

Understanding the Logic of Educational Encampment: From Illich to Agamben

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Illich's call for "deschooling" society is well known. In the book that shares the same name, Illich argues against schools on two accounts. First, the common school has become "the world religion of a modernized proletariat, and makes futile promises of salvation to the poor of the technological age."¹ Here a genealogical argument is made that links the school to the church, both of which mask the increasing "underdevelopment of self- and community-reliance" with the ideology of salvation and hope. In fact, schools perform the "three fold function" of powerful churches, acting as "the repository of society's myth [which include the myth of unending consumption and social progress], the institutionalization of that myth's contradictions, and the locus of the ritual which reproduces and veils the disparities between myth and reality."² In this model, the teacher acts as "custodian" who leads students through a series of institutionalized rituals and as a "moralist" who substitutes for God. In sum, Illich writes, "For the child, the teacher pontificates as pastor, prophet, and priest—he is at once guide, teacher, and administrator."³ In short, the school has become the new "World Church"⁴ acting as a global, colonizing agent that simply reinforces modernized salvation myths while masking the on-going destruction of communities and ecosystems.

In Illich's critique, the religious origins of the teacher are juxtaposed to another set of genealogical roots which link institutionalized, age-specific, compulsory schooling to capitalism. The relations between capitalism and religion are summarized by Illich through the concept of the hidden curriculum which "serves as a ritual of initiation into a growth-oriented consumer society for rich and poor alike."⁵ Drawing on the early writings of Marx, Illich argues that "School makes alienation preparatory to life" by equating education with disciplined consumption.⁶ In fact, Illich observes that the school has become the "advertising agency" for contemporary capitalist society,⁷ reinforcing the norms, values, and dispositions necessary to perpetuate capitalist social relations of production.

While the various connections, genealogies, and correspondences which Illich draws between the school, the church, and capitalism have been hotly debated, there is a third line of inquiry that has remained virtually absent from secondary discussions of Illich's work. In 1988 Ivan Illich made the following, provocative observation concerning inner city Chicago schools:

I had come to Chicago to speak about schools, not camps. My theme was educational crippling, not Nazi murder. But I found myself unable to distinguish between Oskar Schindler in his factory in Crakow and Doc Thomas McDonald in Chicago's Goudy Elementary, where he is the principal. I know Doc as indirectly as Schindler, I know him only from the Chicago Tribune, but I cannot forget him.

¹ Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (London: Marion Boyars, 2002), 10.

² Ibid, 37.

³ Ibid, 31.

⁴ Ibid, 43.

⁵ Ibid, 33.

⁶ Ibid, 46.

⁷ Ibid, 113.

And for some weeks now I have asked myself: Why does he stay on the job?
What gives him the courage?⁸

In a sense there is no way of comparing the class of historical events that go under the name of Hiroshima, Pol Pot Cambodia, Armenian Massacre, Nazi Holocaust, ABCstocks, or human geneline engineering on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the treatment meted out to people in our schoolrooms, hospital wards, slums, or welfare agencies. But, in another sense, both kinds of horrors are manifestations of the same epochal spirit. Illich clearly recognizes both the danger in making an analogy between schools and concentration camps and the necessity of thinking through these links (no matter how mediated) for understanding the pedagogical logic of late capitalism.

In the following paper, I will expand upon Illich's metaphorical links through the work of Giorgio Agamben. In particular, we can use Agamben's work on encampment as a way to give analytical weight to Illich's observations. But before I can introduce Agamben's central ideas, I will first make a slight detour through Michel Foucault's theory of biopower. It is Foucault who theorized the complex assemblage between discipline-sovereignty-education that makes Illich's connections a reality for many students. Coupling Foucault and Agamben, we then can rethink the economy of power that Illich's intuitive analogy suggests—transforming a metaphor into a paradigm. In particular, we have to rethink (a) the gaze of power, (b) the subject of power, and (c) the spatial location of power. Through this analysis, I will demonstrate the need for a theory of “necropedagogy” or a pedagogy that promotes a certain form of educational extinction or disqualification according to a sovereign ban.

To begin I would like to offer a basic overview of Foucault's genealogical analysis of power. According to Foucault, power today “differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes,” and “normalizes.”⁹ The resulting “social orthopedics” of education ceases to punish individual infractions and instead focuses on “correcting their potentialities”.¹⁰ Thus in terms of schooling, hierarchical observation (enabling the gaze of administration and performance qualification on state and federal levels access to the practices of teachers and students), normalizing judgment (in which students are ranked in terms of their perceived abilities and rewarded for their disciplined behaviors), and examinations (that articulate hierarchical observation with normalization in the form of intellectual, physical, and psychological tests) become pervasive techniques to manage various potentialities in children. In all such cases, disciplinary power is, as Foucault observes “exercised through its invisibility...and the examination is the technique by which power, instead of emitting the signs of its potency, instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification.”¹¹ In other words, in schools, power shifts from erratic displays of public punishment over and against educational life (humiliation, expulsion, etc.) to internal regulation concerned with reforming individual behaviors through proper training, protecting individual lives through investment, and optimizing efficiency. Such social orthopedics connect Foucault's genealogical analysis of the teacher and Christian pastoral power with Illich's theory of the teacher as pastor, prophet, and priest cited above. For both, the modern school is not so modern after all, re-institutionalizing the Christian shepherd in a secularized form.

⁸ Ivan Illich, “The Educational Enterprise in the Light of the Gospel” Lecture, Chicago IL, November 13, 1988.

⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 183.

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984* (New York: The New York Press, 2000), 57.

¹¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 187.

On the macro-level of the population, these micro-rituals of power that discipline and individuate bodies congeal into a philosophy of biopower wherein the management of the health of the nation becomes the principle problematic of the modern world.¹² Here bodies are transformed into statistics for the measurement of birth rates, migration statistics, consumption and production capabilities, and death rates in the form of censuses, surveys, and other quantitative tools of population measurement and calculation. Thus, disciplinary regimes function to correct and to regulate individual “free citizens” with rights while biopower manages a collective population on a macro-level. Two “series” are created: body-organism-discipline-institutions and population-biological processes-regulatory mechanisms-State.¹³ The element or category that unites and separates these two series (and thus allows biopower to pass into the disciplinary and vice versa) is the norm which “can be applied to both a body one wishes to discipline and a population one wishes to regularize.”¹⁴ In other words, biopower distributes disciplined bodies around normalities (in education, industry, politics, etc.) and in the process constitutes politics as immanent to life itself.

Overwhelmingly, Foucauldian scholars have focused on schools as disciplinary institutions. Yet this emphasis on disciplinary/pastoral power and its ability to train, homogenize, and invest in the body/mind of the student through subtle mechanisms does not adequately describe other forms of classroom interaction. Such as those students in the Chicago school system described above.

Extrapolating from Illich’s bleak description, we could argue that these schools are not facilitating disciplinary rehabilitation through the micro-management of student potentialities but rather an untimely educational abandonment that, as statistics now demonstrate, leads to high drop-out rates, expulsions, jobless futures, and various subaltern lifestyles outside of dominant disciplinary institutions. If schooling in capitalist America reproduces the student as a producer/consumer, then the frightening situation in Chicago schools falls short of social reproduction theory as well. There is a violence at work here which is not captured by the discourse of micro-management or the reproduction of capitalist social relations that inform many critical analyses of schooling, including Illich’s own. It is a violence of exclusion, an exceptional violence that does not weave students into a matrix of disciplinary power so much as make them bear witness to a power that judges them from the outside and above.

It is my contention that we need a new descriptive language to capture the full uniqueness of what Illich describes. In order to achieve this goal, we have to look back toward a theory of sovereign force, which, as we will see, maintains itself within disciplinary apparatuses as a disavowed anchoring point. Moving toward a language of sovereign force might seem counter intuitive to Foucauldian inspired educational theorists. In the literature cited above, sovereignty is more often than not described as an anachronism in two senses. Theoretically, sovereignty restricts our analysis of power to a reductive legalistic framework often associated with a critique of the oppressive state. It also focuses on questions regarding who has power rather than how power operates, its techniques, and its technologies. Phenomenologically, it is incapable of describing the reality of power relations existing in the modern world as they are distributed in networks that function continuously, silently, invisibly, and ubiquitously. As such we cannot dwell on questions of sovereignty but rather must refocus attention on the micro-physics of disciplinary power. This shift does not mean that sovereign force no longer operates in schools; it

¹² Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

¹³ Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended* (New York: Picador, 2003), 250.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 253.

simply means that its functioning is increasingly peripheral to the daily routines of education. For instance Roger Deacon's in-depth analysis of Foucault's theory of education states that coercive power relations "still have their place" in modern schooling, but have been largely replaced by subtler forms of disciplinary training and "moral orthopedics."¹⁵ Likewise Robin Usher and Richard Edwards argue that "effective learning, the training of the body and soul, renders unnecessary the requirement for more direct forms of coercion, although these forms never entirely disappear."¹⁶ Sovereign force remains at sites where disciplinary normalization seems to break down. Key here is that sovereign force does not form a necessary category within an analysis of disciplinary power. It remains a left over, a shadow that haunts disciplinary power from the outside. Because sovereign force appears to be an anachronism in present day schooling, ethical analyses of Foucault in education speak to resistance against disciplinary normalization and to the production of contra-conduct rather than rebellion against overt forms of violence and or authority.¹⁷

At the same time, Foucault's lectures have emphasized that while the modern world might be dominated by a disciplinary paradigm on an institutional level, on the level of the health of the population, on the level of biopower, sovereign force is far from a peripheral issue and in fact returns in the form of genocide against the "other" as biological threat.¹⁸ As opposed to the above-mentioned studies, noted educational philosopher John Covalleskie has argued that sovereign force is a *central* issue for educational philosophy, thus opening up a line of investigation that enables us to reassess the internal role of sovereign force in modern schooling.¹⁹ In fact, for Covalleskie, the figure of the teacher is one of the very last outposts for sovereign force in the modern world. While schools might be disciplinary institutions, the force that teachers wield over their students is a form of power sharing many qualities with classical notions of sovereignty: it is inconsistent, not regular; often overt, not subtle; visible, not invisible; vengeful, not indifferent. Because disciplinary power is diffuse, invisible, and ubiquitous it is difficult to resist, yet as Covalleskie points out, the sovereign force of the teacher is often a central catalyst for student resistance. Such resistance then provides the institutional motor for then re-inscribing students into an expanding disciplinary regime. Thus, sovereign force is not simply a marginal anachronism existing only when disciplinary mechanisms falter. It is rather a constitutive aspect of schooling (as both an institution and as a set of social relations within the classroom) with intimate ties to the extension and proliferation of disciplinary mechanisms. In relation to the politics of policy implementation in higher education, theorists such as Maarten Simons (2006) have argued that the European initiative "life long learning" has the very real potential to shift from a form of self-government into a form of sovereign decision to let die or make live.²⁰ Drawing on Foucault's later biopolitical lectures and recent scholarship by Giorgio Agamben, Simons correctly pinpoints the persistence of sovereign force within the

¹⁵ Roger Deacon, "Moral Orthopedics: A Foucauldian Account of Schooling as Discipline," *Telos* 130 (2005): 90.

¹⁶ Robin Usher and Richard Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education* (London: Routledge, 1994), 100.

¹⁷ Frank Pignatelli, "Mapping the Terrain of a Foucauldian Ethics: A Response to the Surveillance of Schooling," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 21, no. 2 (2002): 157-80; and "Dangers, Possibilities: Ethico-Political Choices in the Work of Michel Foucault," in *Philosophy of Education Yearbook, 1993* Audrey Thompson ed. (Urbana-Champaign, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 1993).

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended* (New York: Picador, 2003).

¹⁹ John Covalleskie, "Power Goes to School: Teachers, Students, and Discipline," in *Philosophy of Education Yearbook, 1993*, ed. Audrey Thompson (Urbana-Champaign, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 1993).

²⁰ Maarten Simons, "Learning as Investment: Notes on Governmentality and Biopolitics," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 38, no. 4 (2006): 523-40.

biopolitical state. From the now pervasive logic of neo-liberal, entrepreneurial ideology, the state invests in what will produce a viable and strategic outcome. Here learning becomes an investment in life, thus capitalizing learning within an overall “vital-economy.” “If,” as Simons states, “the expectation of possible incomes disappears, their [youth] very real existence and survival is at stake.”²¹ The sovereign decision is in other words a decision based on a cost-benefits analysis concerning long-term social payoffs of educating certain bodies over and against others. The economic calculus that functions within the biopower of the state acts as the sovereign determinate indicating which bodies have become socially superfluous. Thus, social abandonment lies at the very heart of the logic of social investment and a governmental logic of self-regulation.

In sum, both Covaleskie and Simons suggest that an analysis of the relation between the educator and sovereign force is still necessary; only now the sovereign’s claim over life has been transformed into a biopolitical claim concerning the nature of the individual subject and his or her productive role in relation to the health and prosperity of the population. Yet questions still remain. For instance, Covaleskie and Simons remain silent on major issues concerning the relation between this power over death and race and class. Which bodies are subjected to the sovereign ban and how is this related to a racialized notion of the “entrepreneurial self”? Secondly, there is a question of the exact relation between the production of self-regulating subjects and the production of the sovereign ban. In Covaleskie’s argument, the sovereign decision reinforces disciplinary modes of power, enabling new lines of discipline to penetrate, describe, and control socially disruptive behaviors. In Simons’ case, he argues that the production of “bare life” via the sovereign decision to let die is *the* principle political object within biopolitics, yet he does not adequately analyze what role this object plays within an entrepreneurial, neo-liberal economy. Is the body simply the waste of an investment paradigm or does it serve a structural function as waste?

Here we have to reopen the question of sovereignty via Agamben’s theory of exceptionality.²² For Agamben, sovereignty maintains its functioning within the modern era by producing a biopolitical body that includes life within itself through its exclusion. Biopolitics is thus at its most foundational moment grounded in a form of violence whereby life is exposed to the logic of the sovereign ban. Bare life is natural life (*zoe*) that has been banned, or rather politicized by a sovereign decision, and it is this form of life—stripped of civil rights and social investment—that forms the premiere political object of biopower. The space of bare life is, as Agamben argues “a no man’s land between a process of subjectivation and a process of desubjectivation, between identity and nonidentity.”²³ This is a space of pure survival without the supplement of *bios*. Thus bare life is a paradoxical location betwixt and between the inside and outside of the state, lacking the security of rights or legal processes and devoid of the investment of a normalizing, disciplining apparatus. It is a space of irrational excess based on a sovereign decision outside the law yet founding the law.

For Agamben, the quintessential spatial location of the sovereign decision over life is the camp. Agamben defines the camp as a “state of exception” functioning outside the normal state of the law. It is a spatial location where the law remains operative only through its suspension.

²¹ Ibid, 535-536.

²² Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

²³ Jason Smith, “I Am Sure that You are More Pessimistic than I Am...’ An Interview with Giorgio Agamben,” *Rethinking Marxism* 16, no. 2 (2004): 17.

As such, the camp has a paradoxical location. According to Agamben, “What is being excluded in the camp is *captured outside*, that is, it is included by virtue of its very exclusion.... The people who entered the camp moved about in a zone of indistinction between the outside and the inside, the exception and the rule, the licit and the illicit, in which every juridical protection had disappeared.”²⁴ These individuals captured by the no-man’s-land of the camp are given over to the sovereign decision. They are, in other words, rendered *sacred*. Tracing the etymological roots of the sacred, Agamben argues that in Roman law, the sacred individual is the one who can be killed without the accusation of murder.²⁵ In the camp, the fate of the sacred individual is determined not so much by the normal rule of law as the arbitrary will of the sovereign who makes a decision. What is most disconcerting for Agamben, is that the logic of the camp functions as the “hidden matrix and *nomos* of the political space in which we still live”.²⁶ It is not an anachronism to discuss the sovereign decision, rather it is *the* biopolitical question.

Here we can return to my example from Illich’s analysis of educational extermination in Chicago schools. Students in these schools are externally included, or, as Michelle Fine argues, they become the educational “disappeared.”²⁷ These children are not examples (which are “exclusive inclusions” of proper or improper action within a disciplinary regime)²⁸ but are exceptions (which are “included exclusions” totally invisible or disappeared). In other words, the student is rendered “uneducatable” and thus outside the field of normalization while remaining firmly within the very institutions which were meant to “educate” him or her. Schools become paradoxical locations of disappearance. In light of Agamben’s theory of the sovereign decision, the camp, and the sacred, Illich’s remarks concerning contemporary schooling gain a new urgency and relevance. For example, in passing, Illich argues that “Classroom attendance removes children from the everyday world of Western culture and plunges them into an environment far more primitive, magical, and deadly serious. Schools could not create such an enclave within which the rules of ordinary reality are suspended, unless it physically incarcerated the young during many successive years on sacred territory.”²⁹ The logic of the camp is clearly described in this passage: schools suspend the normal law, thus becoming sacred spaces of institutional abandonment.

What we see at work here is a form of necroschooling. This term is an adaptation of Achille Mbembe’s term necropolitics, which suggests that the function of politics today is no longer purely to regulate and invest in *bios* (political life) but rather to reduce *bios* to inhuman life through a power of death.³⁰ It is also a term that draws upon Paulo Freire’s observation that the pedagogy of oppression is itself necrophylic, or in love with death rather than biophylic or in love with life.³¹ Such a necropower does not simply imply biological or actual death (although in its most extreme forms, massacre is certainly its final *telos*), but can include forms of social death wherein a productive civic identity is withheld from the subject. Necroschooling is a form of education that is more concerned with abandonment than with social investment, protection, etc. It reveals that at the heart of technologies of biopower lies an obscene sovereign decision

²⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without Ends* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 40-41.

²⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

²⁶ Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without Ends* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 37.

²⁷ Michelle Fine, *Framing Dropouts: Notes on the Politics of and Urban High School* (New York: SUNY Press, 1991), 24.

²⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 22.

²⁹ Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (London: Marion Boyars, 2002), 32.

³⁰ Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11-40.

³¹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2000), 77.

that is predicated on a fundamental ban that separates the social from itself, creating an internal division that does not operate in terms of hierarchical normalization or examination. In order to fill out the specificities of necroschooling, I will now describe the mechanisms underlying the force of abandonment.

First, the gaze of necropedagogy has its origins in the long history relating education and medicalization.³² Just as the clinical gaze understands life only in relation to the corpse as reference so too the normalizing gaze of education only understands knowledge in relation to ignorance/stupidity.³³ Thus the gazes of medicine and pedagogy are structurally similar, knowing the healthy through the referent of the sick and smart through the referent of the ignorant. Throughout the history of schooling in the U.S. (see in particular the history of educational eugenics) these two gazes have repeatedly conjoined to monitor and inspect the student as (potential) biological/intellectual *corpse*—thus linking eugenics with Freire’s pedagogy of oppression as a necrophylic pedagogy obsessed with death.³⁴ As such, the history of biopower and its internal relation to necropower are intimately linked through the *macabre* gaze of deficit thinking. This macabre gaze is certainly at work in Illich’s description. For Illich, students in these inner city schools are rendered educationally invisible, subjected to a new, intensified version of educational violence.

It is in the macabre gaze of necropedagogy that a critical distinction becomes clear. While Foucault’s analysis of disciplinary power examines the technologies that produce and sustain the dialectic of the normal and the abnormal, the gaze of necropower ultimately distinguishes a different object entirely: the abject. The abject is not simply the extreme of the abnormal but rather falls outside the scope of the normalizing “bell curve.” As Joy James argues in her criticism of Foucault’s color blindness, the abject body is a racialized body that cannot be normalized through disciplinary apparatuses but is at the outset deemed unfit and thus given over to the field of necropower.³⁵ I would press her argument even further and suggest that the “health” of the normalized population (white, middle-class, etc.) is in fact sustained by the production of this abject for it is the foreclosure of abjection that sets the parameters of the field of the normal and the abnormal. Thus the racialized other as deficit is not simply a body that is abnormal (and thus capable of normalization) but a discounted body exposed to necropower as a power over whose life can and cannot be educated. It is this body that is marked for a certain form of social disqualification from the active life of the citizen subject—a body that ironically is forced to survive as a social corpse neither inside nor outside. This is not a subject that acts to further expand disciplinary mechanisms (as in Covalleskie’s model), nor is it simply a surplus (as in Simons’s analysis). Rather the life of the student subjected to necropedagogy is the excluded ground for defining the normalized, docile, disciplined body.

Thus, it is important to remember that for Foucault there are two types of disciplinary technologies. The first is perhaps the most widely commented upon: the panopticon. The goal of the panopticon is to “improve the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more

³² Tyson Lewis, *Sovereignty-Discipline-Education: Essays on Biopedagogy*. PhD diss., UCLA, 2006.

³³ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

³⁴ Steven Selden, *Inheriting Shame: The Story of Eugenics and Racism in America* (New York: Teachers College, 1999).

³⁵ Joy James, *Resisting State Violence: Racism, Gender, and Race in U.S. Culture* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 1996).

effective, a design of subtle coercion for a society to come.”³⁶ The panopticon renders all actions and behaviors visible through examination, careful cataloging, and recording so as to normalize and homogenize the subject. The other image of discipline is the “discipline-blockade” which is an “enclosed institution, established on the edges of society, turned inwards towards negative functions: arresting evil, breaking communications, suspending time.”³⁷ Stated differently, Foucault’s distinction between 18th century institutions which “reinforce marginality” and 19th century institutions which “aimed at inclusion and normalization” seems to have reversed itself in relation to those schools that serve low income, minority students.³⁸ Here urban schools such as those described by Illich appear to resemble the discipline-blockade of the 18th century; as I am arguing, this image of a negative institution forms the proper genealogical paradigm for understanding educational abjection or invisibility.

Agamben’s work pushes us even further and, as suggested above, forces us to confront the relation between the camp and the school. While it might seem outrageous to suggest that certain schools, such as those described by Illich, exist in the hazy realm between panoptic spaces of disciplinary power and camp-like spaces of sovereign force, there appears to be a pressing need to make such analogies in order to reveal the secrete kernel of sovereign force the underlies U.S. educational institutions.

To summarize, we can now formulate the exact differences between disciplinary power and sovereign force in relation to three questions:

- a) What is the gaze of sovereign violence?
- b) What is the object produced through sovereign punishment?
- c) What is the educational space of sovereign force?

Distinct from the genealogies that link schools to churches and capitalist production, I propose a completely new set of terms that are necessary in order to understand educational sovereignty. Here the gaze is the gaze of macabre abandonment, the object produced is not an object at all but rather the abject (neither inside nor outside the school, locked in the zone of indifference), and the space of necropedagogy verges dangerously close to that of the camp or discipline-blockade.

How can we overcome the limit of the sovereign decision and thus end educational abandonment? Perhaps what we need is to draw a line in the sand between education and the logic that makes the school a sacred space of abjection. For Agamben, religion “removes things, places, animals, or people, from common use and transfers them to a separate sphere” thus rendering them sacred.³⁹ The mechanism of the sacred is of course sacrifice. For Illich, schooling removes education from the sphere of common use, making us dependent upon the teacher as priest, prophet, or pastor. This separation is predicated on a sacrifice, an abandonment, of the child to a sovereign decision over and against life. In opposition, Illich proposes deschooling as the *profanation* of education. Profanation, for Agamben, “returns to use what the sacred had separated.”⁴⁰ Is this not exactly Illich’s formulation of deschooling? Isn’t deschooling the abolition of separation that divides education from social life and in turn the community from self-regulation? In sum, removing the sacredness of education embodied in the rituals of

³⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 209.

³⁷ Ibid, 209.

³⁸ Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984* (New York: The New York Press, 2000), 79.

³⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 74.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 74.

schooling, and thus releasing education back to the common, becomes the mission for radical educators today.

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