learning.

The Lawyer represents the Promethean attempt to capture the categorical unknown.<sup>30</sup> For the Lawyer encounters Christ as an unknown and finds within themselves an agitation to pursue the categorical unknown's measurement.

'And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'.<sup>31</sup>

This temptation is read here as a temptation of Christ. The question appears not as a self-posed opening to the surprising other. Rather, Luke's account, being the sole account of the preceding moments to the Samaritan emergence, clearly represents the question as a temptation, and thus, by Illich's terms, would be an opportunity for the manifestation of the *mysterium*. It is to say that the Lawyer appears as an agent of temptation, and the temptation is for Christ to forego his divinity by institutionalising himself. The query is not an open question, as a curious student would ask their teacher.

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<sup>30</sup> 'In fact, Jesus tells the story of the Samaritan in order to frustrate the request of that "certain lawyer" for a permanent airtight definition of "the neighbour," and this is a common occurrence in the Gospel: opponents often try to entangle Jesus in his own words or entrap him in some blunt formula, only to have him parry and dance out of their grasp with a story, a joke, or an answering question.' Ivan Illich, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, David Cayley, Introduction, 36. The Lawyer is understood in this final illustration as being the Promethean who encounters Christ, and deems him to be subservient to the power of measurement, in this case to measure Christ by the Lawyer's own expectation of how the divine should define the law or the neighbour.

<sup>31</sup> Luke 10:25.

It is instead the question which seeks of the recipient a self-definition that enables their capturing into the Promethean consciousness. By these terms, the Lawyer is posing a temptation to Christ to formalise his teachings into positive definition, and as such to destroy the contingency of Christian thinking as it becomes translated into Promethean language.

As Christ is here himself the exposition of *kenosis*, what can be found in the text is that Christ's words represent a facet of divine intervention into the world. In following Illich in recognising Incarnational being, the interpretation here determines itself by recognising in Christ's acts and words the purity of its outworking. It is to say that in attempting to resolve the tension which occurs in the meeting between the divine and the worldly, here between Christ and the Lawyer, the dialogue expresses a dialectical path in which this interpretation may ground itself.

And so, in this instance, Christ's response to institutional temptation is to respond in negativity.<sup>32</sup>

'He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?'.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the Promethean attempt to capture Christ, the response is a kindly recognition of the being of the other. Christ does not grant the Lawyer the positivist definition, rather, the response is one of a reflecting negativity. It is to give the Lawyer, despite their being an agent of temptation, the opportunity to recognise in themselves the openness to their own closed query. Christ opens what was posited as a closedness.<sup>34</sup> And the Lawyer's response reveals that he contained the answer, the self-expectation, to his own question.

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<sup>32</sup> As a sidenote to this interpretation, and thus posited here without lengthy proof, I wish to point out that the reflecting negativity of Christ's response (as a moment in the wholeness of the dialogue and the parable) is offered as a crucial stage in the development of the truth of the Incarnation's expression of love. The love that Christ offers the Lawyer, which is not yet apparent here, is nevertheless planted as a seed from the first moment. The dialogue is the development and nurturing of such a seed in which its blossoming represents a truth that cannot have been achieved nor appreciated without the necessary dialogical steps in between.

<sup>33</sup> Luke 10:26.

<sup>34</sup> In a curt interpretation, this is to say that Promethean knowing collapses as it enters Incarnational consciousness and finds its openness when Christ responds.

'And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.'<sup>35</sup>

The returning query, which is an opening to that which was first existent as a closedness, grants the Lawyer the opportunity to recognise in their expectation the possibility of the unknown actual's appearance. This is Christ's first gift of love to the Lawyer. That Christ, in facing his own temptation, offers the response which grants the tempter the opportunity for their own salvation. The Lawyer's initial question regarding eternal life was posited to Christ in the attempt to formalise Christ's unknown being. And in return, Christ, instead of falling to temptation and granting an answer in Promethean language, returns to the Lawyer the negativity of the initial question. And it is a negativity which now enters the place of the Lawyer's mind. In this moment of Promethean knowing, what has returned, despite returning as a response to the initial attempt at capturing, re-enters as the unknown actual itself. The gift of self-interpretation is described as the first moment of Christ's love, and thus as the first moment in which learning may appear as an opportunity. However, what it is that Christ offers as a teaching, that which the Lawyer may learn, cannot yet be discerned. It is more intently to express the opportunity that learning is an opening to the unknown actual, rather than to describe learning as the mere moment of a capturing of measurements. Furthermore, Christ's response to the Lawyer is one which is self-positing as a response, that is, Christ's returning query, is posited as what may be recognised by Promethean knowing.<sup>36</sup> It is not that Christ is merely positing a differentiated and atomic query, the reflecting negativity is entirely founded upon the surprising question which has appeared before Christ. Christ answers the Lawyer in a way that the Lawyer understands. It is not that answering questions with more questions is the essential element. It is that Christ's meaning can be interpreted to represent the Epimethean embrace with the Promethean consciousness. That in returning to the other, to the one who seeks to dominate us, the Epimethean response must be presented in terms that the Promethean may find acceptable. Christ does not smite the Lawyer as a tempter, or to condemn him to damnation, rather, the dialogue preceding the parable is found to

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<sup>35</sup> Luke 10:27.

<sup>36</sup> It is that Christ's recognition and response to the Lawyer finds its expression completely determined in the terms of the other. Christ has asked the Lawyer regarding his own interpretation of divine law, a response that recognises the vocation and being of the Lawyer.

represent a case for the expression of divine love even in the face of the appearing *mysterium*.

This stage is only the current moment in which Christ's first response is an offering of the opportunity of love and learning. For when the Lawyer responds to Christ with such a clear and defined recognition of divine law, a self-answer which shows further proof of a Promethean self-expectation, Christ justifies the Lawyer's interpretation of his own answer in response to his own questioning. The gift of interpretation, that the Lawyer may learn of their own recognition within their own querying, remains unactivated within the Promethean mind. The luring temptation of the initial question has not yet reached a captured state, and although this first moment has led to an initial opening, it represents the Lawyer's denial of the unknown's appearance (Promethean knowing's initial reaction against eruption), and the Lawyer's responding act is shown to commit to a further attempt at capturing Christ.

'And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.  
But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?'.<sup>37</sup>

It is upon this final challenge that Christ responds, in finality, with the parable of the Samaritan. It is not that Christ delivers the parable atomically, it is rather that only because of the possibility of such a dialogical outworking, in the dialogue between Christ and the Lawyer, that the Samaritan blossoms as the conclusion to the love that Christ shows to the Lawyer.

The parable of the Samaritan is then the conclusion to how we may here describe an expression of divine love, and in the moment of its activation we may perceive the appearance of learning. The parable-as-response is Christ's reaction to the Lawyer's continued attempts to capture his teachings into Promethean knowing. The first response, the re-questioning which offers self-recognition outside of expectation, is met with by the Lawyer as being only an atomically erupting moment of their knowing. That when the Lawyer has attempted to capture the unknown, Christ is found to return to its Promethean knowing as being outside of its expectation. The question which re-solicits of the Lawyer the answer to their own question is the opportunity of self-recognition as it is determined by the unknown other themselves. As the Lawyer answers their own question, their own interpretation of divine law, Christ has provided the Lawyer the possibilities of

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<sup>37</sup> Luke 10:28-29.

recognising the unknown actual itself. The recognition that occurs in this moment does not correspond to the accumulation of Promethean knowing, where the Lawyer's question meets with a captured definition. It is instead that the Lawyer's self-expectation meets with Christ himself. As the Lawyer appears and broaches the question to Christ, the Lawyer's consciousness recognises only in Christ what is also in themselves. This can be stated in proof by the Lawyer's knowledge of their own answer to their own tempting queries. And so, when Christ responds with a returning question, one founded entirely on the recognition of the Lawyer as an unknown other, what Christ offers is for the Lawyer, in their own self-recognition, to see within themselves what it is that appears before them as an unknown actual. Christ, in this way, grants the Lawyer the opportunity to recognise Christ himself, not by the Lawyer's own Promethean conception, rather, to perceive Christ as that which remains unknown, and requires self-interpretation in order to encounter in actuality. It is this interpretation, the attempt to find one's own meaning, that is highlighted as being outside formal definition. In offering interpretation, Christ grants the Lawyer a way out of their own Prometheanism. It is to dislocate self-expectation from their own being, and to recognise in themselves not the correspondence of expectation and the measured object, rather, the contingent encounter in which the other is familiarised in the opening to their recognition. To clarify, this is to say that the Lawyer is offered recognition by Christ, and that Christ does not posit it over and above them in the Promethean fashion. However, this recognition by the Lawyer, in the first moment, perceives the eruption as a mere error, in much the same manner as in Promethean knowing. It corresponds such an error as a duty to continue to determine its experience by its captured and measurable state, and so, as the Gospel proceeds, the Lawyer must 'justify' this aspect of their own insatiety with the case that Christ continues to appear uncaptured and unknown.

The question, in which Christ's parable of the Samaritan is here described as the possibility towards the Lawyer's Promethean collapse, is depicted. It is that the Lawyer is found by Christ to have merely intensified within themselves their Prometheanism, that the parable manifests as the Epimethean embrace. The parable appears directly as a response to the intensified attempts to capture Christ, the query 'who is my neighbour'. This appearance of the Samaritan does not appear as the institutional reading would suggest. Thus, from Illich's own reading, the interpretation presented here would follow

in the case that Promethean knowing has contended with the parable by its own terms, as a tale which categorises the Christian notion of love.<sup>38</sup>

As the Samaritan parable is the opening of love in its contingent possibility, so it is found that Christ's parable-as-response is itself an opening of love made contingent to the moment in which the parable is an offering of aid to the Promethean Lawyer. The collapse of Promethean knowing, as discussed, occurs in the moment that its knowing loses the potency of its tool of measurement, and thus predicates the releasement of the unknown actual from their captured states. In the parable, Christ offers the Lawyer a story which is open to interpretation. It is an offering that grants the Lawyer a tale in which the Lawyer may, at their leisure, continue to attempt to interpret into a category. In reading Illich, this attempt is expositied, it is the attempt to capture in the parable the notion of the categorical activation of Christian love, through the institution, as a divine commandment. As such, Christ has provided the Lawyer the opportunity to witness their own collapsing from within themselves. As the parable is categorised, what is the opportunity for the Promethean is the intensification of its possible institutionalisation. In manifesting and activating its categorical definition of the parable, the Promethean has erected institutions in which the Samaritan is its founding basis.

The Lawyer, in now capturing the parable, has taken within themselves Christ's words on Christ's own terms. Although the Promethean has deemed themselves to have completely determined the definitional meaning of the Samaritan act, it is referred to here as illustrating the moment in which the radicality of the parable remains dormant within Promethean knowing. The collapse of the parable's captured state, thus being the opportunity in which its releasement is found to re-emerge from within the Promethean, is the gift of learning that Christ gives to the Lawyer. Here, learning, as interpreted through Illich, and reinterpreted through this co-reading of the parable and Prometheus, is described as the development which begins in the Promethean attempt to recognise only in the world itself, and the procedure in which Promethean knowing intensifies itself towards its own moment of crisis. This interpretation of Illich's notion of learning, does not conclude in this Promethean collapse, for it is to also involve the after in which

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<sup>38</sup> '[...] as Illich explains. It is not said, but inescapably implied. If the Samaritan had followed the demands of sacred social boundaries, he would never have stopped to help the wounded Jew. It is plain that the Kingdom involves another kind of solidarity altogether, one which would bring us into a network of agape. Here's where the corruption comes in: what we got was not a network of agape, but rather a disciplined society in which categorical relations have primacy'. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 158.

Promethean knowing comes to its own convalescence – through its recognition of that which appears from within itself, a self-appearance that occurs outside of expectation. It is in the open moment that the Epimethean rebirth, the revival of that which remains captured, and yet alive and dormant, comes to the fore and becomes recognised as itself on its own terms by the Promethean.

I illustrate this philosophical core of Illich's notion of learning in the last moments of the dialogue between Christ and the Lawyer.

'Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?  
And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise'.<sup>39</sup>

After the parable, Christ offers the obvious question, out of the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan, who amongst them most appropriately corresponds to the query posited by the Lawyer. The parable, here, in differentiation to the first query of eternal life, mediates the Lawyer's self-expectation. In the first query, Christ's response is to directly respond with a reflecting negativity, to ask the Lawyer what he himself knew. And yet, in response to the second query, Christ's response must first pass through the parable, before Christ is able to offer a reflecting negativity, which once again, reveals that the Lawyer contains within themselves the self-answer to their Promethean questioning.

In tracing this dialogue, we find that Christ first grants the Lawyer a direct response, although one that does not conform to the Lawyer's expectation of self-categorised definition. In reacting to this, the Lawyer's Promethean instinct finds that Christ remains uncaptured. Thus, the Lawyer's response to the first opportunity of self-recognition is to overcover such a misalignment in its knowing, and to respond with further Promethean reactions. The second query appears in the same manner. It is a continued attempt to tempt Christ to institutionalise the Christian message. In doing so, we now reach a stage in which we may explicate an interpretation for the reasoning in which Christ's second response is dissimilar to his first, and why it is that the second response requires mediation through the parable of the Samaritan.

The Samaritan parable is found to be essential in the differentiation between Christ's first and second response. In telling the parable, Christ now offers the Lawyer

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<sup>39</sup> Luke 10:36-37.



knowledge on Christ's own terms. It is a moment in which Christ grants the Lawyer the opportunity to perceive a foreign idea. In doing so, Christ now invites the Lawyer to move outside of expectation into the unknown. In apprehending the parable, although the Lawyer seeks to categorise the meaning of the Samaritan, it is nevertheless the case that the Lawyer is recognising such a categorisation by the terms that Christ has provided. This is a profound moment of recognition. It is the Epimethean embrace, and offering of aid and love, to the Promethean. Christ's love is now apparent in its developed form. The parable is the offering to the Lawyer, the seed of self-recognition, that blossoms as a result of the Lawyer's own thinking. It is that the Samaritan's explication of love, must first be transformed into measurement before its radicality is to become appreciated by the Promethean. This is here presented as Christ's offering of learning to the Lawyer on their own terms. That the parable is significantly particular to the Lawyer, and that the reading in which the Lawyer categorises the Samaritan is a necessary stage in the collapsing of such a categorisation. For the Lawyer to come to terms with the actuality of their queries, of the question of eternal life and of the neighbour, they are to proceed through the stages of the rise and fall of Promethean knowing. It is to also say that Christ recognises this, and proceeds in the manner in which Promethean knowing accumulates its knowing towards its own collapse. The Lawyer takes away from the parable its captured categorical state, and yet, alongside this capturedness is the complexity and depth of its actuality that remains dormant within its capturedness. What Christ offers is learning itself, in all its moments, and in all its stages of development, as a possibility manifestable even to the individual who appears as completely Promethean.

## Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to exposit an Illichian theory of learning. In recognising that Illich himself never claimed nor attempted a systematic development of his educational theory, the work conducted here is put forward as an interpretation of the concepts and ideas that Illich has provided in his work.

The contextual framework persists in the intention that Illich sought for his ideas to be recognisable even to those who do not accept his primary theology. From this, the educational theme focusses the attention in developing a secular and post-secular reading of Illich to the concept of learning.

The case is that in order to exposit Illich's idea regarding learning, what is required is a retracing of Illich's thinking from its theological basis to its possible philosophical interpretation. Through this pathway, this thesis has contended that Illich's thematic concerns on education may be understood, developed, and appreciated by the speculation that refers to the essence of Illich's thinking. This essence is appreciated by the terms of Illich's readings of the Greek myth of Prometheus and the Christian parable of the Good Samaritan. Following from this base, the terms of these central Illichian ideas are co-read to explore their possible interpretations outside the boundary that categorically defines them to mythology or theology.

In attempting the approach a speculation, this thesis has further worked to reinterpret Illich's own readings of these stories towards a perspectival shift. The philosophical lens has been the intention to recognise the insight of Illich's reading without a general recourse to his theology. This can be found in the final illustration of Illichian learning, whereby this thesis seeks to find in the Christian parable its dialogical expressions as a source for a potential pedagogy.

Although this pedagogy is not outline in depth, the scope of this thesis has been clear to describe its horizon. That Illich's theory of learning, as it is to be appreciated beyond his theology, can be interpreted in a co-reading of the two central stories towards the dialogue between Christ and the Lawyer. The pedagogy that is possible from this study is the potential for further work to discover the greater insights of Illich's thinking, both in general and in the scope of his educational thought. Thus, this thesis concludes with the hope that it has contributed to the literature by formulating a philosophical reconstruction of the idea of learning as found in Illich. This thesis owes itself to the concepts that Illich has left in his wake.

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