

What Happens When “We” Forget about Authority?:
Legitimizing Student-held Authority

by

Nathan Jacklin
B.Mus., University of Victoria, 2011

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. Graham McDonough, Supervisor
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. David Blades, Departmental Member
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Abstract

It is undeniable that schools and classrooms must function according to some conception of authority, but contemporary educational theory often overlooks this concept. This ‘forgetting’ of authority can lead to misconceptions about the concept itself or to conflating it with other concepts such as autonomy, agency, self-regulation, or power. In turn, these misconceptions can then diminish the role that students play in education by ignoring or overlooking any authoritative aspect of it. The authority relationship between student and teacher in educational theory—and in classrooms—then often defaults to an unbalanced binary structure in which teachers hold authority but students do not. To rectify this problem, authority and its importance in the classroom must be remembered and reconsidered. This thesis undertakes a critical analysis of authority to state its complex features clearly. Moreover, this analysis will show how authority is distinct from importantly related concepts like autonomy, agency, self-regulation, and power. The analysis then moves to examine the education models of Peters, Dewey, and Neill, with the purpose of highlighting the prevalence and importance of authority in education. With these distinctions and boundaries drawn, the final section of this thesis will describe the strengths of an authoritative student role in epistemic, political, and moral realms, positioning student-held authority alongside the socio-critical theory of Freire, Apple, and Giroux.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Authority plays an important role in the education system and it is undeniable that some form of authority exists as an integral part of schools and classrooms. Examples and symbols of authority can be found throughout the formal education system, in larger structural areas such as in the design of school buildings, the set-up of a classroom or the scope and sequence of a particular curriculum, or, as will be the focus of this work, forming part of the foundation for the relationship between students and teachers. Consider, for example, the average classroom in a public school, often filled with rows of desks, books, artwork on the walls, and other common materials. This traditional set-up of the classroom, with the student desks lined in rows and the teacher's desk at the front of the classroom, promotes a distinct form of authority that works to reinforce the hierarchical roles of student and teacher (Goodman, Hoagland, Pierre-Toussaint, Rodriguez, & Sanabria, 2011; Swindler, 1979, p.23). The teacher, placed directly in front of the students and thus occupying the most visible part of the classroom, is positioned as the authority and the students, lined up in rows facing the teacher (and not each other), usually play the role of receivers of knowledge.

There are numerous examples of philosophical work that have analyzed structural or hierarchical forms of authority in schools. Theorists who promote a more traditional view, or the transmission position¹ in education, such R.S. Peters and W.H. Kitchen, broadly promote a system of education in which they assume that authority rests with the teacher because of their larger accumulation of experience and knowledge relative to that of the student (Kitchen, 2014;

¹ This term has been borrowed from Miller & Sellar (1990), who, through a meta-analysis of different curriculum positions, present three major positions in education: transmission, transaction, and transformation. Each is aligned with different orientations to curriculum, which include areas such as the differing conceptions of learner and teacher, the learning environment, and the learning and evaluation processes (p.5).

Peters, 1960, 1963, 1967). The concern in their analysis of authority is to solidify the authority of the teacher and promote an educational institution whose efforts should be to introduce students to the world and to initiate them into “the citadel of civilization” (Peters, 1963, p.43). The teachers, in effect, are to be gatekeepers of society and should carefully create educational opportunities for students to be exposed to new knowledge and experiences when they are deemed ready. In effect, Peters’ and Kitchen’s analyses deal largely with conceptual interpretations of authority as it has to do with the role of the teacher in education.

Forms of institutionalized authority have formed the foci for the work of several different philosophers, notably in the works of Paulo Freire and Michael Apple. Though they take very different approaches, both reach a broad conclusion that formal structures in education can be used as instruments of oppression. The structure of the formal relationship between student and teacher, as supported by a curriculum detached from student experience and meaningless rote learning, was described as ‘banking education’ by Freire (1970/2000) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This results in a system of education in which the roles of teacher and student are hierarchical and unchangeable; “education,” Freire (1970/2000) writes, “thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor [of knowledge]” (p.72). Apple (1982/1995) locates several forms of control within education, arguing that these forms stem from the same logic of capital that affects factories and offices, albeit in different ways. The forms of control which can result in oppression within schools can be “simple controls (do this because I say so) or at the level of bureaucratic form” (p.135) but these forms are, for Apple, less consequential than “the encoding of technical control into the basis of the curricular form itself” (p.135). In other words, the form of control that has the largest potential for consequence is the control that is built into pedagogical, curricular, and assessment

practices of the individual teacher and, perhaps more importantly, into the curricular structures in education. Both Apple and, to a lesser extent, Freire, broadly focus their analysis of authority on the social, educational, and political outcomes which result from the contemporary large-scale authority structures in the education system.

Yet despite this type of analysis and an apparent acceptance of authority underwriting the entire structure of education—indeed, the existence and continuation of both public and private schools is dependent on the authority of the current government system—there is a dearth of analysis on authority and its role in the classroom (Pace & Hemmings, 2006, 2007). The concept is under-theorized and so there exist subsequent mischaracterizations and misconceptions about the small-scale forms of authority, such as the authority relationship between students and teachers (Macleod, MacAllister, & Pirrie, 2012).

This current lack of academic discourse about authority could have a direct aspect on important aspects of the education, such as the ‘hidden curriculum,’ the “norms and values that are implicitly, but effectively, taught in schools and that are not usually talked about in teachers’ statements of end or goals,” which students face every day (Apple, 2004, p.78). An education system that proposes to teach students about the political and social structures in which they live, and attempts to find ways to empower the students to learn the skills needed to navigate the complexities of democratic systems, is weakened when it asks students to learn about authority but never explicitly demonstrates to them how authority currently affects their lives, especially in institutions of schooling. For example, the new curriculum currently being introduced in British Columbia encourages students to become more engaged in their own education, encouraging critical thinking as a core of the curriculum (BC Ministry of Education 2018a, 2018c). However, students are directed to simply learn about their political and social structures but there appears

to be little or no direction to critically examine, with an aim of change and empowerment, their own role as students or the authority structures found within a school.² Without participating in a critical discourse about authority, students and teachers may end up behaving only in those ways authorized by the hidden curriculum and this form of tacit acceptance may very well carry on in their future political and social lives.

It seems that an increase in critical academic work on authority, deepening the understanding by both academics and practitioners of teacher and student roles, could aid in the equalization of the teacher-student relationship as promoted by Friere (1970/2000) and help promote the democratic goals of educating for autonomous and critical citizens. Current educational structures, which include conservative, traditional education and progressive liberal education, are flawed when it comes to consideration of authority and its role, and the socio-critical perspective provided by Freire helps to overcome these flaws through its emphasis on student liberation and equalization of the student-teacher relationship. It also seems possible that, in line with critical theory about democratic education, a better understanding of authority and its actual role in education would aid in analyses of the discrepancies and inequalities present in contemporary Western education models (Apple, 1982/1995).

Two Conceptual Problems Caused by Forgetting Authority

While a few large-scale problems caused by the under-theorizing of authority have already been suggested, there are also two very important conceptual problems that need to be examined. First, the lack of continuous research about authority noted by Pace & Hemmings

² A possible exception to this are the student councils which exist at some schools. While some of these councils may have the political power to help bring change to the student role, there is no provincial document outlining a political role for students. The Directorate of Agencies for School Health (2015), in partnership with the British Columbia Ministries of Health and Education, advocates for student involvement within different teacher committees in an effort to support whole-school connectedness but this is distinct from politically powered student councils.

(2006) has led to persistent misunderstandings and misconceptions of authority in the classroom. This is especially problematic as authority is very closely interrelated with autonomy, agency, and power, other important concepts in education that permeate the classroom. These misconceptions include when (1) authority is seen either as an aspect of power or is entirely conceptually confused with sovereign power³, (2) authority is only discussed as a result of autonomy, which limits authority to the self and ignores any relational parameters and, (3) students are perceived as acting with agency or autonomy when at least part of their actions are the result of holding and wielding different forms of authority. As a result, either a narrow and incomplete conception of authority exists or authority is neglected entirely. Each is a troubling possibility and one that could be addressed through a more thorough understanding of small-scale authority structures.

Second, forgetting authority could also lead to potential problems with conceptions of the student-teacher relationship, philosophically and in the classroom. As suggested by Freire (1970/2000), neglecting to critically evaluate authority structures in education can lead to the continued oppression of students. Part of this critique was the metaphor of the ‘banking’ concept of education, in which “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable [the teachers or the depositors] upon those whom they consider to know nothing [the students or the depositories]” (p.72). The banking approach to education “will never propose to students that they critically consider reality” (p.74), instead masking their efforts to turn the students into automatons. This could refer to either large-scale authority structures or smaller

³ In this particular instance, the argument is that authority is confused with sovereign power, found in situations where an ‘authority figure’ such as a king is able to use his authority without many, if any, limits. In this case, the king is actually wielding power and is using his legitimate authority, granted through some form of political process, to provide cover for his use of coercion and force. However, the discussion surrounding authority and power should not be limited to strictly sovereign power and, later in the text, there is substantial space given to analyses of other forms of power described by D.H. Wrong (2002).

structures, such as within the student-teacher relationship. When teachers ignore or neglect authority in the classroom, students will continue to exist in their role regardless of whether they are in an oppressive or empowering position. This results in a one-directional binary teacher-student relationship, one in which the teachers hold all or most of the authority and the students hold none. Not only could this type of relationship slide into the banking education system described by Freire, it seems to go against the ethos of the new British Columbia curriculum as it promotes an involved leadership for students in their own education, which states “[p]ersonalized learning focuses on enhancing student engagement in learning and giving students choices—more of a say in what and how they learn—leading to lifelong, self-directed learning” (BC Ministry of Education, 2018c).

Additionally, students who do not critically evaluate their own positioning within an authority relationship may not realize that they can actually be recognized as authority figures themselves. As will be explained in Chapter 3, recognition by self and others is a central component of all forms of authority so, by not recognizing themselves as possible authorities in the classroom, students may continue believing that authority is something which teachers can hold and wield but students cannot. However, students are capable of holding and wielding different forms of authority in education; this is a position that will be explained in Chapter 4 but it is important to consider now.

Addressing these important conceptual problems regarding the nature of authority in education in a clear manner is the main purpose of this work. Broadly, this thesis aims to address the under-theorized nature of authority by providing a conceptual analysis of authority in the classroom. This type of analysis will include providing a social-critical lens on authority and those concepts to which it is closely related, especially agency and autonomy. It is intended that

this work will also provide a future path for addressing the lack of contemporary discourse on authority in the classroom. In addition to providing important conceptual clarity to the nature of authority, this thesis aims to describe and argue for the recognition of student-held authority. This is a more radical argument, one that follows the works of social-critical theorists such as Freire, Apple, and Giroux. Despite the appearance of the radical nature of student-held authority, the argument hinges not so much on that the role of the student be changed in order to hold authority but that students should be recognized—by teachers, parents, peers, other community members—as already holding authority of some form in their current role in education.

Defining Agency, Autonomy, and Authority

It is difficult to fully discuss authority without mention of autonomy and agency, as all three are closely interrelated and so should be analyzed individually and together. Each concept is distinct from the others but these concepts share certain similarities. Choice, for example, is a common thread between authority, autonomy, and agency. Agency, which can be described as, “the opportunity for engagement in the social world” (Eggen, 2011, p.533), is comprised of many choices as an individual navigates such opportunities. Each intentional interaction with the world can be an expression of agency and, often, these interactions involve some form of choice. Autonomy, broadly, can be defined as, “the personal characteristic of [a subject] being in charge of his [sic] own life” (Haworth, 1986, p.1) or, in other words, to have the capability both in ability and circumstance to choose for one’s self. Finally authority, which involves choice in two ways, namely (1) what command is to be given by the authority figure, and (2) the continued recognition of the authority by its subjects (Weber, 1922/1958). The importance of choice to conceptions of agency, autonomy, and authority not only ties them together conceptually but also names one feature and way in which they may become conflated within the role of a student.

When the student engages in making a decision, others (teachers, parents, etc.) often acknowledge degrees of agency and autonomy being exercised but it is possible that the student is acting with some form of authority, either in addition to or in substitution of the others.

To avoid similar conflation, it is necessary here to provide some brief definitions of authority, autonomy, and agency, although all three will be more extensively analyzed later. The definitions here will simply provide a foundation for clarity, from which the identified problems caused by the under-theorization of authority can be more clearly understood. This groundwork will then be built on in subsequent chapters, with the conceptual analysis also highlighting some of the ways in which these three concepts are interrelated.

Agency, to begin, is defined in this thesis as, “the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments” (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p.970) or, in other words, the intentional interactions between actors and their environments over time to create change.⁴ These engagements must be intentional and so, as an individual’s capabilities grow, so too does their agency (Haworth, 1986). A person’s agency is found in their own growing understanding of their abilities to make rational or emotional choices as social actors. As Emirbayer and Mische (1998) write, the locus of agency “lies in the *contextualization* of social experience...[through which in] deliberation with others (or sometimes self-reflexively, with themselves) about the pragmatic and normative exigencies of lived situations, actors gain in the capacity to make considered decisions that may challenge received patterns of action” (p.994, emphasis in original). Agency requires then interaction with the world and the subject’s cognitive abilities to understand, at least in part, the effects that their actions have on the

⁴ It is also possible to become an agent of someone or something and, acting as the principal agent in that relationship, have the same capabilities but making the decisions of behalf of that person, group, or institution. This important to note as shows a direct connection between agency and authority. An individual acting as an agent on behalf of someone is doing so from a position of authority.

environmental structures around them. Boyte and Finders (2016), add to Emirbayer and Mische's definition of agency, writing that agents are also "*makers of political communities*" (p.130, emphasis in original). Agency then, is not simply the theoretical capability to make decisions but is tied to the actual ability to live a political life and create change.

Autonomy, although a widely debated and complex concept (Dworkin, 1988; Hand, 2006), can be defined as self-control through self-choice, "essentially pertain[ing] to the regulation of the will" (Callan, 1988, p.26). An autonomous individual is able to self-rule, determining one's own purposes and then to some extent being able to make choices and actions to reach those purposes. Autonomy is an individualistic concept where the self (*autos* in Greek), is given both the capability and the opportunity to exercise judgment and action over the *nomos*, the "knowledge, law, rule, or standards" (Devine & Irwin, 2005, p.320), that applies to oneself. However, while autonomy can be a largely individualistic concept it must be considered alongside the social context in which it exists, "since knowledge and standards are socially constructed, [and hence] *nomos* can never be the totally individualistic, solitary creation of one individual" (Devine & Irwin, 2005, p.320). Autonomy also then includes consideration of interpersonal relations as part of the larger social context. Callan (1988) does this in order to connect autonomy with democracy and its values, such as justice, while Piaget argued that for a person to be autonomous there must be relationships with others and that autonomy requires cooperation among people (Piaget, 1932).

The final brief definition to be provided here is on authority, which can essentially be conceived as a form of relationship between people, institutions and offices, or ideas and knowledge. Weber (1922/1958) narrows the authority relationship to one of commands and obedience, where an obligation is found in the superordinate's responsibility to command and the

subordinate's responsibility to obey. This command/obey relationship must be in accord with both parties' interests and both parties must legitimate the relationship through recognition of the other. Legitimation is a central component of authority and an authority relationship can only be considered legitimate when participants have certain beliefs that lend credence to the superordinate. These beliefs are the "basis of every system of authority, and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey...[and is how] persons exercising authority are lent prestige" (Weber, 1947/1964, p.382).

In addition to the obligations created by an authority relationship, such as the consideration of the other's interests, sociologist Metz (1978) argued that authority relationships, in order to be successful, must work towards a collective moral order. Metz argued that the intrinsic right to command of the superordinate and the duty of the subordinate to obey stems "from the crucial fact that the interacting persons share a relationship which exists for the service of a *moral order to which both owe allegiance*" (p.26, emphasis in original). By requiring all involved parties to acknowledge a common moral order, an authority relationship, for Metz, must always consider the interests of both parties and, in so doing, creates a cooperative, co-constructed social relationship. Metz is writing here specifically about authority relationships within education, where it may be more likely that a common moral order exists and can be agreed upon. Metz's requirement for moral order may be transferable to other personal authority relationships but it may not be a requirement within large-scale authority relationships, such as that between a government and the governed. There may not exist an agreed upon moral order but, instead, there may be a plurality of ideas of what should make up the moral order or there could even exist different, possibly contrasting, moral orders being worked towards. In this case, having a single moral order may not be so much a requirement as a possible feature of large-

scale authority relationships. Regardless, Metz and Weber agree upon the necessity of considering shared interests within an authority relationship.

When the relationship turns against the interests of either party, the relationship turns from one of authority to one of power, which is a distinct form of relationship from one based on authority (Burbules, 2005; Goodman, 2010; Lukes, 1974). This change to power is, in part, brought about when one party's beliefs in the legitimacy of the other's position, which, as Weber (1947/1964) stated are the basis of every system of authority, are invalidated. Power, in this case referring to a version of sovereign power and as stated by political and social theorist Lukes (1974), is when "A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests" (p.27). In distinction from power, A exercises authority over B when B, prompted by circumstances, does as indicated by A what B may not do in the absence of A. In this instance, while B may be performing an action that they may not have without prompting it is not necessarily an action that goes against B's interests. It also for possible for A to exercise authority tacitly, as B may do what B wants as A accepts this action.⁵

Philosophical Methodology

This work is, very broadly, a large-scale conceptual analysis of authority in the classroom, with a specific focus on the recognized authority of teachers and students and authority's role in the student-teacher relationship. Authority, however, cannot be examined in a vacuum and so will be critically examined in relation to other similar concepts as well. The two main related concepts to be analyzed will be agency and autonomy. This will be done for several

⁵ It should be noted that actions that result in conditioned responses may no longer be actions of authority. Lukes (1974) writes that A "also exercises power over him [B] by influencing, shaping, or determining his [sic] very wants" (p.23). There is an important distinction then between conditioning a subordinate's interests to fit that of the superordinate (power) and having a subordinate perform an action which they may not have done otherwise but still fits their own interests (authority).

reasons, some of which were stated earlier in this chapter. Authority, agency, and autonomy are closely interrelated—and so should be discussed together—because they share some similar central features, including choice, interaction and engagement with the social structures in which people live, and the importance of each concept to the field of education. In order to provide a clear method of analysis, this work is broken down into three chapters, each of which examines authority in different ways. Approaching authority from different angles will help create a fuller and more complex conception of it, thus helping to address the under-theorization of authority in education.

Before taking a closer look at the exact methods in each section, one final comment on the overall structure should be made. This conceptual analysis loosely follows a structure laid out by Miller and Seller (1990), moving from more traditional positions to ones much more closely related to socio-critical theory. In each analysis of agency, autonomy, and authority there is a deliberate move from a philosophical orientation linked with analytic philosophy which, for example, Dearden and Peters are a part, to a progressive liberal philosophy, such as found in the pragmatism of Dewey, and then a final move to the social and political critical theories of Freire, Apple, and Giroux. Miller and Seller (1990) describe these philosophical orientations as the transmission position, transaction position, and transformation position. While Miller and Seller do not suggest that this is a necessary linear progression between these three orientations, such “models of reality shape each educator’s personal belief structure about the purposes and methodologies of education” (p.4). As each orientation provides a different and important lens from which agency, autonomy, and authority can viewed, these three philosophical orientations can be used as the meta-structure of this work. This structure will help inform the different conceptions of agency, autonomy, and authority with varying philosophical positions and

provide coherence to the progression of the analysis. The structure will also provide support in addressing the main concern of this thesis, the ‘forgetting’ of authority, by creating space for consideration of authority from differing philosophical views, allowing for analysis of strengths and weaknesses in each.

The second chapter focuses on agency and autonomy, including an analysis of each concept and then moving to highlighting the different ways in which they connect with authority. Agency, to begin, has suffered in terms of conceptual clarity because “[v]ariants of action theory, normative theory, and political-institutional analysis have defended, attacked, buried, and resuscitated the concept in often contradictory and overlapping ways” (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 962). This has often resulted in the detachment of agency from its own distinctive definition and created a limited version of agency as only the theoretical capability to consider change, not as an important process in social engagement. In an effort to create a coherent theory of agency, Emirbayer and Mische’s seminal work *What is Agency?* (1998) argues for a conception of agency which enables the involved social actors to be involved in a form of engagement that considers how influences of the past to help orient and stabilize choices and actions in the present and future. In effect, the authors consider the varying temporal aspects of agency to exist simultaneously within a particular social engagement. The analysis then moves to connect Emirbayer and Mische’s work with Dewey’s conception of civic agency in an effort to conceive of agency as a more active concept, one in which agents “are *makers of* political communities, not simply *deliberators about* political communities” (Finders & Boyte, 2016, p.130). Using the combination of Emirbayer, Mische, and Dewey as a foundation for a robust conception of agency connects it and authority with the intent of highlighting how interrelated these two concepts are.

Along with its analytical treatment of agency, the second chapter also provides a thorough examination of autonomy within educational philosophy literature. This section very clearly follows Miller and Seller's framework, beginning with the analytic philosophy of Dearden (1968, 1972) and his highly individual conception of autonomy. His work will then be contrasted with conceptions of autonomy from Callan (1988, 1997) and Levinson (1999, 2011, 2012), who view autonomy as more thoroughly connected to an individual's social structures. Callan's (1988, 1997) conception of autonomy is rooted in its connection to democracy and democratic values, suggesting that autonomy has a specific moral quality that requires autonomous individuals to deeply consider the interests of others. Levinson (1999) also argues for a conception of personal autonomy which connects to social and political structures in which people live, writing that personal autonomy should be defined as a "substantive notion of higher-order preference formation within a context of plural constitutive values and beliefs, openness to others' evaluations of oneself, and a broadly developed moral, spiritual or aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional personality" (Levinson, 1999, p.58). Levinson's conception is then combined with a conception of social autonomy—one in which an individual's capacity to be autonomous is defined from an individual's social context—as presented by Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1981, 1984). These theorists provide not only an important empirical viewpoint but also substantial philosophical consideration of their own work. Finally, the intrinsic connections between autonomy and authority are considered, connections that are especially apparent given the suggestion that autonomy is never fully autonomous but is always influenced by other aspects of the society. While none of the above theorists ever explicitly mention authority it seems reasonable to suggest that some of the societal influences on the different accounts of autonomy presented can be provided through an account of authority and authority relationships.

The third chapter exclusively analyzes authority and attempts to do so in a number of ways. The difference in analysis, it will be seen, aids in presenting a more complex and multi-dimensional conception of authority than is often encountered in contemporary academic discourse. Despite the fact that academic work on authority has waned since the 1980's—and the sparseness of current literature on authority within educational philosophy—there are still of number of important treatments of authority which should be considered (Hurn, 1985; Pace and Hemmings, 2006).

The first such treatment was created by sociologist Max Weber in his 1922 essay *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*, which became a foundational piece of academic literature on authority. In this essay, Weber attempts to differentiate where authority could be located and the different ways in which authority could be legitimized. To do so he split authority into three categories: traditional, legal-bureaucratic, and charismatic. Each form of authority is found in different political and social structures and it legitimated through different means. Traditional authority is located in hereditary positions or social roles, such as the patriarch of a given tribal society or within a nuclear family. Legal-bureaucratic, as the name suggests, is the form of non-hereditary authority found in the hierarchical governance structures of companies, institutions, or the government itself. Finally, charismatic authority is vested in social relationships and strong personalities and is legitimated by the subordinate's agreement to follow a certain personality figure (Weber, 1922/1958).

While Weber's conception of authority is very important to start with—almost every theorist examined here references his work during their own treatment of authority—it is limited by locating authority only in people and institutions. This focus ignores the important location of authority in ideas, shared concepts of morality, and knowledge. In order to remedy this

narrowness of perspective other theorists, such as Peters (1960, 1966b), Durkheim (1956, 1961), and Strike (1982a), will be brought into the discussion as they describe, in turn, how the authority of knowledge, morality, and political ideas or, henceforth, epistemic, moral, and political authority, round out this discussion. These less tangible but still important types of authority add more layers to the complex conception of authority that is often missed in educational discourse. These extra layers in authority are important to examine because, simply put, each additional layer is found in the education system and so needs to be acknowledged and analyzed to gain a more complete picture of authority in education.

The second half of Chapter 3 will include an examination of authority in the context of three contrasting education models, ones that deliberately follows the transmission, transaction, and transformation meta-structure of Miller and Sellar. This examination will be done for several reasons, including (1) to show that authority is an important and necessary aspect of all conceptions of education, whether explicitly referred to or not, (2) to specifically show how authority can affect the classroom and those in it and, (3) to give clear examples of when students and teachers act with authority (as opposed to agency or autonomy). The first model to be examined, an example of the transmission position as presented by analytic philosopher R.S. Peters (1960, 1966b), will be termed *traditional education*, a model often considered as a standard which other philosophers either build on or react against. Peters, it should be noted, is also the only philosopher to be examined here who explicitly mentions authority as part of his vision of education (see Peters, 1960 and 1966b).⁶ Dewey's progressive model, representing the

⁶ Of the other two theorists, Dewey and Neill, only Neill mentions authority but, unlike Peters, does so only to suggest that Summerhill runs without authority (Neill, 1960). These three educational models were chosen for a number of reasons, including (1) that Peters, Dewey, and Neill are all influential educational theorists whose work is still important today and, (2) they are all important representations of Miller & Sellar's (1990) division of education into the transmission, transaction, and transformation positions.

transaction position, and more specifically his Laboratory School, which he ran from 1896-1904, is the second educational model that will be examined. Finally, the free school movement as embodied in Summerhill will be considered, an important school—and example of the transformation position—to include in this type of analysis as the founder, A.S. Neill, firmly believed that Summerhill was an institution that ran without authority (Neill, 1960, p.154).

Finally, the fourth chapter will move from a conceptual analysis to a more radical argument for the recognition of student-held authority. This argument begins by using the epistemic, political, and moral authority typology created in Chapter 3 as the framework for substantiating student-held authority. In each case it is shown how students can be recognized as holding some form of legitimate authority and that, in many cases, students are already doing so in education, just in an unrecognized manner. Dewey's work helps to establish epistemic authority by connecting experience and knowledge, writing that experiences are "loaded with significance" (Dewey, 1916, p.139) and should be considered as part of students' knowledge-building. From Dewey's perspective, the role of a student is almost entirely one of learning and experiencing and so, as they build knowledge through experience, they also build their capability to hold and wield epistemic authority. Recognition of student-held political authority is argued for based on the current language in the British Columbia educational curriculum in combination with the democratic ideals of Janusz Korczak, who firmly believed that students, as members of their own political communities, were deserving of political consideration and status. Finally, student-held moral authority is argued for based on (1) the inherent moral status of child as derived from their individual personhood (Brennan & Noggle, 1997), (2) the development of moral reasoning based on Kohlberg's stages of moral development, and (3) that moral decisions do not necessarily need to be correct to establish moral authority. This final point is important for

two reasons. First, the student role is based in part on learning and growth, both of which can require learning from mistakes and so, if students are to be considered capable of moral authority, allowance for mistakes should be considered. Second, it is unreasonable for anyone to keep to a level of perfection in moral decision-making in order to be a moral authority. If this were true, there would be hardly any, or no, moral authorities at all.

Once this part of the argument is completed, it becomes necessary to establish that there is space in contemporary education for student-held authority. As foreshadowed above, a brief examination of the current BC curriculum suggests that there is the possibility for this radical idea to exist, despite its making no explicit mention of authority. This space for student-held authority is established based on the curricular emphasis on student-led learning, independence, creating critical citizens, and the personal responsibility of students inherent in the curriculum's core competencies. However, even if there is some apparent space in the current education system, most of the social and political structures in the classroom work against the possibility of student-held authority and so further work is needed. These barriers necessitate the final part of the argument, that a thorough and complete change is required for conceptions and perceptions of the student-teacher relationship. This argument relies on Freire's 'teacher-student, students-teacher' relationship in which he argued that "the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach" (Freire, 1970/2000, p.80). Freire did not specifically use the term student-held authority as he argued for authority to be shared between students and teachers, but the concept does fit into his project of challenging the normative authority structure in the student-teacher relationship. The argument ends by suggesting that student-held authority is also supported by

Apple's work on recognizing agency in acts of resistance and Giroux's project of promoting student liberty in an education that is truly emancipatory.

CHAPTER 2

Agency and Autonomy in Education: Conceptual Confusion and its Implications

A beginning step in clarifying the concept of authority can perhaps best be made by examining its interrelations with agency and autonomy. All three concepts are distinct but closely interrelated, even if contemporary discussions that surround agency and autonomy often neglect to explicitly include authority. This chapter will undertake an analysis of both agency and autonomy in the hopes that by presenting clear conceptions of the two concepts, their relationship with authority can be elucidated. An analysis of this type will also show the distinctions between the three concepts and create space for a full and complex conception of authority to be presented in Chapter 3.

The first section will present several conceptions of agency, notably one suggested by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) and another supported by the philosophical work of Dewey (1916, 1938). Both conceptions argue for a multi-dimensional view of agency, one in which the interactions an individual makes with the world around them requires considerations of intent and temporality. After this presentation, agency will then be connected with different forms of authority. It will be argued that not only does consideration of agency in education create space for authority but that authority—as a concept which underwrites almost all social relationships between people and institutions—must be considered as intrinsic to a full understanding of agency.

The second section introduces the concept of autonomy and, in an attempt to clearly analyze competing conceptions of it, moves from ideas of individualized autonomy to relational or social autonomy. Despite the conceptual differences between individual and social autonomy, within autonomy in general there is an important and intrinsic relationship to authority. Broadly

defined as some form of self-rule, autonomy “confers normative authority over one’s life” and “[a]utonomous persons are presumed to have the capacity, the right and the responsibility to exercise this authority, even if they do not always exercise it wisely” (Mackenzie, 2008, p.512). Essentially, autonomy implies some form of authority is also in effect (even though not all authoritative actions are necessarily autonomous). In order to more clearly understand the relationship between autonomy and authority, the conceptual bounds of each need to be set and that is, in part, what this section on autonomy attempts to do.

Defining Agency

Defining agency within education is a complex endeavour, not only because of the multi-dimensional aspects of the term itself but because there exist contradictory claims about its exact definition. This is not a new problem, but one that appears to continue to plague educational theorists and teachers alike. Sociologists Emirbayer and Mische (1998) aptly describe the problem this way:

At the center of the debate, the term *agency* itself has maintained an elusive, albeit resonant, vagueness; it has all too seldom inspired systematic analysis, despite the long list of terms with which it has been associated: self-hood, motivation, will, purposiveness, intentionality, choice, initiative, freedom, and creativity. (p. 962)

The association of agency with any one of these terms results in a one-dimensional definition that does not fully encapsulate what it means to be an agent and to act with agency. For example, if the definition of agency is limited to intentionality, this association suggests that to be an agent is solely to create a desire or to have the intent to follow through with a particular choice. In order to be an agent, then one only has to have the capability to choose and then intend to act,

and whether or not that action is actually completed is apparently not essential within this definition of agency. Agency is thus reduced to a completely reflective concept, without the need to act on one's choices. By itself, this example is problematic—agency cannot simply be defined as the intent to act—but, by combining the terms Emirbayer and Mische (1998) identify, further problems come to light. Each term from the above list is, by itself, not sufficient to fully define agency and so definitions of agency are sought by combining these terms. However, even by using a combination of associated terms, a definition of agency remains elusive. Combining self-hood, motivation, will, and purposiveness may help define certain aspects of agency but does not produce a complete version.

For example, a full definition of agency is not reached if, in combination with intentionality, one chooses creativity as a central aspect of agency, another term that Emirbayer and Mische found is often associated with agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p.962). To be creative is to engage in some combination of imagination and construction, to “produce the sorts of things that others...regard as exceptional, and beyond or divergent from what is normally produced” (Jorgensen, 2008, p.235). Creativity demands not only imaginative thinking but also action, with an individual or group actively constructing a product that has some unique aspects.

Using both intentionality and creativity to create a definition of agency can define important aspects of agency but does not produce a full and complex definition of the concept. Agency is more than an individual's intent to act (intentionality) and the use of imaginative thought and action to construct unique products (creativity), although these could be considered important parts of agency. Creativity—even with an implied intentional aspect to produce a specific end—is not sufficient as a definition of agency because there are aspects of agency not concerned with creation of unique products and ideas. In the end, if one only uses a combination

of terms to define agency, such as using only intentionality and creativity, the result is a definition that may include some aspects of agency but is still insufficient. The problem with defining agency through use of a long list of complex terms, as Emirbayer and Mische (1998) identified, is that when the terms are explored in depth, the analytical emphasis on the smaller parts cause one to misunderstand agency as a whole, resulting in “an elusive, albeit resonant, vagueness” (p.962) of the term.

Neither intentionality, creativity, or any of the other terms from Emirbayer and Mische’s list fully define agency because each term only presents a one-dimensional view which does not fully encapsulate agency’s conceptual complexity. Examining agency as a whole concept, rather than one which is made up of a list, will perhaps result in a more complete understanding of agency. A fuller consideration of agency will also allow for consideration of the mutually supportive relationship that exists—but is often overlooked—between agency and authority.

Viewing Agency as ‘Agency-as-Process’

Agency is perhaps better understood “as the capacity to act with others in diverse and open environments to shape the world around us” (Boyte & Finders, 2016, p.130). This creates the necessary space for agency to be active and relational, which the individual terms identified above by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) lack. One must be careful, however, because even this definition can be read in such a way that suggests the locus of agency is found only in an individual’s potential or capacity to act, as opposed to including the action itself or that agency is only found in relation to others, thus denying agency as individual. This creates a problematically narrow conception of agency, in much the same way as defining agency as intentionally did. Boyte and Finders (2016) seem to recognize this possible misreading and propose that agency is not just an individual’s *debating about* participating in communities, that

is, not just recognition of the capacity to act, but in actively participating as *makers of their communities* (p.130). By doing so, Boyte and Finders draw a connection between the capacity to express agency to the actual action of doing so. This is important because it conceives of agency as an entire process in which individuals engage, defining it as a multi-dimensional concept that involves a wide number of practices and actions.

These practices can be broken down into three components: reflection, potential action, and action. While each will be spoken of in isolation, it should be noted that there is no necessity for a linear progression through these three components. The first of these components involves reflective thinking about oneself and the social and political structures, paradigms, and contexts in which this thought process take place (Devine & Irwin, 2005, p.329). In order to be expressed, these reflective thought procedures must then connect to actual action through that action's potential, which can be defined as how an individual who has engaged in a reflective process can connect those possibilities to the world in a tangible way. There can be many different potential actions that arise out of the reflective process, any of which could be an expression of one's agentic capabilities. The important idea here is that agency requires a route from reflection to action, which is found in an action's potential, the "opportunity for engagement in the social world" (Eggen, 2011, p.533). Without this action, an individual is not so much expressing their agentic capabilities as just engaging in an exercise of theoretical thinking because there is no connection from that thought process to action.

Implied in this definition is the idea that agency is an acquired ability. It takes practice and experience to thoroughly connect reflective thought to action, although this experience can be built beginning from infancy. No one begins life as an agent but can acquire the competency

needed to make decisions that lead to action through experience and exercising the ability (Haworth, 1986)⁷. Haworth (1986) writes:

When for the first time the corners of an infant's mouth turn up, the infant isn't smiling. The first time the rattle falls from his hand he isn't dropping the rattle. Agency is an acquired ability. By exercising the ability, the infant builds a repertoire of performances appropriate for various needs and occasions. (p.13)

In the same way that an infant requires a minimum level of competence to have their actions represent a form of deliberate agency, an individual requires a minimum level of competence to deliberately engage in the social world around them. The engagement does not need to be successful to be considered agency but, if the roots of trying to deliberately act are there, the individual should be considered an agent (Haworth, 1986, p.14). This minimal level of agency can then be further developed, in both the case of the infant smiling and of an individual engaging the complex social world around them. Applying this into the multi-dimensional concept of agency-as-process will require an individual to build a minimum level for each of the three dimensions of reflection, potential action, and action (although this may happen concurrently).

Each of the three elements is not separated from each other but continuously work together, often with a single aspect taking a primary role. In the beginning of expressing one's

⁷ This is in apparent contradiction to Rousseau's description of the crying infant in *Emile, or: on Education* (1762/1979), in which he depicts an infant who constantly cries as the parents "caress him in order to pacify him...[or] strike him in order to make him keep quiet" (p.48). Rousseau creates a scene where the infant begins life as an agent, crying in order to achieve a specific purpose. However, the first time a child cries is not necessarily an expression of agency but rather as a response to birth. It is the repeated cries of a child that are the building of agency as they begin to associate that action with a multitude of responses from their parents. While Haworth contends that while no one begins life as an agent, it seems reasonable that life begins with a natural capacity for agency that can be built upon.

agency, for example, reflection on one's own past behaviour may be primary so that it is possible for an individual to distinguish the available avenues for potential action. Reflection here does not replace action—indeed, an individual may act on ideas from an initial reflection and then make a different choice after further thought—but it does take on a leading role. Agency is not a linear concept where one actor proceeds from step to step but is much more cyclical and dynamic, with each of the three elements informing and supporting the others. Seen in this light, agency is better viewed as *agency-as-process*, something which cannot be separated from the process in which an actor expresses their agency and develops their agency further.

This idea of 'agency-as-process' is aligned with the work of philosopher John Dewey. While rarely using the term 'agency,' many of Dewey's ideas can be seen to associate with the concept of agency (Boyte & Finders, 2016, p.130). Underlying his democratic philosophy of education is a commitment to agency in which he strongly emphasized agency's relational qualities. Writing in *Democracy and Education*, Dewey put forth that “such a [democratic] society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder” (1916, p.196). In the words of Ryan (1995), a Dewey biographer, Dewey believed that the person “makes sense of the world for the sake of acting productively *on* the world” (p.127, emphasis in original).

A more specific conception of agency is found in Dewey's principle of experiential continuum, which is an individual's “every attempt to discriminate between experiences that are worth while [sic] educationally and those that are not” (Dewey, 1938, p.24).⁸ In this principle, there are two distinct elements needed, which work in tandem. The first is simple growth,

⁸ Similar to the definition of agency presented by Haworth (1986), Dewey does not require an individual to have a successful action in order to be viewed as demonstrating agency.

whether that growth is in a skill or character trait or in knowledge. A citizen who participates in political processes or a student who is involved within the education system is always experiencing growth. For Dewey however, growth is not sufficient by itself because there is no guarantee that the growth will actually add anything positive or instructive to an individual's experience. As Dewey wrote, a person may grow from a poor burglar into an excellent one although this is not a desirable end (Dewey, 1938, p.36). To mitigate this, Dewey introduces education as the second element of the principle. Every experience promotes growth in some direction but not every experience is educative. For an experience to be educative a judgment of its value based on what it moves toward—both in terms of knowledge-building and morality—must be made and this judgment can only be made by one with “[t]he greater maturity of experience which should belong to the adult as educator...in a way which the one having the less mature experience cannot do” (Dewey, 1938, p.31). Dewey contends that an educative experience has both knowledge and moral components, both of which are guided by a more mature educator. The moral component is especially important because without this the burglar could simply become an educated burglar. By including moral value as part of educative experiences, Dewey limits what he considers to be educative to more positive aims. Thus, the act of being involved in educative experiences will help to funnel one's growth into a particular—and hopefully beneficial—direction. For Dewey, the principle of experiential continuum is a directional, moral concept.

The parallels between Dewey's experiential continuum and agency-as-process are found with (1) the potential for growth and, (2) the necessity of each concept to be considered in a specific moral context to provide direction. The first parallel, the potential for growth, is found in agency-as-process as an individual is required to practice and develop their skills in interacting

with the world around them. Agency is an acquired ability (Haworth, 1986), or at least is a natural ability that can be educated (Rousseau, 1762/1979)⁹, and so the necessity and potential of growth is central to the concept. Growth is also intrinsic to experience within Dewey's continuum, as the simple act of being involved in a given experience will, it is hoped, end with growth in some manner (Dewey, 1938, p.25). The second parallel is that each concept requires consideration of the context the individual inhabits. For Dewey, the context is found within education, which provides direction for experiences towards a given end, one that, it is hoped, is beneficial. Agency-as-process by definition requires a social context to take place. The type of situation in which an individual finds themselves would include a range of external influences on one's agency. At this point there is a small divergence between the experiential continuum, which under the guidance of a more mature individual may have a specific positive direction, and agency-as-process as the latter holds no explicit attempt to provide a positive direction. Agency-as-process is influenced by the current societal conditions and, while the individual can attempt to be in mostly positive situations, there is no guarantee. The process may lead an individual to a wide variety of ends. However, it is important to note that the defining feature of both concepts is not the actual end itself but the cyclical relationship between reflective thought, potential action, and actual action.

'Agency-as-Process' in Connection to the 'Chordal Triad of Agency'

This three-dimensional conception of agency mirrors an important framework created by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) in their seminal work *What is Agency?* In an effort to create a

⁹ The distinction between Haworth and Rousseau presented here is subtle but important. Haworth (1986) suggests that agency is acquired through both practice and cognitive growth, where at the beginning of one's life the actions are not expressions of agency but they could be. Rousseau (1762/1979) is similar in his conception of agency as a power that one can grow but conceives of agency as a natural part of human ability, including those actions one takes at the beginning of one's life.

coherent theory of agency—and working with the assumption that there is not any viable prior theory available—the authors argue for a conception of agency that enables the involved social actors to act in such a way that considers the influences of the past—including inherited traits—to help orient and stabilize choices and actions in the present and future. Emirbayer and Mische work to re-conceptualize human agency:

as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment). (p.963)

Importantly, while the authors consider the varying temporal aspects of agency to exist simultaneously within a particular social engagement there is the possibility, and almost the necessity, for one particular component of time to be primary. Each action an individual makes will be oriented towards either reflection on the past, directing one's intentions towards the future, or responding to the situations of the present. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) term these three elements as the *chordal triad* of agency (p.972). As will be shown, the three elements that make up the chordal triad of agency resonate strongly with the three aspects of agency (reflection, potential action, and action) that make up 'agency-as-process' (Boyte & Finders, 2016; Dewey, 1916, 1938; Haworth, 1986). Hence, agency encompasses both a procedural element (moving from reflection to action) and a temporal one that considers past, present, and future. This congruence is important because, as will be shown later, it is the combination of process and time that allows for a clear view of agency's relationship with authority.

The first element of the chordal triad is termed the iterational element and, broadly, has to do with consideration of the past. Specifically, iteration is the “selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action” (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p.971) that provides stability and order by maintaining personal and institutional identity over time.¹⁰ These past patterns, or schema, can consist of one or a combination of mental categories, embodied practices, or social organizations (p.975). The agentic dimension of iteration lies in the process of deciding, “how actors selectively recognize, locate, and implement such schemas in their ongoing and situated transactions” (p.975). This is a constantly reflective process in which individual actors must reevaluate their situations against past experiences in order to proceed in the present. The iteration element of agency implies heavily the importance of different structures surrounding actors, such as routines, patterns, and traditions. Far from these structures providing restrictions on an actor’s agency, it is possible for the two to support and inform each other, with traditions and routines actually enabling an actor’s expression of agency (Devine & Irwin, 2005; Marshall, 1996). As philosopher Thiessen (1993) argues, there is “a creative tension between tradition and emancipation” (p.130), which creates a needed space for the expression of agency. Indeed, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) argue that focusing on the patterns of action themselves in the present misses the agentic dimension of iteration and that it is far more important to consider “the precise ways in which social actors *relationally engage* with those preexisting patterns or schemas” (p.975, emphasis added).

Second within the chordal triad is a projective element, which pertains to the future. Projectivity, which could also be considered as the intentionality of performing future actions,

¹⁰ This claim can be challenged by the suggestion that the past, for some individuals, may be destabilizing or potentially harmful. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) suggest that an individual’s life course development, even one that includes hardships, may “work to shape emotional and cultural responses” (p.982) so that even potentially harmful pasts can provide some guidance to subsequent life careers.

looks to the future through an imaginative process which reconfigures the current received thoughts and actions into different possibilities of future thoughts and actions (p.971). This is the process of reconstruction of both the past and present to create different possibilities for the future. Projectivity then acts to ensure that actors do not simply repeat past actions such as performing the same daily routine but that they “are inventors of new possibilities for thought and action” (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 982). As actors create and project new ideas and actions they temporarily distance themselves from the surrounding structures and schema in order to imagine potential actions. Emirbayer and Mische place projectivity in between the past and the present as “it involves a first step toward reflectivity, as the response of a desirous imagination to problems that cannot satisfactorily be resolved by the taken-for-granted habits of thought and action” (p.984). This is similar to the placement of potential action at the juncture of reflective thought and action with a conception of agency-as-process.

Finally, the last element of the chordal triad is the practical-evaluative element, which works within the present and represents “the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action” (p.971). This is a responsive element of agency, reacting to the presently occurring dilemmas within a given situation and providing grounding for the various ideas and projects created within the first two elements. Practical-evaluation provides a chance for the actors to make discerning judgments about either the various options open to them or to make further secondary choices created by making a primary choice. These evaluations “must often be made in the face of considerable ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict; [when the] means and ends sometimes contradict each other, and unintended consequences require changes in strategy and direction” (p.994).

In much the same way as the three elements in the conception of ‘agency-as-process’ mutually support each other, the three features Emirbayer and Mische’s chordal triad of agency are likewise constantly informing each other. Despite the actor’s actual experience taking place solely in the present, the presence of reflection on the past and consideration of future possibilities are both constantly present. Implied within both agency-as-process and the chordal triad is the idea that agency itself, considered in the abstract, is a neutral concept. An individual can express one’s agentic capabilities in ways that affect themselves, other individuals, and society at large without a prescribed moral direction. This is true even though the reflective processes in both agency-as-process and the chordal triad include consideration of the explicit societal influences, as well as the influences which remain unacknowledged. Consideration of the same influences does not necessarily lead to agentic decisions that aid themselves or others. This can lead to conflicting ideas and purposes between individuals, leading to societal problems and, more specifically, creating problems within education. This problem is very familiar within the liberal democratic tradition, namely how a balance is achieved between recognition of the individual and of the society. Some theorists have worked towards this balance through inclusion of a moral aspect of agency.

Moral Agency

To create a balance between the individual and the group it must be recognized that growing alongside one’s capacity for agency also grows one’s recognition of the agency of others. Alexander (2007) argues that agency has a moral aspect that requires agents to accept that, as a part of one’s growth in agency, there exist many acceptable different visions of how to live and what the good life is. Alexander (2007) writes:

One can acquire the capacity to make independent choices given that we can never stand outside of the lives we lead by learning to be different and to respect the difference of others. This requires coming to understand myself, both past and present, and being prepared to assume responsibility for my future. It also requires coming to understand others who are different from me, both past and present, and recognising that it is they, not I, who should assume responsibility for their future.

(p.619)

Given that agency is a process in which an individual critically engages with the people, structures, and paradigms surrounding them in order to reflectively evaluate possible avenues of action with the intent of taking that action, it seems reasonable that there is a moral quality to one's own agency. For Alexander, taking responsibility for one's own life is a moral action because it requires rejection of other avenues toward different versions of the good life in favour of a particular route¹¹. This act of choosing demonstrates agency in a general sense and, as it propels the individual towards a specific idea of the good life, thus demonstrates moral agency in particular. Alexander's conception of agency is purely individual and this limits the value of moral agency because while Alexander does propose that one can recognize the agency of others, there is no explicit discussion that considers possible infringements on the lives of others.

The choices that an individual makes can have important consequences in the lives of others and so a purely individual moral agency must be rejected in favour of a communal and relational vision of agency that arises from the consideration of other people. Levinson (2012), in her book *No Citizen Left Behind*, argues against a purely individualized conception of agency

¹¹ Alexander's conception of moral agency is underwritten by positive freedom, where an individual is free "to the extent that one has control over one's life" (Dworkin, 2001). Both positive and negative freedom will be more thoroughly analyzed later in this thesis.

because it is an ineffectual method to promote the agentic capabilities of students who, despite individual growth, are “still left...in a profoundly subordinate position in the larger world” (p.12). Individuals in a lower social or economic position may be oppressed through the actions of those above them if agency does not require some consideration of others. Levinson is convinced that individual agents, in order to grow as students and citizens, must express themselves “through public, political, and civic action, not just through private self-improvement” (p.13). It is not sufficient to consider only oneself as an agent but also the status of others with whom one is involved and how your choices will affect them, requiring a conception of moral agency that limits pure individualism in consideration of the agency of others.

Connecting Agency and Authority

The conception of agency-as-process makes possible a number of ways in which agency and authority mutually support and inform each other. This is a necessary step if both agency and authority are to be accepted as central conceptions to a liberal democratic education and one that is almost never explicitly discussed within the literature on agency. There are a number of different possibilities within agency-as-process that can support a complex vision of authority. This is not an exhaustive list but serves to show how agency and authority can exist in mutually supportive ways. One can be found within Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998) temporal aspect of agency, supported by iterational agency; and a second can be found in a connection between practical-evaluative agency and Dewey’s principle of experiential continuum. Finally, a connection between moral agency and moral authority will be brought to light, centred on the concept of legitimation within authority relationships.

Reflection, Knowledge and R.S. Peters' Education as Initiation

Emirbayer and Mische's conception of iterational agency works largely with an actor reflecting on and mentally 'sorting through' a wide variety of past schema, traditions, routines of behaviour, and past engagement with individuals and institutions. As such, this dimension of agency relies heavily on an individual's past experience and knowledge for its exercise and, as an individual grows, a greater amount of information is available to them upon reflection. While Emirbayer and Mische (1998) intend for the iterational dimension of agency to engage with a wide variety of structures, schemas, and patterns, it is the relationship between an agent and the structures of knowledge that is most relevant when considering the connections between agency and a form of authority called epistemic authority.

Epistemic authority is a form of authority whereby an individual is legitimated in their position of authority due to the extent of knowledge they hold within a specific field. The epistemic form is legitimated in part by the acceptance of the subordinate actor and also in part by peers in the same position of epistemic authority but, unlike other types of authority, it also depends on an individual's intimacy with a particular body of knowledge that has been created before them (Peters, 1966a, p.151). To be an authority in this sense is to intimately know "some aspect of culture of the community which he is employed to transmit" (p.152) and to have this knowledge recognized by others.¹² Epistemic authority is thus limited in its scope to speaking and acting within a narrow context and so it is possible for an individual to act as a superordinate with epistemic authority in one context and act, very appropriately, as a subordinate in another.

¹² It is also possible to be authoritative within a particular body of knowledge. This is distinct from being an authority, which requires some form of recognition, as being authoritative does not necessarily require recognition from others.

This form of authority is part of the authority of experts, who have a recognized and credentialed relationship with, and deep knowledge of, a particular field.¹³

Within education, teachers are recognized as having epistemic authority within certain subjects due to their experience and their own education within a given field. However, it is not necessarily sufficient for an individual to have only factual knowledge of a field to be considered as holding epistemic authority. In a lecture titled *Education as Initiation*, R.S. Peters (1963) makes a distinction between an individual who is trained, which Peters defines as one who gains pure factual knowledge or basic skills, and one who is educated with both a certain minimum of care about the subject and the necessity of deep cognitive understanding as part of education. For Peters, to be educated, which would imply that some form of epistemic authority could be legitimate, is “(a) caring about what is worth while [sic] and (b) being brought to care about it and to possess the relevant knowledge or skill in a way that involves at least a minimum of understanding and voluntariness” (Peters, 1963, p.25). This type of authoritativeness confers authority to that person through the recognition of their education and knowledge by others. These others could be students, other recognized authorities on the subject, or a person from the general population. There are several implications of basing one’s authority on recognition; (1) it narrows the bounds of an individual’s epistemic authority to certain fields (i.e. a person could be recognized as an authority in particle physics but would have no recognized authority in

¹³ Interestingly, in *Ethics and Education* Peters describes a difference between being an authority on a subject and being an expert. The distinction lies “in the aspect under which knowledge is viewed” (1966a, p.152). If knowledge is pursued for an extrinsic value, rather than for its own sake, then the person who is pursuing such knowledge is an expert. For Peters, expertise “implies the application of knowledge, not just the possession of it” (p.152). An epistemic authority is then someone who pursues knowledge for its own sake. This appears to reflect a change in thinking over time with his other work on authority (Peters 1960, 1963), wherein he describes the right of being in authority as derived from “training, competence, and success in [a given] sphere” (1960, p.17). This implies that some application of knowledge is needed to be established as an authority, a definition which he later applied to becoming an expert. In the education field at least, Peters does attempt to rectify this problem by suggesting that teachers should be “an authority figure in both the above senses [authority and expert]” (p.152).

medicine), (2) recognition given by one party by itself could provide grounds for that individual to be recognized as an authority by another, and (3) it creates the foundation of an authority relationship, showing that while authority can be held and used by only one person, it cannot exist in a vacuum and requires a relationship between people, institutions, or ideas.

Peters goes on to describe his conception of the educational process, terming it ‘education as initiation.’ This ‘initiation’ does not specify any particular method of interaction between teacher, learner, and body knowledge but the broad process is one which “intentionally transmit[s] what is valuable in an intelligible and voluntary manner and which create[s] in the learner a desire to achieve it” (Peters, 1963, p.33). There are thus two main components that are necessary for Peters, (1) that one’s education is intentional on the part of both teacher and learner and (2) that, out of the educational process, one builds an interest in the knowledge gained. The latter is especially important to an individual holding epistemic authority because it is through the creation and growth of one’s interest in a specific field that one arrives at a deeper comprehension beyond factual knowledge and technical skills.

The connection between epistemic authority, education as initiation, and the iterational element of agency lies in the structures, schemas, and patterns to which an individual is exposed. As an individual becomes initiated into a specific body of knowledge, thus growing into having a legitimate claim for epistemic authority, they begin to surround themselves with certain structures and patterns. These then inform the selective reflective process an agent goes through when evaluating and learning from their ongoing transactions with the world around them.

Judgment, Experience and Dewey’s Principle of Experiential Continuum

Both Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998) practical-evaluative dimension of agency and Dewey’s (1938) principle of an experimental continuum are based on an actor’s ability to discern

between different possibilities of action. Dewey's continuum is more limited in scope because it attempts to differentiate between experiences which are educative and which are not, but both concepts work with the same broad strokes. An individual is using and nurturing their practical-evaluative agency and building experience when responding to a variety of dilemmas that can be encountered in daily life. Both concepts suggest that an actor can increase their agentic ability based on the accumulation of experience because it is through this gathered experience that one can make more informed judgments. In fact, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) note that this form of growth has often been colloquially termed, "practical wisdom, prudence, art, tact, discretion, application, improvisation, and intelligence" (p.994). This list may be a mixed bag of virtues and skills but all have as part of their definition an implication of growth in ability and skill.

It is the growth of agentic ability from experience that supports a connection with a wide variety of different forms of authority. In the simplest sense, as an individual grows in their ability to make discerning judgments about the world around them, they also grow in their potential to hold certain forms of authority. Often an individual with authority is bound to a specific role or office. In the political sense, this could be an elected official or an appointed bureaucrat and, within education, the office could be that of a teacher or administrator. The connection between these is found in the requirement of experience and knowledge, some general and some specific, in order to gain that role.

It should be noted that within this form of authority, which in theory combines skill, knowledge, and a particular office, it is possible that an individual could gain such authority without building the prerequisite skills or vice versa, building knowledge and skills without gaining an office. The result would be a weaker form of legal-bureaucratic authority but, as long as there continues to be adherence to the laws that support the office, the individual could

continue as an authority. The Peter Principle is a good example of this weak form of authority, which states that in a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to their level of incompetence (Peter & Hull, 1969).

Weber (1922/1958), in his essay *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*, describes this form of authority as legal-bureaucratic authority, a type of authority which, in its pure form, rests on the enactment of laws which then give credence to individuals gaining roles through election or appointment (p.2). “The typical official,” writes Weber, “is a trained specialist,” one whose “[d]utiful obedience is channeled through a hierarchy of offices” (p.2). Ideally for Weber, as one grows in experience and makes gains in their capacity for practical-evaluative agency, the roles they inhabit in a hierarchy of offices will change and so will the authority that rests with those roles. As the Peter Principle suggests, this may not always be the case but it can be suggested that legal-bureaucratic authority, and the prerequisite skills and knowledge needed for such authority, are connected to specific offices even if the individual does not completely fulfill the requirements.

Moral Agency and Authority

The version of moral agency Levinson (1999) proposes offers an important connection to legitimation, a central component of authority. Authority relationships, either moral, political or epistemic, can be considered legitimate when participants have certain beliefs which lend credence to the authority figure (Weber, 1947/1964, p.382).¹⁴ Authority requires legitimation of the superordinate by the subordinate, without which the relationship is no longer based on authority (Weber, 1922/1958). When there is no epistemic, political, or moral legitimation of the authority figure the relationship changes and coercion, manipulation, or force takes its place

¹⁴ Legitimation will be thoroughly discussed in the proceeding chapter. For its purposes at this point as part of the connection between it and moral agency, only a brief definition will be given.

(Goodman, 2010, p.231). This legitimation is often given by the subordinate because the interests of all involved parties are being considered, including those of the subordinate. If their interests are being considered when the superordinate is making choices on their behalf, the subordinates will continue to legitimate the superordinate's position. For example, within a liberal democratic nation the general public, in the role of acting under a governmental authority, first legitimates the government's superordinate position through elections and can then either affirm or deny that position in subsequent elections. This is an example of governing by 'consent of the governed,' a principle which states that government derives their powers from those they rule over (Sabine, 1937, p.65). The connection to moral agency is found within the requirement for one party to consider the interests of another when making decisions. Within moral agency, it is necessary to consider the interests of others to ensure that each individual retains the power for agency and within authority the same requirement exists to maintain the authority relationship.

Defining Autonomy

Despite the vast range of ideas within liberal conceptions autonomy there are a few similarities that can be found throughout them; the etymology of autonomy may be the best place to find any broad similarities. Autonomy derives from the Greek *autos*, meaning self, and *nomos*, or rule. Thus autonomy, in its broadest sense, is "the [positive] condition of living according to laws one gives oneself, or negatively, not being under the control of another" (Haworth, 1986, p.11). According to Haworth, the original definition was the negative aspect of self-rule and not the positive (p.11-12). This idea of self-rule in its Greek context did not refer to personal autonomy, which is the topic here, but to the city-states in ancient Greece not being under the control of any other city. Plato can be credited with expanding the idea of autonomy to the individual through his discussion of virtues such as wisdom and courage in *The Republic*,

whose definitions closely resemble conceptions of self-control and personal independence (Haworth, 1986; Marshall, 1996; Plato, 380 B.C./1943). It is an error to say that Plato argued for personal autonomy but his example showing that aspects of autonomy could be applied to the individual was explored by many other philosophers. Personal autonomy, while having been explored by previous philosophers, gained greater philosophical currency through Kant's work, who claimed that a person was autonomous "if in his actions he bound himself by moral laws legislated by his own reason" (Dearden, 1972, p.448; also see Kant, 1785/1998, §4:433). Once the idea of self-rule applied to the individual, definitions of autonomy became much more diverse and it became more difficult to clearly state how autonomy is defined.

It is important to note that, in a certain sense, autonomy is very close to that of positive freedom, that "one is free in the positive sense to the extent that one has control over one's life" (Dworkin, 2001, p.723). Both are a form of self-determination and self-rule stemming from the internal, such as desires, passions, and reasoning. This sense of positive freedom, the 'freedom to do,' is in contrast to negative freedom, or 'freedom from.' Dworkin (2001) writes that, "one is free in the negative sense if one is not prevented from doing something by another person" (p.723). If one person makes it impossible for another to do something, than that person is no longer free in the negative sense. Both positive and negative freedom are important to the following analyses of autonomy and will be referenced throughout, even though autonomy is more closely linked with forms of positive freedom.

R.F. Dearden's Individual Autonomy

Even after the major shifts in thinking that Plato and Kant made, there is no unanimous agreement on what autonomy means. Some theorists focus on a purely individual conception of autonomy, taking the negative definition (i.e. 'freedom from') as primary. R.F. Dearden (1968),

for example, gives two basic requirements for the development of personal autonomy, (1) independence in thought and action from authorities¹⁵ and (2), testing the truth of things for oneself (p.46). For Dearden, a person is autonomous “to the degree that what he thinks and does cannot be explained without reference to his own activity of mind” (Dearden, 1972, p.453). This requires autonomy to be placed solely within the individual and removes pure autonomy from external influences. If an action or thought is explained even in part by referring to something beyond the individual, the action or thought is no longer completely autonomous. Dearden does recognize that autonomy cannot be absolute because of “genetic inheritance and social conditioning” (Dearden, 1972, p.454) but this is the only allowance given. Actions that involve any sort of heteronomy—defined here when one’s thoughts and actions are governed by other people—cannot be autonomous by definition.

Autonomy requires independence of thought, to reason about one’s choices on one’s own, but independence is not sufficient for autonomy nor is each autonomous action or thought completely independent. Independence, Dearden reasons, is defined based on what an individual is apart from, such as independent of others in political thought or “independent of the headmaster for the syllabus we teach if we are ourselves responsible heads of department” (Dearden, 1972, p.452). This creates a weak foundation for autonomy because “independence emphasizes what a person is not, and it leaves somewhat obscure what positively it is in virtue of which he has these kinds of independence” (p.453). In other words, independence as defined here references a form of negative freedom (‘freedom from’) and this creates a weak foundation

¹⁵ Dearden uses the term ‘authorities’ here to refer to those in positions of power over other individuals. Those who can govern over others’ thought and action are the ‘authority.’ Dearden does allow for an individual to choose to follow the dictates of another but this choice must be made autonomously (Dearden, 1972). Haworth (1986) also allows for autonomy within conformity, using the example of a cloistered nun. As long as “the decision to enter cloistered life was a serious and personal one and if moreover it is renewed from time to time, her substantive dependence need not be taken as a sign that she lacks personal autonomy” (p.20).

because autonomy is much more closely linked with positive freedom to the degree that it is a power that the person possesses.

Dearden's conception of autonomy requires a high level of individual rationality—that is, the positive power of reasoning—in order to have “the ability to reason about one's own choices and the fact of doing so or having done so in the past” (Kerr, 2002, p.15). This could present a difficulty within education as students are still developing a capacity for rationality but Dearden argues that autonomy should be considered by degree.¹⁶ The more a person acts based on their individual critical thoughts, the more autonomous that person is and so, as students gain higher levels rationality they are able to be more autonomous.

Much of Dearden's work on autonomy is conceptually sound and represents an important part of the theoretical relationship between autonomy and education. However, it is limited because it is based, in part, on a negative formulation where an action or thought is autonomous when it is not governed by others or by factors that are external to an individual's mind or, in other words, when it is an expression of negative freedom. This raises conceptual barriers when it comes to the examination of autonomy and the variety of relationships one experiences within education. The influence of others is seen as a detriment to one's autonomy to the extent that they externally influence an individual's activity of mind and to the extent it limits one's freedom. The increase of external influence is an oppressive force for negative freedom, which is ‘freedom from’ the influences of others. This is problematic for a number of reasons, the first being an assumption that external ideas and influence necessarily hamper one's autonomy (or one's freedom) until they are rejected or internalized. One's life is filled with a variety of

¹⁶ Kohlberg's structural stage model of moral reasoning precisely follows this idea in the sense that individuals exhibit an autonomy of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1981, 1984; Kohlberg, Higgins, Tappan, & Schrader, 1984). Kohlberg's contributions to the philosophical development of autonomy will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter.

relationships and, if it is accepted that external influences had adverse effects on autonomy, then it seems very unlikely that an individual could develop any capacity for autonomous actions. The same is likely for negative freedom, where the presence of some external influence does not necessarily harm one's capacity for freedom. The second problem arises when attempting to discern what is an acceptable level of social conditioning on one's autonomy—which Dearden allows—without slipping into heteronomy. How is it possible to think of external influence without (immediately) considering it to be autonomy-inhibiting? Social conditioning may lead an individual to certain actions or thoughts, as will the explicit influence of others, and some external influences may promote autonomy, but to what degree do each of these affect autonomy? It is unlikely that an individual, through their own activity of mind, will recognize all of the conscious and subconscious influences they encounter, even if they can critically assess most of them.

Despite some apparent limitations, Dearden's ideas still resonate today and help to fuel an important debate about the nature of autonomy. What follows is a brief examination of two philosophers who build on Dearden's individualized conception of autonomy. This will highlight a revised and enhanced conception of autonomy which influences many involved in the education and, as will be argued, shows the weaknesses present when autonomy is defined apart from its social context.

Educational Implications for Pure Individualized Autonomy

Contemporary discussion on autonomy can be a complicated endeavour because there are many competing and, in some cases, conflicting views about it (Kerr, 2002; Mackenzie, 2008). Theorists who have undertaken a survey of the literature on autonomy have found disparate conceptions of it, with very few common links. Gerald Dworkin (1988) writes that,

“about the only features held constant from one author to another are that autonomy is a feature of persons and that it is a desirable quality to have” (p.6). This sentiment is echoed by philosopher and ethicist Callan (1988), who suggests that while there appears to be some coherence between definitions of autonomy, the use of the concept varies widely and this variation is detrimental to the understanding of autonomy, noting that, in his view, autonomy has sometimes been treated as a conceptual *tabula rasa* in theoretical and ordinary discourse (p.25).

Perhaps it is the difficulty in agreeing to a conception of autonomy that has led contemporary theorists to suggest that it should not be a goal of education. Hand (2006, 2010), an educational philosopher, has argued against autonomy as an educational aim, writing that there are two ordinary uses of the term: a state of being and as a quality of character; he notes that neither leads to a defensible educational aim. The first sense of autonomy, the state of being, is defined as when an actor is “free to determine her own actions” (Hand, 2006, p.537). Hand goes on to further define this sense of autonomy as *circumstantial autonomy*, since it pertains to the circumstances in which one lives. A person may be autonomous if they have freedom to act and are not “deprived of this freedom...enslaved, imprisoned or otherwise obliged to submit to the direction of others” (p.537). The second sense of autonomy identifies a specific quality of character that is the intent to determine one’s own actions. Hand terms this sense *dispositional autonomy*, which is “[t]o possess this trait is to have a preference for relying on one’s own judgment, to be independent-minded, free-spirited, disposed to do things one’s own way” (p.537).

Interestingly, this dual view of autonomy seems to follow the difference between negative and positive freedom. Circumstantial autonomy appears to be loosely linked with negative freedom, which social and political theorist Berlin (1969), in his essay *Two Concepts of*

Liberty, defines as one who is “free to the degree to which no man or body of men [sic] interferes with my activity” (p.15). Dispositional autonomy, referring to a more internal autonomous structure, appears linked with notions of positive freedom, “which consists in being one’s own master” (p.23).

Hand raises the question of not only whether it is desirable for education to encourage both senses of autonomy, but whether this is even possible. Circumstantial autonomy, Hand argues, may be a desirable state of being but cannot be conferred to another by educating them. “The deficiency” Hand (2006) writes, “lies not in her character but in the conditions under which she lives” (p.537). In effect, increasing circumstantial autonomy is a political goal and not an educational one. Note that Hand’s view is problematized, however, if one questions his underlying assumption that political and educational goals are separable. While this separation may occur some of the time, this is not necessarily always true. Education is often considered a highly political act, with decisions that affect education coming directly from political goals (Apple, 1996; Apple & Beane, 1995; Giroux, 2005). Many Canadian curricula, for example, have the development of citizens as a central goal of education, which is directly connected to politics and thus to political goals (BC Ministry of Education, 2018c; C21 Canada, 2015).¹⁷ Hand continues questioning the desirability of autonomy in education with dispositional autonomy, which he argues should also not be considered an aim for education as, in his view, it encourages an “independent-minded, free-spirited” person who would not be advantaged in an educational setting by having this mindset¹⁸. Hand (2006) writes:

¹⁷ Apple (1996) gives a more critical example of the relationship between education and politics, detailing an account of the relationship between corporate interests (in this case, potato farming and french fry makers), the local government, and the schools in the area (p.3-5), highlighting how the political and corporate goals of the region became a driving force for changes in the education system (see also Apple 2004, 2007, 2008)

Dispositional autonomy would confer advantage only if it were always or generally the case that actions one has determined for oneself are more effective, appropriate or worthwhile than actions performed under the directions of others. And it seems obvious that this is *not* always or generally the case. (p.538)

There are two examples in which others may be better placed to make decisions for another. These are (1) where others may possess experience that another may lack, or (2) their role may be better placed in a given organization to make such a decision. Teachers, Hand argues, can fulfill both or either of these criteria and so may make better educational decisions for the students than the students themselves. As with circumstantial autonomy, Hand's conception of dispositional autonomy contains a problematic assumption. In this case, Hand seems to assume a particular view of what educational institutions are supposed to look like. While an "independent-minded, free-spirited" person may not be a desirable outcome for some educational institutions, it can be for other schools such as Neill's Summerhill (1960).

In a similar vein as Hand, political philosopher Swaine (2012) raises questions about the importance of educating for autonomy by making a careful distinction between autonomy and critical thought. Swaine makes this argument for the benefit of an individual's moral character, which could be degraded through a certain understanding of autonomy. Autonomy, defined here as "a condition in which one rationally assesses one's beliefs, aims, attachments, desires, and interests" (Swaine, 2012, p.108) could potentially lead to deleterious influences that could damage one's moral character, or equally to influences that positively enhance it. The problem, Swaine argues, is that there is no clear cut way to limit autonomous aims to only healthy—taken here to mean morally good and valuable—ends. "Quite to the contrary, pursuit of autonomy

seems to give license to unhealthy imaginings on the part of those who seek it, and that allowance cuts against standards of moral character” (Swaine, 2012, p.113).¹⁹

For Swaine, autonomy is a neutral concept that demands that an individual “shines the light of day on his or her beliefs and commitments, proceeding carefully and rationally, and deciding individually whether to affirm, modify, or reject them” (p.109). Such actions could lead individuals to pursue ends which benefit their moral character or which harm it. Hence, it is the possibility that education for autonomy could lead students to reject foundational moral values in a liberal society, such as the Rawlsian consideration of others’ beliefs, that leads Swaine to reject a pure conception of autonomy in favour of promoting critical thought defined as a limited form of autonomy.

Hand and Swaine illustrate conceptions of autonomy that do not consider its possible positive social or relational aspects and it is possible that these conceptions fall into Callan’s description of detrimental treatments of autonomy (Callan, 1988, p.25). While examination of the complete range of these social and relational aspects of autonomy is beyond the scope of this thesis, the relational context provided by authority will now be thoroughly examined, first through the work of Callan and then that of political philosopher Levinson. While not explicit responses to Hand and Swaine—especially as Callan’s work came before either—Callan’s and Levinson’s conceptions of relational autonomy can be considered as a countering view of

¹⁹ Swaine seems to be describing autonomy in terms of negative freedom, that is, that there is an *absence* of obstacles in one’s pursuit of autonomy. However, this creates a weak foundation for a conception of autonomy as the mere lack of barriers in making decisions (negative freedom) does not necessarily make an action autonomous. Consider, for example, Carter’s (2018) point that an addict’s desire is to smoke cigarettes. An addict is driving and makes a left turn at an intersection at which there are no obstacles barring the addict from making a different choice (turning right or going straight). This action appears to be autonomous in terms of negative freedom as there are no apparent barriers forcing a particular decision. However, if any taken actions are being driven by the urge to smoke and not from a presence of control or self-determination, then these actions are not taken freely or autonomously as it is the addiction that is determining the actions (Carter, 2018). A strong version of autonomy is based on positive freedom, the *presence* of control, and this difference weakens Swaine’s claims.

autonomy in education to Hand's and Swaine's more individualistic versions. In their views, autonomy cannot exist in a vacuum or, in other words, an individual cannot be autonomous when completely alone and so it is important to frame an individual's autonomy within their social world.

Callan's Democratic Personal Autonomy

Callan argues for a conception of autonomy which is intrinsically connected to an individual's own interests, defined as a set of ideas or actions which creates in an individual the desire for sustained mental activity (Callan, 1988). According to Callan, autonomy is the individual creation, pursuit, and critical examination of one's own interests based on the condition that "[t]he strongly autonomous self is to be distinguished from others partly by a level of rationality at which the motivational structure is developed in a realistic fashion and occurrent desires are regulated in the same manner" (Callan, 1988, p.30). Autonomous individuals display a higher degree of realism and independence of mind than others when it comes to the regulation of their wills [*nomos*] (p.26). This is in direct contrast to the language of 'license' used by Swaine, whose conception of autonomy included moral limits set outside the individual. For Callan, it is possible for an individual to demonstrate different degrees of autonomy in a variety of scenarios as their autonomy depends, in part, on their level of unexamined acceptance of the norms and structures within a particular society. The more critically an individual examines their surroundings, the greater their autonomous capability becomes. Importantly, Callan also connects autonomy to the prevalence of conflicting interests, both individual and communal, in the general human experience. "[F]riction between rival interests is an almost ubiquitous experience" (Callan, 1988, p.33) and the competing demands of these interests will influence the

degree of an individual's autonomy, promoting autonomous choosing among competing goods or conceptions of the right.

Callan goes on to argue that autonomy is intrinsically important to one's life because of its connections to the development of, amongst other fundamental values of liberal democracy, self-respect, moral virtue, and freedom. Specifically, Callan argues that the requirement to seriously examine the fundamental values that inform one's choices autonomously makes autonomy an essential component to the exercise of moral virtue. In order for an individual to use and build moral virtue, they must carefully examine the circumstances and values they encounter and make informed and critical decisions based on their independent and realistic evaluations. This reflective and critical process is embedded in Callan's conception of autonomy and is a main factor in determining the importance of autonomy within liberal democratic societies and education. Callan (1988) writes "because these things [exercising moral virtue and achieving self-respect] are plausibly regarded as very weighty intrinsic values, autonomy can be seen, with equal plausibility, as a very weighty constitutive good" (, p.45)

By connecting autonomy intrinsically to moral virtue, freedom, and justice, Callan is in direct contrast to the conception of autonomy presented by Hand and Swaine, who view it as a neutral concept in which external influences—which could be different forms of oppression—threaten to denigrate both an individual's autonomous capabilities and the value of autonomy within education. In *Creating Citizens*, Callan (1997) compellingly argues that certain liberal democratic values, justice for example, cannot be separated from autonomy because this separation fundamentally changes the nature of such values. To view others with justice, one "must regard them as agents with projects and values of their own that are of moral consequence" (p.47) but to do so autonomously is not sufficient to ensure that justice will be

applied to all.²⁰ By connecting justice with democracy, Callan strengthens the connection between justice and autonomy as well, writing that a “shared, minimal list of political rights and acceptance of democratic procedures for resolving conflict give[s] a core of common content to the sense of justice that citizens can endorse together” (p.47).

To highlight the defect of having justice without autonomy, Callan gives the example of a fictitious character named Michael and his unexamined life. Michael is born, raised, and lives his entire life in the same town, enters the same career as his father and, along with his wife, raises his children in a similar manner to the rest of the town. It is not the end results of Michael’s life that make it less-than-fully autonomous (or even barely autonomous at best) but it is the “shallowness of his thought about how he should live” (p.47) which does so. Having never questioned the values that he inherits from those around him, Michael’s choices are made heteronomously and thus, according to Callan, make his life less autonomous (p.47). By diminishing his autonomy in this way, Michael “falls unreflectively into received cultural patterns, and lacks the ability or inclination to do otherwise [and thus] he is blind to the oppression that might persist” (1997, p.48). His perceptions of justice are thus limited because he need not take into consideration the full moral equality of all citizens, which is compatible with the “complacent bigotry of a man who thinks that women count for much less than he does or that systematic discrimination against those who differ from him in race or religion is just fine” (p.49). If Michael had seriously examined and evaluated the values he was inheriting, it is possible that his life would remain the same but to reach his decisions, he would have acted

²⁰ Here Callan uses the arguments presented by Johnston (1994), who suggests that a universal sense of justice may be too weak when the sense of justice is defeated by too many opposing desires, or too narrow, when justice only applies certain set of people.

more autonomously.²¹ This would mean that Michael must make conscious decisions to participate or not with the societal values which surround him, including those that make it possible to perpetuate injustice against certain peoples. Recall Haworth's (1986) argument about nuns in a strict religious order choosing to seriously and continually renew their vows as an expression of autonomy within a closed society which values conformity. Because Michael did not do so, his life within a conformist society is less-than-fully autonomous.

In contrast to Callan, recall that Hand and Swaine only accept a version of autonomy that considers the individual's interests, in competition and even at the expense of the greater good for the general populace. In their view autonomy should thus necessarily be *limited* by other values such as freedom or justice but cannot necessarily *enhance* such values. Since in their view, the individual competes with social interest, the resulting possibility that autonomy might degrade societal values means that it should not be considered educationally valuable. Callan, however, argues that autonomy has a specific moral quality and it is precisely because of its connection to moral virtue that it should be encouraged within education. Nonetheless, even he modestly acknowledges that autonomy may be neither necessary nor sufficient as a social good, noting that “[a]utonomy is not the high road to all that is good nor is its absence a guarantee of evil” (Callan, 1997, p.49). Autonomy could lead to an education and society that is well “adjusted to the moral ambiguities of real diversity” (p.51) but autonomous individuals may make carefully evaluated decisions that negatively impact those around them.

Balancing Relational and Personal Autonomy

Devine & Irwin (2005), invoking the arguments set forth by Marshall, suggest that actual autonomy is, in a way, paradoxical, and that even the most overt examples of “rational self-

²¹ Similar to Callan, autonomy is also foundational to Kohlberg's ideal conception of justice reasoning (Kohlberg, 1981, 1984).

control or mastery of the self” still exist within “the context of the knowledge of its own society, and can therefore never be autonomous” (p.320). Here is the suggestion that autonomy is never fully autonomous but that it is always influenced by other aspects of the society, although one can choose to follow external influences autonomously (Haworth, 1986, p.20). While the meaning of ‘influence’ is quite broad it seems reasonable to suggest that at least part of it involves the social relationships between individuals. The strength of the influence will change with the exact nature of the relationship, with a close familial tie potentially having a greater influence over an individual’s autonomy than a colleague at work. Regardless, it seems that Marshall is not as concerned with the strength of the social contexts and relationships that influence one’s autonomy but that this influence exists at all (Devine & Irwin, 2005; Marshall, 1996).

Consideration of societal influence must therefore be given both greater attention and weight in conceptions of autonomy and so what is needed is a conception of it, which includes both an individual aspect and a contextual one. These can exist in a mutually supportive manner, not just with the common understanding of negative tension that is created between the needs of the individual and those of the community. In her book *The Demands of Liberal Education* Levinson (1999) argues for an account of autonomy that, while still largely focusing on the capabilities of the individual, takes into consideration the pluralist society in which citizens live. This builds on Callan’s concession on purely individualistic autonomy, where he notes that indirectly held beliefs—whether by the individual or the larger community—can influence the range of autonomy and that this is intrinsic to any definition of autonomy (Callan, 1988, p.32-33). Levinson, however, goes further to promote the importance of societal influence on a conception of individual autonomy, arguing for a ‘groups effect’; namely, that an individual’s

capacity for autonomy grows when others they encounter have ideas, beliefs, and values which are studiously evaluated (Levinson, 1999, p.59). Essentially, the autonomous capabilities of one person are strengthened by their exposure to the autonomous capabilities of others. This is a big shift from Callan's concession that an idealized vision of pure autonomy is impossible because of indirect societal influences, which are potentially either helpful or harmful to an individual's autonomy.

Levinson is able to argue for a collectively strengthened version of autonomy because of her complex version of liberalism. Broadly, she argues for a form of liberalism that is based on three components. Liberalism demands an acceptance of (1) the fact of pluralism, (2) a set of conditions that demand free and equal public agreement on basic political principles, and (3) a set of institutional conditions, including "constitutional democracy, broad individual freedoms and civil liberties, and sometimes some measure of state welfare provision or income redistribution" (Levinson, 1999, p.38). While all three components are considered necessary for liberalism, it is the first that provides a strong base from which her collective conception of autonomy is possible. Each individual must accept that there exists a plurality of views, ideas, and values *and* that there is value in this diversity. Levinson does not argue here that one must simply accept pluralism but that one acknowledge that it is a fact of life in a liberal democratic state and, in order for every person to be able to pursue some version of the good life, they must accept that there will be competing ideas that also have value. Levinson (1999) defines autonomy within a liberal democracy as "the capacity to form a conception of the good" (Levinson, 1999, p.15) and by doing so implies that other conceptions could exist. These strong, reasonable conceptions then inform one's own autonomy. It is through the "existence of a thoughtful community which offers valuable evaluations and criticisms of one's own beliefs, a

lack of false consciousness on one's own part and on others', and mutual respect and toleration" (Levinson, 1999, p.59) that one's own autonomy is strengthened.

Viewing others' autonomy as an intrinsic part of one's own autonomy can be traced back to work done by psychologists Jean Piaget and, building on Piaget's work, Lawrence Kohlberg. They provide not only an important empirical viewpoint but also contribute substantially to the philosophical literature. Piaget's conception of interpersonal autonomy is one in which an individual's capacity to be autonomous is defined from individual's social context (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989, p.27). In *The Moral Judgement of the Child* Piaget (1932) writes that autonomy is social to the degree that one authors and follows the rules of interaction with others:

Autonomy follows upon heteronomy: the rule of a game appears to the child no longer as an external law, sacred in so far as it has been laid down by adults; but as the outcome of a free decision and worthy of respect in the measure that it has enlisted mutual consent. (p.57)

The key modifier here is *mutual* and with it, Piaget establishes that autonomy has at least a minimal level of acceptance by others. If the action or expressed thought is accepted as a free decision by both the individual expressing it and those it affects then such an action is, at least to a certain degree, autonomous. Each person, including children, has their own unique conception of reality and mode of reasoning and, as such, must be recognized as having the capacity for some form of autonomy. This social conception of autonomy suggests that "[a]lthough the notion of autonomy presupposes that selves make choices that do not depend on the will of others, this does not imply that selves make those choices in isolation from others (Power et al., 1989, p.28). This is a partial departure from a more individualistic Kantian conception, which

can be characterized as “self-governance and self-control according to self-chosen principles” (McDonough, 2005, p.201) and one that helps to support Levinson’s pluralist conception of autonomy.

Kohlberg builds on Piaget’s initial idea of requiring cooperation for autonomy by suggesting that to recognize and respect the moral autonomy of students, and thus help equalize the power relations between student and teacher, a democratic structure must exist within schools and classrooms. As suggested by educational psychologists Snarey and Samuelson (2008), a central tenet of autonomy for Kohlberg is an individual who is actively creating and making sense of their own world. Part of this expression must be included in an understanding of the importance of others and their own autonomous capabilities. The culmination of Kohlberg’s work on autonomy can be found within his Just Community school model, which as McDonough (2005) states, “points to a conception of the ideal self as fully autonomous through immersion in the social world of attachments and care” (p.203).²²

The work done by Piaget and Kohlberg can be viewed as a support for Levinson’s conception of autonomy, as they support the idea of mutual recognition as part of autonomy. Levinson’s pluralist conception of personal autonomy demands that individuals recognize the different pursuits of others and then argues that this feature does not impede autonomy. Piaget’s work elaborates on this idea through the suggestion that not only should autonomous persons recognize each other’s autonomy but that this is a requirement for its continued development. Community and social relationships can strengthen autonomy and this allows for the

²² The Just Community model began in 1974 and was developed by Kohlberg as a way to “promote moral development and moral responsibility through the organization, practices, and culture of the school itself”. The model had two major aims “(1) to promote students’ moral development and (2) to transform the moral atmosphere of the school into a moral community” (Power & Higgins, 2008, p.230-231). This educational model serves the purpose here of highlighting a conception of autonomy which promotes it through an individual’s social relationships (See Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989).

consideration of authority as part of what strengthens student autonomy. As authority underwrites many of the social relationships an individual is part of, it is important to consider that it can both coexist with autonomy without diminishing it and that it is possible for the two to exist in a mutually supportive relationship.

Authority as Part of the Social Context of Autonomy

The connections between authority and autonomy, understood as firmly grounded in a social context, can now be more easily illuminated. The broadest connection was previously hinted at with the critique of a pure liberalist understanding of autonomy provided by education philosopher James Marshall. In his 1996 essay “The Autonomous Chooser and ‘Reforms’ in Education,” Marshall argues that an individual can never be fully autonomous because of the extent of external influences, writing “there is no self (*autos*) independent of the behaviour and principles (*nomos*) that classify or objectify that self as being an individual of a certain kind” (p.91).²³ While never explicitly mentioned by Marshall, it seems reasonable to suggest that some of this influence can be provided through an account of authority. Authority is a fundamental concept within political and societal relationships and, because of its prevalence, could be at least a part of the societal influence that affects autonomy. The common understanding, exemplified by Dearden, Swaine, and Hand, would be that this effect would be detrimental to one’s autonomy and perhaps even change the actions or thoughts from autonomous to heteronomous. As shown through the work of Levinson and Piaget, however, it is also possible that external influences support autonomy. Taking this view, it is possible for an authority figure to support a subordinate's developing autonomy and still retain authority within their

²³ Through Marshall, this thesis has a point of contact with a post-modern perspective. However, a post-modern analysis of subjectivity and agency is outside the scope of this thesis.

relationship. Importantly, in both cases authority can figure in discussions of autonomy, as an intrinsic part of different conceptions of autonomy and as part of its social context.

It should be noted here that Marshall's work also serves to highlight how a misunderstanding of authority found in liberal accounts of autonomy is mirrored in its critiques. For Marshall, and other theorists, authority is a force which forms part of the social context in which the self exists and autonomy is the positive opposing force which "conventionally impl[ies] freedom from authority" (Devine & Irwin, 2005, p.320). Used here, authority is a part of the societal contexts that prevents individuals from being autonomous. To view autonomy and authority as antithetical is a common error and this may stem from a limited conception or misunderstanding of authority as a form of coercion or force. An individual involved in an authority relationship as either super- or subordinate does not necessarily have their capacity for autonomous thought and action limited. However, when authority is conflated with coercive power and force, it is very easy to understand how authority could be seen as part of the oppression of the subordinate's autonomy. With a clearer understanding of authority, it can be argued that an individual can inhabit the subordinate role and still possess the capability for self-governance and self-control.²⁴

A similar type of influence is hinted at in Callan's explanation of moral virtue and its importance to autonomy. Callan argues that autonomy is an essentially neutral concept and that it thus requires a connection to virtue for an individual to have a positive impact on their community. Authority could plausibly be one of the different external influences, or virtues, that help to shape an individual's moral understanding. Weber's traditional authority, for example, provides an important social influence that could affect one's autonomy. A hereditary leader,

²⁴ This will be more extensively examined in the following chapter.

such as royal monarchs or First Nations leaders, may provide overt and subconscious influences to an individual's morality, which in turn could affect the ways in which that individual would express their autonomy. Individuals in the superordinate position who have traditional authority have the ability to influence those in the subordinate position but fall short of repression of autonomy. They inhabit an important place within the given context of an individual's autonomy but, because of the nature of authority, have limits on the level of influence they provide. When applying this to Callan's connection between moral virtue and autonomy, it is reasonable to suppose that authority can positively support autonomy by providing part of its moral fibre. Now, having made some distinctions and connections between agency, autonomy, and authority clear, it is now necessary to more deeply consider authority, both in general and within education. This will build on the distinctions between authority and the related concepts of agency and autonomy, as well as creating a foundation for the argument for recognizing student authority in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

Uncovering and Understanding Authority and its Role in Education

“Authority is a fundamental, problematic, and poorly understood component of classroom life” (Pace & Hemmings, 2007, p.4). Authority is often conceived as a dominating and oppressive force, one that will often work against the interests of the subordinates that, in education, are often the students. Peters (1963), for example, writes that “[a]uthority is at hand where a rule is right or a decision must be obeyed or a pronouncement accepted simply because X...*says so*” (p.15), demonstrating an understanding of authority as only existing in top-down hierarchies. The educational philosopher Burbules (1986) has recognized the existence of such misunderstandings of authority in schools, asserting that while authority is “the legitimate cousin of power” (p.107) simply because a relationship is not easily seen as one of domination (power) does not mean that it is consensual (authority). In other words, some apparent authority relationships are, upon close scrutiny, built on coercive power and this can result in a conception of authority that is based on oppression. The social-critical theorist Apple (1982/1995), while not explicitly using the term, also seems to recognize authority as oppressive, describing a ‘hidden curriculum’, the result of an ideological state apparatus in schools, as a form of conditioning “that produces agents with the ‘appropriate’ disposition, values, and ideologies” to fill the political needs of society but not the needs of the students.

As demonstrated above, there are a wide number of terms which are used to help define authority, including: power, force, coercion, persuasion, discipline, domination and submission, social and political order, and patriarchalism. Each of these terms does indeed have some connection to authority but none of these on their own or in combination really define authority. When authority is reduced to or conflated with one of these terms, its meaning is significantly

altered or even stereotyped, often resulting in students, teachers and theorists misconceiving authority's fundamental role in the school, classroom, and student-teacher relationship.

Attempts to define authority have often been done through the creation of a wide variety of typologies. The first comprehensive one was provided by sociologist Max Weber in his famous essay "The Three Types of Legitimate Rule" (1922/1958). In that essay he divides authority into three different types, *traditional*, *charismatic*, and *legal-bureaucratic* authority, each defined based on the different source of legitimation. Contemporary theorists Pace and Hemmings (2006, 2007) have added *professional* authority to Weber's list. Other typologies include that of educational philosopher Strike (1982a, 1982b), who distinguishes a difference between moral and epistemic authority while sociologist Wrong (2002) includes authority—split into five subtypes of coercive, legitimate, competent, personal, and by inducement—amongst a list of types of power, alongside force, manipulation, and persuasion. Finally, sociologist Metz (1978), splits authority in schools into two kinds: (1) incorporative, which relies heavily on external control by the teacher, and (2) developmental, relying more on student self-discipline. Metz's ethnographic analysis of authority is particularly striking as she describes authority in terms of how traditional schools, including students and teachers, conceive it.²⁵ The sociologist Durkheim (1956, 1961) and psychologist Kohlberg (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989) greatly expanded on the concept of moral authority through their work in moral education.

²⁵ Metz describes authority as part of a the teacher's understanding of classroom relationships, dividing the teachers in her study into two groups, incorporative and developmental. According to Metz (1978) both groups "saw teaching as based upon a genuine relationship of authority" (p.36). Incorporative teachers viewed their relationships with students as a one-sided relationship in which the authority resided with the teachers, legitimated by their greater knowledge, experience, and the "time-honored tradition" (p.38) of teaching. Developmental teachers were more apt to view their students as "active rather than essentially passive agents" (p.37) and, by so doing, tended to view authority in the classroom as communal rather than individual.

Each of these typologies has greatly contributed to a philosophical conception of authority, most notably the work by Weber, but each also encounters limitations that must be addressed. From their work, and that done by other theorists, it is possible to construct a positive definition of authority that does not rely on related concepts such as power or force or negative definitions such as ‘lack of freedom or choice.’ As authority underwrites the entire education system—indeed, the existence and continuation of state recognized schools is dependent on the authority of the current government system—it is important to examine critically and to be able to clearly define it on its own terms. Durkheim, writing in *Education and Sociology* (1956), states that “one can say that education must be essentially a matter of authority” (p.87) as one cannot depend only on their own influence to change but must also depend on others. The pervasiveness of authority will then be shown in this thesis by analyzing three different education models. The first, advocated by R.S. Peters will be called *traditional education* and is an example of the transmission position, closely mirroring a conservative view of both authority and schooling. Second will be the contrasting *progressive education* model—or the transaction position—espoused by John Dewey, which, in part, aims to provide democratic values within schools and create a child-centred approach to the curriculum. The last will be the free school Summerhill created by Alexander Neill, an example of *existential-Rousseauian education* or the transformation position, which was created as an attempt to remove authority from education (Neill, 1960, p.154) though it will be shown in this thesis that authority wasn’t absent in Summerhill, but in this school authority was simply reconceptualized.

Defining Authority

As first described by Weber—and then followed by other theorists—authority, in its most basic sense, is a command/obey relationship (Hurn, 1985; Macleod et al., 2012; Metz, 1978;

Pace & Hemmings, 2006; 2007; Weber, 1922/1958). A superordinate is considered to have authority when those in the subordinate position will obey commands, which can be based on a wide number of diverse motives. These could include expediency, custom, routine, personal devotion of governed, or because the actions support the interests of all involved. However, each of these motives is not sufficient in itself to support an authority relationship, as it would result in a relatively unstable relationship. This instability would occur because each of the above terms does not necessarily include legitimacy as a defining condition. Expediency, for example, is largely centred around what actions or decisions would be most efficient and not if the superordinate's position is legitimate. The foundational tenet of authority rests in the legitimacy of the roles inhabited by both super- and subordinate as recognized by the Other. Weber (1947/1964) writes that a relationship can be considered legitimate when participants have certain beliefs which lend credence to each participant, noting that this is particularly of concern for the superordinate. These held beliefs are the "basis of every system of authority, and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey...[and is how] persons exercising authority are lent prestige" (p.382). Legitimation requires consideration of all participants' interests and because of this, authority cannot be wielded only for the benefit of a single party. All elements of an authority relationship must be voluntarily accepted, even if some of this acceptance is subconscious (i.e.: a student may tacitly accept a teacher's authority in certain areas by accepting the institutional authority that a school provides). In this way, acceptance of authority can provide positive benefits for all involved. As Burbules (1986) writes:

Authority can be grounded in consensually defined qualifications and bounded by relevant and sensible limits; in this case it can serve common human interests by sharing information, promoting open and informed discussion, and

maintaining itself only through the respect and trust of those who grant the authority. (p.108)

It is important to note that the positive gains provided by an authority relationship are only possible when the subordinates trust that the superordinate, when granted the authority to command and lead, will protect their interests. It is this requirement that separates authority from related concepts, such as power and coercion (Burbules, 1986, 2005; Goodman, 2010; Pace & Hemmings, 2006).

Weber's Three Types of Legitimate Rule

Weber outlines three different sources of legitimation: legal-bureaucratic, traditional, and charismatic. It should be noted that while each of these can be idealized as pure types, they rarely exist as isolated elements within authority relationships. The first type, legal-bureaucratic, comprises “not only the modern structure of state and city government but likewise the power relation in private capitalist enterprise, in public corporations and voluntary associations of all sorts” (Weber, 1922/1958, p.2). In this form of authority the subordinate does not obey any specific individual but instead adheres to the commands set forth by the rules and regulations of different offices. Within institutions this authority rests on legitimated rules and the acknowledged hierarchy of offices and positions. Built within this type of authority is an emphasis on accreditation, skills, and knowledge. An individual, in order to gain a particular role or office, must demonstrate a certain amount of proficiency within a specific field. An elected official, for example, must convince the populace that their particular skill-set and goals are well-

suited for the position. Without such demonstration of skills, the individual cannot hold this form of authority.²⁶

Traditional authority, the second type described by Weber (1922/1958), is vested in the belief of the people in the social order (p.3). Examples of this authority can be found within patriarchal or matriarchal societies where the role of authority figure is legitimated by tradition, such as hereditary leaders or the father or mother as *de facto* head of the family. It is the accepted social order of a given community that provides the legitimacy of rule. Weber (1922/1958) gives the example of feudal lords ruling over their subjects, whose “[c]ommands are substantively bound by tradition and the lord’s inconsiderate violation of tradition would endanger the legitimacy of his personal rule, which rests merely upon the sacredness of tradition” (p.3). Unlike legal-bureaucratic rule it is not necessary for an authority figure legitimated through traditional means to display competence or have credentials beyond those sanctioned by the social order. A feudal lord can hold onto authority—up to a point—despite their competence as long as those in the subordinate position still believe in the legitimacy of the social order in which they reside.

Finally, Weber describes charismatic authority, a type that is legitimated through the strength of the superordinate’s personality. This type is largely found in social, political, and religious movements, whose followers believe in an individual’s unique qualities, such as charisma, defined by Weber as “[perceived] magical abilities, revelations of heroism, power of the mind and of speech” (Weber, 1922/1958, p.6). Charismatic authority requires a leader and

²⁶ It should be noted that while this is true in the ideal of legal-rational authority, it is not always the case in real-world scenarios. An individual can hold a particular office without meeting the credential and skill requirements of it and an individual with such skills may not be elected or promoted to a particular office. When this is the case, it can be the result of external factors or the personal charisma of the individual in question influencing the decisions leading to appointment to a certain position.

disciples, who obey the leader “for the sake of his [sic] non-routine qualities, not because of enacted position or traditional dignity” (p.6) The pure type of this form of rule is found in “the prophet, the warrior hero, the great demagogue” (p.6). Charisma, as Weber uses it, is value-neutral and it is only through the effectiveness of a leader that it can be used as legitimation of an authority position. “If success fails him, his authority falters” (p.7). It is based on a specific, extraordinary, and purely personal relationship that can dissolve or transform if the charismatic-driven elements of the relationships disappear. Because of this feature, charismatic authority is the least stable of Weber’s three types. When charismatic authority fails, its governing structures disappear entirely. Only when the “charisma is not extinguished at once but continues to exist in some form” (p.8) can the strength of this authority type continue, such as when a lord—who often had to prove their authority was “sent 'by the grace of god' by performing miracles” (p.7)—transfers their authority to successors.

Other Forms of Authority

While Weber’s work is considered to be an important foundation for the study of authority,²⁷ some theorists have found that this conception of authority is too narrow and have added to Weber’s original typology. Building on Weber’s list, some sociologists identified *professional authority* as a fourth type of authority, “distinguished by the use of individuals’ expertise to achieve consensual aims” (Pace & Hemmings, 2006, p.3). In this type it is the command of knowledge in a particular subject matter and a certain expertise in using it for the professional task that lends credence to an individual’s claim for authority (Benne, 1970). This is closely related to legal-bureaucratic authority but, where that type requires a form of

²⁷ Burbules (2005), Goodman (2010), Macleod et al. (2012), Metz (1978), Pace & Hemmings (2006), Peters (1960), and Wrong (2002) all acknowledge Weber as forming at least some portion of the beginning of their own analyses of authority.

accreditation from a political or corporate body to be legitimate, professional authority is legitimated merely by the breadth of knowledge the individual has in a particular area coupled with the pedagogical skills required to disseminate their knowledge (Pace & Hemmings, 2006, p.3). A doctor's legal-bureaucratic authority, for example, can be legitimated through the accreditation provided by governing health authorities but this is distinct from their position as a professional authority, which has been granted by the patient through the doctor's use of specific medical knowledge "to achieve consensual aims" (Pace & Hemmings, 2006, p.3) with the patient. In this case, the agreed upon aim would be to improve the patient's health.. In this example, the doctor is exhibiting use of both legal-rational and professional authority.

Political authority, another possible addition to Weber's typology, shares many similarities with traditional and legal-bureaucratic authority and, in some ways, combines aspects of these authority types. This form is used to describe the authority relationship found between political offices or between a political office and its constituents. Like legal-bureaucratic authority the political form is legitimated by the consent of the general public to give certain rights and responsibilities to a particular office. The scope of the authority consented to by the public will vary, as will the types of offices which can act as the superordinate. The offices could range from different types of public servants, such as the office of the Prime Minister or an Ombudperson, to those hired through the governing structures (but who are not elected) such as a teacher.

However, political authority is distinct from its legal-bureaucratic counterpart to the extent its legitimation must take into account the will and consent of the people being governed. Some forms of political authority, such as found in democratic nations, rest on the recognition of the legitimacy of the state by the citizens, the 'consent of the governed' (Sabine, 1937, p.65).

Philosopher and essayist Saul (2014) refines this concept even further, arguing that “[a]uthority is the expression of profound legitimacy” (p.32). For Saul, the political authority of the state does not just require legitimation from the people but to be called authority at all, must embody the will of the people, writing “[w]e [Canadians] call this the legitimacy of the Crown or the state. The Crown is the people. The people are the guarantors of the state” (p.33). In contrast, Weber claims that “bureaucracy represents the purest type of legal authority” (Weber, 1922/1958, p.3), and that the bureaucratic offices—and the laws and rules they represent—legitimate the authority of those at the top of hierarchy.

These are important additions to Weber’s typology, as he exhibited a tendency in his analysis of authority to only identify it in specific individuals, offices, and institutions. Traditional, charismatic, legal-rational and political authority are all found in such places. Weber’s conception of authority locates legitimate internalized power structures only in rulers and in the rules of an office (Weber, 1922/1958, p.1) but neglects other, less tangible locations of authority. This limitation could be a result of Weber’s narrow definition of authority as “the probability that a specific command will be obeyed” (p.1). This definition implies that there must be some administration system in place in order to give a command and this system will require either figures or laws. Weber creates a conception of ‘command authority’ as opposed to other more participatory forms of authority.

However, it is also possible for authority to rest in knowledge, morality, and social values. R.S. Peters (1960) describes a form of authority that is ascribed to a given body of knowledge as opposed to a particular figure. Scientists, for example, in the pursuit of greater knowledge, do not necessarily acknowledge the authority of the scientist as a person but that of their reason, arguments, and evidence. “He [the scientist] believes that bodies fall at a certain rate

to the ground not because Galileo or anyone else said so, but because the experiments can be performed which convince him that what Galileo said was true” (p.27). In this instance the authority relationship is between an individual and a set of scientific experiments. When an experiment is repeated and continuously ends with the same result, the experiment’s conclusions gain scientific validity and thus build a type of factual authority that then informs the scientists’ own judgment and knowledge. The validity of the experimental results are the authority, not the scientists themselves. However, the scientist is more than a technician or sharer of facts as they still retain an ability to judge validity within the context of scientific knowledge. This is true even if the received ideas are given authority only to then be criticized or rejected for, within the narrow limits of scientific discourse, to disagree with a valid idea or result implies a minimum level of acceptance of the idea as worth debating. This form of authority will be referred to as epistemic authority, distinct from those types identified by Weber because it is legitimated in the strength of the idea itself.

Moral authority is another type of authority that does not necessarily rest in tangible figures and institutions and is a type that has featured as an important concept in the moral philosophical work of Durkheim and Strike (Durkheim, 1956, 1961; Strike, 1982b). Durkheim, for example, views moral authority as the most pure form of commandment, “consist[ing] entirely in a commandment and in nothing else” (Durkheim, 1961, p.30), writing that when it is in place “all other considerations must be subordinate” (p.31). Moral authority is found in the moral strength and capabilities of an individual or within the shared conception of morality within a particular community. In either case, it also requires recognition from those in the subordinate position. As with other forms of authority, the moral type is not often found in its pure form and can often be recognized alongside other forms such as charismatic and political

authority.²⁸ However, when it is located in a shared conception of morality this form of authority appears to be less likely to work concurrently with other forms as, in Durkheim's view, morality takes precedence over other considerations (Durkheim, 1961, p.31).

When located in an individual, this form of authority is unstable because the legitimation of an authority on moral grounds requires acceptance of a superordinate's continual ability to be reasonably correct with moral-decision making. Sanders (1982) argues for a personal version of moral decision-making that takes an authority figure's commands into account but does not require an individual to follow those commands, writing "[t]here is no infallible method by which it can be established that an authority is, or has been, consistently reliable" (p.20). Because moral-decision making cannot be uncritically relied upon, if the position of superordinate is legitimated only on moral grounds, the resulting authority relationship is unstable and the roles could change very quickly. Durkheim (1961) works to stabilize this form of moral authority by asserting that it is morality itself that holds the final authority, thus locating it in a version of shared morality and not in any individuals who make moral decisions, such as the resistance fighters in France during World War Two.

Moral authority can be stabilized, however, when it intersects with a developmental model of morality with education. This occurs because the authority is not legitimated on the exact content of the moral decisions but on the form, the how and why those decisions are being made. Similar to epistemic authority, this conception of moral authority relies on the greater experience of the superordinate to stabilize and legitimate the relationship. This is perhaps most common within moral education, described by Durkheim (1956) as a way to "initiate the child

²⁸ This is similar to Weber's analysis of authority, where he describes three types of authority in their ideal form but notes that, in practice, they are often intertwined and that it is rare for any type of authority to exist completely on its own (Weber, 1922/1958).

into various duties, to create in him, one by one, particular virtues...[and] to develop in him [sic] the general aptitude for morality” (p.41).²⁹ One of the more influential bodies of work on moral development that emphasizes the form of moral reasoning was created by Kohlberg, who created a Piagetian-inspired structural stage model of moral development³⁰ where each stage requires acceptance of some form of moral authority (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989).³¹ Put in an educational context, the teacher’s role is to lead the student through an ordered progression of moral development, to promote the kinds of moral conflict that disrupt lower stages and promote thinking in the next higher stage. As students have more experience in making moral-decisions, their position as superordinate leader for this process is legitimated (Snarey & Samuelson, 2008). For example, within the first two pre-conventional stages of development—obedience and punishment and instrumental purpose and exchange—the reasoning agent’s moral authority is heteronomous and so rests apart from the student. In the obedience and punishment stage moral authority rests largely with the teacher, the individual who is capable of setting commands and punishments for failure to obey. In the second stage, instrumental purpose and exchange, the authority rests in the idea of fulfilling one’s immediate interests. This may involve recognition of the teacher as moral authority, especially if the teacher is the only individual capable of fulfilling

²⁹ It should be noted that while this approach to moral authority appears similar to indoctrination there is an important difference. Moral authority, as found in all forms of authority, must take into consideration the interests of all involved but indoctrination need only consider the interests of the superordinate. A relationship which does so then moves from one based on authority to one based on power (Burbules, 1986; Goodman, 2010; Lukes, 1974).

³⁰ The stages are as follows: (1) Obedience and punishment orientation, (2) Instrumental purpose and exchange, (3) Mutual interpersonal expectations/good relations, (4) Social system and conscience maintenance, (5) Prior rights and social contract, and (6) Universal ethical principles (Power & Higgins, 2008). These are structured in a hierarchical fashion such that each higher stage incorporates and improves in philosophical adequacy upon the prior ones. Each lower stage (1-5) is an increasingly adequate approximation of the highest stage (6). It is not within the scope of this chapter to examine each stage in detail but only to give a brief examination to them for the purposes of showing a conception of moral authority which rests in experience and the decision-making process (Kohlberg, Boyd, & Levine, 1990).

³¹ The sixth and final stage of Kohlberg’s model, Universal Ethical Principles, is rarely found and has no empirical proof; however, it is conceptually established.

a particular need, but this is not necessarily the case. Later stages, such as the final universal ethical principles, describe moral autonomy and so locate moral authority in the “principles that generate decisions by which human dignity is ensured and persons are treated as ends in themselves” (Snarey & Samuelson, 2008, p.60).

Kohlberg’s work, particularly his claim of the existence of universal progressive stages of moral development, elicited some important criticisms that should be mentioned. Anthropologist Shweder (1982), for example, is highly critical of Kohlberg’s work, which Shweder characterizes as “the impossible question for a rationally dictated objective morality” (p.423). Alongside questioning Kohlberg’s assumption of the existence of a morality that is not bound by culture or history, Shweder specifically notes inconsistencies in Kohlberg’s work on the sixth stage, the universal ethical principles. For example, “he [Kohlberg] seeks a universal morality on which all people can agree” (p.423) and so Shweder asks the question: “Does that universal morality prescribe a way of thinking about moral decisions or does it prescribe particular moral choices?” (p.423). Shweder notes inconsistent an answer from Kohlberg, writing that “[w]e are told that stage 6 ethics cannot tell us what is virtuous or worthy of praise...[and then]...we are told that stage 6 reasoning leads to ‘morally right’ conclusions about specific dilemmas” (p.423). Such inconsistency problematizes Kohlberg’s progression and, for Shweder, weakens the possibility of the existence of moral developmental stages. Moral philosopher and feminist Noddings (1984) has also critiqued Kohlberg’s progression of moral reasoning, writing that although his work is often considered a model of moral education it is really only “hierarchical description of moral reasoning” (p.96). Similar to Shweder, Noddings is most critical of stage six, to which she presents an alternative termed one’s-caring, the “commitment to care and to define oneself in terms of the capacity to care” (p.42) and that this can replace the

“rearrangement of priorities among principles [in stage six]...[with] maintaining and enhancing caring” (p.42), specifically noting that this is most applicable to women, who, because of their caring orientation, often get ‘stuck’ at Kohlberg’s stage three (mutual interpersonal expectations/good relations). This criticism, along with Shweder’s (1982), addresses perceived shortcomings in Kohlberg’s work but, while these criticisms are important to consider, Kohlberg’s developmental model still helps to provide an important intersection between moral authority and education and so should be considered.

These additional forms of authority to Weber’s original typology—professional, political, epistemic, and moral—help to show the complexity of the concept and highlight how values and knowledge can hold authority outside of individual persons or institutions. The intersections between Weber’s typology and these additional forms of authority are highlighted in Table 1 (p.75). This chart works to bring together each of these forms of authority into a coherent analytical tool which can then be used on a wider scale than either Weber’s original typology or any of the additional forms on their own. It is important to note that, while Table 1 shows both the connections and distinctions between authority types, any of these types can be found in a given authority relationship working concurrently. For example, the student-teacher authority relationship may be separately legitimated by legal-rational, epistemic, and moral means but, in practice, may be difficult to parse out from each other.

Each form of authority can trace a path back to Weber’s basic command/obey relationship, albeit perhaps in way that Weber’s analysis did not initially include. For example, epistemic and moral authority may sometimes be found in non-physical locations (i.e. knowledge or shared moral authority) while Weber found authority in people and institutions. In epistemic and moral authority, which rest in ideas and socially accepted norms, the ‘command’ is found in

the acceptance of the factual or moral authority of presented idea, even if the idea is ultimately criticized or rejected. Ultimately, “the bearer of authority receives willing obedience from the subjects of his (or its) authority as the bearer exercises his (or its) claim to help mediate the field of conduct or belief in which the subjects are in need” (Benne, 1970, p.393). For example, in a classroom discussion regarding the contemporary use of historical monuments that represent a harmful past, the view that it is morally repugnant to keep such monuments in public spaces is presented by the teacher. This moral idea may represent a common societal view—and perhaps the view of the teacher as well—but if a student chooses to reject this view, the moral authority of the idea does not dissipate. The teacher could still retain a legitimate position of moral authority despite this single idea being rejected by the student, and the moral idea itself still retains authority as well as it is a common societal view, but the authority is simply not viewed by the student as the *only* possible moral idea on the subject that can hold authority.

Table 1 - The Intersection of Weber's Authority Types with Epistemic, Political, and Moral Authority

	Epistemic Authority	Political Authority	Moral Authority
Legal-Rational Authority	These types of authority can be connected but are not necessarily so. They intersect more often than they connect as knowledge (epistemic authority) is often found in a variety of bureaucratic offices but is not necessary.	These two types are intimately connected, frequently found together in bureaucratic offices. The crucial distinction between them lies in the consent of the governed, which political authority requires while legal-rational only requires compliance	These types can overlap with each other but are not necessarily closely connected. Legal-rational is based on competence and accreditations which, unless the position demands moral judgments, will not also use moral authority.
Traditional Authority	Traditional and epistemic authority are not often connected as they are legitimated by conflicting means. Traditional authority rests on belief in a particular social hierarchy while the epistemic type requires knowledge and ideas. However, these forms can overlap.	As both types can include a variety of political offices (at least in that they both require some form of hierarchical offices), they can often be identified together. The distinction between the two lies in the consent of the governed, which political form requires but traditional does not.	These two authority types are often connected in form if not always in substance. Both require continuing acknowledgment and approval of the leader's choices. However, the collective legitimation of traditional authority may be stronger as the belief in traditional social structures is often stronger than shared morals (which can be challenged).
Charismatic Authority	While these types can intersect, charismatic and epistemic authority do not often connect. The former relies on the strength of the leader's personality and force of will. Whether or not any claims made by a charismatic authority are factually true seems to be incidental, although true epistemic claims may strengthen charismatic authority.	These forms of authority can often work together, especially with charismatic authority (which is often unstable) leading into the more stable form of political authority. They are often mutually supportive forms of authority, with each lending credence to the other. Charismatic authority could also be an unstable form of political authority.	Charismatic and moral authority can be mutually supportive forms of authority, although they can strongly exist separate from each other. It seems reasonable to suggest that charismatic authority is more greatly strengthened by moral authority than vice versa, as moral authority rests on shared moral judgments and does not necessarily need a strong personality to be legitimate.
Professional Authority*	These are intimately connected forms, with professional authority requiring a minimum level of epistemic authority (but epistemic authority does not require the professional type). A crucial distinction lies in the shared, consensual aims which professional authority requires and epistemic does not.	These types of authority can be connected but are not necessarily so. The similarity lies in the necessity of shared aims for both types, called consensual aims in professional authority and the consent of the governed in political authority.	These types of authority can be connected but are not necessarily so. The shared aims required in professional authority can have a moral aspect to them but this is not necessarily so. Moral authority can be strengthened by the professional type, as the authority relationship is then legitimated through multiple means and thus moral authority's more unstable foundation is strengthened.

*Professional authority, while not originally part of Weber's authority typology, has been included here as it was specifically added to Weber's typology by Pace & Hemmings (2006).

Authority, Coercion, and Power

A moment should be taken here to address the claims made by D.H. Wrong who, unlike the other theorists cited here, considers authority alongside coercion as a type of power. His work, while often overlooked (Macleod et al., 2012), is an important voice in contemporary philosophical analysis of authority and so critical consideration of his work is important. Analysis of Wrong's work will also be an example of using the authority framework created using the work of Weber (traditional, charismatic, and legal-bureaucratic) and the epistemic, political, and moral forms of authority.

In Wrong's view, it is necessary to consider authority alongside power and coercion—and they do have an important conceptual relationship—and by doing so seems to conflate the three concepts. As Goodman (2010) writes, “[b]ecause authority is associated with constraint and submission it is often confused with coercion” (p.231). Wrong's work on authority can be seen as exactly an example of this type of conceptual confusion.

In his book *Power: Its Forms, Bases, and Uses*, Wrong (2002) includes authority as a form of power alongside force, manipulation, and persuasion, writing that:

In authority, it is not the content of a communication but its source, that is, the perceived status, resources or personal attributes of the communicator, which induces compliance...Authority, in short, is *successful ordering or forbidding*, [maintaining that] ‘anyone who is regularly obeyed is an authority’. (p.33, emphasis in original)

Here, Wrong correctly identifies that it is the subordinate's perception of the superordinate that creates and maintains the role of authority and he also clearly recognizes that some authority

relationships are formed around a command/obedience structure. However, Wrong also seems to misidentify or overlook a number of key components of an authority relationship.

First, Wrong emphatically associates the continuing existence of an authority relationship with the overall success of obedience to given commands. While such a relationship cannot exist without some level of continued obedience to commands, this is not a sufficient condition for the continuance of an authority relationship. Weber (1947/1964), for example, describes authority as “the probability that certain commands (or all commands) from a given source will be obeyed to a given group of persons” (p.324) but Weber also gives no indication that when a command is not followed that all authority is stripped from the superordinate. Think of, for example, that moral authority does not require the superordinate to always be correct but that there is an allowance for some error while still retaining moral authority (this is examined in greater detail in the next chapter). It would be very difficult for anyone to remain an authority if the simple act of someone else’s not fully obeying a command had the potential to remove all authority from that person. Far from removing authority, when an individual in the subordinate position questions a given command and then potentially disobeys the command, it may actually strengthen the superordinate’s position because a chance is given to reaffirm the legitimacy of their authority. When a teacher, for example, is questioned by a student about the validity of a specific fact that they have given it could actually be an opportunity for the teacher to potentially strengthen their epistemic authority. Instead of blindly insisting on the validity of a possibly incorrect statement, the teacher could then question their own knowledge and use this as an opportunity to engage with the student to either confirm the statement or to find the correct one. This critical exercise could lead the student to question exactly why they recognize the teacher as an authority and, because the teacher has demonstrated the ability to grow in their own

knowledge and learn from errors, potentially recognize the strength of the teacher's epistemic authority. The teacher does not lose epistemic authority simply because they have erred or did not know but the recognition of such authority could be weakened if they insist on their position without reason (this is perhaps especially true of epistemic authority because of its close connection with knowledge and critical reasoning). As Burbules (1986) writes, "[q]uestioning authority does not mean rejecting authority: it means scrutinizing who is an authority, why they merit such a position, and what are the limits of that authority" (p.106).

Wrong's second conceptual shortcoming occurs when he fails to create a clear distinction between coercive power and authority, with the former existing when an order is forced upon the subordinate and the latter when an order is acknowledged as and obeyed as a responsibility. Wrong (2002) suggests that as long as the subjects believe a coercer, in a position of authority, has the capability or intention of using force to enforce a command then the parties have entered into an authority relationship (p.42). Acknowledgment of the threat of force by the subordinate is sufficient for Wrong's conception of authority. While a relationship between authority and coercion is rightly identified—as both concepts are associated with obedience, constraint, and submission—instead of being conceived of as two related but separate concepts, Wrong blurs the boundaries between them. For Wrong, there does not seem to be an important difference in whether or not the subordinate is forced to obey an order, which is emblematic of a coercive power relationship (or, for Wrong, a coercive authority relationship), or that the order is obeyed because of a non-coerced choice made by the subordinate, which is found in other types of authority relationships. In fact, Wrong promotes coercive authority as a form of power, describing this form as obtaining "compliance by threatening him [sic] with force" (Wrong, 2002, p.41). By ignoring the difference between authority and coercion, Wrong seems to ignore

the importance that non-coerced legitimation plays in an authority relationship. Coercive authority, in Wrong's view, can still be a form of authority because it is legitimated through the threat of force but this seems to ignore Weber's view of legitimation, a central feature of authority, and one that requires the subordinates to have at least a minimum level of voluntariness and willingness to obey (Weber, 1947/1964). While it may be possible that an authority relationship can be legitimated from coercive power, it is questionable that this legitimation would be voluntary on the part of the subordinate. This flaw that leads to the conflation of power and authority, which are interrelated but not the same concept (Burbules, 2005). As Goodman (2010) writes, "[w]here coercive power is employed, [legitimate] authority has failed" (p.231). Authority requires the acceptance of constraints for the superordinate while there is no similar necessity for a power relationship (Goodman, 2010, p.230).

Uncovering Authority in Education

Having established a definition of authority, utilizing a number of different typologies to include the many different complex versions of authority, it is now possible to analyze and uncover authority within different education models. To be as exact as possible, this analysis will refer to both Weber's authority typology and to the political, moral, and epistemic forms. The three education models were chosen because they are representative of distinct and important trends that still greatly influence education today. The works that will be examined include R.S. Peters and traditional education, John Dewey and his democratic Laboratory School, and Alexander Neill's Summerhill as an example of existential transformation pedagogy. This analysis will serve a dual purpose, both of which lead to an argument for the promotion of student-held authority as a positive idea within education. Its first purpose is to highlight the importance of authority in education, acknowledged or not. It is important for the acceptance of

student-held authority that the continuing overall prevalence and conceptions of authority—even in those models that deny needing authority at all—is understood. Authority is a foundational concept in education models across the political spectrum and, as will be shown, is compatible with ideas from each of the three educators. Secondly, this type of analysis will work to show how, if authority is conceived of as distinct from related concepts such as autonomy, agency, and power, the education models created by Peters, Dewey, and Neill can be strengthened.

R.S. Peters and Education as Initiation

“Education consists essentially in the initiation of members of a society into a form of life that is thought to be worth-while” (Peters, 1966b, p.1). This statement contains R.S. Peters’ central definition of education and thus, the foundation for a model of education based on his philosophy. Education as initiation is the combination of two main ideas, (1) that all involved are engaged in the intentional and voluntary transmission of knowledge, skills, and ideas which are valuable to the society in which both the teachers and learners live, and (2) that this process creates in the learner a desire to develop a desirable state of mind, by which Peters means a receptive and pliable mind (Peters, 1963; 1966a). For Peters, education does not need a school or specific institution but only requires willing teachers and learners. The distinction made between these roles lays in the experience gained. An individual accumulates first-hand experience through involvement with a large variety of circumstances and scenarios and it is the accumulation of experience over a greater amount of time that, in part, separates teachers and students (Peters, 1966).³³ Teachers are not held apart from learners or learning—they are in fact just further along in their unending initiation to their society—but are better positioned to help

³³ Peters also distinguishes teachers from students on institutional-rational grounds because teachers, when appointed to a specific position in schools, gain the function of “preserving and transmitting the ultimate values of a society” (Peters, 1966, p.161). This is similar to Weber and, while Peters is not referring to Weber, one can use Weber’s theory to interpret Peters’ move in this way.

those less-experienced to acquire the required knowledge. For Peters this is because the acquisition of knowledge is not just spinning out facts but is “the matter of rejecting or accepting assumptions on the basis of experience” (Peters, 1960, p.98).

Implicit to Peters’ idea of education as initiation is a very specific understanding of authority. Peters wrote extensively about authority within education because he viewed it as a crucial concept for understanding the educational process, as he did of initiation. Authority, for Peters, is “inseparably connected with a rule-governed form of life” (1966b, p.1) and thus presupposes some form of normative order that must be maintained. Authority is a form of societal conservation and is one of the ways that a given community and its particular social order can be perpetuated. It arises from the general acceptance of what is right and wrong. Essentially Peters describes authority and these rules as the formalization of conventions, with certain individuals being awarded the positions with privileges and responsibilities to make decisions over what follows said conventions (what is right and correct) and what does not (what is wrong or incorrect). The emergence of this rule-oriented conception of authority is important enough to quote Peters (1960) here in full, where he describes the emergence of authority:

For what human beings do can be described as ‘right’ or ‘correct; and things are done just because they are known to be right or correct. And this introduces the idea of ‘authority’; for as such standards are man-made [sic], alterable, and, to a certain extent, arbitrary, procedures are often needed for deciding what standards are right and correct, who is to originate them, who is to decide about their application to particular cases, and who is entitled to introduce changes. These procedures give certain people, like majors and magistrates, a right to give orders, to make decisions and pronouncements. Where we find such arrangements for

originators or umpires in the realm of rules we find authority. (p.14, emphasis in original)

Peters is describing a form of authority closely aligned with Weber's legal-bureaucratic authority. Both are associated strongly with laws and rules and the legitimation of those with authority is provided by the consensual acceptance of said laws. This conception of authority fits very well with Peters' conception of education as initiation because both are based on the acceptance and promulgation of a given, pre-existing social order. Teachers are able to hold authority, in part, because the social function of teachers is the "passing on of rules, information and skills in a community which are essential to the life and continuance of that community" (Peters, 1960, p.96). This passing on of information will help to build the community because the next generation of teachers will be initiated in the existing set of rules and knowledge and then, from that foundation, be able to maintain and increase it. In effect, Peters conceives of education as a contract, wherein learners, in their role as being introduced to society, are expected to accept the authority of teachers because of the learner's desire to be initiated into their society.

Peters' conception of authority is limited, however, because he associates it almost entirely with conventional rules, laws, and social control. Even his epistemic authority, which on the surface appears to be dissociated from control is in fact connected with control because he views knowledge as the conservation of social order (Peters, 1960). Teachers, for example, are to be put in authority because they have reached some level of agreed upon accreditation, legitimated both by the laws of their society which place them in authority and because they have reached a level of expertise on a given aspect of the culture of the community (Peters, 1966b, p.3). The main function of this authority figure, the transmission of societal values, is not done solely for the benefit of the learners—notwithstanding what benefits they accrue—but also

importantly to maintain a certain societal status quo. Again, Peters presents a form of contract between teachers, learners, and the society at large. The maintenance of a desired societal status quo is achieved through the use of different social controls, which in schools Peters associates with authority (Peters, 1960, 1966a, 1966b). While this may have the desired effect of promoting and maintaining communal values and knowledge, it may also have other, undesirable effects in education, most notably for this thesis precluding the authority of students.³⁴

It should be noted that while this thesis positions Peters' conception of education and authority as aligned with the transmission position in education that there are other important readings of Peters' work. Most notably, Peters could be interpreted as a liberal thinker who promotes a conception of education that is preferable to the 'traditional' education often found when Peters was writing in the 1960's. Specifically, his education as initiation could be interpreted as student-enabling as the students are being guided into different groups of knowledge. This is distinct from a more traditional education where the students are entirely passive in their own learning. However, because Peters' associates authority in education with social conservation, conventional rules and law the role that students play is limited and so this thesis has placed Peters within the transmission position of education. Having described now, in brief, Peters' education as initiation and his view of authority's role in education, one can now turn to a detailed view of Dewey's democratic education, representing the transaction position in education.

John Dewey's Laboratory School

Under the auspices of the University of Chicago, John Dewey created his Laboratory School as an experimental school, which aimed "to analyze theoretical educational theories and

³⁴ Such association of authority with social controls could also ossify injustice or epistemic narrowness.

to add to the sum of educational facts and principles” (Engel, 2008, p.118). The school’s intention was to test educational hypotheses and, from the results, influence the education system as a whole (Tanner, 1997). In a lecture titled “The University School”, Dewey claimed that one problem with education is that there is no place for countervailing hypotheses to be tested. “If it is advisable to have smaller classes, more teachers and a different working hypothesis than is at present the case in the public schools, there should be some institution to show this” (Dewey, 1896, p.417). The vision for this school was not simply a chance to model a particular vision of education but to research, experiment, and revise educational theory. Dewey expected the school to perform two main functions: “to test and evaluate his theories about schooling and teaching and, second, to appraise the findings of these studies and work out subject matters and teaching methods for a curriculum that did not focus on books and recitations but on children and activities” (Phillips, 2014). All of this was done with the ultimate goal of influencing and changing much of how education was generally conducted in Dewey’s context (Engel, 2008; Tanner, 1997).

The Laboratory School functioned as “an embryonic democratic society” because within the school there was a “commitment to democratic social values” (Engel, 2008, p.188) such as cooperation and social renewal. Dewey promoted a participatory vision of democracy in education, writing that because “education outside the school proceeds almost wholly through participation in the social or community life of the groups of which one is a member” (Dewey, 1986, p.418) so should education within a school. Students and teachers were considered to be partners in creating and maintaining a democratic community in the school, one that was to be a way of life for those involved. Dewey’s democratic conception of education was more than the incorporation of social values into schooling, it was a reflection of his belief that the Laboratory

School—and all other schools—was both a special community that looks after the needs of students and was intimately connected to the larger community (Dewey, 1916, p.22). From Dewey’s perspective, a school is not only a place for cognitive development or exposure to certain values but for the growth of the whole child, including moral and social growth. Dewey (1897a) writes:

The much and commonly lamented separation in the schools between intellectual and moral training, between acquiring information and growth of character, is simply one expression of the failure to conceive and construct the school as a social institution, having social life and value within itself. (p.14)

By constructing the Laboratory School as an experimental social institution, Dewey also provided an “organizing idea for a unified curriculum” (Tanner, 1997, p.23) in which children were to be the focus. At the Laboratory School “Dewey and his teachers developed [a curriculum which] had two dimensions: the children’s side (activities) and the teacher’s side (logically organized bodies of subject matter)” (Tanner, 1997, p.47). The two-dimensional curriculum at the Laboratory School began with consideration of the interests of the child, which included those skills and knowledge teachers deemed necessary for children to learn to participate in their own communities (both inside and outside of school), and from there carefully considered how to present the complex ideas found within a variety of topics in a meaningful way to the children. Growth as members of the school as social community was the aim for students and teachers and this informed the curricular choices that were made.

Curricular creation and authority.

While there is much of import that could be studied from the Laboratory School, most pertinent to differing conceptions of authority in education is (1), the heavy emphasis Dewey

places on the curriculum following the child's interests and (2) the democratic community he hoped to foster. To begin, Dewey believed that the curriculum, as it was being taught during his time, was too far removed from the child's own experience and the value of any information or knowledge being passed on was thus diminished (Dewey, 1902/1964, p.342). Subjects, having been distilled to their simplest formulae or facts, were removed from all context and the child was simply to progress along a single path set out by the teacher. Those who believe in this form of curriculum, Dewey writes, see the child as "the immature being who is to be matured" (p.342), whose narrow experiences are to be widened by others.³⁵ A separation is then created between child and curriculum, limiting the student role to one of docile acceptance.

Dewey also cautions against a curriculum in which the child alone determines the educational standard. The quality and quantity of learning is thus stunted because the teacher is removed entirely from the education equation (Dewey, 1902/1964, p.344). For Dewey, the teacher coordinates the child's interests and the desired social learning as part of the curriculum, playing an important role in Dewey's conception of education as they are engaged in "the formation of the proper social life" (Dewey, 1897b, p.80)

Dewey instead advocates for a curriculum in which both student and teacher have a role, with the aim not to a pre-specified outcome but to "know in what direction the present experience is moving" (Dewey, 1902/1964, p.345) and to build the curriculum around that experience. The two-dimensional curriculum developed in the Laboratory School, described above, has a the child's side and the teacher's side. For the child, the curriculum focused on their activity and experience. Any subjects to be studied must relate directly to the child's life and be

³⁵ Dewey's understanding of immaturity is quite different from contemporary definitions, as he views immaturity as "the primary condition of growth" (Dewey, 1916, p.41) and a positive quality for a child to have, implying that the child has the power or potential to grow and develop. This is very different from "[o]ur tendency to take immaturity as a mere lack" (p.42).

applicable to their current needs and experiences. Mathematical weights and measures, for instance, is best taught through cooking and sewing because these, in Dewey's mind, most closely reflected the child's actual activities at home (Tanner, 1997, p.48). The teacher's role was to consider how subject-matter can act as "representing a given stage and phase of the development of experience" (Dewey, 1902/1964, p.352). This would include consideration of: how the subject may become part of experience, what is in the child's present current experience that could be used, how his/her knowledge of the given subject could assist the child, and to determine the medium in which the child should be placed in order that the child's growth is properly directed. In short, the curriculum should be organized in a progression which recognizes the child's growth and abilities but uses the greater experiences of a teacher to help guide the student's progress so that they grow steadily and within their current capacities (Dewey, 1938).

Much of Dewey's work is focused on changing nature of the roles, relationships, and experiences of both students and teachers. Despite not using the term—except in a pejorative sense—Dewey appears to be advocating for a reallocation of authority within education. Students are to be given a much larger role in determining not only the subjects studied but also the sequence of subject material and the specific educational methods used; in Dewey's approach to education the unique interests and experiences of children become the curriculum. This is an important step towards student-held authority in education relative to Peters but one that is limited as the teacher still holds a disproportionate amount of authority in the student-teacher relationship when it comes to determining the curriculum.

It should be noted here that other places in Dewey's writings, such as his 1902 essay "The Child and the Curriculum", suggest a stronger commitment to student-centredness than is found in this thesis. This discrepancy is because of a distinction made between Dewey's

historical work in the Laboratory School and his philosophical work, especially his 1916 treatise *Democracy and Education*. Within his Laboratory School Dewey worked to promote a conception of education that was student-centred and create, in his view, a necessary change to the entire education system. Dewey's work was important for, in part, enlarging the role of the student in schools and this change still resonates with many teachers and academics in contemporary education. However, the success of Dewey's work was limited philosophically because of his misconception of authority as coercive power (see Dewey, 1938) and so it is argued in this thesis that the effectiveness of Dewey's student-centred education system is limited.

As Dewey makes clear, while student interest informs the curriculum it is the teacher who translates the student's interests and abilities into curriculum. This is the teacher's authoritative act, an example of an individual using legitimate epistemic authority.³⁶ By placing the translation of interest into curriculum solely within the teacher's purview, the student role becomes limited. While Dewey envisioned a democratic education system that "gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control" (Dewey, 1916, p.99) the students do not have the same ability affect change within their own education. Teachers, for Dewey, need to be concerned with how a curriculum may become part of an experience for the students. What should concern a teacher is:

What there is in the child's present that is usable with reference to it; how such elements are to be used; how his [sic] own knowledge of the subject-matter may assist in interpreting the child's needs and doings, and determine the

³⁶ Referring back to the previous typological analysis of epistemic authority (p.6-7), a teacher's epistemic authority in Dewey's conception of education seems to be legitimated by their greater experience, knowledge, and their important pedagogical role in a student's education.

medium in which the child should be placed in order that his [sic] growth may be properly directed. (Dewey, 1902/1964, p.352)

In effect, Dewey sets up a curriculum that both teacher and student can impact but in very different ways. Students can determine some of the direction of the curriculum through their own experiences but these changes are directed by the teacher so that growth is in the proper direction. To put it a different way, the teacher retains the epistemic and political authority to create curriculum—albeit based on an interpretation of the student's needs and experiences—while the possibilities a student has to determine curriculum is under the authority of the teacher.

While Dewey did not put it in these terms, an analysis of this type can show how easily authority in education between students and teachers can be, in some ways, illusory. Students in Dewey's Laboratory School appear to have been given some authority over their own education because their experiences, in part, inform the curriculum but this authority is still under the greater epistemic authority of the teachers. It is part of the teacher's role to translate experience into action within the Laboratory School and so it is the teachers who are placed into an authority position with regards to determining the curriculum within Dewey's educational model. This does not discredit the work that was done or tarnish any lessons one can take from Dewey but it does suggest that Dewey's work is hampered by the lack of consideration of authority. In this way it is evident that Dewey does not overcome the problem of manipulation that both Plato, with the Noble Lie in *The Republic*, and Rousseau, with the tutor in *Emile*, wrestled with before him, which is significant as Dewey refers to both Plato and Rousseau as points of departure in *Democracy and Education* (Dewey, 1916; Plato, 380 BC/1943; Rousseau, 1762/1979).

Democratic education and authority.

Well before the Laboratory School, Dewey wanted education to more closely reflect the interests and needs of the student and, in general, saw too much educational stimulus, social control, and discipline in the hands of the teachers. The teacher should not be the only individual whose opinion affects education but should be but one part of the overall process, albeit a guiding force. As Dewey (1897b) writes in *My Pedagogic Creed*, a teacher's role is to be the "member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences" (p.24). These selections are to reflect closely the individual child's needs and should move towards "common lines, in a common spirit, and with reference to common aims" (Dewey, 1915, p.39). In effect, Dewey wants to move the educational centre of gravity from outside the child to placing the child at the centre (Dewey, 1902/1964). The answer was to introduce democratic values and aims to education that moved away from the teacher-centric system that existed during Dewey's time and, arguably, still exists in much of education today.

Importantly, Dewey promotes social control coming from the community itself (as opposed to from an individual) as fundamental to democratic education. He notes that children, independent of adult interference, will create complex social organizations in games and sport, participating in a form of communal governance (Dewey, 1915, p.39). Children, involved in a group that has the common aim of playing a particular game, create rules and, as importantly, discipline those who do not follow them. As Piaget (1932) finds in the opening of his book *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, "[c]hildren's games constitute the most admirable social institutions" (p.1) and it is through the development of their own rules towards a common aim that children begin to develop a sense of morality and social cohesion. Dewey, following the

same path and anticipating Piaget, argues that if students have a common aim in schools they will be able to create the same type of social and moral organization in the classroom as they do in games (Dewey, 1915; 1938). Within these games there is no one individual who alone creates an atmosphere of social discipline but it is the “moving spirit of the whole group” (Dewey, 1938, p.58) that establishes order. Dewey is describing a situation wherein the authority to lead is given to all actors involved based on the simple fact that they are a member of the community. In this system, the teacher does not lose authority but is just no longer the only individual in the classroom who can act as superordinate.

In effect, Dewey’s work locates political and moral authority in the classroom within all students and teachers because of the emphasis on discipline coming solely from the community. However, students and teachers are not considered equal within Dewey’s model, instead inhabiting very different roles. The teacher is still to play a larger role in promoting discipline, as a teacher is “a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth” (Dewey, 1897b, p.32)³⁸. A teacher serves students in this way by creating opportunities for learning and growth, thereby hopefully stirring up interest in a child and thus discipline. “Interest and discipline,” writes Dewey (1916), “are correlative aspects of activity having an aim” (p.137) and, in effect, discipline is the “development of power of continuous attention” (Dewey, 1916, p.137). Part of the teacher’s role then is to create the opportunities for students, both individually and as a community, to build interest and thus develop self- and communal-discipline.

³⁸ This is an important departure between the education models of Dewey and Peters. While in Peters’ traditional model knowledge comes from the teacher, who acts as a preserver and transmitter of information, in Dewey’s model knowledge comes from the child’s environment and community, with the teacher acting as a facilitator of learning.

An important caveat here is that teachers will only intervene in the social organization as a “representative and agent of the interests of the group as a whole” (Dewey, 1938, p.59). For Dewey, it is a failure of the social community when the teacher is forced to act as a strict force of authority in an individual way³⁹ (Dewey, 1938, p.60). The role of the student is certainly enlarged within Dewey’s education model but, similar to their role in curriculum development above, there are limits on the authority that they hold. The most important is found within the student-teacher relationship, which is supposed to be more democratic in nature than found in Peters’ traditional education but this is problematized *because* of the intrinsic intimacy Dewey finds between the community of the classroom and democracy. Democracy, writes Dewey, is “primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experiences” (Dewey, 1916, p.87). Thus, the community experience in Dewey’s Laboratory School classroom is inherently democratic in nature and by definition must remain so. As a representative agent of the democratic group, the teacher must ensure that the decisions made by both themselves and by the community are democratic in nature. When this occurs, the teacher is actually acting as the only authority, despite of any possible intentions to represent the democratic, communal authority of the classroom. Student-held authority, as found in Dewey’s work, is thus limited by the strictly adhered to democratic nature of the classroom to informing teacher-held authority at best and, at worst, is illusory.

³⁹ Authority, as Dewey refers to it in *Experience and Education*, appears to mean the use of coercive power in order to gain the outcomes desired only by the teacher. This is not authority as other scholars have defined it, although it does fit into Wrong’s (2002) definition of coercive authority, and more closely aligns with definitions of coercion and force (Burbules, 1986; 2005; Goodman, 2010; Pace & Hemmings, 2006).

‘Freedom from’ at Summerhill

A different attempt to create a democratic school to Dewey’s progressive democratic education is the free school Summerhill, created by Alexander Neill. Summerhill began, in part, as a reaction against prevailing attitudes in the 1920’s that any institution of education required obedience and tacit acceptance of imbalanced power relationships.⁴⁰ This view held that students were not to be given freedom to pursue their own interests but instead, to submit to the wills of others, such as teachers and parents because their greater experience and position legitimated a more authoritative position. This form of relationship in schools created, in Neill’s words, the ‘unfree child’; one who is conditioned through a variety of life experiences to accept his or her position as subordinate, to not “question anything—just obey” (Neill, 1962, p.102). An unfree education “results in life that cannot be lived fully” (p.100) because the concern of the teacher in that system is only with educating “the head”—focusing on facts, figures, and discipline (in this context, social conditioning)—and thus the emotional and physical needs of the children are ignored. The view that Neill propounds is based on the child being free from external influences that create restrictions on one’s life, such as religion, politics or class consciousness (p.11). Neill associates freedom with self-regulation⁴¹, which he writes to mean “the right of a baby to live freely, without outside authority in things psychic and somatic” (p.105).⁴²

⁴⁰ There are still Summerhill schools running today, including the original one in England, and Summerhill’s philosophical position is largely unchanged after almost a century. As it did during its inception the school still faces hostile forces. The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in the UK has, as recently as 1999, attempted to close the school and though the school continues to operate, its most recent overall effectiveness rating from Ofsted is only “requires improvement” (Ofsted, 2018; Stanford, 2008)

⁴¹ Self-regulation is a term which has a significant and specific psychological meaning, to which Neill does not appear to be referring. When using this term, Neill seems to define self-regulation as a form of freedom, someone who is free to act as they wish. A fully self-regulated child in the Neillean sense is one who is not “moulded, conditioned, disciplined, repressed” (Neill, 1960, p/95) but one who is completely free.

⁴² It should be noted here that when Neill refers to authority, it is meant as a form of coercion. In this conception, authority figures are those who will tell an individual what to do and make sure that it gets done, regardless of whether this aligns with the interests of those in the subordinate position.

A moment should be taken here to more fully understand how Neill views freedom because Neill seems to go to great lengths to ensure that his definition of freedom and self-regulation is not confused with an unlimited licence to act. Summerhill generally embodies a vision of negative freedom (except for the General School Meetings, which are underwritten by positive freedom), defined as when individuals are left free from the outside influences of others and “not prevented from doing something by another person” (Dworkin, 2001, p.723). Within this negative space, students are encouraged to learn the positive freedom of *amour de soi* (love of self), attending to one’s own needs in order to discover one’s existential authenticity. To do so, students at Summerhill are generally able to do what they like, free from coercive forces, but this is not the same licence as being able to do anything that they like. In fact, often the students are “forced to be free” (Rousseau, 1762/2003, p.11) by the General School Meetings as their participation is required. Neill’s conception of freedom does include restraints, seemingly preceding a Rawlsian-type view of liberalism that students can act as they will “as long as he is not trespassing on the freedom of others” (Neill, 1962, p.154). Put into the language of what rights a student has, Neill argues that his ideas of freedom are a middle road which aims towards equity between children and adults, not just complete freedom for children⁴³, writing:

It is this distinction between freedom and licence that many parents cannot grasp. In the disciplined home, the children have *no* rights. In the spoiled home, they have *all* the rights. The proper home is one in which children and adults have equal rights. And the same applies to school. (p.107, emphasis in original)

⁴³ Despite the contrary views Neill encounters from many parents at his school, he recognizes that there has never been a completely free, self-regulated child because the influence of parents, teachers, and society is always present (p.104)

Here Neill is trying to create a balance between the rights of the individuals and that of the larger community: each person at Summerhill, whether teacher or student, has the same rights as any other person. However, this is not the same as each individual having the right to do anything, instead placing the same limits and freedoms on each person.

Because of the equality between students and teachers, Summerhill is a democratically run school. This is different from Dewey's Laboratory School, which was based on and influenced by democratic ideas but was still ultimately managed solely by the teachers and administration.⁴⁴ Summerhill, in contrast, is managed through the General School Meetings, a democratically run meeting in which the school rules and disciplinary action is decided upon. A chairperson is voted on to help navigate the meeting but has very little power to influence discussion because each student and teacher is given equal opportunity to discuss the matters at hand. The Meetings, an example of positive freedom at Summerhill, are an attempt to remove external authority and disperse it equally throughout the school population, legitimating each student with some amount of political authority. Neill writes "I believe that to impose anything by authority is wrong. The child should not do anything until he comes to the opinion—his own opinion—that it should be done" (p.114).

The General School Meetings, and the management of almost the entire school, is heavily influenced—or at least appears to be—by Rousseau's concept of General Will. A central concept to Rousseau's treatise *The Social Contract*, and his political philosophy as a whole, the General Will is a form of legitimate political order "where the people are both rulers and subjects at the same time" (Bertram, 2012, p.403). This is clearly reflected in the governing

⁴⁴ Refer to p.83-91 for a more detailed discussion on the Laboratory School.

structures of Summerhill, where teachers and students participate in the creation of laws and then are also subject to them. Furthermore, two core concepts that underwrite the General Will, the positive freedom found in the autonomy of the individual and the general welfare of the community (Thompson, 2017), can also be found throughout Summerhill. “[T]he general will can be seen to manifest itself once the fullness of individual autonomy is aligned with the concern for the general welfare and not welfare of particular persons or interests” (Thompson, 2017, p.276). The General School Meetings are an example of the General Will and of positive freedom, where the overall command is to act freely according to the law one authors for oneself and others (Rousseau, 1762/2003, p.90). A further connection to the General Will is found in how Summerhill also tries to navigate the tension found in the General Will between individual diversity of needs, thoughts, and opinion and the overall well-being of the whole institution.

A final connection of interest between Summerhill and the General Will is found in the relationship between freedom and authority. In Book 1, chapter 7 of *The Social Contract*, Rousseau writes that “[i]n order that the social compact may not be an empty formula... whoever refuses to obey the General Will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body” (Rousseau, 1762/2003, p.11). In effect, individuals who are to be governed by the General Will shall be “forced to be free” (p.11). For Rousseau, it appears that the legitimate authority of the General Will is a form of protection against personal dependence on others, the problem of *amour propre*,—thus promoting at least some personal independence—and a form of subordination to the needs of the whole community. Authority, at least as it held and legitimated through the General Will, is thus a way of promoting freedom for individuals, albeit a freedom which is enabled by the General Will and *amour de soi*. Rousseau’s attempt to reconcile authority and freedom is complicated and, by forcing individuals to be free with negative freedom, perhaps

even paradoxical. In Summerhill, as will be shown, the same tension between authority and freedom arises in practice—even if it is ignored by Neill in theory—with the result that authority is deliberately overlooked in favour of promoting freedom.

Summerhill and authority.

Despite Neill's assertion that "in the main, Summerhill runs along without any authority or any obedience" (p.154), the school is filled with examples of authority. It is discounted by Neill however, because of how he conceives of authority; he conflates authority with power, coercion, and force, viewing authority as a restriction on freedom and, according to Neill, an individual cannot experience freedom in action or thought when under the thumb of external forces: "You cannot have freedom unless children feel completely free to govern their own social life. When there is a boss, there is no real freedom" (p.52). Neill is referring here implicitly to negative freedom and views authority as the opposing force to that freedom. This view represents a split from Rousseau, who finds authority within the General Will in *On the Social Contract*, as when Neill uses the word 'authority' explicitly, he neglects the authority of a group, such as found at the General School Meetings⁴⁵ and even in his own school identifies only the authority of individuals. By doing so, the political, moral, and epistemic forms of authority that underwrite Summerhill's entire governing structure are ignored. In practice however, Summerhill runs in part under the legitimate authority of the General Will and uses the democratic idea of the citizens, teachers and students in this case, being both rulers and subjects to promote individual freedom.

⁴⁵ Neill's overlooking of the authority of a group is more of a conceptual error than one found in practice at Summerhill. The General Meetings which take place are a definite example of collective authority at Summerhill but Neill does not seem to recognize that these Meetings in fact represent a distinct use of authority. In his writing on authority he ignores this possibility and instead only focuses on a limited form of coercion as authority.

As authority in Summerhill is hastily considered the antithesis of freedom, it is very clear why Neill positioned Summerhill as a school without authority but this hastiness, however, results in a fundamental misunderstanding of authority and its role in education. Authority is not necessarily attached to only one figure, nor are those who are in a position of authority allowed to do as they please or command others to do things not in their own interest. To keep an authoritative command from becoming an abuse of power, the concerns of the subordinates must be taken into account. Neill associates authority with the arbitrary exercise of power and sees all forms of authority over others an individual can hold as oppressive to the development and growth of a child.

However, he does support authority when it is dispersed amongst the schools' population and in students' rights to make existential choices, which is most clearly seen in the democratically run General School Meetings. Democratic systems in which each individual has a voice and vote in all decisions that are made, unlike what Neill believes, do not remove authority from the equation. Instead, the political authority is moved from a single individual to being held by the group, legitimated by each individual's beliefs in the groups system, an application of Rousseau's General Will. In an ideal form, every single teacher and student at Summerhill has the same claim to hold political authority and has the same rights to promote or fight against any given proposal, exercising authority in their own existential choices. Summerhill, while holding to this idyllic form of self-government, does not reach this state; this is acknowledged by Neill. He connects a growth in maturity with the necessary level of rationality needed to participate in self-government, effectively claiming that there is a certain level of maturity needed to hold political authority and, as a result, the older students and teachers tend to hold a greater amount of authority within the General School Meetings than the

younger children. This is not to say that, theoretically, the younger children do not have the same claim to equal authority but, as they are not at the same level of rationality, there appears to be a direct effect on the kind of authority they can hold and exercise at Summerhill.

To put this in Weberian terms, the General School Meetings are an example of a collective, legitimate legal-bureaucratic authority and, according to Weber's definition, there are certain levels of accreditation, skills, and knowledge needed to hold it. However, the legitimation of collective authority is distinct from that of individuals and so the accreditation needed is distinct as well. The collective authority wielded at the General School Meeting is legitimated through the accreditation of the school itself and as a combination of the students' and teachers' roles. It should be noted that all students and teachers at Summerhill have an equal right to claim part of such collective authority but not all will have the same ability to articulate the authority they hold. It is also possible that Weber's charismatic authority exists within the Summerhill model, with students and teachers able to hold a second legitimate form of authority because of the force of their personality. Over all of this however, is the political authority of the General Will that, as Rousseau argued, is greater than the sum of its parts. Within the General School Meetings, even as individuals hold varying forms of authority they are still beholden to the legitimate authority of the whole community.

In addition to a form of democratic political authority, Summerhill is underwritten by a form of moral authority, found within the particular social conventions of Summerhill. Similar to the treatment of political authority above, Neill's advocacy for equity of rights between student and teachers does not eliminate moral authority but instead places it among all members of the

school. There is no lone individual who holds all the authority to say what is right and wrong⁴⁶ but this does not mean that each person can do everything that they wish. Recall Neill's distinction between freedom and license, essentially saying that freedom can be restricted as long as it applies to and is agreed upon by all involved actors informs the type of moral authority which is found in Summerhill. The group can still decide what is morally correct because that position has been legitimated through the collective will of all its members. Neill alludes to this when writing about discipline and obedience, though he does not use the term 'moral authority'. Neill (1962) writes "[i]n Summerhill, when a child of seven makes himself a social nuisance, the whole community expresses its disapproval. Since social approval is something that everyone desires, the child learns to behave well" (p.159). The language used here is that of approval or disapproval of certain actions, or that of passing judgment between what is acceptable and what is not. This example shows how the community at Summerhill is able to hold a legitimate form of moral authority and one that is known to be legitimate because of the change of actions by the child in question.

It becomes increasingly apparent that even free schools such as Summerhill are founded on different forms of authority and that this is also necessary for the social cohesion of the school. The positive freedom found at Summerhill, that individuals are "forced to be free", is possible in part because of the authority of the General Will. The Summerhill model does not show what education would look like without any kind of authority or obedience because some

⁴⁶ At Summerhill there actually is an individual who holds such authority and it is Neill himself, who holds a position analogous to a monarch underwriting a democracy. While the students at Summerhill are mostly removed from the rest of society, the school is still under the British governmental authority and so most follow certain rules, such as those involving gender-split dormitories or sexual relationships (Burwash & Miller, 1967). Neill must enforce these policies, regardless of the decisions of the General School Meetings This is a dilemma found within the Summerhill model because in order to continue as an educational model exhorting a different conception of freedom in schooling it must, at least in part and at some points, fit within the government-defined version of education.

of central ideas of the school, such as the General School Meetings, would not function without authority. The model does highlight however, one version of what education could look like when an attempt is made to locate authority evenly amongst the community.

Moving to Student-Held Authority

Analysis of these three educational models begins to show a pattern within schooling. Students do not, and in the case of Peters' traditional education cannot, hold authority over their own education. Dewey's democratic model is centred on the student and their interests but, in the end, the teacher still holds the ultimate authority to make decisions the curriculum and its implementation and, more importantly, must side with the democratic ideals in the classroom. Even Summerhill, which holds self-regulation and equality between students and teachers very dearly, does not recognize how individual students can hold authority despite the forms of authority that students hold in practice at the school, such as how it is the law they author for themselves that forces them to be free. Instead, Summerhill misconceives authority as a limited force of power and then denies the necessity of authority and thus the possibility of student-held authority, at all within schools. Then, at the same time, it promotes existentialism and the General Will, both of which are based on, in part, a complex conception of authority. While Neill views authority in a limited way as an oppressive force—one which limits individual and collective freedom—in practice at Summerhill authority is actually a desirable concept (for example, the collective authority of the General School Meetings). When authority is centred on recognition and legitimation it is possible for authority to actually enable freedom. With this in mind, the question that must be asked is can student-held authority exist within schools today and, if so, should it? This is the question that will be asked in the final chapter, with the

argument that student-held authority is not only possible but can provide a positive direction for both students and teachers.

CHAPTER 4

What Happens when “We” Remember Authority?

Having completed a thorough conceptual examination of agency, autonomy, and authority in education—looking into what happens when authority is forgotten, overlooked, or conflated with other concepts—the question remains of what happens when “we,” referring here to not just those explicitly involved in education but also to society at large, remember authority. This is an important question and one whose answer is complex, possibly even challenging and creating a need for change within the current educational structures. Before it is possible to answer this question, it seems important to briefly restate how this question emerged in the first place.

This examination into authority began by asking what happens to that concept when it is under-theorized in education. This is a dramatic statement—it hardly seems possible that authority has been, or could be, wholly forgotten—but although there has been some thorough and rigorous research into authority’s role in education, it continues to be a conceptual blind spot for many theorists, researchers, and practitioners (Pace and Hemming, 2006). Of the myriad of problems that rear up when authority is actually considered, one of the most important is conceptual confusion about the features and characteristics of authority. This problem is especially pressing when considering the role of students in education. As was explored in Chapter 2, the conceptual confusion about authority can result in a narrowing of the student role. Typically, students can be recognized as capable of some level of autonomy and agency but rarely as legitimate sources of authority in their own right. This creates a number of problems within the education system, including teachers, students and others (1) perceiving when students act with authority as agentic and/or autonomous actions, (2) perpetuating misunderstandings

surrounding authority's important role in education and, (3) overlooking the mutually supportive connections between agency, autonomy, and authority. By thoroughly defining agency and autonomy, including outlining some of the connections these concepts have with authority, it becomes possible to address these problems as the distinctions between the three concepts become clearer, allowing each concept and its role in education to be better understood.

Chapter 3 was devoted to clarifying 'the what' of authority, beginning with developing a complex and nuanced definition of authority. This included examining different typologies, which attempted to differentiate between forms of authority. From this a broad distinction between epistemic, political, and moral authority was outlined. Important distinctions were also made between authority and related concepts, including power and discipline. From this analysis, the multi-dimensionality of authority and authority relationships was discussed. The analysis then moved to finding examples of authority within three contrasting models of education—R.S. Peters' traditional education, John Dewey's progressive education, and A.S. Neill's free schooling Summerhill model—with a two-part goal. The first was to highlight the importance and prevalence of authority in education and the second was to critique any models of authority found. A pattern emerged of either overlooking, ignoring, or severely limiting actual student-held authority, in part because of a limited understanding of authority itself.

All of this leads to the question that started this chapter, what happens when "we" remember authority? Part of the answer must be a change in the student role, both as perceived by the student, teacher, and others within the education system and in the actual recognition and wielding of student-held authority. The student role will be enlarged if we accept that legitimate student-held authority exists and that this existence must be recognized. The rest of this chapter explores this change in the student role, beginning with the argument that there is a strong

foundation for the legitimation of the epistemic, political, and moral authority of students. Once the claim that student-held authority can be legitimated within education is clearly laid out, there is a brief look at British Columbia's 21st century curriculum with the intent of showing how there is space for student-held authority already exists in contemporary education models. It will be shown, however, that this space is very limited by its still fairly traditional view of the roles of students and teachers in contemporary school and curricular frameworks. This chapter ends by bringing in the critical works of Freire, Apple, and Giroux, who—in very different ways—argued for an emancipated and more authoritative student role. Student-held authority fits into all of their projects and its important role in education is highlighted and strengthened.

Legitimation of Epistemic, Political, and Moral Authority of Students

Similar to the authority granted to teachers, student-held authority can be legitimated through many different means and within many different contexts. By closely examining epistemic, political, and moral authority within education, I will argue that authority can be legitimately held by students and that this authority has a foundation which is as strong—even if slightly different—than that held by teachers. Furthermore, the complexities inherent to an authority relationship will be brought out as different forms of authority can be held at the same time, legitimated through different means, within a single relationship.

Legitimizing the Epistemic Authority of Students

Epistemic authority, as defined in Chapter 3⁴⁷, is a form of authority that is vested in knowledge itself. In *Authority, Responsibility, and Education*, Peters (1960) describes a figure devoted to pursuing and building knowledge, such as a scientist, as one who does not recognize the authority of a particular person but only the authority of knowledge. Peters (1960) writes,

⁴⁷ See p.68-69 in Chapter 3 for the earlier treatment of epistemic authority.

“we do not accept them [the results] just because they are *his* beliefs, or because he claims some kind of revelation or authority for them... We must listen to the argument and ignore the man [sic]” (p.27). When an individual speaks as an authority in the scientific realm, they are not speaking on any form of personal authority but as one who is empowered by their intimate knowledge of a particular subject.⁴⁸ Epistemic authorities still provide a form of judgment based on their particular knowledge set as science is not black and white, often full of complex and subtle ideas. This form of authority can be held by any person, so long as they have a particularly strong knowledge about the subject on which they are speaking or writing. Teachers will certainly have a legitimate claim to be recognized as epistemic authorities and students, as they build their own knowledge, will also have a progressively similar claim.

Before continuing, a distinction should be made between epistemic authority based on knowledge of a subject and knowledge on how to teach a subject. While both are based on having obtained a certain amount of proficiency and depth of understanding they are substantially different. The “knowledge needed to make subject matter accessible to students” (Kleickmann et al., 2012, p.91) is called pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and is comprised of two core facets of knowledge: “knowledge of students’ subject-specific conceptions and misconceptions as well as knowledge of subject-specific teaching strategies and representations” (p.91; see also Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008; Park & Oliver, 2008). PCK is unique from general content knowledge and so helps form the foundation for what could be called pedagogical authority, a form of epistemic authority to which teachers have a strong claim (Harjunen, 2011). An argument will not be made for students to be recognized as pedagogical authorities but only

⁴⁸ While this is Peters’ (1960) description of the authority of scientists it should be noted that it is unlikely that this type of authority will always exist in complete isolation and may be combined with the forms of personal authority, such as charismatic authority, that Peters does not explore.

for a form of epistemic authority that is based on knowledge and experience with a particular subject.

Experience as knowledge.

Experience is the condition when “an activity is continued *into* the undergoing of consequences, when the change made by action is reflected back into a change made in us” (Dewey, 1916, p.139)⁴⁹. It is both active, when an action is attempted by the individual, and passive, when the consequences of that action are received. This combination results in an experience that, as Dewey writes, is “loaded with significance” (p.139) and the individual learns something. What is learned may not be a particularly important subject but nonetheless, the experience still creates a learning opportunity for the individual. When such an experience is explicitly reflected on, this learning opportunity becomes one for thinking and knowledge-building. Thinking, writes Dewey, “is the intentional endeavor [sic] to discover specific connections between something which we do and the consequences which result, so that the two become continuous” (p.145). Thinking thus makes it possible for one’s experiences to gain deeper meaning, to focus one’s experiences towards a particular aim or end in view (p.146). In this way, the combination of thinking and experience also build knowledge.

Dewey uses the example of a child learning—and thus possessing that knowledge—of what happens when one sticks a finger into the flame of a candle. The action by itself is not an experience, it is simply a child sticking a finger into a flame. When this action is connected through intentional thinking to the pain undergone as a consequence, then it becomes an

⁴⁹ Despite the limitations of Dewey’s educational model noted in the previous chapter, it would be an error to dismiss his entire progressive educational philosophy. Dewey’s lack of writing on authority is a deficit but his extensive work on knowledge and experience is very important to examine and so is included here.

experience. Through this experience, the child then learns that “the sticking of the finger into flame *means* a burn” (Dewey, 1916, p.140) and thus builds their knowledge about fire.

While this example may seem simple—after all, the knowledge that a flame can burn skin seems too basic to confer special epistemic authority on any individual—it is analogous to more complex forms of learning which both students and teachers will go through. A student, for example, may be participating in a particular science experiment where they are measuring the results of adding certain chemical compounds together. Through intentional thinking, the student connects the action of adding different compounds together to the results and thus engages in an experience that builds knowledge, for example, knowledge of neutralizing an acid using an alkaline compound.

It should be noted that experiences which result in gaining knowledge are not limited to school activities and that this can result in the students gaining knowledge which the teacher may not have (Dewey, 1916; Goodman, 2010). In fact, as building experience is an individual form of growth, this can and should be expected by educators.

There are several implications for student-held epistemic authority that comes from an understanding of experience as knowledge and knowledge-building, which are important but often overlooked locations which can grant epistemic authority. First, a student’s individual experiences build a unique base of knowledge and understanding from which the student can be recognized as an authority by peers and teachers. There is no requirement for knowledge to be unique to a particular individual to legitimate epistemic authority but the individuality of experience does create space for recognition of authority. As each individual gains knowledge, they grow in the possibility of being recognized as holding epistemic authority regardless of whether someone else, such as the teacher or another student, has already learned said

knowledge. In other words, there is not a limited amount of portions of epistemic authority. Second, there must be an understanding of the educational context in which students can hold epistemic authority. Students are, by definition, learners, and as such are initiated into the existing body of knowledge through their schooling (Peters, 1963). As students learn new knowledge, they are then capable of being recognized as holding a form of epistemic authority, even if this is limited by their own limits of knowledge. Put differently, a learner can still be recognized as capable of holding authority even if another individual knows more about the given subject. The teacher's presence does not discredit the possibility of student-held epistemic authority, even though they presumably know more about the subject they are teaching. For example, in a high school concert band the teacher can maintain legitimate epistemic authority based on their content knowledge about music and, concurrently, a student can maintain legitimate epistemic authority based on their content knowledge about the trombone. Both claims to authority can exist in the classroom simultaneously and it is possible for the authority relationship described here to be co-recognized by both teacher and student. Epistemic authority, while grounded in experience and knowledge, is not just for those who are the most knowledgeable experts in a subject, although they certainly are capable of such authority. However, this is not to say that the epistemic authority of a student is identical to that of a teacher. A student can be recognized as an authority within a certain context but still recognize the authority of teacher to help guide and further provide experiences to build more knowledge. As Dewey (1938) writes "[t]he greater maturity of experience which should belong to the adult as educated puts him in a position to evaluate each experience of the young in a way in which the one having the less mature experience cannot do" (p.31-32). In short, both student and teacher

possess the capability of holding epistemic authority but do so in different ways and to pursue different ends.

Legitimizing the Political Authority of Students

A political authority relationship is one that is found between political offices or between a political office and its constituents. This is a very similar definition to Weber's legal-bureaucratic authority, as both also include positions of authority legitimated by political, public, and corporate structures (Weber, 1922/1958, p.2). The political structures of education, for example, create positions of authority for a wide variety of persons, ranging from government employees to school district superintendents to teachers. Each of these positions share a number of legitimating factors that help create and define their position of authority. Within British Columbia, and across Canada, accreditation of some kind from universities and government are required for almost all positions of authority within the education system. Teachers within British Columbia, for example, require the following: a BC grade 12 diploma or equivalent, four years/120 credits at a post-secondary institution that meet the academic requirements set forth by the British Columbia Teacher Regulation Branch, a complete teacher education program, and language proficiency in English (BC Ministry of Education, 2018d). Once these requirements have been met, teachers are then recognized by the state and thus can hold legitimate political authority. The requirements in the education system differ from position to position and from province to province, but the basic requirement of legitimation from a political entity is the same.

This narrow means of political recognition poses a problem for elementary and secondary students. Acquiring political authority through accreditation is not generally available to

students.⁵⁰ The student role is substantially different from the teacher's, as is the politically sanctioned path to become each⁵¹. As such, an alternative means of legitimating a student's capability for political authority is needed. This can be found in the recognition of citizenship of students.

Janusz Korczak, the Children's Republic and democratic education.

One of the pioneers of recognizing children's inherent rights as individual persons and as citizens was a Polish doctor, writer, educator and, later in life, creator of the orphanage known as The Children's Republic, named Janusz Korczak (b.1878, d.1942) (Lifton, 1988). Korczak has been remembered for many things, including writing the popular children's book *King Matt the First* and a number of books on children development and education, but the most enduring part of his legacy was the creation of The Children's Republic. This orphanage opened in October, 1910 and was the introduction of progressive orphanages to Warsaw, Poland (Lifton, 1988, p.61). The Republic was an institution that centred every aspect of life around the child and involved children in every part of its operation. Engel (2008) writes:

The Children's Republic was developed as a cooperative, self-governing environment where children actively participated in the Court of Peers (guided by a Code of Peers), the Judicial Board, and the Children's Parliament.

Together with Korczak, the children wrote and agreed on the rules governing the internal life of the Children's Republic. (p.119)

⁵⁰ In the current British Columbia public education system, this includes Kindergarten to Gr.12. The accreditation which students do receive upon graduation, a high school diploma or equivalent, is a form of political recognition but one which does not confer much change in political status and certainly does not confer an equitable form of political authority, which a teacher's accreditation does.

⁵¹ The path to become a teacher in British Columbia, described above, is very different from the path to become a student. To become a student, generally, all that is required is registration at a school or to register as a home-school student.

This meant that the children were heavily involved in the governing structures of the orphanage, including decisions over the subject and manner of their education, disciplinary issues, and in the writing and maintenance of rules guiding internal life.

In respect to the co-creation of governing structures at school, the Children's Republic is very similar to Summerhill. Both schools use a system of democratic student involvement—the Court of Peers and the Children's Parliament in the Children's Republic and the General School Meetings at Summerhill—to create and maintain rules which effect the academic and ordinary life of the students and teachers; in this sense, both schools are maintained by a form of positive freedom. However, some of the criticisms levelled earlier against Summerhill, such as the deliberate misconception and neglect of authority, do not necessarily apply to the Children's Republic. Korczak, in the few writings of his which have survived⁵², does not seem to consider authority as an opposing force to freedom, instead conceiving of the authority structures in place at the Children's Republic as freedom-enabling. Within the co-created laws by the Children's Parliament, the students could each become the “patron, the worker, and the head of the home” (Lifton, 1988, p.70).

Korczak created this model because of his strong belief that children should be treated as equals based solely on their individual personhood.⁵³ Korczak uses this belief to establish a foundation for a child's political status and rights. Lifton (1988) writes:

⁵² Sadly, on August 6, 1942, Korczak and the students at the Children's Republic were led out of their Polish orphanage and onto a train car that was to take them to Treblinka, one of the German concentration camps. No one survived and most of Korczak's writings were destroyed (Lifton, 1988, p.338).

⁵³ Korczak was not unique in this belief and a range examples can be found in the lived educational experiences of those from a kibbutz (Dror, 2004), Kohlberg and other theorists who were inspired by the kibbutz movement, and in the moral philosophy of Brennan and Noggle (1997; 1998; Noggle, 2002), who used individual personhood to help establish a child's moral status.

The underlying philosophy of the children's republic was: children are not the people of tomorrow, but people today. They are entitled to be taken seriously. They have a right to be treated by adults with tenderness and respect, as equals, not as masters and slaves. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be: the 'unknown person' inside each of them is the hope for the future. (p.62)

The Children's Republic was an institution which was built through a cooperative effort between Korczak and his students because he believed that children were already equals to each other and with adults, and should have a valid and recognized political voice within the orphanage. Those at the orphanage were being directly affected by the rules and governance structure in which they lived, and so Korczak believed that they should have a voice (Silverman, 2017).

This was a belief that Korczak carried beyond the walls of the Republic as well. If an individual is, indirectly or directly, being affected by the political structures in which they live, that individual should be recognized as a political entity, entitled to some level of political status and thus, access to some form of political authority. This is true of most political structures (monarchies, oligarchies, etc.) but, for Korczak, a democratic structure provided a political status of a different kind. Whereas the political status of many peoples, such as serfs, in feudal monarchies were passive and did not include much, if any, accompanying political agency and authority, the political status of peoples in a democracy do gain as such. This authority can be limited by the state—indeed, most political authority that is recognized is constrained by the same structures which give it legitimacy—but that does not make this capability less potent or important.

Korczak clearly believed in promoting a form of democratic education and, as sociologist Engel writes (2008), looked “to a new kind of school environment as a way of realizing a democratic society” (p, 119). This was a very similar goal to his American contemporary Dewey (1916), who also promoted a form of democratic education which “makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life” (p.99). Dewey also promoted a form of political status for students because of their direct participation in creating their own community (Dewey, 1915). This occurred in part because of his uniquely participatory democratic conception of education, where students were active members in creating and maintaining a community in schools and within their larger community. While the simplest version of this community-creating was found in self-organization of games and sport (Piaget, 1932), Dewey also believed that children could do the same within the classroom. As long as the students worked towards building a society, which Dewey defines as “a number of people held together because they are working along common lines, in a common spirit, and with reference to common aims” (Dewey, 1915, p.39), then they should be recognized as capable of some form of authority to make decisions and take action.

Both Korczak and Dewey, in their different visions for democratic education, worked to have children be recognized and treated as equals within their own communities. This recognition of political status would then create a path for children to be recognized as political authorities. As the classroom for Korczak and Dewey was one of the communities in which the students actively participated, it was also a place in which students should have some form of authority.

Acquiring political status from belonging to and participating in a community is very different from acquiring political status from accreditation but is no less valid. As the classroom is its own community, both students and teachers should be able to draw some form of co-recognized political status, and thus political authority, from it. This could be within the walls of the classroom, with teacher and students having a democratic role in the establishment and maintenance of the classroom society, such as found in Neill's Summerhill model, or it is possible for the political status to move outside the classroom as well. Korczak, for example, appears to argue for such a move because, as students are affected by the political structures around them (including the political structures of education), they should be recognized as having a political status (Lifton, 1988; Silverman, 2017). Having now established the possibility of legitimate epistemic and political authority, it is now time to consider how students can hold legitimate moral authority.

Legitimizing the Moral Authority of Students

The condition of students holding a recognized form of moral authority, a form based on acceptance of certain culturally and socially contextual morality and the capacity to make moral-decisions, seems to have three broad requirements that must be met. The first requirement is for the individual to have a moral status recognized by others, which is necessary because legitimation is based in part on recognition and one cannot be a legitimate moral authority without being recognized as a moral figure. Second, moral authority requires the actor in the superordinate position to have a certain level of power to make moral decisions, without which it would be impossible to hold authority legitimated on moral grounds. The final requirement is best considered in the negative, that moral authority does not require moral decisions to be correct. Instead, moral authority can still be recognized even if in error as long as those actors in

the subordinate positions continue to follow. This could be between two or more people, where one party is in a position of moral authority over others or it could be one person's recognition of the moral authority of a particular idea. In either case, the moral decisions that are made or influenced by the authority do not necessarily need to be correct for the authority to continue. It will be argued that students can fulfill each of these requirements, thus opening the door for students to hold a recognized and fully legitimated form of moral authority.

The moral status of children.

Moral philosopher Noggle (2002) writes “[v]irtually all reasonable people hold that children are persons, and not, for example pets or property” (p.98). Persons are, he continues, beings who can make choices, generally run their own lives, and, just from the mere fact of being persons, must be considered to have certain recognized rights and agentic and autonomous capabilities.⁵⁴ In much the same way, “much of the moral status a person has comes simply from the fact that she is a person” (Brennan & Noggle, 1997, p.5). As moral status comes largely from personhood, children have an equivalent moral status to adults and so then do students and teachers. It is important to establish moral status as a foundation for holding moral authority because only individuals who warrant moral consideration can be legitimated as a moral authority by others. Any person, in order to be a recognized moral authority, must start from a minimum of recognized moral status. Without such recognition it would be all but impossible to command others from an authority position based on morality.

This is not to say that students and teachers have the exact same moral status, nor do they have the same moral rights and duties—including the same claims to moral authority—that stem

⁵⁴ James Griffin (2002) defends this statement, writing that all humans capable of agency “have a kind natural equality: they all have the capacities to reflect and choose and act, and once above a certain threshold any further difference in the degree to which they have these capacities is irrelevant to their having human rights” (p.21)

from such a status. Moral philosophers Brennan and Noggle (1997; see also Kadlac, 2010; McMahan, 2002; Mulhall, 2002⁵⁵) write that while *much* of an individual's moral status comes from their personhood, it is not the only source: "[a] person's moral rights and duty typically depend on many other things in addition to her status as a person. Roles, for example, often confer moral status" (p.6). The different roles of student and teacher would confer different duties and responsibilities and would thus have an impact on the exact forms of moral authority each could hold. It would be unreasonable to suggest that students, who may not have the same experience or cognitive capability to make moral decisions as teachers, should be placed in the exact same authority position as teachers. However, the students should be recognized as capable of holding moral authority and that this authority could change as the student grows and develops. The establishment of equal moral consideration, leading to co-recognized moral status and thus the possibility for co-recognized moral authority, between students and teachers leads to some important conclusions. (1) Students possess a similar and conceptually equal, and overlapping qua personhood, moral status and so deserve equal moral consideration and so, (2) teachers must recognize students as potential moral agents and finally, (3) both students and teachers must recognize that their own moral status, and the moral status of the other, supports a capacity for developing moral authority.

Making moral decisions.

The bulk of an individual's moral status comes from one's own personhood and, as suggested above, it is this moral status that creates a foundation for the possibility of holding moral authority. The moral authority of an individual can also develop and part of this

⁵⁵ While there appears to be general acceptance of personhood granting moral status, there is an important and ongoing debate about the definition of personhood, particularly as it relates to the ethics of abortion and speciesism. This debate does not affect the claims made in this thesis but the lack of a consensus on personhood should be noted.

development is the cognitive ability to make moral decisions. To engage in moral decision-making is a developmental process in which an individual must grow, both in experience in their shared morality with their culture and society and in their cognitive power. The power to make moral choices requires the individual to consider “a plurality of doctrines, of convictions, and of moral viewpoints” (Sanders, 1982, p.18) and to understand that people have different conceptions of the good. Moral judgments are therefore sometimes judgments among competing views of what constitutes the good. This is a complex endeavour and one that requires a minimum level of moral and cognitive development. For example, Kohlberg’s structural stage model of moral development, which clearly “illustrates the potential evolution of moral reasoning toward greater complexity and adequacy” (Snarey & Samuelson, 2008, p.59) shows how an individual will grow in their capabilities of understanding and acting morally, moving from the pre-conventional stages (Stage 1 and 2), which are considered to be pre-moral, to the conventional and post-conventional stages. An individual can only make truly moral decisions once they progress past the first two stages and thus, an individual only has the prospect of becoming a moral authority once their reasoning qualifies them as one. This development of moral reasoning should be understood as connected to but distinct from a person’s moral status or dignity, which is an inherent trait. Authority’s foundation is legitimation and it is unreasonable for any figure, or in Kohlberg’s view, their moral reasoning, to be legitimated on moral grounds if that person does not possess the power to make moral decisions (although this does not deny them authority legitimated through other means). The capability of making moral decisions, as it depends on moral development, thus indicates that recognition of morally-grounded authority should be limited to only those who have developed the capability of moral reasoning. However,

this is then complicated when the results of moral decisions are considered, mainly, do moral decisions need to be correct?

Do moral decisions need to be correct?

At first glance, moral authority seems to depend on the need to make consistently correct decisions.⁵⁶ Who would continue to support an individual whose moral decision-making has erred, especially given that the support given would legitimize the superordinate's position over themselves? It seems reasonable to assume that any individual who does not consistently make morally correct decisions would find themselves no longer legitimated as a moral authority. However, this position becomes unrealistic when one considers both the complexity of making moral decisions, the difficulty of making decisions about topics one may not have encountered before, and that knowing what is 'correct' can only be done post-hoc. Put in this light, the question needs to be asked: do moral decisions need to be correct for an individual to maintain a position of moral authority?

Kohlberg and Sanders provide two possible responses to this question, and though they reach their answer in very different ways, both ultimately reject the philosophical necessity for moral decisions to be correct. Kohlberg's focus in moral decision-making and judgment was the "adequacy or inadequacy of moral thought structures to make sense of experience" (Snarey & Samuelson, 2008, p.59). Emphasis was placed on the form of moral reasoning itself and not whether the answer's content was 'correct' (Kohlberg, 1984). In fact, while it is reasonable to suggest that as different individuals developed in their moral reasoning they would reach similar results in different moral dilemmas, the final decision which was reached was less important to

⁵⁶ The term *correct* for Sanders seems to refer to several possibilities: a moral decision which follows the shared normative structures of a given culture or society, a decision to which all involved parties agree, or one which attempts to follow more post-conventional ethical ideas.

Kohlberg than the form of reasoning taken to get there. Kohlberg's model of moral stage development "illustrates the potential evolution of moral reasoning toward greater complexity and adequacy" (Snarey & Samuelson, 2008, p.59), not the accumulation of 'correct' responses.

Sanders (1982) makes an argument from a liberal position against the need for moral decisions to be correct, thus arguing why it is desirable for individuals to hold personal responsibility for their own moral choices and providing an avenue for moral authorities to stay in that position. Sanders gives three specific reasons which lead to these conclusions:

- (1) There is no infallible method by which it can be established that an authority is, or has been, consistently reliable;
- (2) All authorities have been known to be mistaken, so authorities need to be checked and criticized rather than uncritically relied upon;
- (3) Even if we found an authority we believed to be completely reliable, we would still have to decide whether or not to guide our lives by its prescriptions. (p.20)

Given that all authority figures are capable of error, Sanders' conclusion is that "it is both possible and desirable to check and criticize all moral authority and methods for moral choice" (Sanders, 1982, p.20). This seems very reasonable given that, other than weighing probabilities based on a past record of a person's correct or erring decisions, one cannot know that the next moral decision will be correct. Examined from the perspective of the authority figure, a second conclusion seems possible, one that suggests that a figure who holds moral authority can err and still maintain their authority position *as long as they are still legitimated* by the subordinate(s). Given Sanders' argument, it also seems likely that a moral authority would lose such authority if the number and scope of errors in moral judgment were deemed too large by the subordinate. So

while making one error in moral decision making does not seem to be sufficient for losing one's position as a moral authority, too many errors could result in such a loss.

Sanders' claim is narrow however, as it is concerned only with moral decision-making with one party over another and that a moral decision is 'correct.' Two important areas of moral decision-making remained unexplored and should be briefly mentioned. To begin, Sanders does not take into consideration that the adequacy of the moral decision-making could also play a part in the continued recognition of a moral authority. An authority who demonstrates, through the development of their moral reasoning, increasing adequacy in moral-decision making may still retain recognition as moral authority despite any resulting errors. Second, Sanders only seems concerned with moral decisions *over* others and does not consider that individuals, acting autonomously, may demonstrate some form of moral authority over their decisions. Decisions concerning only oneself do not require the super/subordinate relationship implied in Sanders' analysis. However, it still seems possible that if a person's moral decision-making results in too many errors, they would lose confidence in their own capabilities as a moral authority. These two additions to Sanders' work, while based on an observation that his analysis was too narrow, do not change the substance of his argument and his overall conclusions are still very reasonable.

This is an important consideration for student-held moral authority, largely because of how much the role of student centres around growth. As students grow morally, the opportunities to make moral decisions for themselves and others will present themselves.⁵⁷ Students encounter

⁵⁷ Following Kohlberg's stages of moral development, as students move from the two pre-conventional stages to stages 3 (mutual interpersonal expectations, good relations) and 4 (social system and conscience maintenance) they acquire the cognitive capabilities to make such moral decisions. The argument that students can hold moral authority requires a minimum level of moral cognition and, as such, those students who can legitimately hold such authority must have moved beyond Kohlberg's first two stages. The interpretation of this argument that *all* students should hold moral authority is incorrect; instead it is put forth that all students have such capability and, once a minimum cognitive threshold is reached, students should be recognized as possible moral authorities.

moral problems in their day-to-day life at school and will need to make choices. While students may not often be legitimated as moral authorities by their teachers, they certainly can be authorities for themselves and their peers and indeed, it is even desirable that students become such an authority in order to learn and prepare themselves for what lies beyond school. If moral decisions always had to be correct there would be little to no opportunity for moral growth beyond following the decisions of others and this would diminish the student role in the moral realm, implying that morality is a closed system. Acceptance of some limited errors within moral decision-making allows for students to hold moral authority and gives opportunity for growth as moral beings.

Finding Space for Student-Held Authority in Contemporary Education

Recognizing the legitimacy of student-held epistemic, political, and moral authority is an important step for those in education to take but one which is possible only if it can find space within the existing education system. If, for example, the demands of the curriculum are such that student input is not valued at all, it will be very difficult for any form of authority other than the teachers to be recognized. This was one of the problems within a more traditional education, where students were seen as *tabula rasa* and not as contributors. Miller and Seller (1990) refer to this as the transmission position in education, largely because the object of education was to “transmit facts, skills, and values to students” (p.5). However, if the curriculum values student contributions, such as in the form of promoting inquiry learning or other similar student-driven modes of education, then it seems likely that recognition of student-held authority would at least be possible.

There is a current trend that moves away from a more traditional education towards educational practices that view the student as a more equal participant in learning (Bolstad et. al,

2012; C21 Canada, 2015; Jacobs, 2010; Miller & Seller, 1990).⁵⁸ This view is reflected in the new British Columbia curriculum, which has as a central mandate a vision of what the aim is for all students, a section titled *The Educated Citizen*. Developed from the Royal Commission on Education in 1988, this short list details the province's view of what elements are considered important for educators and students to consider as they both work to grow the students as citizens of the province and country (BC Ministry of Education, 2018c). This includes emphases on critical thinking, creativity, co-operative actions, and to be respectful regardless of any differences (in opinion, beliefs, etc.). Students should be able to adapt to different situations, make independent decisions, and to “exercise the responsibilities of the individual within the family, the community, Canada, and world” (BC Ministry of Education, 2018c). In other words, students should feel empowered to make complex decisions which affect their well-being—acting autonomously—and which could affect the well-being of others, acting authoritatively. While falling short of recognizing student authority, *The Educated Citizen* does seem to point to that direction.

Also included in this document are several key phrases that again suggest a shift from strictly teacher-held authority to views that open education up to the possibility of student-held authority. Developing citizens, for example, “are capable of making independent decisions” and should have the opportunity to “develop their skills and explore their passions and interests” (BC Ministry of Education, 2018c). Students are to make individual choices in all aspects of their school lives, including social, personal, and intellectual. There is also a much greater emphasis on student-led learning, including personalized learning and increased flexibility and choice.

⁵⁸ Miller and Seller (1990) refer to this form of education broadly as the transaction position, where “the individual is seen as rational and capable of intelligent problem solving” and “[e]ducation is viewed as a dialogue between the student and the curriculum” (p.6).

While in practice this curriculum would likely result in a version of illusory student authority as found in Dewey's Laboratory School, where students were engaged in a form of autonomous choosing but did not have a recognized form of authority—especially as student-held authority under the current system would require permission of the teacher and/or principal—these documents do suggest that students are to participate in education in an authoritative manner.

The addition of core competencies to the curriculum further substantiate the claim that BC's education system is shifting towards recognizing students as capable of authority. Core competencies are “sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep learning and life-long learning” (BC Ministry of Education, 2018a). These competencies include “communication”, “thinking” (both creative and critical), and “personal and social.” What makes these competencies particularly important for a more complex view of authority is that the responsibility to build, examine, and analyze each competency belongs to the student. Students are encouraged in this curriculum to build ownership for demonstrating each competency (BC Ministry of Education, 2018a).

Student-ownership and responsibility is also built directly into each competency, where each definition is described using ‘I’ statements from the point of view of the student. For example, the Communication competency is broken down into four interrelated facets, one of which is to “connect and engage with others (to share and develop ideas)” (BC Ministry of Education, 2018b). This is described using ‘I’ statements, such as “I [the student] ask and respond to simple, direct questions” and “I recognize that there are different points-of-view and I can disagree respectfully” (BC Ministry of Education, 2018b). Students are thus encouraged to have greater responsibility and control over their own education, to step into a student-role that includes the capacity for authority over certain aspects of one's education.

Based on this interpretation of BC's curriculum, it becomes possible to suggest a practical way in which a teacher could plan on recognizing student authority in the classroom. The first step, if students are to gain authority over their own education, is to engage them in a discussion about the curriculum itself. A grade ten Socials Studies teacher, for example, could begin the school year by handing out the curriculum to the students and, in a discussion, decide what topics will need to be covered over the school year. Both teacher and students, acting as authorities in the classroom, will need to take responsibility for covering the curriculum. This will include determining exactly what topics should be covered, what the sequence should be, and other curricular decisions. It should be noted that within such a discussion, the authority of teacher could be overtaken by the authority of a student, such as when a topic the teacher argues for is not included in the school year plan. In a classroom where there are different sources of authority that can overlap or even compete, this scenario could occur. It is important to understand that, in such curricular discussions, the authority of teacher and student is underwritten by the authority of the curriculum and as long as the student still legitimates the curriculum's authority, there is no reason why student authority cannot trump teacher authority in this context. While this is only a first step when it comes to recognizing student authority in education, it is important because it encourages students to take greater responsibility for their own education and to act as authorities in the classroom.

Unfortunately, discussion of the concept of authority itself is absent from the curriculum entirely. This both weakens the opportunity for student-held authority to be recognized within British Columbia's education system and tacitly promotes a student-teacher relationship in which authority still resides entirely with the teacher. However, the new curriculum does provide the opportunity for beginning to recognize student-held authority as it promotes a more critically

involved student role in making decisions over what should be included in their education and how it should be studied. While the existing educational structures in British Columbia currently serve as barriers to promoting student-held authority, there is no reason that this will always be the case. There is space within the new curriculum for practices that promote and recognize a more complex role for students and a more complete authority relationship between students and teachers. As educational theorist Giroux (1983) writes, “while there is little doubt that schools are tied to educational policies, interests, and resources that bear the weight of the logic and institutions of capitalism, they also provide room for emancipatory teaching, knowledge, and social practices” (p.115).

Student-held Authority and Changes to the Student-Teacher Relationship

Dewey (1897) argued that too much control resides in the role of teacher, who initiates almost every action that students were to take. In other words, the role of a teacher relied too much on a narrow conception of authority as control and discipline, which created a hierarchy of teacher over the students and diminished the role of student to a passive one. This is the result of a misunderstanding of the school as a place where “far too much of the stimulus and control proceeds from the teacher” (p.432) instead of “proceed[ing] from the life of the school as a whole” (p.432). Dewey’s solution was to break this directional binary relationship between teacher and student by repositioning them as members of the same community, with different but complementary aims. A teacher, he writes, is “not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences” (p.432). Dewey keeps students and teachers in different roles but, through the

introduction of democratic influences in schooling, works to equalize the relationship.⁵⁹ This opportunity to support students in education is limited, however, because the binary relationship between student and teacher is not broken but instead is only changed.⁶⁰

The result is an authority relationship where the teacher still retains a large portion of the authority over the students' education and the student, despite the emphasis on a child-centred education, is only able to influence the teacher's decisions in a variety of ways. There still exists a resulting problem of an authority imbalance, although it is a different type of problem from the more traditional education against which Dewey was writing. Giroux (1983) notes this type of problem as a general weakness in liberal theories of education: "[o]ne such study sums up the theoretical essence of most of this work with the 'insight' that 'a teacher teaches a child, while the child teaches the teacher' or '...children structure and modify their environment just as they are structured and modified by it'" (p.53). This form of equalizing the student-teacher relationship through mutual influence is, at best, a limited response to addressing the problem of authority imbalance within the student-teacher relationship. Teachers still retain most, if not all, of the recognized legitimate authority while students are left with limited forms of autonomous choosing and acting under a restrained licence. It appears that to disrupt the one-directional, binary authority relationship there must be a greater reconsideration of the roles of students and teachers.

Freire and the 'Student-Teacher, Teacher-Student'

In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1970/2003) begins with his concerns about the problem of humanization and how that concern leads to the recognition of

⁵⁹ This is another example of Miller and Seller's (1990) transaction position in education.

⁶⁰ See p.17-18 of Chapter 3 for an analysis of the authority relationship between student and teacher as represented in Dewey's Lab School.

dehumanization (p.44). Dehumanization, writes Freire, “marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a *distortion* of the vocation of becoming more fully human” (p.45, emphasis in original). Those whose humanity was stolen, the oppressed, then have before them the task of liberating themselves and their oppressors. This task then becomes one of the Freire’s main concerns, which is problematized by the ease in which the oppressed, through their own liberation, can become the oppressors. It is much simpler for those at the bottom to simply replace those at the top of the social hierarchy but this simply perpetuates the problem of dehumanization and continues its destructive cycle.

Freire (1970/2003) then identifies a second central problem for the oppressed, namely “[h]ow can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation?” (p.48). From this complex problem rises the solution, to change the hierarchical positions between oppressor and oppressed completely, equalizing the relationship and redefining those dehumanizing positions into one single role of being human: “[T]he solution of this contradiction is born in the labor which brings into the world this new being: no longer oppressor nor longer oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom” (p.49). The correct method of liberation lies in dialogue between oppressed and oppressor, that both sides intend to carry out the transformation *with* the oppressed and not *for* the oppressed. As part of this liberation, educational practice must become co-intentional, where both students and teachers are engaged in the task of critically unveiling reality and then, together, re-creating that knowledge (p.69). This leads Freire to an important re-consideration of the teacher-student relationship, one that equalizes the oppressor (teacher) and the oppressed (student).

As part of his larger vision of emancipatory education, Freire (1970/2003) argues for a reconceptualization of the student-teacher relationship, one where “the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teacher” (p.80). In this, Freire writes that traditional views of authority—those including a one-sided relationship based on control, discipline, and power—must be ignored and that a new version of authority that encourages the emancipation of students must be embraced: “In this process, arguments based on “authority” are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be *on the side of* freedom, not *against* it” (Freire, 1970/2003, p.80, emphasis in original). For authority to be on the side of freedom, those who are free must be recognized as capable of holding authority, whether this is students or teachers. Thus, student-held authority is one form of authority that is consistent, and possibly even required, for Freire’s reconceptualization of the student-teacher relationship. He disrupts the binary structure of the authority relationship as there would no longer be two distinct entities within the relationship but instead there would be two parties who engage in the same activities of teaching and learning and who, at times, embody both student and teacher roles.

Freire’s ‘student-teacher, teacher-student’ relationship is not without its criticisms (Galloway, 2012) and, in order to further establish the need for student-held authority as part of a student-teacher relationship, these should be addressed and responded to. Galloway’s most relevant criticism of Freire’s student-teacher relationship posits that it may not be possible for a teacher to maintain themselves as a “co-subject related when engaging in dialogue with students” and that if even the “student-teacher *could* be a relation between co-subjects—that is, one in which the teacher does not play a dominant role—there might no longer be a clear demarcation between the student and teacher” (Galloway, 2012, p.175). This criticism is based on the

assumption that, in order for education to be educative and not simply people working on shared projects, there must be separate roles for teachers and students. The acceptance of different interwoven forms of student- and teacher-held authority as possible and necessary for education requires Freire's disruption of the student-teacher relationship and that relies distinct teacher/student roles, so this is an important criticism to consider. It is a valid point about the limitations of Freire's student-teacher relationship but thorough consideration of the complexity of authority in education can lead to a reasoned response.

As demonstrated in the arguments for legitimating student-held epistemic, political, and moral authority, equal recognition and capacity for authority does not necessarily lead to equal authority roles. For example, both students and teachers are capable of holding epistemic authority based on their unique experiences and knowledge and, in this authority role, are thus capable of acting as both student and teacher. However, the greater experience and knowledge of the teacher can legitimate their leadership role—one that is not necessarily available to the student—which can be fulfilled without jeopardizing the freedom of the student. The holding of authority by the teacher in one context does not negate the student-held authority in another. Considered this way, the person who is the teacher is still distinct from the student but there is still opportunity for either actor to inhabit the roles of student and teacher:

The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own. The role of the problem-posing educator is to create; together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the *doxa* [belief or popular opinion] is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the *logos* [rationality and reason]. (Freire, 1970/2003, p.81)

Even in Freire's own writing, there is space for different roles in education but, as the students are elevated and freed to be critical thinkers and learners, education becomes a space for co-creation by actors in equal roles.

A second way to address Galloway's criticism is to consider the *telos* for each party within the student-teacher relationship. The teacher and student, though both engaging in teaching and learning actions, still bring different educational goals and aims to the relationship. The student will, for example, wish to learn about the world in which they live and harbour a desire to follow their own unique interests in such a way as to be humanized and validated. The teacher will have the different educational goal of motivating and empowering the learning of others (Burbules, 2005). In the process of working towards these goals, both students and teacher will teach and learn but neither would be confused or conflated with the other. They are not "simply people working cooperatively on shared projects" (Galloway, 2012) because they do not have identical goals for the work with which they are engaged.

Student-held Authority and Resistance

For three decades socio-critical theorist Apple (2007) has dealt with questions "about the relationship between culture and power, about the relationship among the economic, political and culture spheres, and about what all this means for educational work" (p.162). As he admits, this is an almost impossibly large project for one person and, he writes, "no one who takes these questions seriously, at least not me, can answer them fully or without contradictions or even wrong turns or mistakes" (p.162). However, even with expecting the possibility of error in his work, Apple has made an important case against the relationship between politics, the economy, and education he has viewed in the United States since the mid-1970's. Apple makes an important call for systematic and strategic change and for a real understanding of the systems of

power that surround education. “Educational work that is not connected deeply to a power understanding of these realities (and this understanding cannot evacuate a serious analysis of political economy and class relations without losing much of its power) is in danger of losing its soul.” (Apple, 1996, p.4).

The full scope of Apple’s work is too broad to examine in this thesis but there is an important analysis and refutation of the hidden curriculum that appears to support an idea of student-held authority that must be examined. From *Education and Power* (1982/1995) comes Apple’s assertion that, amongst others, the education system is one where “domination and exploitation persist and reproduce themselves without being consciously recognized by the people involved” (p.12). There is, in other words, a hidden curriculum that exists in many of the structural and curricular elements of education that, in part, limits the possible agency of students through acts of “ideological reproduction” (p.22) to effectively socialize them into the macro-political goals of politicians and the corporate economy. Apple suggests that despite the limits of the hidden curriculum, students will often resist, transforming “modes of control into opportunities for resistance” (p.23). Apple then argues that this resistance is often an expression of agency—which the hidden curriculum denies students but Apple insists can and does exist regardless—and that the important areas of non-reproductive acts (those that go against the hidden curriculum) can only be found through active participation in them. It is here that it seems possible that alongside the recognition of student agency as a vehicle for less reductive actions, student-held authority could also aid students in resistant actions. If authority is no longer only vested in the structures of the hidden curriculum but is also recognized in those who are unknowingly under it, then it seems possibly that the students would have greater opportunities to choose non-reproductive acts. This recognition could come from the self-

recognition of oneself as a possible authority figure or it could come from the co-recognition of one's student peers as possible authority figures. In either case, the legitimate recognition of a student (either self or other) as capable of holding a form of authority could allow for a greater opportunity to actively participate in resistant actions.

Student-held Authority and Liberation

In *Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life*, Giroux (1988/2005) makes a case for “democracy as a referent for developing political and social practices that would invigorate critical citizenship, expand the possibilities of public life, and energize an educational system that needed to recognize the valuable role it play[s]” (p.xvii). Written in the 1980's, this book was a reaction against the perceived growing conservatism, concentration of social and financial power into the hands of the elites, and the draining of substance from the public life. Giroux's overall argument was for the inclusion democracy in education as a support for developing and maintaining critical education as a means of creating critically aware citizens. To achieve this, he made three large arguments, 1) that pedagogy is a moral and political practice, 2) if public education is crucial to creating citizens then teachers must be able to take critical positions, and 3) when schooling is reduced by political and private interests, it becomes even more important for citizens to view and support education as part of a wider democratic project (Giroux, 1988/2005). As part of his argument, Giroux views a reduction in the roles of both students and teachers and, though he was arguing in the 1980's, this is still a relevant observation and, for Giroux, is as true today (Giroux, 1988/2005, xvii).

Giroux (1988/2005) writes that there is an important argument put forth by conservative factions decrying that “the current crisis in public education is due to the loss of authority” (p.71). In this context, authority is referring to a strong teacher role, akin to the type of authority

promoted by Peters and his transmission position of education. In this conception, students are supposed to be willing to learn, without bringing their own ideas to their education. Even the teacher role is complicated because even as they are supposed to inhabit a strict authority role in the classroom, their own autonomy is being stripped away as power is centralized towards the administration and districts, leaving teachers as mere technicians (Giroux, 1988/2005, p.87). This view of education not only strips students of an active role in their own education, it reduces the teacher role as well.⁶¹ If one applies Freire's oppressed/oppressor relationship here, it appears that the students are the oppressed and the teachers are both oppressed and oppressor—what Freire (1970/2000) terms the sub-oppressor—depending on a given context.

To address this issue, Giroux argues for a dialectical view of authority, essentially arguing that authority can be emancipatory if it is “grounded in a theory of ethics based on the principles of democracy, solidarity, and hope” (Giroux, 2005, p.79). This view of authority, although he does not explicitly use the term, deliberately creates space for student-held authority as part of emancipatory education. Students and teachers are supposed to develop a co-authority relationship, one which “provides the basis for raising questions about the kinds of teaching and pedagogy that can be developed and legitimated within a view of schooling that takes democracy and critical citizenship seriously” (Giroux, 2005, p.79). This is an authority relationship that closely mirrors that advocated by Freire and throughout this final chapter. Authority can enable freedom and, as it plays an important role in education, the nature of this concept—and the role of those involved in authority relationships—needs to be very clear. To provide this clarity,

⁶¹ It should be noted that here Giroux is commenting on the American public school system, where the reduction of the teacher role is more prevalent. However, while there are many differences between the American and Canadian school systems, the general critique still applies.

Giroux (1983) argues for specific roles for teacher and student that can aid in human emancipation:

Education has fundamental connections with the idea of human emancipation, though it is constantly in danger of being captured for other interests. In a society disfigured by class exploitation, sexual and racial oppression, and in chronic danger of war and environmental destruction, the only education worth the name is one that forms people capable of taking part in their own liberation. (p.114)

Giroux uses this impassioned statement, taken from R.W. Connell's 1982 book *Making the Difference*, to broaden the general understanding of education from building knowledge and skills to a large-scale act which has, at its heart, the goal of freedom and liberation. This definition is part of a larger project to develop an idea of radical teachers, people who "will have to be deeply involved in struggles outside of the apparatuses of the state to develop alternative public spheres and counter-educational institutions that provide the conditions and issues around which people could organize in ways that reflect their own needs and actual experience" (Giroux, 1983, p.238). Giroux argued for those already in positions of authority, such as teachers, to recognize their own role in helping students become liberated or, in another sense, share authority and recognize and invest in student authority. The change was to take place from the top down, with teachers following three main points in order to become radical teachers, emancipators of students and education. These points were, 1) to reexamine and understand "their own social and theoretical perspectives regarding their views about society, teaching, and emancipation" (p.241), 2) to "strive to make school democracy possible" (p.241), and, 3) to remember that "radical pedagogy either within or outside of schools involves linking critique to

social transformation, and, as such, means taking risks” (p.242). By thoroughly and continuously engaging in these three acts, teachers could aid in Giroux’s project of liberation education.

The recognition of student-held authority, while not directly part of Freire’s, Apple’s, or Giroux’s arguments, can be seen as part of the socio-critical project of emancipatory education and the liberation of students. Freire’s transformation of the student-teacher relationship requires authority to be on the side of freedom and, if the goal is to free students, then authority must be with the students. While this could be interpreted as the teachers, as authority, working for the students—which seems to largely to be case for both Freire and Giroux—this may not be sufficient. When seen as an object of a project, even one that seeks to liberate them, the role that the student plays in their own education is still fairly narrow. If students are recognized as capable of holding authority, then the role that they can play in their own liberation is enlarged and students may be greatly empowered, either as resisters to an oppressive system as Apple argues or for the liberation called for by Freire and Giroux. This does not replace the role for teachers argued for by Freire and Giroux but supplements it. Student-held authority can be an aid in producing an education system which is democratic, free, and which reaches the aims of education, both in terms of knowledge and skill building and the liberation of all involved.

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