Interpreting Foucault: an evaluation of a Foucauldian critique of education

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The potential strengths and weaknesses of a Foucauldian critique of education are discussed and evaluated. The article focuses specifically on the value of Foucault's work for critiquing social and political ideologies prevalent in education, which is understood as a societal institution, and hence, as a modern regime of institutional power. In terms of strengths, the ability to raise issues of knowledge, power and contestation that are traditionally ignored in educational theory is addressed. In terms of weaknesses, Foucault's problematic use and understanding of power and his apparent rejection of objective truth are investigated. The critique develops at the hand of influential, but competing, interpretations of Foucault's contribution to the field of education in particular, and philosophy in general. It is argued that these influential readings of Foucault gain traction within specific discourses (such as education), and should thus be subjected to critical scrutiny.

Keywords: critique; education; Foucault; institution; power; truth

Introduction

During the past two decades, Michel Foucault's archaeological and genealogical methodologies have been employed in the theory of education to pose an alternative to the critical and liberal theories (grounded in the philosophy of consciousness) that have traditionally dominated theoretical discourses in this field (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). Chris Mayo (2000:103) argues that this turn to Foucault appears:

> to be part of a more general attempt to reevaluate and revise positions previously taken, and to resituate now potentially problematic concepts like "progress" and "autonomy" while still attempting to sort out better and worse forms of agency, power, and resistance.

Despite many advantages, the turn to Foucault — which draws mostly on his earlier work — has also met with some criticism. In this article, the potential strengths and weaknesses of a Foucauldian critique of education will be discussed and evaluated. The aim of the article is to assess influential interpretations of Foucault's work in the field of education (particularly Thomas Popkewitz and Marie Brennan's (1998) article, entitled 'Restructuring of social and political theory in education: Foucault and a social epistemology of school practices'), with the hope of gauging the merit of these perceived strengths and weaknesses. Influential readings of Foucault gain traction within a specific discourse (such as education), and often form the basis of future debate. As such, these interpretations should also be subjected to critical scrutiny.

In focusing on the value of a Foucauldian critique of education, the article also progresses with the assumption that, in order for such a critique to be successful, the critic must be able to impact on the social and political ideologies prevalent in the theory of education. In other words, the intent is not to evaluate the potential value that Foucault holds for the specific

learner's self-construction (although it has convincingly been argued by Mayo (2000) and Justin Infinito (2003:171) that there is much merit in re-inscribing education 'as an effort to aid individual self-construction'). Rather, the aim is to evaluate the value that Foucault's work holds for critiquing education as a societal institution, and hence, as a modern regime of institutional power.

Towards a critique of education

Traditionally, the task of critical theorists is to help mankind accept the ideals prescribed by philosophy, particularly those ideals that are deemed advantageous for society. Critical theory therefore has a practical objective (Rajchman, 1985). However, if one were to read Foucault as a critical theorist, then one would have to forego this definition, which rests on the distinction between ideals and practice. For Foucault, theories are always already practices. His central concern is therefore not to realise philosophical ideals in practice, but rather to make people aware of those forms of knowledge, norms and ideals that constitute their lives (*ibid.*). Particularly important for Foucault is the idea of power, and in his philosophy, he tries to elucidate our relation to specific (although anonymous) configurations of power. His critique is not centred on a global or universal critique of society, and neither does he offer any ideal view of life. Instead, he limits himself to articulating those forms of knowledge and power that we have come to accept as self-evident and that often obscure our understanding of ourselves (*ibid.*).

Whereas traditional critical and liberal theorists have assumed the role of the 'professor-critic', Foucault has attempted to create a type of critique that neither delivers judgement nor poses alternatives for the emancipation of society. In this regard, his philosophy also constitutes a critique of the critical and liberal theories grounded in the philosophy of consciousness, wherein it is presumed that we are in a position to carry forth a historical emancipation, through determining the foundations of knowledge, and through revealing the ill-founded ideologies that form the basis of society (*ibid.*). Instead of asking, 'What are the foundations of our knowledge?' Foucault poses an alternate question, namely: 'How have we come to accept the types of knowledge that we presume to be legitimate, valid and true?' In so doing, Foucault attempts to problematise that which we take to be self-evident, not in order to uncover a redemptive truth about human nature nor to reveal the *telos* of human history, but merely to draw attention to previously neglected issues of change and dimensions of knowledge and power relations. He further tries to nurture sensitivity for how different epistemes and intellectual traditions have raised different epistemological and political points of focus, and how research projects have been influenced by different sets of relevance (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998).

Apart from the belief in progress that underpins traditional critical and liberal theories, these theories also work with the premise that disciplinary knowledge has a subject, which Alessandro Pizzorno (1992:204) defines as 'a unit, continuous in time, possessing a personal identity that nobody normally questions… and through which past and future actions appear to be linked together.' Pizzorno argues that within this ideological paradigm, the individual is posited as an observable reality, to whom an external observer can refer when describing society, and to whom power and reason can be applied, in order to manipulate behaviour. Power and reason are exercised by a certain set of actors who are in possession of social scientific knowledge, and who can consequently steer society — defined as a population of pre-constructed, pre-labelled individuals — in a direction that can guarantee the betterment of society.

In terms of school reforms, Popkewitz and Brennen (1998) argue that the traditional critical discourses on change (specifically the liberal discourses) follow rational, systematic and logical lines. The state and educational theorists conceptualise reforms, and the teacher (defined as a self-motivated professional) implements these reforms. As such, social progress is achieved through schooling, and the subjects of redemption are defined as marginalised groups, including subjects of racial discrimination, and, more recently, women. The direction of progress is typically an outcome of the research itself, and although different research projects lead to different outcomes, all these outcomes are seen as emancipatory. The theorist assumes authority over the subject, who, paradoxically, is viewed as a free rational agent.

Foucault (1989) uses the term 'doubles' to refer to this modernist view of the individual, as someone who is simultaneously conceived of as the object of knowledge and the transcendental condition of knowledge. This view manifests in three doubles, namely: the transcendental / empirical double, wherein the aim is to assimilate a transcendental truth (based on eschatology or positivism) with the empirical; the cogito / unthought double, whereby one tries to make intelligible the unthought or obscured realms of man's actions and thoughts; and, the retreat / return of the origin double, which builds on the second double, and which amounts to the attempt to conceive of an ever-elusive origin. None of these doubles are tenable, and theorists must continue to try and break out of what Jürgen Habermas (1994:69) terms 'this unstable to and fro between aspects of self-thematization that are just as irreconcilable as they are inevitable… as the intractable will to knowledge and more knowledge', which has come to define our intellectual tradition.

Despite privileging the subject, theories steeped in the philosophy of consciousness have not always been empowering or convincing. This is primarily because the power invested in the dominant actors (who engage in the practice of 'doubling' the subject) has often gone unchallenged due to the construction of the individual as a rational subject. Habermas reinforces this point in arguing that the human sciences — especially fields like psychology, pedagogy, sociology, political science and cultural sciences — have traditionally contributed to the perpetuation of disciplinary technologies insofar as they have uncritically partaken and reinforced disciplinary violence in social institutions through 'the penetrating gaze' (69) of one that can look (and therefore quantify, qualify and classify) without being seen (due to the maintenance of objective distance).

What is clear from this discussion is that there remains a continuing need to escape intellectual paradigms that perpetuate the above view of the subject, power, and knowledge; and, as stated in the introduction, Foucault's work (especially his use of the archaeological and genealogical methodologies) constitutes a helpful tool for overcoming these negative self-thematisations.

The value of a Foucauldian critique of education

Foucault (1977a:69) describes archaeology as those empirical studies relating to a specific discipline that has 'allowed us to isolate the distinctive level of discursive practices' and that reveals the 'general characteristics and the proper methods for their analysis'. Genealogy, on the other hand, is used in conjunction with archaeology and signifies the '[s]tudies conducted in relation to the *will to knowledge*' (69). According to Herbert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (1983), genealogical studies provide a theoretical justification for archaeological investigations by rendering the human sciences comprehensible as part of a larger set of organised and organising practices, as well as by explicating the present state of affairs through examining

the history that has contributed to legitimising a present discourse or practice. Barry Smart (1985) argues that the value of Foucault's genealogies lie in their ability to expose previously neglected areas of human history (including physiology, feeling, morality and sentiments), which have traditionally been assimilated into extra-historical structures. These issues are taken-up under the term 'micro-powers' or 'microphysics', and Foucault raises their singularity in order to rediscover the complexity and multiplicity of factors that impact on and characterise any single event. Furthermore, by contrasting different systems of belief, Foucault is able to highlight the perspectival nature of all knowledge, thereby debunking any form of teleology. The vital elements of continuity in both Foucault's archaeological and genealogical work are themes of power, knowledge and the body, and the complex relations between these concepts, as they appear in both discursive and non-discursive practices.

Popkewitz and Brennan (1998:9) illustrate their Foucauldian position using the example of learning, which they define as 'embodying a range of historically constructed values, priorities and dispositions toward how one should see and act toward the world'. Similarly, the learner is also defined as constituted within a framework of historically institutionalised forms of knowledge and power. This reinscription problematises the notion of a rational, free subject, thereby necessitating that we abandon both the view of the individual, construed as the architect and controller of an internal and external order, and the view of the individual as an *a priori* given. In the Foucauldian perspective, the individual is decentred, and the focus of analysis shifts from studying individuals (for example, children, black people, women) to studying the system of ideas that constitute the identity of those individuals (for example, childhood, blackness, femininity). In decentering the subject, the theorist highlights previously obscured power relations that disturb the liberal rhetoric of progress and emancipation, and thereby opens up discourses to alternate conceptions of current practices (*ibid*).

In the theory of education, Foucauldian terminology is directly applied to modern day educational practices, in order to reveal how the microphysics of power such as surveillance, exclusion, classification, distribution, totalisation and regulation (through the practices of writing, grading and examining) pervade the learning environment (Gore, 1998). In fact, Popkewitz and Brennan (1998) go as far as to suggest that the institutions of formal education are central to discipline in society, since it is here where governmentality and the techniques and strategies of disciplinary technologies are nurtured. These disciplinary technologies have, in turn, pervaded other institutions, thereby forming the major powers that define western society.

Although Foucault studied several institutions (including the asylum, the prison, and the clinic) in order to investigate the disciplinary technologies at play, he never conceded to any dominant locus of discipline and power in society. Rather, Foucault's genealogy is characterised by a discontinuity between events and time, and he gives very little indication of what causal influences are at work in society. The reason for this being that, if an ultimate cause or ground could be located, then history could be portrayed as continuous (and possibly even progressive), which would allow social critics to transform society through identifying, and thereby acting upon, the source of disciplinary practices (Giddens, 1988). This would constitute a return to a philosophy of consciousness. Rather, Foucault contribution lies in unveiling the power relations and disciplinary practices that we have come to view as normal in our practices, including our educational practices.

A last issue that Popkewitz and Brennan (1998) raises in order to demonstrate the superiority of a Foucauldian critique above traditional critical and liberal theories is that of resis-

tance. In the philosophy of consciousness, resistance is viewed as external to the system of power relations, whereas for Foucault, resistance always forms a part of this system. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977b) argues that resistance is necessary in order to transform and to assert power. In other words, resistance is both an element of the functioning of power and a source of its perpetual disorder. In viewing resistance as part of the mechanisms of power, educational critics have begun to pay closer attention to the performative aspects of classroom talk and writing. The voice of both the student and the teacher is no longer viewed as natural, because, in resisting, the reflective 'I' is contrasted with the subject as a historical construction.

In summary, in viewing educational practices in the light of Foucault's work, educational critics are able to raise issues of knowledge, power and contestation that are ignored in the more traditional critical and liberal theories. Lynn Fendler (1998) argues that, taken in the context of genealogy, the educated subject is posed both as a description and as a construction of historical power configurations. The language and assumptions that characterise the philosophy of consciousness fail to lead to educational reforms, through virtue of the fact that such positions contribute to (rather than challenge) current disciplinary technologies, and are therefore unable to move beyond the parameters of stipulated objectives. It is only once the subject, and the intellectual tradition to which the subject belongs, is problematised and understood in the context of shifting power relations, that effective critique is possible.

Applying Foucault: a second look

Popkewitz and Brennan's careful elucidation of the value that Foucault offers in conceptualising social and political theory in education remains influential. However, there are two criticisms routinely lodged against Foucault, which are also applicable in this context, and which therefore need to be examined. These criticisms concern Foucault's use and understanding of power, and Foucault's apparent rejection of any notion of objective truth.

Foucault's use and understanding of power

Although one can hardly deny that Foucault is a social critic, his genealogies — paradoxically — seem to deny the possibility of successful criticism. The concern here is with the status that power enjoys in Foucault's work. Habermas (1994:62) explains as follows: '[j]ust as life was once elevated by Bergson, Dilthey and Simmel to the basic transcendental concept of a philosophy … so Foucault now raises 'power' to the basic transcendental-historicist concept of historiography as a critique if reason'. This problem is compounded by the fact that, in refusing to pose emancipatory alternatives, Foucault also refuses a value-position. In other words, he repudiates the possibility of freedom through truth (since, for him, truth can only be defined within a given intellectual tradition) (Taylor, 1986). We will return to this issue later, but at present, it is illuminating to explore the critique of Foucault's view of power in more detail.

Marxist critics point out that in elevating the notion of power to the basic transcendental-historicist concept of philosophy, Foucault runs the danger of generalising our understanding of power to such an extent that it has very little or no analytic force (McNay, 1994). Charles Taylor (1986) reinforces this point by showing how Foucault views the rise of humanism solely in terms of technologies of control, thereby negating the possibility of progress made in terms of, for example, egalitarian forms of participation. Applied to educational theory, one can argue that the strengths that the genealogical methodology hold in

bringing previously neglected micro-powers to light, are offset by the almost wholesale dismissal of the learner and teacher, understood not merely as objects of disciplinary power, but also as discrete social, legal, political and psychological entities.

Lois McNay (1994) further argues that Foucault tends to view discipline primarily in terms of a history of unmitigated domination, even though it is his explicit aim to expand the concept of power to include not only the repressive effects of power, but also its positive effects (see Foucault, 1977b:23). McNay (1994:105) continues by stating that apart from the type of power exercised in 'complete and austere institutions' such as prisons, power relations in other sectors of society tend to be more free, reciprocal and porous. This point is systematically undermined (at least in the earlier works of Foucault), which results in a skewed view of discipline, described by Michael Walzer (1988:197) 'as rhetorically inflated and drained of moral distinctions'. Foucault's refusal to adopt a value-position further contributes to his problematic use of power, since relativising the notion of truth compromises the integrity of one's value judgements of different conceptions and manifestations of power.

Mayo (2000) rejects what he calls these 'claustrophobic accounts of power', arguing that a careful appraisal of Foucault's later works (particularly *The History of Sexuality*) allows for an account of power that does not draw power too negatively, but that rather attempts to 'warn off the dangers of normalizing power while simultaneously attending to the possibility of new forms of subjectivity and ethics' (104). These new forms of subjectivity and agency are denoted by the idea of 'caring for the self' which means 'not merely to know one's self but also to improve, to surpass and to master one's self' (Marshall, 1996:101). Mayo (2000:107) explains that whereas 'knowing thyself' leads to subjectification, 'caring for thyself' implies actively working on one's self. Mayo argues that the value that this reconceptualisation of power as a productive force holds is that it represents a way out of claustrophobic accounts of power, in that care of the self — acting upon one's self so-to-speak — constitutes the immensely difficult task of negotiating freedom while avoiding the traps of normalising power. As such, Mayo's reinterpretation of Foucault constitutes an attempt to right previous readings of Foucault in educational works 'that make power inescapable', and thereby 'appear to foreclose the possibility of action' (116).

Although Mayo's contribution extends the application of Foucault's work in educational theory by drawing attention to a more productive account of power that can help theorists' and researchers' to reevaluate their own practices (through a process of ethical self-formation), and thereby change their own approaches to research (Mayo, 2000), the basic contention is that Foucault's later works cannot be readily employed in order to criticise social and political ideologies that characterise theory in education. Otherwise stated, Foucault's later work is not suited to critiquing the educational institution, precisely because it advocates resistance to the forms of normality imposed on us by modern regimes of institutional power, such as the state, and, by extension, the educational system.

For the later Foucault, ethics amounts to an aesthetic way of life, in which we choose to cultivate our lives so that they may become works of art. As such, the individual forms the focus of analysis in his later work in that 'the principle work of art one has to take care of, the main area to which one must apply aesthetic values, is oneself, one's life, one's existence' (Foucault, 1987:362). It is therefore argued that Foucault's later work has limited appeal in education, which remains subject to the hazards of institutionalisation, and which is therefore largely incompatible with a philosophy, characterised by the image of the self-styled dandy. Furthermore, an appeal to Foucault's later work also cannot help to overcome the problems

associated with Foucault's use and understanding of power in his genealogies, which, as argued, often serve as a means for critiquing educational institutions.

In light of the above, it is argued that Foucault's use and understanding of power (as something that primarily encompasses forms of domination) limits the impact of a Foucauldian critique of education. Making power the object of philosophical analysis, restricts our understanding of the complex relations at play in education, and may result in the obfuscation of other important factors (including social, political, legal and psychological factors) that characterise institutions, such as education. Educational theorists should be sensitive to this pitfall, and seek to actively reintroduce differentiation in the concept of power when assessing its workings in the social and political ideologies that underlie theories of education.

Foucault's apparent rejection of any notion of objective truth

Taylor (1986) argues that, in order for power to exist as a meaningful construct, the idea of truth (viewed as a necessary condition of liberation) must in principle be possible. Liberation-through-truth is a necessary condition for effective social criticism and for collaboration in our own subjugation, even though this truth need not be construed as absolute. If the question of truth or emancipation cannot be raised within a regime (since truth is relative to the regime in question), then liberation can only amount to the substitution of one regime for another. Yet, even if this were to be successful, any gains in the name of truth would be impossible to assess, since the standards of truth and liberations are redefined within a new context. Consequently, resistance can only amount to local disruption within a dominant power form or regime. The only way in which criticism can result in effective gains for society is to introduce a measure of commensurability between Foucault's monolithic forms, and a value position (in terms of which we can discern between certain gains and losses for humanity).

For Walzer (1988:192), this criticism results in what he terms 'the lonely politics of Michel Foucault', which also forms the title of a chapter in which he explore the above issue in more detail. He cites Foucault as stating that the purpose of his project is 'not to formulate the global systematic theory which holds everything in place, but to analyse the specificity of mechanisms of power… to build little by little a strategic knowledge' (Foucault, 1980:145). Yet, as argued above, strategic knowledge requires a coherent view of reality and a sense of human purpose. Without a coherent view of reality (that is, without a theory of truth), Foucault cannot hope to meaningfully impact upon the disciplinary technologies of society. There appears to be no independent or significant standpoint, either internal or external to the system that can allow for the development of critical principles (Walzer, 1988). Knowledge can only be validated once resistance is possible; yet, on Foucault's terms, it is unclear what success local resistance can have. In other words, Foucault's detachment, his unwillingness to take up a value-position, disables his critical position. Walzer (207) summarises as follows: 'when critical distance stretches into infinity, the critical enterprise collapses'. Foucault's philosophy has demonstrative but no practical force and as such he is not a purposeful social critic. Walzer (206; 209) is therefore of the opinion that Foucault's powerful analysis of the disciplinary system collapses into nothing more that 'a rhetoric and a posturing' that 'stands nowhere and finds no reasons'. Consequently, Foucault is left '[a]ngrily… rattl[ing] the bars of the iron cage. But has no plans or projects for turning the cage into something more like a human home' (209).

Greg Seals (1998) takes issue with those who assert that Foucault rejects any notion of objective truth, arguing that Foucault distinguishes between the ideological ideal of eman-

cipating truth from every system of power, and the laudable task of detaching the power truth from forms of hegemony that dominate at any given time. This latter task is served by three operations, namely: *episteme* ('rules for identifying statements that can be judged as true or false'); *savoir* ('rules for judging statements true or false'); and, *connaisance* ('statements so judged') (59-60). These rules are context-dependent, however transsubjectivity and inter-subjectivity is also possible in so far as these rules conform to the standards of justified, true belief. Seals is of the opinion that Foucault's view of objectivity and truth constitutes a moderate or nonpolemical Cartesianism that is superior to objectivist and postmodern accounts of truth, both of which offer mutually exclusive accounts of objectivity thereby landing in an absurd impasse. When these latter perspectives are applied to the educational context, 'pedagogy serves as institutional support of the will to a single, exclusionary sense of truth' (64). Foucault's more moderate position is preferable precisely because it allows us to specify the meaning of our truths and knowledge 'in relation to any given statement they are used to characterize' (63). The strength of this approach in the domain of education is that:

> teachers… are able to examine with their students the truth-logics appropriate to various kinds of statements and investigate together the truth conditions, especially, of inter-subjective statements. On this pedagogical approach realms of truth become explorable as regimes, actually, of truth… Teachers and students, that is, become able to problematize knowledge (66).

Although Seals's account saves the Foucauldian project from the critique based on the incommensurability between Foucault's monolithic forms, the following critical question remains: to what end does one problematise knowledge? If one further explores Foucault's analysis of the microphysics of power in relation to the subject of knowledge, one finds that the space of the subject is vacated. Foucault explicitly stipulates that '[p]ower is not built up of 'wills' (individual or collective) nor is it derivable from interests' (Foucault, 1980:188). On the contrary, power is portrayed as deeply internalised and all-pervasive, and macro-structures and strategies of power (such as elections, parties, mass movements, legislative assemblies and political debates) are simply absent from Foucault's discourse on power (Walzer, 1988). According to Taylor (1986), this holds the consequence that Foucault's historiography amounts to power strategies without projects; or, otherwise stated purposefulness without purpose. This consequence represents the inverse of the consequences arising from the philosophy of consciousness, in which the purpose of dominant agents is realised through institutional mechanisms, in order to bring about purposeful activity. Yet, just as this philosophy has been shown to be ineffective, so too a theory with demonstrative but no practical force is also not suited for effective critique.

Taylor argues against Foucault's position, since, in order to make historical action intelligible, '[a] strategic pattern cannot be left hanging, unrelated to our conscious ends and projects' (87). Foucault is unable to resolve this position without sacrificing a part of his declared position. If he were to explain the continuing growth in disciplinary technologies in connection with the projects of a certain group, then he would have to assign priority to a dominant social class (thereby reinstating the liberal view of a group of actors steering and dictating the actions of others). The same problem arises if he were to attribute the growth of disciplinary technologies to the unintended actions of a certain group. The only other alternative is to illustrate how the microphysics of power might configure in such a way so as to result in a steady increase in disciplinary technology. Yet, as Taylor remarks, setting about to prove this seems an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task, and Foucault himself is not

bothered with taking up this task. Taylor concludes stating that: '[t]o give an absolute priority to the structure makes *exactly as little sense* as the equal and opposite error of subjectivism, which gives priority to the action, as a kind of total beginning' (90).

The idea of resistance only makes sense if we can link it to conscious ends and projects, and for this to happen one needs an account of truth and objectivity that is not only inter-subjective and transsubjective, but that is also in service of our ends and projects. In other word, we must know that we can make a difference, not only in our own lives, but also to the future of humanity. Truth and objectivity must be employed in the name of a liberating alter-native, otherwise exploring and problematising our conceptions of knowledge and truth merely amounts to an exercise in mental gymnastics. Although Seals is able to defend a Foucauldian account of truth, this account cannot serve any function when viewed in light of Foucault's larger power ontology.

Therefore, if we were to use a Foucauldian methodology to not only elucidate power relations, but to legitimise critical intervention, we transgress Foucault's position. The danger is that we will reinstall the knowledgeable liberal critic, who is able to make educated decisions on behalf of social actors (in this case learners), who will presumably benefit from the trans-formed and improved practices.

Conclusion

In light of the above, it would seem that although a Foucauldian critique of education is useful in raising previously neglected issues of knowledge, power, and contestation, and thereby in problematising intellectual traditions; this type of critique also has its limits. The heart of the problem has to do with Foucault's non-teleological, non-ideological position. In his later work, Foucault attempts to reintroduce a measure of agency by showing how the subject can actively work against normalising power, and thereby create the space for ethical freedom and self-formation. In order for a Foucauldian critique of education to be successful, his later work needs to be extended so that we are able to purposefully act upon not only ourselves, but also upon our societal institutions. Whether Foucault's analysis of caring for the self can indeed be extended to caring for society necessitates a close reading of his later works, and is beyond the scope of this article. At its core, the answer to this question hinges on the possibility of limiting Foucault's all-pervasive view of normalising power, conceding to dominant centres of power, and resurrecting a notion of purpose. Such a notion of purpose need not (indeed, must not!) be based on a causally progressive view of human history, orchestrated and steered by powerful individuals. Rather, we must seek to redefine the notion of progress as an ethical deepening and understanding of the human condition. In this sense, progress would mean taking care of the work of art of humanity, and it stands to reason that our educational institutions are pivotal centres for carrying this project forward.

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