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The purpose of this study was to reflect on several theories of homeschool advocates regarding the nature of childhood education practices. The study focused on claims made by some who identify as Christian that schools are outside the design God has for society and that parents should directly educate their children in the home.

This study utilizes a framework of cosmic relations developed by the Dutch Reformed philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd and central to the school of thought known as Reformational Philosophy. Aspectual Theory provides a structure for examining normative functioning. Sphere Sovereignty is the differentiated rights and responsibilities entities possess based on their cosmic law structure. Aspectual Analysis examines the actualization of normative functioning. Aspectual Theory presupposes that the cosmic law framework enables a plurality of entities to actualize their distinct normative functioning in a mutual supportive way, contributing to an experience of Shalom, or universal flourishing.

The cosmic structure of educational entities is theorized and three principles for normative functioning are postulated. The cosmic structure of Family and School are examined. Theories advanced by some homeschool advocates concerning the dysfunction and anti-normative status of schools are critically examined. A unique power, qualified in the Ethical bond of human relationships, is identified as crucial to understanding the educative distinctiveness of others and the possibility of educational institutions.

HOMESCHOOL AND SCHOOL: AN INQUIRY
INTO THE SPHERE SOVEREIGNTY
OF EDUCATIONAL ENTITIES

by

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Approved by

Glenn M. Hudak
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To Brea, *animae dimidium meae*

my faithful spouse and educator.

To the students of the Perelandra School:

Ransom
Asher
Sigourney
Tobias
Corwin

May you flourish!

To Joel Whitmire McClain

July 6, 2007 - Feb 3, 2012

in loving memory.

APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Homeschooling is a growing educational movement in America. Homeschoolers eschew conventional schooling and instead practice a more parent-directed learning centered in the home. The success homeschoolers are experiencing, that is their broad legal acceptance, their growth in numbers, and finally, the growing body of research¹ which shows that homeschooled children, in general, fare just as well as or better than on academic and social indicators as their schooled counterparts, challenges modern notions of the institution of *school* and the vocation of educator. What is the meaning of this challenge?

There exists today an institutional crisis in America, and this crisis is nowhere more evident than when examining attitudes toward schools. Students, parents and community leaders are increasingly calling for reform and questioning whether institutions of education truly serve the public's best interest. Questions of relevancy, safety and cost place incredible pressure on educators and school administrators. But these challenges to institutions of learning are not sudden or even new. They follow on the heels of an educational movement now nearly 30 years old: modern homeschooling. Citing a variety of reasons, including a desire to give their child more opportunity for

1 Joseph Murphy's *Homeschooling in America: Capturing and Assessing the Movement* (2012) provides an excellent review of the research over the past 20 years regarding the academic and social effects of homeschooling on children.

self-directed learning in a safe, unhurried, stress-free environment and to include in the curriculum the lessons of their cultural, moral and religious heritage which have guided them through life, parents are increasingly electing to forgo conventional schools and instead direct their child's education in the home. The modern homeschool movement in America continues to grow, currently at a rate of 8% a year (Ray, 2004; Rudger, 1999; Spiegler, 2003). In America, as of 2009, roughly 2.9% of school-aged children (5-17) were homeschooled (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2009). Since 2006, over 4% of school-aged children in North Carolina are homeschooled (NCDNPE, 2007).

Originally frowned upon and even charged with educational neglect by some, homeschoolers have persisted in their educational lifestyle. Increasingly, educational researchers who study homeschoolers find well adjusted children and socially-engaged families (Kunzman, 2009; Stevens, 2001). Reports of academic success have caused many universities and colleges to recruit homeschoolers. Indeed, the success of America's nearly 2 million homeschoolers have inspired others in numerous developed societies; current estimates include 15 developed countries and an additional 2 million students (Ray, 2011).

The transformation in the attitude in American culture toward school and homeschoolers is significant. Once a place that celebrated the one room schoolhouse, American is now a place which acknowledges the legitimacy of, and even often admires, the homeschool. As their numbers grow and attitudes toward them shift, homeschoolers

are in a unique position to influence society by advancing the theories and practices they embrace. They are increasingly in a position to advocate for changes to educational policy. Therefore, what homeschoolers think about learning and the institution known as school may very well impact the future educational policy.

Homeschooling is not a singular movement (Gaither, 2008; Knowles, Marlow, Muchmore, 1992; Stevens, 2001). Within the homeschooling community there is a wide range of practices and attitudes toward education and the institution known as school. Homeschoolers attribute their educational practices to an array of religious, epistemic, sociopolitical theories. As philosopher Richard Rorty (1989) has noted, it is a testament to the contingency that is characteristic of reality that a diverse group of people with different backgrounds and perspectives and theories about knowledge and society arrive at similar conclusions and practices. Several researchers have noted the increasing diversity present in the modern homeschool movement. Studies from the beginning of the homeschool movement (Chatham-Carpenter, 1994; Mayberry, 1995; Ray, 1997; Rudner, 1999) showed the movement predominately (over 90%) white and Christian. Evangelical, fundamentalist, pentecostal and charismatic denominations were most prominent, characterized by weekly church attendance and being "biblically anchored" (Murphy, 2012, p. 23). However, as early as the late 1990s, the correlation of homeschooling growth to these population demographics was recognized by many researchers as insufficient.

While in its recent resurgence homeschooling began as a trend among fundamentalist Christians with primarily religious motivations, homeschoolers now represent a wide array of values and political mores. As such, homeschoolers are no longer an easily defined segment of the population (Welner & Welner, 1999)

Joseph Murphy, Vanderbilt University Peabody School of Education associate dean, former vice president of the American Educational Research Association (AESA) and author of *Homeschooling in America: Capturing and Assessment the Movement* (2012), challenges the assessment that homeschooling is first and foremost a religiously motivated activity and instead argues that what defines homeschoolers is a decision to forgo the conventional school experience and instead become more directly involved in their child's learning. Murphy presents two major definitions of homeschooling. The one summarizes homeschooling deftly: “the rejection of public (and private) schooling and the use of the home as the center of educational gravity,” while the second provides a more complex framework comprised of several dimensions:

a student is homeschooled when (1) funding for the student's education comes from the family, not the government; (2) the service is provided by the parents, not state-funded (or privately financed) employees; and (3) regulation of the enterprise is internal to the family, not the responsibility of the government (or another entity such as a religious body). The closer one is to the family/parent end of the continuum on each of these three dimensions, the more robust is homeschooling. (Murphy, 2012, p. 6-7)

What is significant in Murphy's definitions is the recognition that while a majority of homeschoolers identify as religious, and specifically as evangelical Christians, the practice is not completely rooted in religious identities. Robert Kunzman, whose

ethnographic study *Write These Laws On Your Children* (2009) focused on six “conservative christian” homeschooling families, emphasizes this point. “Perhaps the most crucial insight in the homeschooler mentality is that they generally view education as more than just formal schooling” (p. 5). In other words, homeschoolers think that the experience of schooling provides less of an education than what can be provided by the family. Therefore, what manifests is a lack of reliance on others for educational services and instead emphasize the active role of the family, especially the parent. However, in each dimension, non-reliance on educational services and active role of the parent, there is significant range of attitudes and practices. This is again to say: not all homeschoolers cite the same reasons for their educational practices, and not all homeschoolers have the same orientation toward the institution known as school. Reasons cited for the rejection of educational services such as conventional schools include the inherent limitations of the classroom setting, or the use of public funding. Some find fault with particular curricular choices (the exclusion of some subjects, the inclusion of others), others with experimental methods. Some reject the authority and expertise claims made by teachers, others the bureaucracy inherent in complex organizations. Still others express concern for their child's safety, developmentally or physically. In regards to the second dimension, parent-involvement, there is again a broad array of practice. Many homeschooling families divide the labor of teaching with one parent, typically the mother, taking on the lion's share of the work (Kunzman, 2009; Lois, 2013; Stevens, 2001). Some homeschoolers gather around the kitchen table, others emulate the classroom in a specific

room, replete with desks and a whiteboard. Still others practice a more experiential learning by integrating their children into their daily activities. Some rely heavily on correspondence courses, which are now largely accessible online, while others incorporate a wide range of social activities and even form loose associations in order to swap teaching responsibilities amongst like-minded families. What is clear is that the definition of homeschooling is broad so as to include a wide range of attitudes and practices. In short, the label “homeschooler” fails to reveal the nuances present in the homeschooling community. However, as homeschooling develops and grows, one can anticipate the differences in attitudes and practices will come into sharper view.

One such view is their critical assessment of schools and of the vocation of educator. Homeschoolers ascribe to an array of ideas about knowledge, power and society. They are critical of the institution of school, but not all to the same degree. Some homeschool advocates argue that elementary, middle and high schools -- the modern institutions organized to provide education to children -- are radically dysfunctional, that is to say that their very existence signifies the social acceptance, and even propagation, of fundamentally anti-normative relationships between people and institutions, that society is aligned against families. The notion that schools are actually organized over and against families is a significant part of the homeschooling ethos.

Educating is deeply human and therefore susceptible to flaws. Some voices in homeschool movement argue not that schools are in need of reform, but that schooling is a dysfunctional use of the human power to educate. In contrast, homeschooling is a more

proper use of human's power to educate. But what does that mean exactly? If the homeschooling movement is to affect long-lasting positive social change, it must identify and communicate the theories which have yielded its success. Doing so requires critically reflecting on the theories used to critique the power of institutional school and defend the practice of homeschooling. What explains homeschooling's success, what is the source of its power? Can this success, this power, be exported out of the home and into institutions, or is it completely antithetical to institutional forms? Theorizing about homeschool power also includes critically examining the larger social implications of these theories. What might the future hold if the theories of homeschooling power are increasingly accepted as the norm? How will homeschooling impact the social practices of education and the profession of educator? Does homeschooling mean that society should completely dismiss the concept of school? I think not. Rather, I think that the success homeschoolers are experiencing signifies that the educational power present in a child and actualized through everyday interactions in a home environment and in family relationships is greater than our modern institutions conceive. This is not to say that I believe these home environments and family relationships preclude the need for additional environments and non-family relationships. Rather, it is to say the home environment and family relationships have a significant role in the education of a person, especially children, and that the success of homeschoolers provides additional insight into the power of this role which warrants significant philosophical inquiry.

As noted earlier, families who identify as Christian, evangelical and fundamentalist primarily, are a major voice in the homeschool community. What these individuals think about educational power, families and schools will likely have significance in the impact of the homeschooling movement. Their defense of the practice is what will most likely be heard in the marketplace of ideas. However, we we will examine later, many homeschool advocates who identify as Christian, instead of advancing theories concerning the nature of learning and of educating, have relied on particular forms of biblical exegesis for their defense of the practice and for their critique of schools. Yet, there is obviously significant difference within the Christian community concerning the validity of particular hermeneutics. Moreover, a biblical defense of parent-directed education will likely not be convincing to a person who does not find the biblical text authoritative. Indeed, the lack of pedagogical theories advanced by evangelical Christians supporting the state of affairs would seem to affirm the multiple voices from within the evangelical Christianity which are critical of the irrationalism inherent within modern American Christianity, and which has resulted in a lack of positive intellectual engagement with society. Mark A. Noll, Professor of History at Notre Dame and author of *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (1984) writes, "To put it simply, the evangelical ethos is activist, populist, pragmatic, and utilitarian. It allows little space for broader or deeper intellectual effort because it is dominated by the urgencies of the moment" (p. 12). Historian Nathan O. Hatch, and president of Wake Forest University, affirms Noll's populist evaluation of evangelicals, "The genius of

evangelicals long has been their firm identification with people" (1984, p. 73). Noll's point is not that populism is bad, but rather that 21st century American evangelicals need to be aware of their modern context and be able to resolve it with ancient Christian practices which have advanced a life of intellectual rigor. In short, human activity requires a reasoned defense, and, according to some, modern American evangelicals should make a more concerted effort to advance well-reasoned defenses for their choices. How might evangelical Christians develop intellectually? One suggesting by Noll is that Dutch Reformed Christianity could contribute to a postfundamentalistic evangelicalism (p. 216).

The *Reformed Tradition* echos a Latin rallying cry of Dutch Protestant Christians during the 17th century. The phrase "ecclesia semper reformanda est" is translated as "the church is always to be reformed". The Protestant Reformation was a 16th century movement challenging the authority claims of the Catholic church regarding its role in the restorative activity. Due in part to the close ties the Catholic church had to many nation-states, the Protestant Reformation greatly contributed to centuries of European political unrest. The Reformed tradition is nearly synonymous with *Calvinism*. John Calvin (1509-1564) was a young humanist lawyer when he converted to Christianity. He became a prominent Protestant theologian whose influential writings, which systematized Protestant thought, emphasized the sovereignty of Christ. Calvinism significantly influenced Western culture and is widely accredited with providing an ethical framework

that helped facilitate major changes in the political, economic and social order of the Western world (Hatch, 1989; Marsden, 1981).

Calvinism had a significant impact in the Netherlands and especially in Dutch social policy. Over a century long period starting in the mid 19th century, the Netherlands peacefully transitioned from a theocratic monarchy, one in which the Dutch Reformed Church was the official church of the state, to a pluralistic society, one which disestablished the Reformed Church, and which enabled the development of Protestant, Catholic and Secular cultures to co-exist within a single nation-state. The Reformed Tradition was the driving force behind a distinct Christian Democratic movement. Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), a Dutch theologian, journalist, educator and politician, developed several concepts, now associated with *Neo-Calvinism*. Kuyper was prodigious; he was a pastor in the Reformed Church and a key figure leading the disestablishment movement. He founded the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880. He founded and edited a national newspaper. He founded a political party, the Anti-Revolutionary Party, which advocated for peacefully transition from monarchy to a democratic form of government and ultimately rose to serve a Netherlands prime minister from 1901-1905. From within the faculty of the Free University of Amsterdam developed Reformational Philosophy, a unique school of thought which sought to philosophically express and expound upon Kuyper's religious themes.

Central to Kuyper's theology were concepts derived from the biblical story of creation (Kuyper, 2011; Mouw, 2011). According to the book of Genesis, reality was

created by God by his word and functions under his authority. God's creative activity involved speaking into existence different kinds of entities, each with its own environment to rule: stars in the sky, birds in the air, fish in the sea, and animals on the land. Lastly, humans, made “in the image of God”, were located in a garden and were commanded to further cultivate it. The principle derived from this story is that human activity is inherently creative and full of dignity. As such, cultural development is what humans were made to do, and all human activity has inherent dignity. What is important for our purposes is that humans are uniquely designed and empowered to act in reality. This unique status of humans takes on special significance in Reformational Philosophy. Reformational Philosophy provides a powerful lens by which to reflect on educational power and how it affects relationships, in homes and in society. Central to Reformational Philosophy is *Sphere Sovereignty*, a concept of inherent power, rights and responsibility. It is theorized that a proper recognition of the sphere sovereignty of social entities contributes to human flourishing and the common good. In considering educational power and entities theorists may benefit from the concept of Sphere Sovereignty, especially as it is expounded upon by the Dutch philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1977). An explicitly Christian philosophy, especially one originating in the Netherlands, may seem like an odd fit for an inquiry into the theories of education power present in the American homeschooling movement. However, there are some links. While the research shows that homeschooling is an increasingly diverse group, it is still largely a movement

populated by people who identify as Christian, and so might benefit from the infusion of Christian voices less influenced by the American fundamentalism.

Theory has value, but ultimately concepts and ideas manifest themselves in our responses to the issues of our everyday experience, our interactions with our environment and with others. Before inquiring into the inherent power, the sphere sovereignty, of educational entities, let us examine two examples of how homeschoolers in North Carolina demonstrate the struggle to resolve competing notions of parent-directed education in the home. The first example is at the start of North Carolina homeschool history and it involves Larry and Michelle Delconte, and how their actions provided the basis for legalizing home education activity in North Carolina. The second example has to do with the recent decision by North Carolinians for Home Education (NCHE) to modify North Carolina law governing homeschooling activity to provide more flexibility to parents to delegate instruction responsibility to parties outside the home. Both examples are provided to demonstrate how within the homeschool there exists a deeply rooted commitment to the home environment and the parent-child relationship. This commitment is often expressed in terms of religious commitments.

In 1981 Larry and Michelle Delconte moved to North Carolina and informed their local school that they were not enrolling their children, and instead were going to homeschool. Ultimately, Larry Delconte was charged with truancy, and his case went all the way to the North Carolina supreme court. In 1985 he was ultimately acquitted. The Delcontes expressed two reasons for choosing to homeschool. The one was explicitly

religious. They argued that as Christians who believed the bible is authority, the bible mandates that they teach their children. “The Delcontes are deeply religious, fundamentalist Christians They believe the Bible is authoritative and obliges them to teach their children at home.” (Declonte vs North Carolina, 1985). However, Larry Delconte also gave additional reasons, described as a socio-psychological, for wanting to homeschool. These reasons were oriented around the impact the act of sending a child to a school environment had on a child's identity:

Delconte explained his sociopsychological basis for home instruction in several ways: Sending children from the home at an early age signifies to them rejection by their parents. Young children are too susceptible to undesirable influences of both teachers and other students. Children should not be exposed to the community at large, either in or out of school, until they can have more of an effect on their environment than their environment can have on them. (Declonte vs North Carolina, 1985)

In short, the Delcontes sought the welfare of their children in accordance with their parental insight regarding the vulnerability of children to a variety of powerful influences present in a pluralistic society. In court, the prosecution attempted to discern which of these reasons was the primary motivating factor for the Delcontes. Larry Delconte testified that although his family has religious commitments, the sociopsychological reasons are sufficient. He said:

It is accurate that my decision to teach my children in my home was a twofold decision; that there were two reasons underlying that decision. One reason I would describe as sociopsychological, common sense reasons. The other reason is religious in nature. It is a tough question for me to answer as to which of these reasons is more important. Of course, I put Jesus Christ above anything. However,

either reason alone would be enough for me to want to teach my kids in the home. (Declonte vs North Carolina, 1985)

I cite the example of Larry Delconte to provide evidence of how even at the beginnings of the homeschool movement, religious and non-religious arguments were tightly bound together, and that many advocates saw them as complimentary and highly motivating. These two categories of reasons to homeschool, religious and "sociopsychological", continue to interplay in the homeschool community and create both unity and disunity amongst advocates. A very recent event, also in North Carolina, displays this interaction.

At the November 2012 board meeting of North Carolinians for Home Education (NCHE), a non-profit homeschool advocacy and support association formed in 1984, legislative vice president Spencer Mason gave a report of the activities of the legislative committee. The results of the November 2012 election were in, and the committee recognized their historical significance. Dan Forrest, a homeschooling father, had been elected lieutenant governor. Moreover, for the first time since Reconstruction, North Carolina had elected a Republican governor, as well as Republican majorities in the North Carolina House and Senate. Because historically Republicans have been amiable toward homeschooling, the committee believed the new political orientation of North Carolina's government provided a unique opportunity, the first in over 20 years, for the introduction of a bill to modify the law governing homeschooling in NC with minimal risk of major interference from those in opposition to homeschooling. The purpose of the

change would be to clarify the definition of homeschooling to include instructional activities in collaboration with non-guardians.

Mr. Mason, who had served on NCHE's board in some capacity since 1988, continued his report by providing a context of the desired change. NCHE helped write the existing law in 1988, and at that time, the vast majority of homeschoolers were educating younger children. What was assumed was that parents would be directly involved in the delivery of instruction of “core” subjects. However, not long after the law was enacted, it became clear that many homeschooling parents included a social component to their educational activity. What was of particular interest was that parents, especially parents of high schoolers, sometimes sought assistance in subjects they did not feel that they were strongly suited to teach. The result was that homeschooling parents sometimes collaborated and exchanged educational services. Collaborative structures varied, but a typical practice is that one parent might provide instruction to a small group of students in a particular subject matter for which he or she had expertise. For example, a physician might teach biology, or a journalist might teach language arts. Some of these instructional activities were loosely organized, almost “play-dates,” other were more formal, and functioned more as educational co-operatives. The legality of this practice was in question: Is this collaborative activity homeschooling or institutional schooling? Is it governed by the homeschool law, or the private school law? Because the law was fuzzy on the matter, the interpretation and enforcement was left to the director of the Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE), to whom private school and homeschool

administration was assigned. Given the relative infrequency of the activity – during the 1990s the number of homeschools in the state hovered between 5,000 and 10,000 – the director had enacted a “don't ask, don't tell” policy.

NCHE, as the largest homeschooling association in the state of NC, frequently fielded questions asked by homeschooling parents about co-operative activities. Since the beginning, this “don't ask, don't tell” policy toward homeschool co-operatives has been an elephant in the room. The members of the board, like many homeschoolers, were conflicted. To some, the absence of enforcement meant that it was legal activity. To others, the absence of its clear inclusion in the homeschool law, along with DNPE's interpretation, created a moral dilemma. Is it legal? Are NC citizens violating laws governing education by forming educational partnerships with other parents? In response to those who inquired, board members sought to educate those who asked about the legal definition of homeschooling and leave the issue regarding educational partnerships to the conscience of the homeschool parent. But even this tactic gave some board members pause. The NCHE board claims to be guided by Christian principles. By leaving the question to the conscience of each homeschooler, was NCHE leadership inadvertently violating the biblical principle of submission to legitimate authority? Given this dilemma, the NCHE board had occasionally, over the last 25 years, discussed revising the law to clarify this issue. However, whatever changes were desired were mitigated by the fear that those in opposition to homeschooling might use the NC legislative process to change the law to further restrict homeschooling freedom. Therefore, for years, NCHE has

watched and waited for a time favorable to enact change. Was now such a time?

Moreover, homeschooling in North Carolina had grown considerably. As of August 2012, there are nearly 50,000 legally recognized homeschools, enrolling an estimated 80,000 children (State of North Carolina Department of Administration, Division of Non-Public Education [NCDNPE], 2012). More and more parents were electing to homeschool, and a variety of issues, such as cyberschooling, which were unforeseen at the time the law was passed, were developing. Questions concerning the practice of educational co-operatives were becoming more frequent. The issue would have to be addressed eventually. Finally, the original director of DNPE had retired, and a new director had been appointed. While the new director had been fair to homeschoolers, DNPE was now more explicit in communicating that fact that the law is not clear and up for interpretation. Would a “don't ask, don't tell” policy continue to suffice? Given this background, and the current political climate in NC, the legislative committee was requesting the authorization from the rest of the board to explore the possibility of introducing a bill to change the NC homeschooling law to clarify the legality of co-operative educational activity between homeschooling parents. This explorative activity would include talking to NC legislators, as well as the director of DNPE, about the desired change, suggesting language to amend the law, and publicizing the matter amongst the membership and the public, all for the sake of determining the likelihood of success.

At the end of his report, the legislative committee's motion for NCHE to further explore the possibility of changing the law governing homeschooling to clarify the

legality of homeschool collaborative activity was discussed and then unanimously approved by the board. Little did the NCHE Board suspect that this act would generate amongst homeschoolers in North Carolina months of discussion, debate and conflict.

The early months of 2013 were very busy for NCHE and especially for Spencer Mason. News of NCHE's activity spread quickly throughout the homeschooling community in North Carolina and bordering states. The NCHE Facebook page, which had nearly 7,000 fans, functioned as an electronic forum. NCHE also held 5 public forums across the state to present and discuss the issue. These forums were advertised through NCHE's communication channels: the NCHE website, emails to their nearly 5,000 members, and Facebook event postings. In addition, the board members who serve as regional support leaders worked to inform homeschoolers through local support groups. The participation in the public meetings was mixed, attendance ranged from 10 to 50. During a six week period, members of the NCHE board heard from many people electronically. Spencer Mason received hundreds of emails from homeschoolers across the state. Homeschoolers in North Carolina were divided over NCHE's activity. While some expressed agreement for the need for clarity, others disagreed entirely. Many did not see the need to change the law: "If it's not broke, don't fix it." Many expressed concern with the risk of modifying the law, citing the potential of those in opposition to homeschooling to insert increased regulations; why endanger all homeschoolers for the sake of the conscience of a few. Others argued that NCHE was improperly pushing their own agenda, and that NCHE had no right to advocate to change the law, as they did not

represent all homeschoolers in the state. Still others criticized NCHE for poorly representing NC homeschoolers and failing to poll all homeschoolers. Some affirmed the moral dilemma inherent in the situation, and expressed gratitude to Spencer Mason and other board members for recognizing it and acting so as to have it eliminated. Still others thanked NCHE for leading the way on the issue of the ability of parents to direct their children's education. Some argued that homeschoolers were getting by with collaborating and the “don't ask, don't tell” policy was working. Therefore the risk of opening up the law was not worth it. Still others argued passionately that the modification in the law would empower and therefore encourage homeschoolers to develop stronger partnerships with others, leading to the delegation of educational responsibilities, thus violated the very spirit of homeschooling. The diverse response to the issue of modifying North Carolina homeschool law to legal recognize the authority parents have to engage with others in collaborative educational activity reveals the fault lines in the homeschool community and gives insight into theoretical future of schooling. The last response cited, that of concern of violating a major principle of homeschooling by delegating educational responsibility, is of most interest to this particular inquiry. At the April 23, 2013 North Carolina Senate Educational Committee meeting which debated the bill, only homeschoolers voiced opposition to the bill. The fact that the most vocal opposition to a bill which sought to expand the rights of homeschoolers to delegate their parental authority over their children's education came from within the homeschooling community is striking. What is the meaning of this opposition? The 2012-2013 debate amongst

North Carolina homeschoolers concerning collaborative educational practices is significant. It reflects both the hope and skepticism present in the homeschooling movement concerning society and collective educational activity. It reflects different views concerning the potential benefits and possible dangers of collaborative relationships. It speaks to the distinctions homeschoolers' make concerning the institutions known as *family*, *state* and *school*.

The Delconte case and the recent NCHE event reveals how homeschoolers uniquely act on questions about the human capacity to collectively engage in educational activity and to form an institution devoted to education. Homeschooling challenges the modern dichotomy of public versus private and with it conceptions of *state* and *family*. What is the significance of these institutions to learning and of the human capacity to educate? Is the modern institution known as school a failed project, a social organization rooted in ideas which no longer carry weight? Or is the institution merely a mismatch for today's society and merely in need of reform? Does homeschooling represent a desire for ancient ways or are homeschoolers the avant garde, giving us glimpses of a better future yet to be fully developed?

As noted, there is growing diversity of the homeschooling population but researchers (Boyd and Bichao, 2012; Gaither, 2008; Murphy, 2012; Rachid, 2005) have noted that since the 1990s the homeschooling movement in America is divided and two very different groups of homeschoolers exist. The smaller of the two groups is characterized by its commitment to alternative pedagogies. The larger of the two groups

identifies as Christian, especially evangelical. This group has played and continues to play a significant role in the homeschooling movement. Moreover, this population shapes the perception others have of homeschooling, and the perception many have of homeschoolers' attitude toward the institution known as school. Given their prominence in the movement, Christian homeschoolers have the responsibility to critically reflect on how the homeschool movement is impacting and shaping a vision of education. In short, how Christian homeschoolers think about the vocation of educator and the social practices of education may influence the future of the institution known as school.

In short, homeschoolers who identify as Christian would do well to reflect on the worldview they embrace and use to defend their actions and theorize about the effects, for themselves, for their children, and their community, indeed, for society, of their educational practices. Moreover, they would be wise to acknowledge that the effects of a social movement are one thing when its theories and practices are adopted by a small percentage of society, but they are another thing if they reach a tipping point and begin to radically change culture. Another way to address this issue is for homeschoolers to ask themselves questions: What would institutions of education look like if society, en masse, adopted their theories of education? Would schools cease to exist entirely, or would they transform radically into something altogether different? Might they be very similar to the institutions that exist today, but with noted differences? If so, what would they look like and how would society be better as a result? Or do the theories homeschoolers embrace lead them to conclude that society would be better without the institutions known as

schools? In order to begin to answer this question, homeschoolers must recognize that even within the movement there are conflicting theories about knowledge, human development and society. Some theories will be worthy of nurturing and developing, others deserve to be acknowledged for what they are, reactionary and ill-conceived. Moreover, it is the responsibility of Christian homeschoolers to identify which of the theories fall within and without the parameters of the Christian world and life view.

Educational Philosophers are presented with new evidences of teaching and of learning and therefore now have new experiences from which to draw, to challenge assumptions and to theorize; think outside the box, if you will. In the search for wisdom, no stone should go unturned. Homeschoolers are in a unique position to provide an explanation for the success they are experiencing. In his article, *Education, Schooling and Children's Rights*, Robert Kunzman (2012) summarizes nicely:

As cyberschooling and other alternative education models continue to proliferate, however, the learning process for young people may bear little resemblance to institutional schooling of the twentieth century, and the practical distinctions between [Life as Education] and schooling will blur for more and more families. What that means for the provision and oversight of those educational experiences merits serious philosophical and policy consideration. (p. 77)

This study attempts to critically engage the homeschooling movement in America and its theories about collaborative educational activity and the institution known as *school*. It is the responsibility of educational philosophers, those who seek by way of theory and analysis to contribute to humanity's body of knowledge concerning educational

experiences, to declare the presuppositions of the philosophic framework in which they situate their effort. Philosophy emerges from a historical context. It is a response of individuals to the world, as they experience it. Therefore, philosophic frameworks approach reality with a history in mind, fundamental commitments and assumptions concerning reality and knowledge. This inquiry will pursue a critical analysis by way of Reformational Philosophy. The social conflict of 19th century Holland helped shape a distinct variant of Protestant Christianity, Neo-Calvinism. It is from this religious, historical and geo-political context that Reformational Philosophy emerged.

Reformational Philosophy claims a Christian world and life view and traces its heritage to the Reformed Tradition. The concept of *Sphere Sovereignty* figures prominently in Reformational Philosophy. Sphere Sovereignty speaks to the inherent rights and differentiated responsibilities of entities by way of their divinely established structure. Sphere Sovereignty provides a conceptual framework to think about just relationships. As it relates to education, the question of the Sphere Sovereignty of the Home and the School asks: Who can educate? What is just educational activity? What are the responsibilities and rights of the parents of children concerning education? What are the responsibilities and rights of those who engage in the vocation of educator and those who build organizations in order to fulfill that vocation? As it relates to homeschooling, what is the just relationship of the institution known as *family*, signified by the word “home”, to the institution known as *school*? What is the just relationship of parents, children, teachers and school administrators? Are they inherently antagonistic, or can they

mutually serve each other? Sphere Sovereignty and The Aspectual Theory and Method developed by Herman Dooyeweerd, prominent in Reformational Philosophy, seeks to explain how inherent rights and responsibilities operate in reality.

It is my hope that this study will be of interest to three audiences. One audience I hope this work will be of interest to is parents who are homeschooling or who are considering homeschooling. Homeschoolers possess a strong sense that the conventional school fails to meet the standard of care they want for their child. Their response, ultimately, is to take the matter into their own hands. Historically, the “rugged individualism” characterized by a willingness to take matters into ones own hands and “buck the system” has been celebrated in America. However, too radical an individualism fails to do justice to the inherent strengths and weaknesses of a person, as well as the reality of diverse backgrounds and unpredictable circumstances. Actions are significant not only for an actor, but for a community. As such they warrant deep consideration. Direct involvement may be good, but does it have a limit? Can every parent be their child's teacher? Are there circumstances when a parent should not function as an educator of their child? What complicates the matter is that some, if not a majority, of the first generation of homeschoolers have framed schooling in extremist religious and political rhetoric. Is school, by definition, an instrument of industrialists, secularists and/or socialists? Homeschoolers would benefit from more critical analysis of their attitudes and motivations of homeschoolers and how they have shaped the practice.

As the son of a public school teacher, a beneficiary of private and public schools, and as someone who had aspired and trained to be a secondary English teacher, I have a deep appreciation for the vocation of educator and the institution of school. At the same time, I am a homeschooling parent, seeking to abide by the non-public education laws of the state of North Carolina. But I am also more than a practitioner, I am an advocate. I am a board member of a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting homeschoolers in the state of North Carolina. My spouse (also a trained secondary English teacher) and I think homeschooling signifies more realistic view of learning, one whose principles and methods are not typically implemented in schools. This is not to say schools could not change and adopt some of these principles and methods. I believe they can. This inquiry wants to better understand, put language around, the notions that have other homeschoolers convinced they cannot.

I want homeschoolers to legitimately advance their cause in society, in the marketplace of ideas. However, I want to balance the cause of homeschoolers with the cause of advocates of schools, especially those individuals who identify as educators, who are devoted to helping children learn and so associate with others to form schools. I do not believe these two causes are fundamentally at odds. Rather, I believe they are complementary. I believe both causes can mutually support each other. I believe justice requires that the inherent value in each other's practices, in the practice of parent-directed education in the home and in the practice of schooling, be recognized. I believe they can co-exist and complement each other because I have been captivated by hope. My hope is

perhaps best captured in the Judaic concept of *Shalom*. Shalom has been translated into English as *peace* or *flourishing*, but both of these words fail to capture its sense of the *potential for mutual beneficial cooperation*. Shalom holds forth the hope that two might work together for the good of each. Two people, with very different needs and goals, need not consider themselves adversaries. Rather, they have reason to hope that there might be a way, a path, by which they both will experience well-being; they both may improve upon their states. Philosophically, shalom can be described as the potential that diversity and unity are compatible, that individuality and universality need not be in conflict. The hope of Shalom is that there exists a way for each to serve the needs of the other, thereby allowing a universal good to be achieved while maintaining individuality. The end result is that the good performed by each compliments the good experienced by each. In this way, universality and individuality are fully present. The philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff has written extensively on the Western history of the concepts of justice, rights and responsibilities. In a collection of essays, *Educating for Shalom*, Wolterstorff (2004) argues that the concept of *Shalom* provides a guide to the goal of education, “[Wisdom literature] speak of shalom, where everything exists in right relationship with everything else – God, humanity, nature” (p. 130). Shalom entails every entity and has an “ideal of human flourishing” (p. 142). Shalom is a state of being which results from a proper recognition of how one entity relates to another and to God for the benefit of all. Justice is the cornerstone of shalom. Continuing, Wolterstorff says, “And those right relationships, [the ancients] insist, include justice. Without justice, without all the

marginal and voiceless persons of the world being brought back into the community and given voice, there is no shalom” (p. 130). It is my assessment that schools attempt to give voice to a particular kind of power inherent in some individuals. A power to educate. At the same time, I think the homeschooling movement is also attempting to give voice to a kind of power, a power inherent in the relationships of the family, a power which is not well understood by modern institutions of education. Reformational Philosophy provides a unique lens through which to view the phenomenon of modern schooling and homeschooling and to critically analyze the power to educate. Reformational Philosophers have expressed shalom as the goal of their inquiry, and have articulated a “shalom principle” (Basden, 2008, p. 104). Pursuing justice includes better understanding the power of entities and how entities function normatively.

I am particularly hopeful that this work will interest those homeschoolers who identify as Christian, particularly those who identify as evangelical. As noted, while the homeschool movement is growing in its diversity, the reality is that the movement is heavily influenced, one might even say “led”, by those who call themselves Christians and who find their motivation for homeschooling in particular interpretations of the bible and/or visions for a Christian society. Some Christian leaders who have promoted homeschooling have also called for the wholesale exodus and withdrawal of support from public institutions of education. Others have called for “taking back” the schools by way of “taking back” the nation and enacting more biblically-grounded law. Are such views a requirement of Christianity, or a “Christian” view of education? May Christians support

secular state-sponsored educational institutions? May Christians serve as teachers or administrators in such institutions? Is doing so enabling something that is fundamentally ungodly, colluding with evil? These are important questions that Christians should wrestle. To what degree does our actions represent the fullness of the Christian faith? As noted, Reformational Philosophy considers itself a Christian philosophy. Its principle author, Herman Dooyeweerd, was explicit that his work was an attempt to articulate a philosophy solidly grounded on a Christian worldview. It is my hope that given a shared worldview, Christians who homeschool may find analysis of the movement and the institution of school from the perspective of the Reformed tradition of Christianity beneficial. The pursuit of justice is a difficult business, and its delay may cause one to long for revolution. According to Albert M. Wolters, author of *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* (2005), the Reformed tradition of Christianity rejects revolution and instead takes its cue from the restorative redemptive activity of Christ. This activity is characterized by its vision of sanctification, of “inner revitalization” (p. 89) as well as of “*progressive renewal* rather than *violent overthrow*” (p. 91, emphasis original). A reformed homeschool movement, one which can be characterized by shalom, will include a respect for the just relationships found in reality, a love for neighbor and critical thinking marked by dialog. It will therefore pursue justice for any entity seeking to engage in shalomic educational functioning.

Finally, it is my hope that this work will be of interest to educators, or perhaps more specifically, educational philosophers, that is those who are engaged in theoretical

work which seeks to add to the body of knowledge concerning education. In some sense, however, this audience is being asked to listen in on an insider conversation. Many in the educational establishment frowned upon homeschooling in its infancy and declared it a threat to the common good, to children, and even the to profession of educator. I believe this is reactionary and a short-sighted perspective. Education is a complex notion, replete with different theories and practices. There is significant room for difference. The rise of the homeschool movement generates questions concerning modern education. The success homeschoolers are experiencing should be celebrated and studied by educational philosophers and practitioners, in a fashion similar to the biologist who discovers a species thriving in the most remote jungles or deepest sea. What mysteries of educational functioning might homeschoolers help reveal? What is of interest to me is the possibility that the practice of home education may do more than just benefit the child, but the family and even the community. The concept of shalom gives me hope to think that homeschooling can be a force for the common good. Educational theorists should foster the good they find. They are uniquely skilled to analyze and reflect on the lessons of homeschooling and how they can be extended for the common good. Reformational Philosophy, and especially the Aspectual Theory of Herman Dooyeweerd, can aid this task.

This section introduced homeschooling as an educational movement with growing influence, and the questions it generates concerning the institution known as *school*. Homeschoolers eschew the conventional schooling and place special significance on the

role of the family in learning. The homeschool movement employs various theories to defend their attitudes and practices concerning schooling. These claims warrant critical analysis. Reformational Philosophy is a Christian philosophy, a product of the Reformed tradition and worldview. The concept of *Shalom* gives reason to hope that parents and teachers, that homes and institutions known as schools, can be mutually supportive. The concept of *Sphere Sovereignty* and the Aspectual Theory of Herman Dooyeweerd provide a unique tool to analyze the theories. Given the majority of American homeschoolers identify as Protestant Christian, as did Dooyeweerd, a shared worldview should aid the analysis. In the following section, we will examine modern homeschooling in America through the writings of several prominent advocates who shaped the movement. From these works, we will identify a collection of general theories to analyze.

CHAPTER II

PROBLEM

Some homeschool advocates allege that institutions of education, that is schools, are inherently unable to serve the learning needs of children. Not only are they unable to serve the learning needs of the next generation, they negatively impact society by conditioning young and old alike to a unsatisfactory vision of humanity. This chapter serves as an introduction to the alleged inherent problem of schools, as presented by those who have abandoned the practice for a different approach.

Before exploring these views, I wish to make clear that many homeschool advocates do not agree with these sentiments. These sentiments represent the most adamant within the homeschool movement. Many homeschool advocates would be satisfied with a “separation of school and state”, with a defunding of public education and instead a non-public education system, which would allegedly permit a broader variety of educational practices. These advocates recognize that some parents may feel that schooling is best for their children. For many homeschool advocates, schools simply not do qualify as a public service. Rather, education is considered a private endeavor. But some home educator advocates go further, and argue that schools do not contribute to the development of children nor to the general welfare of society. It is claimed that individuals who work to develop and support schools simply do not understand the

principles of human development, learning and the nature of knowledge. Instead of helping children, schooling is, in fact, harming children. Instead of contributing to societal progress, schools are contributing to social regress. Schools are a failed social experiment, and a predictable one at that.

While there is much to criticize about schools, what I wish to reflect on is the concept that schools are a bad idea, that they are a failed experiment in education, and that sending a child to school, educating a child outside of the home, is to fail in one's parental duty, one's responsibilities. In contrast, it is alleged, homeschooling, or parent-directed education, is essential for society to flourish. Anything less is to invite disaster. Some Christians suggest that homeschooling is a necessary part of a revival movement. For some Christians, homeschooling signifies parents turning their hearts toward God. "If anything can stay God's hand of judgment on western democracy in light of our national sins, the home school movement can" (Klicka, 1995, p. 177). What is implied in such a statement that the practice of organizing educational institutions and of sending children out of the home to be educated is on the list of society's crimes. What is the Reformational Philosophical response to such claims? Do schools contribute nothing to society? Is sending one's child to a school an immoral act? Are people who teach in schools, especially public schools, morally at fault for propagating an oppressive institution? Should people fight for the cessation of public funds expenditures for education and instead pass laws which mandate home education? Are Christians who establish schools, teach in schools, or send their children to schools, violating their faith?

Not all of these questions are within the scope of this study. However, they are part of the homeschooling ethos. Given the degree of success the homeschool movement has had over the last thirty years, educational philosophers should carefully reflect on the movement and seek to understand its theories toward education and schools. This chapter will examine the ethos and claims that schools negatively impact children, parents and ultimately society because they can only present an oppressive view of existence and of humankind.

Homeschoolers frequently cite reports of the academic decline of students of American's public education system; but more essential to home educators is the testimony that schooling has not only negative effects on the cognitive abilities of children, but also the emotional and social well-being of children. Many early home education advocates, including John Holt (1981, 1989) and Raymond and Dorothy Moore (1979, 1981, 1982, 1984), John Taylor Gatto (1992, 2000) and David and Micki Colfax (1988) were educational professionals who wrote extensively about the negative influence of schooling on young people. Some of these testimonials are from the perspective of the teacher, others from the the perspective of a parent. David and Micki Colfax (1988) were professional educators; David was a sociology professor, and Micki taught in secondary public schools. Both recognized that something was amiss with our educational system, and yet they could not quite place their finger on it. But then Grant Colfax, who was six years old in 1971, entered the first grade. According to the Colfaxes:

It took only a week before we began to observe some changes in Grant. Usually active and voluble, we noticed that he had become listless and withdrawn. He assured us it wasn't school—it was “okay.” But by the end of the month, during which his behavior hadn't improved, he admitted that, yes, it was school. It was “dumb” and “a waste of time.” (Colfax, Colfax, 1988, p. 21).

Jessie Wise, who left her teaching position to educate her own children, wrote a book with her adult daughter, Susan Wise Bauer, entitled *The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education in the Home* (1999). In it she tells the story of her son Bob, who started elementary school in the early 1970s. “He started to change”, she writes, “He had been an excited, exuberant, curious child. Now he was a behavior problem. He stopped doing well in school. His papers had always been meticulously done, but suddenly his writing became sloppy” (Wise, Bauer, 1999, p. 35). According to Wise, schooling did not positively impact her son Bob. Instead it had the opposite effect. Through schooling he developed apathy toward his activities. The Wises felt they needed to counter-act the negative influence of school on Bob; “[we] realized that we were spending most of our time with [Bob] trying to undo what was happening to him when was at school” (Wise, Bauer, 1999, p. 35). In other words, schooling was not good for Bob, and was, in some sense, making the Wises' responsibilities as parents more difficult.

In 1991 John Taylor Gatto was awarded “New York State Teacher of Year”. In his acceptance speech, later published as *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling* (1992), he lamented the effects of schooling that he witnessed and called for radical reform. Gatto identified multiple problematic characteristics of students including: a lack of curiosity and interest in the activities of adults, the absence of a sense

of history or of the future, cruelty toward each other and an inability to form intimate relationships, and finally a deep dependency and timidity, which “is frequently masked by surface bravado, or by anger or aggressiveness, but underneath is a vacuum without fortitude”(Gatto, 1992, p. 32). All of these characteristics he attributed to schooling and the fact that schools are “taking all [children's] time from them—time they need to grow up” (Gatto, 1992, p. 31).

Many home education advocates tell similar stories about the negative influence of school upon children. They speak of witnessing in children an inherent capacity for learning, natural curiosity and a cooperative spirit. But many children do not have these characteristics after schooling. Instead of having these qualities enhanced, they are diminished. What explains this? The Colfaxes sat in on their son Grant's class and interacted with his teacher and came to the conclusion that school was boring, but there was nothing really unusual about Grant's school circumstances, nothing different from their own school experiences. There was nothing atypical about his teacher nor his classmates. Their conclusion was that the problem was inherent in the institution. They finally saw it from Grant's perspective. From Grant's perspective, and eventually his parents, school signified oppression:

Sure, it was a waste of time, but how valuable is a six-year old's time anyhow? But however we might try to rationalize it, Grant was right: this was stupid and a waste of time. There was no way we could justify hours in the classroom, no way we could tell him that school was something that had to be endured. Perhaps Grant would have to face dreary reality eventually, but not now. There had to be other options. (Colfax, 1988, p. 21).

This last quote is significant. While it is said somewhat tongue-in-cheek, the Colfax's characterize reality as being “dreary”. The dreariness of reality is something which Grant would ultimately “have to face.” But it was the Colfaxes' view that Grant should not experience it yet, not in its full force. Not while he was a child. What Gatto, Wise, Colfax and other homeschool advocates are saying is that schooling signifies an experience that we naturally resist, something which is boring, mundane and even unjust. Eventually everyone must ultimately encounter these things, and adulthood assumes some level of preparation, but childhood is different. It is not fair that a child be subjected to it. The encounter changes them, leaves them unprepared for adulthood. What is this thing, this oppressiveness present in reality and made explicit in schooling which seems to squander children's curiosity and their capacity for cooperation, and transform them into something less than their potential? How does an institution of learning, and especially a public school, propagate it? How does home education avoid it or even counteract it? What's wrong with schools?

Home school advocates criticize schools for failing to acknowledge the true state of human condition, and to serve young people by preparing them for the complexities of relationships. Instead, schools condition children and adults to accept narrow roles dictated by others. Home educators who identify as Christian often embrace language of cosmic warfare to articulate the gravity of the situation and issue a call to action. Greg Harris, a pastor and founder of an organization called The Noble Institute, in his book entitled *The Christian Home School*, writes:

The real conflict over education in America today isn't primarily within the four walls of a public school classroom; rather, it lies between two very different schools of thought, both having their own very different moral goals, both propagating their own distinct worldview, both wanting to produce a very different kind of human being.... The real battle isn't *for* the public schools; we never had them. The battle is for our children. (Harris, 1988, p. 8)

According to Harris, and many Christian homeschool advocates, schooling propagates a particular way of thinking about reality, about self and about society that is ultimately dehumanizing. Ironically, this dehumanizing worldview is called humanism. Many Christian homeschool advocates employ the epistemological concept of worldview to help explain the differences between home educators and schools. In *Why so many Christians are Going Home to School* (1990), Llewellyn B. Davis writes,

Each of us has a worldview. Our worldview is our personal philosophy of life. It is 'a set of presuppositions or assumptions that we hold consciously or subconsciously about the basic makeup of our world.' Our presuppositions about God, man, the world, authority, truth, value and ethics determine how we will live in relation to God, others, the world, and the authorities in our lives; what we will believe is true; what we will consider personally meaningful and valuable; and what we will determine is right and wrong. (Davis, 1990, p. 4)

As Davis makes clear one's worldview is one's perspective concerning the fundamentals of existence, one's "take" on reality. One's worldview shapes one's goals and response to circumstances. It includes one's suppositions used in one's reasoning, but also one's unconscious desires. One's worldview is both the product and the guide of one's experiences. Public schools (and even sectarian schools according to some Christian homeschool advocates, for they employ the methods of public schools) are bastions of

humanism. Humanism is characterized as a celebration of human power and authority and a unwillingness to recognize any higher authority than humanity. It is deemed antithetical to the worldview presented in the Bible, and is also deemed the source of statism. Christopher J. Klicka, who served as the senior counsel of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), in his book *Homeschool: The Right Choice* (1995) writes: “The religion of humanism is quite easy to identify. Humanism simply means that man, rather than God, is the measure of all things. Humanism does not recognize God or His absolute moral values, but instead asserts that each person can set his own values and control his own destiny” (p. 65). It is significant that Klicka calls humanism a religion. Christianity holds that humans are beings who exhibit fidelity, and as such they cannot help but function religiously. Every worldview is the product of, and communicates, some ultimate commitments. While humanism may not have practices typically associated with traditional religions, it still has ultimate commitments which guide the practices of humanists. These commitments, according to many Christian homeschool advocates, are what shape schools. These commitments are alleged to shape not only the curriculum, but the methods. Schooling, in essence, is the method of humanist worldview transfer. Therefore, for many Christian homeschool advocates, to resist humanism, even sectarian schools are to be rejected, for though they may incorporate religion into the curriculum, they do so employing humanistic methods. The following section will first examine the Christian homeschools' critique concerning the

claims of religious neutrality in public schools, followed by the critique of schooling methods.

The primary evidence of humanism at the root of schooling is the historical movement from biblical-based moralism in public education to the explicit absence of the Bible in schools (Blumenfeld, 1985; Klicka, 1995, Rushdoony, 1968). Christians claim that the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, is a divine revelation. For most Christian homeschool advocates, it is the cornerstone of knowledge and the centerpiece of the curriculum. Mary Pride, author of *School-proof: How to Help Your Family Beat the System and Learn to Love Learning-The Easy, Natural Way* (1988), writes, “The Bible is the rock and foundation of a Christian curriculum. It is the way we learn about God, ourselves, our neighbors, and the world. This Book *explains* things. It tells us why they are what they are what it all means. It even explains the future!”(p. 176). Gregg Harris (1988) further explains the significance of the Bible:

When it comes to the means of education, there are a few general, but crucial, principles we need to consider at this point. The first is the primacy of the Bible in our instruction... Without the Bible, we are walking in the dark on every path of life. We need the corrective lens of Scripture in order to see where we are going. (p. 68)

The Bible therefore not only provides important information but acts as “corrective lens” to one's perspective on reality. Christian home educators argue that the study of the biblical text transforms a person's perspective on reality. Because Christians believe the biblical text does more than just tell the reader about God, but is *the* word of God, to

study the Bible is to be taught by God; it is to come under God's tutelage, and to begin to see reality as God sees it and declares it to be. The Bible provides God's worldview, which is deemed uniquely true. Through the study of the Bible the reader learns of God's perspective on humans, on nature, on society, on knowledge. A person should therefore strive to conform his or her worldview to the worldview presented in the Bible. This in turn, shapes how one acts. Pride (1988) writes:

What does it mean to know and serve your neighbor?

First, it means developing a worldview. ... You see what is there and how it relates to the rest of what's there. Informed by the Bible, you also see what it means and what, if anything, you should do about it. This is the basic knowledge human beings need in this world. (p. 181)

Therefore, for the Christian homeschooler an education without direct study of the Bible is radically deficient, for it is to exclude what is deemed the most essential, positive and powerful perspective-shaping text in existence.

Christian home educators advocate for early and regular exposure to the Bible so as to communicate its importance. Harris (1988) recommends that children, in addition to attending regular church services where the Bible is studied, develop a daily habit of biblical study. In addition, given every opportunity, a parent should explain things with reference to the Bible, making clear what the biblical text says about a particular subject, or how the text has shaped the adult's perspective. Parents should function as role models, "they should see us reading and studying and applying the Bible" (Harris, 1988, p. 72).

Not only should children study the Bible, but they should study subjects as they are biblically informed. For example, the Genesis account of the Old Testament states that the universe was created by God in the space of six days and that humanity suffered from an apocalyptic flood. Therefore, the study of astronomy, geology, biology, etc. should reflect this biblical information. The curriculum producer Apologia, a “family-owned corporation with the mission to help homeschooling families learn, live, and defend the Christian faith” markets its science textbooks as “creation-based” (Carman, 2011). For many Christians home education advocates, any scientific theories which call biblical information into question are deemed incompatible with biblical wisdom. Answers In Genesis (AIG), an organization which advocates for Youth Earth Creationism (YEC), a view, based on biblical statements, that the age of the earth and human history is roughly 6,000 years, publishes textbooks popular with Christian homeschoolers. Commenting on science textbooks with more information about the theories of evolution, AIG staff member Dr. Elizabeth Mitchell writes:

It is particularly important for science textbooks to acknowledge that God’s Word is trustworthy. Observable, scientific facts will never violate God’s Word when properly understood but rather affirm it. In fact, the history of creation and the global Flood are not only consistent with scientific observations, but they also can help explain what we observe in the world. Evidence about origins, because conclusions rely on assumptions about conditions and events that existed in the unobservable past, *must* be interpreted in accordance with a person’s worldview. And that worldview is either one that accepts the history contained in God’s Word as true or rejects it. (Mitchell, 2013)

The biblical perspective should also be included in the humanities. The study of history, art, law and modern government should reflect the biblical worldview. Vision Forum Ministries is an organization which markets education resources to homeschoolers, including history books and replicas of historical artifacts. The organization also hosts historical re-enactment events designed to educate and celebrate the role God has played in American history. Reflecting on a Jamestown Quadricentennial event, Founder Douglas Phillips (2007) writes,

Throughout the week, the scholars, historians and teachers at the event stood unified in their presentation of American history through the lens of the providence of God. ... Several historical themes predominated: First, the proper study of history requires the correct theological presuppositions. Primary among these is the doctrine of providence.

For Phillips, and many Christian home educators, the biblical view of God's active role in human events, expressed in theological statements such as the "doctrine of providence", is essential to an understanding of history. In summary, for the Christian homeschool advocate, the study of the Bible, and of subject matter informed by a perspective shaped by the Bible, is fundamental to education. Its absence signifies a radical deficiency in the development of a child.

But it is not simply the absence of biblical studies or the biblical perspective in schools that troubles Christian home educators. Christian homeschool advocates level two additional criticisms against the humanism shaping the curriculum of public schools. The first is the censorship of Christianity marked by the alleged absence of any positive

messages concerning the role religion has had in history, and in particular Western civilization and America. Mitchell Stevens in his research of the homeschool movement, *Kingdom of Children* (2001), shares the view of one homeschooling mother, Cheryl Marcus:

“I don't like the way schools are going. ... What's wrong with Christianity all of the sudden? You know? This country was founded on Christian, on religious principles. [People] came over here for religious freedom, and now all of a sudden all religious references seem to be stricken out of the public school, and I don't like that at all.” (quoted in Stevens, p. 67)

The use of the phrase “stricken out” is significant. According to many Christian home educators, public schools propagate a revisionist history, with the goal of expunging Christianity from the curriculum. The claim is that public school, in effect, advances an unspoken lesson that Christianity is insignificant and that it has had little to no positive significance in the history of humankind. Many Christian homeschool advocates argue that Western civilization has been positively shaped by the prominence of the biblical worldview. A shared worldview gives rise to culture and common values and a shared morality. What separates American society today from American society 250 years ago is a growing lack of biblical knowledge and therefore the absence of a common biblical worldview amongst citizens. It is said that the success of the American Revolution and the birth of the United States was directly related to the shared biblical worldview of the leaders of the time. Even if not all were devote Christians, what is argued is they shared the biblical worldview. This shared biblical worldview meant shared values, which

positively contributed to the founding of America. According to Christian homeschool advocates, this historical and sociological fact is being denied. Again, Christopher J.

Klicka, writes:

[The] censorship of the impact of religion in the history and accomplishments of our nation deceives our children by making them think religion is ineffectual and outmoded. This is intellectually dishonest, in light of the many historical documents and contemporary historians that demonstrate the tremendous significant effect biblical Christianity has on every aspect of our nation. In fact, our legal and governmental systems were founded on biblical principles. ... Our children are being lied to every day in the public schools, and this is causing the very fabric of our nation to unravel before our eyes. (Klicka, 1995, p. 50)

The charge of censorship and intellectual dishonesty are common amongst Christian home educators. Pride (1988) writes:

Giving children just the modern view of things amounts to censorship. As some ancient author said, "to have no knowledge of history is forever to remain a child." We need the past as a measuring rule by which to compare the present. Since so much of Western civilization's past was Christian, and much of its present is emphatically not Christian, we all the more need the perspective of the past (Pride, 1988, p. 184).

The absence of biblical teaching and any references to the positive contribution of religious-motivated acts is regarded as a failure to educate students about Western history and culture. Therefore, according to some Christian homeschool advocates, the humanism propagated via public schools is responsible for the alleged loss of a common culture in Western civilization.

While the absence of biblical studies troubles Christian homeschool advocates, in some sense it does not surprise them. It is important to note that Christian homeschoolers do not advocate for universal biblical studies. Rather, Christian home educators advocate that it is understandable and proper for parents to want to instill their worldview in their children. Citing an instance where Muslim parents opened an Islamic school, Harris encourages Christians to identify with Muslim parents who “desired an educational system which would produce men and women who had Islamic 'tastes, knowledge, and character.”(p. 6). Harris' point is that a worldview shapes not only knowledge but practices, even educational practices. Therefore, we should not be surprised when people with different worldviews embrace different kinds of educational practices. In this sense, many Christian homeschool advocates adopt a very libertarian orientation toward education. Let each educate according to their own. According to Christian homeschoolers, the Biblical worldview includes the concept that parents have the authority and responsibility to guide their children's education. We will return to this issue later. Christian homeschool advocates therefore are not surprised that humanism yields a different kind of education than Christianity. What is most troublesome to many homeschool advocates are claims by educational professionals of religious neutrality. These claims are deemed intellectually dishonest, and signify something much more sinister in society. Klicka (1995) writes, “In the name of 'neutrality,' the public schools are steadily and many times subtly assaulting the traditional family and destroying the minds of our youth.” (p. 72)

The claim that public schools are impartial regarding religion is deemed incompatible with education. Jessie Wise and Susan Wise Bauer, authors of *The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education in the Home*, write:

Education cannot be neutral when it comes to faith: it is either supportive or destructive. The topic of education is humanity, its accomplishments, its discoveries, its savage treatment of its own kind, its willingness to endure self-sacrifice. And you cannot learn—or teach—about humanity without considering God. (Wise, Bauer, 1999, p. 211-212)

Avoiding the issue of God by claiming neutrality, according to some, including Wise and Bauer, is really an underhanded way of oppressing theistic worldviews:

Public schools, which have the impossible task of teaching children of many different faiths, must proclaim neutrality. *We don't deal in matters of faith*, the teachers explain. *We're neutral*. Think about this for a minute. Arguing for the presence of God is generally considered “biased.” Assuming His absence is usually called “neutral.” Yet both are statements of faith; both color the teacher's approach to any subject; both make a fundamental assumption about the nature of men and women. To call this neutrality is intellectually dishonest. (ibid)

The concept that humans are religious and that education cannot be neutral toward religion is essential in understanding the Christian homeschool movement. It is argued that because humans are creatures who shape their behaviors based on their absolute commitments (whether they consciously acknowledge them and/or even fully apprehend them), education cannot be neutral regarding religion. To ignore religion is to pretend that the difficult questions concerning human responsibility have been adequately

answered by the material world alone. John Taylor (2000), criticizes schooling for failing to recognize the gravity of the situation:

The ancient religious question of free will marks the real difference between schooling and education. *Education is conceived in Western history as a road to knowing yourself, and through that knowledge, arriving at a further understanding of community, relationships, jeopardy, living nature, and inanimate matter.* But none of those things have any particular meaning until you see what they lead up to, finally being in full command of the spectacular gift of free will: a force completely beyond the power of science to understand. (Gatto, 2000, p. 299)

Gatto's appreciation for free will resonates with many Christian homeschool advocates, even if they have a much less optimistic view of free will. But what Gatto and Christian homeschool advocates do have in common is a strong orientation toward freedom, especially the freedom to choose. For many Christian homeschool advocates, their biggest fear is their child's rejection of the faith. Still they are motivated to present their child with a reality which includes that choice. This, they argue, is in contrast to public school, which, it is alleged, is not content to present choices, but instead indoctrinates children into a state-sponsored commitment. Many homeschool advocates argue that public schools function as centers of a civic religion. Rousas J. Rushdoony, author of *The Messianic Character of American Education* (1968), writes, "the public school is the established church of today and a substitute institution for the medieval church and dedicated to the same monolithic concept of society" (p. 314). Rushdoony, like many Christian homeschool advocates, sees too strict an alignment between schools and the state. Arguing that the inherent nature of the state is to strive toward unity, it always

gravitates toward totalitarianism. Therefore, any alignment of schools with the state only further empowers the state:

A state school system, like a state church system, is unable to please all men or meet all needs. The more catholic or democratic it strives to be, the more it must compromise the integrity of its own mission. Moreover, being unable to satisfy all, it must defend itself against enemies who are by compulsion within its ranks. Total systems lead to an *Index* and an *Inquisition* in order to maintain their strength as a total system. (Rushdoony, 1968, p. 326)

Rushdoony represents a vocal group amongst homeschool advocates. This group argues that checks and balances are essential to maintaining liberty. History, they allege, teaches us that the more the public becomes involved in matters pertaining to education, the more the state is involved, the less freedom is experienced. Samuel L Blumenfeld, author of *Is Public Education Necessary?* writes:

It is obvious that public education is far more than simply a community system of free instruction financed by taxes. It is so much more that we must ask ourselves if this is really what we want, what we bargained for. When all is said and done, we must ask ourselves if public education, as it has become, is really necessary at all. Does it educate? Can it educate? Public educators will argue that it all depends on what you mean by educating. Since there is no agreement in this country on the meaning of education, that later becomes impossible under the circumstances. (Blumenfeld, 1985, p. 8)

Blumenfeld's quote represents the characterization by some home educators that public education of a vast organization dedicated to advancing its own agenda, through obfuscation and over and against the will of people. Even if schools are not state-sponsored it seems, they function like the state. At the root of it is frustration at the

alleged social engineering practiced by the education profession. This social engineering impacts not only children sent to schools, but parents who send them. It trains society to think school is absolutely necessary. It perpetuates, it is alleged, a cycle of dependency.

In *School-proof: How to Help Your Family Beat the System and Learn to Love Learning-The Easy, Natural Way*, Mary Pride (1988) writes, “Today education has gone to the dogs... and the rats and the pigeons... and to the machines. Children are considered animals for teachers to train in the way we train a dog, or a computers for teachers to program” (p. 17). According to home education advocates, schools do not educate, but rather subject children to comprehensive behavioral conditioning. The classroom, it is argued, is an artificial environment organized to manipulate a child to conform their response to stimuli. Instead of developing a child's capacity to think and choose to act independently, schooling, it is said, trains the child to uncritically accept information and commands, and to resist developing an identity and exercise autonomy. According to the some advocates, the earlier this process is started, the worse its effects. Perhaps one of the most interesting insights and arguments of homeschool advocates is that schooling, especially early schooling, fosters a detached orientation toward reality, including a poor concept of self and of others. While a young child has physical needs, his or her learning needs are primarily focused on the interpersonal. Moreover, children's cognitive abilities, their capacity for learning about more abstract concepts and objects with complex relations, is developed upon their interpersonal strengths, which are honed for years through intimate interactions. Therefore, the practice of separating children from their

parents and home environment very early and instead sending them to a less personal environment, such as daycare or school, serves to hamper their learning and reach important developmental milestones, according to some child development theorists, such as David Elkind (1979) and Raymond and Dorothy Moore (1979, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984). The influence of the Moores on the Christian homeschool movement cannot be understated. Married in 1938, Raymond and Dorothy Moore served in California public schools prior to World War II. Following the war, in which he served and rose to the rank of major, Raymond attended the University of Southern California and in 1947 earned doctorate in developmental psychology and teacher education. Dorothy later earned an Master of Arts from Andrews University, focusing on remedial reading programs. Dorothy's experience in remedial education in California schools and raising her own children led her and Raymond to inquiry into the significance of the home environment in educational preparedness. In 1961 they founded the Moore Institute to pursue research. However, in 1964, Raymond accepted an offer to serve as a research associate for the U.S. Office of Education. In D.C., Raymond found himself increasingly at odds with those who advocated for lower compulsory education and increase in early childhood programs, such as Head Start, as a response to reports of American academic decline. In contrast, Raymond argued the research showed no cognitive benefit to early childhood programs, but later academic benefit in healthy parent-child relationship. In 1967 he left the Office of Education, “embittered and disillusioned at what he took to be the betrayal of the nation's children by politicians driven more by ideology than by solid research”

(Gaither, 2008, p. 130). In the same year, the Moores received a substantial monetary gift from the Hewitt family, which enabled them to better organize and more actively pursue their research agenda.

In 1972 the Moores' research, which involved distilling roughly 3,000 childhood neurological and psychological experiments, went mainstream in a number of articles in well-known academic and popular forums, including the *Phi Delta Kappan*, the *Congressional Record*, *Harper's* and *Reader's Digest*. In these publications the Moores passionately argued that the research demonstrated that children under the age of 8 or so were not yet cognitively developed so as to be schooled. The brain was not ready to engage in literacy and arithmetic. Moreover, the research showed that early separation from parents resulted in emotional and mental issues, which only further exacerbated academic dysfunction. The Moores advocated that schooling be delayed and instead children should maintain close parental relations as the most effective way to prepare for academic work. The public response to these articles was tremendous. Both *Harper's* and *Readers Digest* reported the largest reader response the publications had every received. The next several years saw a rapid increase in their exposure. Because of their article's success, *Reader's Digest* commissioned and published the Moore's first book. Their research institute received a federal grant which enabled them to direct research at several institutes of higher education, which produced results supporting their initial claims. (Gaither, 2008, p. 131). In 1977, the Moores were featured on Focus on the Family, a radio show hosted by Dr. James Dobson, a prominent evangelical Christian child

psychologist. In 1979, the Moores published *School Can Wait*, the most comprehensive compilation of their evidence for their conclusions.

The Moores amassed considerable research regarding neuropsychological development. Central to the Moores' research was the educational benefits of a family life, specifically child-parent relations. The Moores cited research regarding the sources of psychological negative *dependency* in contrast to positive *attachment* (1984, p. 29ff). They argued that study after study showed that sustained child-adult interaction yielded increased ability in developing children to form healthy psychic relations. Children with anything more than a neglectful family life developed a better sense of self, which resulted in internal motivation, confidence in themselves and in others, and capacity for autonomy and sociability. Through interaction with a caring parent, a child internalized mature social values. According to the Moores (1979), “the earliest, distinct awakenings of the self originate from the quality of care and the trustworthiness of the caregiver. From this basic sense of identity a child can move on to acquire a sense of being “all right” – of being what other people expect him [sic] to be” (p. 51). A child, by being in regular and constant relationship with a caring adult, develops a strong sense that people need each other, and that he or she can contribute to another and the larger project of a group, “he [sic] receives care, but he also learns that he can contribute to the care of others as he become capable of doing so and can cooperate in family endeavors” (p. 54). A healthy psychic state directly benefited the developing cognitive state, which, according to the research of the Moores was not ready for sustained instruction, which is

cognitively oriented, until around the age of 7 or 8. In contrast, sustained child-parent separation yielded dependency, characterized by a lack of confidence, emotional immaturity, and inability to sustain attention and commitments. The result being that when the psychic state of the child is under-developed, the intellectual and social functions fail to flourish. Dependency, therefore, is a class of behaviors developed from a lack of a caring childhood environment. The Moores stressed that the childhood sense of self-concept is truly an internalized psychic state. It is pre-rational; it is not something the child deduces, as some cause and effect, logical conclusion. The child is, in fact, not able to deduce this sense of self-worth. Deduction is a cognitive activity that the child is not yet developmentally ready to enact. Indeed, a positive psychic state facilitates the development of cognitive abilities. Rather, an environment characterized by unconditional love, trustworthiness, need and potential for contribution establishes these features in the child's psychic landscape. They become part of the very fiber of the child's personhood, and they prepare the child for the realities of society, "the child...who can have the security of a reasonably sound family life until his value system is stabilized – until he is able to reason consistently from cause to effect – will be "his own man [sic]." Such a child will more likely enjoy an independence – intellectual and emotional – that will insure a high and positive sociality." (Moore & Moore, 1979, p. 58).

Moreover, the introduction of children into the more highly structured environment of school in which they are not yet cognitively ready creates a circumstance for excessive stress in the life of the child. Because the child is not intellectually able yet

to assent to the more highly coordinated activities of the structured environment, teachers are more inclined to make the structure even more rigid so as to compensate. This again, enhances the stress of the situation. The result is increased psychic harm.

The Moores disavowed the claims made by some psychologists that intellectual development could be sped up, so as to meet the stated desire of America's leadership for a larger pool of intellectuals, including potential scientists, to serve the intellectual needs of the country. In fact, the Moores argued, this course of action taken by the state was producing the opposite effect. Rather than enhancing the pool of future intellectual workers, it was in fact instituting psychic harm, and thwarting the intellectual development of the next generation. Schools were in fact, not for intellectual development, but for socializing knowledge, and were only effective when a child was prepared for intellectual activity. If introduced too early to schooling, the student would not intellectually interact with socialized knowledge but would rather internalize the negative psychical effects of socialization:

[The researcher] observed that generally nursery school children learn little personal responsibility, participate in highly routinized play without internal motivation, and accept impersonal principles for relating to others. The school creates in effect a child's world resembling a large-scale formal organization (bureaucracy), and the child becomes an 'organization child' with adaptive techniques to maintain status but with little initiative for individual achievement. He is, in fact, institutionalized. (Moore and Moore, 1979, p. 209)

Homeschool advocates argue that the impact of schooling, especially early schooling, is that of crippling development and conditioning a person for life-long dependency.

Not only do schools condition children, they condition society to accept uncritically their assessment of a child, especially the child's capacity to learn and for social cooperation. According to home education advocates, one of the ways in which schooling squanders children's natural proclivity to learn is by unfairly penalizing students who fail to conform to the agenda of the school. A child is considered uncooperative if he or she is unwilling or unable to conform to the activities as dictated. But a child's cooperation, it is argued by homeschool advocates, is more a reflection on how well a child's learning needs are matched to his or her environment. The following scenario, given in John Holt's *Teach Your Own* (1981) is said to be more the rule, than the exception:

Their child has taught himself to read, or somehow learned, before he went to school. He finds himself, perhaps in the pre-school, perhaps in one of the early elementary grades, reading from one to three years ahead of his class. Naturally he does not want to do the reading readiness exercises or other workbook tasks that the other children are doing, to “teach” them to do what he already knows how to do. He wants to read the kind of books he is able to read. But when he tries to do this, he gets in trouble. The teacher orders him to do the work the other children are doing, and when he naturally and sensibly says he doesn't want to, or simply doesn't, the teacher punishes him. She may bawl him out in front of the other children, shut him in a closet, strike him, give him a failing grade, call him “hyperactive.” (Holt, 1981, p. 26-27)

The above scenario is presented by Holt to communicate how children naturally resist activities in which they can see no purpose. The activities will not help the child, and so the child is frustrated that he must engage in activities that he does not see any value in doing. His goal is not to avoid cooperation, but rather not to spend time that doesn't serve any purpose. The purpose of the activity is to aid someone who needs it. But instead of

there being some recognition that the activity has no purpose for the child, the classroom creates an environment where a purposeless participation is required.

Sometimes, the opposite scenario is presented, one in which the student is not yet at the level of the curriculum. And in these cases, the young child will actively seek out more and more assistance; the child will raise their hand more, ask more questions, seek more attention. Again, the testimony of homeschool advocates is that such action is frowned upon and often results in disciplinary action; “the teacher complained to us that [our son] was always questioning her in class” (Wise, Bauer, 1999, p. 35). Homeschool advocates say that in cases where the curriculum fails to meet the learning needs of the students, the blame is shifted to students. The practice of diagnosing children with learning disabilities or psychological/behavioral issues is one issue that greatly troubles homeschool advocates. These labels, many argue, do not reflect children, but are more a reflection of the orientation schools have toward particular children. Unable to meet the learning needs of children because of the absence of anything truly inspiring, schools resort to more and more powerful means to control children, including having them labeled (so that teachers have a better excuse for the child's failings) and/or medicated. Homeschool advocates writings are replete with stories of children who were labeled by the school as having a learning disability, but who, after being removed from the classroom and being taught at home, flourished. Holt drew a line connecting the rise in psychological sciences and the increase in educational experimentation for the failure in schools. His conclusion

was that schools were using pseudo-scientific labels as a way to explain and excuse their educational incompetence.

“Good” schools and “bad,” private and public, with only a few exceptions they have always run under the rule that when learning happens, the school takes the credit, and when it doesn't, the students get the blame. Where in earlier times the schools might have said that some kids were bad, stupid, lazy, or crazy, now they say they have mysterious diseases like “minimal brain dysfunction” or “learning disabilities.” Under whatever name, these remain what they always were – excuses for the schools and teachers not doing their job. (Holt, 1981, p. 16)

Holt's point is that if an educator is to make the claim that a student isn't learning, it was the duty of the educator to take responsibility for the failure, and not place the blame on the student. It was the responsibility of the educator to adjust. An unwillingness to take responsibility was evidence that our system of education, school, was radically dysfunctional. The conclusion of homeschool advocates is that schools, and the education experts who control them, do not act as if they understand or care about learning.

According to Holt, the major source of the dysfunction was that schools were not organized around the learner, and failed to recognize who exactly was the principle agent in learning. Within the homeschool movement there are a variety of theories concerning learning. In general, home educators argue that humans are innately curious and are born capable of self-directed learning. Learning naturally occurs in a resource-rich environment and that the knowledge developed by a child in direct involvement with his or her environment is better integrated into the life of the person. For some home education advocates, perhaps the best thing a person could do is NOT try to educate

another person, but rather let them learn. Aaron Falbel (who praises the insights of Ivan Illich, author of “Deschooling Society” in 1971) writes:

Learning is like breathing. It is a natural, human activity: it is part of being alive. A person who is active, curious, who explores the world using his or her senses, who meets life with energy and enthusiasm—as all babies do—is learning. Our ability to learn, like our ability to breathe, does not need to be improved or tampered with. It is utter nonsense, not to mention deeply insulting, to say that people need to be taught how to learn or how to think. We are born knowing how to do these things. All that is needed is an interesting, accessible, intelligible world, and a chance to play a meaningful part in it. (Hern, 1996, p. 65-66)

Instead of providing children with opportunities to interact with an “interesting, accessible, intelligible world, and a chance to play a meaningful part in it”, schooling functions to detach children from reality. One of the chief ways it does so is by curriculum, which imposes an external structure on a child's learning experiences. Many Christian homeschool advocates do not completely agree with the epistemological ideas of advocates such as Falbel and John Holt, who coined the term “Unschooling”, although they do share their observations and assessment about schools. Unschooling is described as an orientation toward learning that is learner-centric and is contrasted with the inherently curriculum-centric activity of schooling. Unschooling “means learning what one wants, when one wants, in the way one wants, where one wants, for one's own reasons. The learning is learner-directed: advisors or facilitators are sought out as desired *by the learner*” (Griffith, 1998, p. 2). Unschooling is not ignoring a child, but rather freeing a child to actively explore his or her environment and interact with what is encountered to the degree the child wishes. Most Christian homeschool advocates adopt

what they would deem a more mentor relationship with a child, and engage in age-appropriate tutoring, “Home-schooled children are being taught with the most effective method instruction: the tutorial method.” (Klicka, 1995, p.145). But where Unschoolers and Christian homeschoolers agree is that schooling is very different than learning. Humans are relational beings and curiosity is the exploration of relations. When given freedom to follow their curiosity and explore relations, to interact with the world around them, students learn. Curiosity, and by extension learning, Holt argued, is actually impeded by school. The more a child sat in school and was subjected to curriculum, the less interaction he or she received, the less motivated to explore relations. What happens instead is that the child develops a passivity toward relations and toward existence. One's mind becomes dulled, and one simply waits for information to be delivered, accepting what is given.

...public school children are confined to a classroom for at least 180 days each year with little opportunity to be exposed to the workplace or to go on field trips. The children are trapped with a group of children their own age with little chance to relate to children of other ages or adults. They learn in a vacuum where there are no absolute standards. They are given little to no responsibility, and everything is provided for them. The opportunity to pursue their interests and to apply their unique talents are stifled. (Klicka, 1995, p. 142)

The faster a child develops a responsive orientation toward the curriculum, the more cooperative the student is said to be. The child who fails to develop this orientation and who instead has an active mind which fails to stay within the confines of the what the curriculum dictates should be explored, is said to be unable to learn. Many homeschool

advocates embrace Holt's argument that this simply was not true. The issue was that the student is simply interested in learning something other than what is being taught. This is to be expected, Holt argued, given that not all students have the same interests or develop intellectually at the same rate. In short, in any given grade classroom, there are some who are not developmentally at the level of the material and others who are well past it. Both will express their curiosity differently. Some might be anxious, others bored. It is, therefore, the educator's responsibility to recognize this and respond appropriately to the inquisitiveness of each learner. Again, the issue for homeschool advocates is that schools fail to take responsibility. What is required is highly individualized learning. Teaching, for Holt, is either making oneself completely available to a child's learning process as a resource, or getting out of a child's way as the child goes about exploring his or her environment, gaining direct experience:

What children need is not new and better curricula but access to more and more of the real world; plenty of time and space to think over their experiences, and to use fantasy and play to make meaning out of them; and advice, road maps, guidebooks, to make it easier for them to get where they want to go (not where we think they ought to go), and to find out what they want to find out. (Holt, 1981, p. 168)

Educating is interacting with a child as a person. Not talking down to the child, not instructing. But rather interacting with the child just as one would any person who was curious and asked you a question. If you know the answer, you answer it. If asked to explain it, explain it. If asked for a good resource, like a book, you would provide it.

What makes a good educator, Holt argued, was not some sophisticated pedagogical method. Rather, competency in a subject matter and the ability to clearly communicate.

To the extent that teaching involves and requires some real skills, these have long been well understood. They are no mystery. Teaching skills are among the many commonsense things about dealing with other people, that, unless we are mistaught [sic], we learn just by living. In any community people have always known that if you wanted to find out how to get somewhere or do something, some people were much better to ask than others. (Holt, 1981, p. 51-52)

The criticism of many homeschool advocates is that in addition to conditioning children, and conditioning society about children, schools condition society into a dependency on individuals who peddle a false science of pedagogy. The purpose of the sham is to advance the vested interests of a select few, the credentialed educational professional. Schools are focused on conditioning society to believe that they need help doing something that is basic to humanity:

Today our social environment is thoroughly polluted by *education*—a designed process in which one group of people (educators, social engineers, people shapers) tries to make another group (those who are to be “educated”) learn something, usually without their consent, because they (the “educators”) think it will be good for them. In other words, education is forced, seduced or coerced learning—except that you can't really make another person learn something that he or she doesn't want to learn, which is why education doesn't work *and has never worked*. People have always learned things, but *education* is a relatively recent innovation, and a deeply destructive one at that. (Hern, 1996, p. 66)

Central to this argument is the notion that an educator is someone who thinks he or she is authorized and therefore has the right to condition others, that he or she knows best what

that person and even society needs and/or wants. But homeschool advocates argue that dismal failing of schools have finally pulled back the curtain. “Experts in education have never been right; their “solutions” are expensive, self-serving, and always involve further centralization. We've seen the results. It's time for a return to democracy, individuality, and family” (Gatto, 1992, p. 38). Many early home education advocates were professionally trained educators and even possess advanced degrees, but ultimately rejected the view that their professional training is what led to success as an educator. Instead, they saw the capacity to teach as something much more inherent in personal relationships and intuitively understood. Educating is work, to be sure, requiring discipline and commitment, but it is not complex. It is not something that requires advanced training. Rather, it is something fundamental to healthy human relationships. Therefore, home educators reject the claim that professionally trained teachers in schools provide a superior education than parents could in the home.

David and Micki Colfax, in their influential book entitled *Homeschooling for Excellence*, tell the story of how they started a ranch and decided to educate their sons at home. Three of their sons went on to receive full college scholarships. In response to the claim that their success was unique and was because of their advanced training, they wrote:

Some have suggested that our success with homeschooling results from our background as high school and college teachers. Perhaps, but it is not all that apparent to us that our teaching 'expertise' has been especially valuable. All parents, after all, are teachers, and it is only the formal education of our children that most of entrust to 'experts.' In homeschooling, the children typically teach

themselves, with the parents appropriately relegated to the job of suggesting courses of study and being available to answer questions—an uncomplicated process. (Colfax, Colfax, 1988, p. 8)

The Colfaxes, like many home educators, decided the “formal education” component was not necessary. In fact, it was not contributing to their children's learning. Instead, they entrusted their children to learn from their experiences managing the ranch. Part of that experience was interacting with their parents and the intellectual resources, the books, the newspapers, the multimedia, available in the home.

Many homeschool advocates argue that the expertise that teachers possess is not in teaching, but in classroom management. In *The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home* (1999), authors Jesse Wise and Susan Wise Bauer reinforce that the notion that the activity of professional teachers in the classroom is different than the activity of education. A professional teacher has to manage a classroom. Managing a classroom may require additional training. But educating a child does not require specialized training:

Never mind educational rhetoric about the years of specialized training necessary for teachers. Forget everything you've heard about the need for classes in child development and educational psychology. These things are indeed necessary for the teacher faced with thirty squirming first graders or twenty-five turned-off adolescents. But you have an entirely different task: the education of your own child, one on one. (Wise, Bauer, 1999, p. 18)

In fact, according to Wise, teacher education courses did not prepare her to have rich educational relationships with children, nor develop her expertise in subject matter or pedagogy. What did that was the practice of educating her own child:

I happened to have a teacher's certificate. But during my years of homeschooling, I learned more academic material, more about how to manage individual relationships with children, and more about how to teach than I did in any of my teacher-education courses. Teacher-education courses gave me a great deal of good information on how to manage large groups of children. I needed that in schools, but a parent doesn't need it to teach at home.
(Wise and Wise, 1999, p. 39)

For many homeschool advocates, pedagogy and the entire professional education is an edifice for conditioning society to concentrate power into the hands of a few. Pedagogy, it is argued, is not about learning. Rather it is about control. It is about conditioning someone to give up power. Gatto (2000) writes:

Pedagogy is a social technology for winning attention and cooperation (or obedience) while strings are attached to the mind and placed in the hands of an unseen master. This may be done holistically, with smiles, music, and light-duty simulations of intellection, or it can be done harshly with rigorous drills and competitive tests. The quality of self-doubt aimed for in either case is similar. (p. 13-14)

Finally, central to the dehumanizing effects of school is their disruption of the parent-child relationship. Pedagogy and the education profession functions to condition parents that they are not capable to serve their children's learning needs. This is the great tragedy of schools. Central to the Christian homeschool movement is the biblical command for parents to take responsibility for their children's education.

The Bible indicates that parents, particularly the fathers, were originally responsible for all facets of their children's development: academic, spiritual, emotional, physical, moral and professional. The stated exception is that the royal children may have had special tutors. In the biblical account of Jewish history, there is no evidence of institutionalized schooling. The only scriptural commands given to children in both Old and New Testaments are to obey and honor their parents' instruction. (Davis, 1991, p. 93)

Parent-directed education, it is argued, is God's natural design. It is evidenced by the fact that children live in homes with their parents. According to many Christian homeschool advocates, nowhere in the Bible is schooling advocated; as such it is a concept foreign to the Christian faith. Some homeschool advocates go further and argue that schools are present in the Bible, but they are always in foreign lands and are designed by foreign agents with the purpose of dismantling the Hebrew nation and culture. Similarly, schools deploy curriculum which condition children into a social order which systematically undermines the positive influence parents have on their children, and go so far as to purposely alienate parents from children. Llewellyn B. Davis identifies “values education” as one way schools function so as to alienate parents from children. According to Davis, schools systematically encourage children to uncritically dismiss the moral views held by their parents. Citing teacher handbooks, Davis argues that schools make unsubstantiated claims about the preparedness of children raised in certain homes.

Value education clarification courses taught in many schools today assume that parental values are not relevant to the child. The textbook *Values Clarification, A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students* assumes “young people brought up by moralizing adults are not prepared to make their own responsible choices.” In values clarification, the student is taught to question his

present value system and encouraged to develop a new one that has not been imposed upon him by his parents or others. (p. 31)

Home educators find evidence in examples such as the handbook cited above, that teachers in schools are encouraging children to uncritically discount certain morals on the basis that they are held by their parents.

Schools condition society to behave as if it is not the responsibility of parents to see to the education of their children, and this notion, it is argued, flies against the face of nature and history: “Is there an idea more radical in the history of the human race than turning your children over to total strangers whom you know nothing about, and having those strangers work on your child’s mind, out of your sight, for a period of twelve years? . . . It’s a mad idea!” (Gatto, quoted in Gunn & Fernandez, 2012, p. 9). Some argue that schools function to satisfy the internal desire of some adults to not have parental responsibility. There is simply not enough time in the day to educate a child as well as perform one’s employment or household management duties or even personal recreational activities. Given all these duties, it is certain that some of them will be poorly performed. Therefore, society has organized itself so that schools enable adults to carry out their various duties more efficiently. As such, schools are less interested in educating, but more interested in simply “babysitting” children, to keep them safe at times their parents are unable. Albert Schanker, who served as president of the American Federation of Teachers, once noted: “The need to control children, to harbor them for a certain amount of time away from their work or otherwise engaged parents, tends to become the

most important function schools perform. And this custodial function often conflicts with, even dominates, the others.” (emphasis Colfax, quoted in Colfax & Colfax, 1988, p. 32).

This “custodial” function, it is argued by homeschool advocates, has become the dominant role of schools. Schools are organized so as to minimize the work of the custodians, or teachers. Homeschool advocates argue that professional educators grant that the role of schools in society is to essentially “babysit” children, freeing their parents to do other tasks. Many Christian homeschool advocates argue that schools function to enable parents to wrongly prioritize their responsibilities. Therefore, schools are not only unhealthy for children, but schools are unhealthy for society by contributing to the delinquency of adults in their parental role. According to homeschool advocates, raising the next generation is the primary responsibility of parents. A parent has the responsibility to raise his or her own children, which includes teaching them. It is shameful, it is argued, that many parents are unwilling to take responsibility to educate their children. But the biblical model, according to many homeschool advocates, is not that the irresponsibility of these parents should be subsidized, and the responsibility be removed from them. Doing so aids them in their irresponsibility. It is God's plan for each family to raise its own children. This plan is God's design for advancing Godly people. Allegedly, the the children of Godly people will receive a quality education, in the home, at the hands of their parents. As a result they will grow in wisdom and will naturally experience more success in life. In contrast, the children of the ungodly will not receive a quality education and will not experience true success in life. They will suffer. They will be

unhappy and develop dependencies. They will experience a loss of control and freedom. God may use this suffering to show them the error of their ways. Or they may continue in their stubborn refusal to obey God, and instead develop their own alternative strategies to meet their needs. In their pride, they will refuse to submit to God's simple plan.

Christian parents, therefore, who refuse to take up homeschooling and instead who send their children to schools are caught up in a wave of destruction. They refuse to heed the truth made clear in God's word. Because knowledge is personal and learning highly individualized, no classroom can compete with the home environment and the parental relationship. As stated earlier, even sectarian schools are deemed part of the condition of society. "Christian schools fall short of the Biblical ideal in at least five areas" writes Harris (1984, p. 39). These include utilizing public school methods and allowing non-Christian children to attend and thereby introduce immoral concepts to Christian children (p. 41). Ultimately, some Christian homeschool advocates argue, a Christian parent must choose. "Homeschooling is an act of faith and of obedience" (p. 10). Therefore, many home education advocates argue that there are only really two options: either the family functions to provide the ideal learning environment for their child, passing on the values they think are worthy of passing on, or a child attends school, where his or her natural propensity to learn will be drastically curbed and instead he will be subjected to impersonal conditioning, which ultimately robs the child of his God-given potential. The decision, therefore, that some home education advocates present is thus: fulfilling

one's parental duties to one's child, or delegating that task to someone else and having one's child receive an radically inferior, dehumanizing experience.

Understanding and resisting the oppression alleged to be inherent in schooling is at the heart of the home education movement. Claims concerning the source and power of the oppression are what distinguishes groups within the movement. Home educators who identify as Christian have their own particular way of talking about the oppression, but they also take advantage of arguments made by home education advocates who do not identify religiously. Regardless of the source of oppression, the home education movement signifies the conclusion that schools are entities which propagate a kind of oppression against not only children who attend school, but against adults, and in particular parents. Schools oppress children by propagating the humanist worldview, a worldview which ignores the most transcendent of human experiences, and subjecting them to the dehumanizing methods of conditioning. Schools oppress society by conditioning it to accept the claim that many children are radically dysfunctional in their learning and that educating is a specialized skill, a science, and is something that only a trained adult can do. As such, schools robs a majority of adults a life-altering positive experience, the experience of educating. Public schools are the most insidious for they propagate a form of oppression which society has endorsed.

In this chapter I have attempted to justly articulate the allegations concerning educators and schools made by some members of the modern home school movement. These claims express an orientation, an ethos, toward reality, replete with theories of

knowledge and humanity. What follows is a reflection on this ethos, employing the methodology of Aspectual Analysis developed by Reformational Philosophy. My reflection will seek to articulate some principles for educational functioning, including the relationship between the school, the home and the state, and use them to respond to homeschool advocates' allegations. In the next chapter I will introduce the methodology.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter serves to introduce Aspectual Analysis, the methodology of this study. Aspectual Analysis was developed by Herman Dooyeweerd and is central to a school of thought known as Reformational Philosophy. Aspectual Analysis can be summarized as the investigation of an entity, utilizing a cosmic framework of relations. First, the internal structure governing an entity is hypothesized, followed by the structure of entities' interlinkages, or relations to other entities. Finally, the root source of reductionistic views of an entity may be reflected upon. The framework of relations is comprised of modal aspects. Therefore, prior to explaining Aspectual Analysis, this chapter will provide an introduction to the Reformational Philosophical theory of Modal Aspects.

According to Reformational Philosophy, philosophy is a scientific, or scholarly, enterprise. To philosophize is to analyze experience and provide a theoretical account of the state of affairs, one which serves to explain both the unity and rich diversity of reality. By contributing to humanity's understanding of reality philosophy seeks to assist humanity experience shalom. Given its scope, philosophy functions as a “totality science” (Troost, 2011, p. xx). As such, it is different than the “special sciences.” In Dooyeweerd's view, a special science, such as Physics, Botany or even Theology, focuses

on a particular way reality functions and the internal relations within that field. Philosophy, on the other hand, serves to provide a theory to unite the special sciences, provide for interdisciplinary work, and ultimately normative activity, which is the practice of wisdom. Philosophizing is an act, but it is not physical labor. Rather it is mental activity of a theoretical kind. In the next section we will briefly discuss Dooyeweerd's view of theorizing. Theorizing, or “theoretical thinking” is described as an activity which serves to transcend experience and locate meaning. The concepts of experience, entity, and law are explained.

Reformational Philosophy contrasts the activity of theoretical thinking with what Dooyeweerd called pre-theoretical, or *naïve*, or experience. Naïve experience serves to express a person's “everyday” state. As a person goes about his or her daily routines, interacting with what is encountered, with nature and neighbors, one does not think *theoretically* about reality. Rather, a person simply *experiences* reality. At the experiential level, we are always thinking, even when we are asleep. Subconscious thinking at the experiential level is evident; our brains function to direct our organs and we can walk and chew gum at the same time. However, experiential thinking is not *theoretical* thinking. Experiential thinking is part of our experiential interaction with reality, in which we encounter reality as as a unified whole by way of individual “things” and facts. We will call these things “entities.” In contrast, in theoretical thinking we interact with the structure of reality by way of the Aspects, which are ways of looking at cosmic law.

The term *entity* is used in this study to denote the object of philosophical investigation. In a person's everyday (pre-theoretical, *naïve*) experience, one interacts with a rich variety of objects. These “things” exhibit individuality; they are factual. One encounters and comes to know natural objects, like rocks, plants and animals. One also finds and comes to know cultural objects or artifacts, natural items that have undergone a human-directed formation, and have been developed into tools, clothing, art, etc. Additionally, in a person's everyday experience one interacts with and recognizes social objects: families, bands, clubs, businesses, communities, governments, churches, etc. And of course, one encounters humans in various manifestations, from one's self, to the person living in the same community, to the deepest and broadest vision of the human object, humanity itself. All these “things”, and all relationships, which are complex and varied, including relations in time, what are commonly called *events*, are real and exist. Appropriately, Chaplin (2012) calls the “things, events and relationships” experienced *existents* (p. 56). On the other hand, Clouser (2006) employs the term *entity*, calling it “the widest and most indefinite term we have in English to refer to any sort of reality. It is used to speak of things, events, states of affairs, relations, properties, laws, and anything else one wants to speak of” (p. 72).

Entities co-exist and exhibit their potentiality. Even when dysfunctional, entities still co-exist, though with an acknowledged distinction, that of not living up to their potential. In this sense, entities exhibit their radical individuality as well as universality. Each has something unique in and of itself, while at the same time, each has

commonalities which are shared with others. This duality of individuality and universality is significant, for it reveals the diversity, or rather plurality, that is reality. In our everyday experience, we experience this cosmic pluralism as a coherent totality. For Dooyeweerd, this experiential state is extremely important. One's experience with existents enables one to know that reality truly is coherent. This is to say that the existence exhibited by an entity is not just some function of reason or senses, aiding humans survival in what is a truly chaotic reality. No, reality *does* exist, and as such it is a *totality*. It is completely integrated, having "indissoluble interrelations" (Dooyeweerd, 1986, p. 3). In our experiential state one interacts with the entities one encounters not as objects consisting of parts, but as totalities, as fully integrated coherences. Again, in our experiential state, entities are just as one experiences them. One does not require additional information so as to relate to an entity. Entities are fully present. Entities exhibit individuality as well as universality, but their individuality and universality are completely integrated. Therefore, each entity is simultaneously an object, acting according to a potential which is internal, and a subject, acting according to the potential which is external. An entity's relations are completely coherent in everyday experience. However, in theoretical thinking, humans have the capacity to set asunder the relations of an entity. In doing so, what is revealed is the entity's structure of relations, or laws. Reformational Philosophy postulates that an entity's structure of relations corresponds to a cosmic structure of relations. This cosmic framework of relations enables the diversity of entities we experience, and also serves to explain how it is that reality is coherent. This

structure of relations is cosmic, in that it is internal to the entity as well as external. It functions so as to provide meaning, that is a sense of an entity's origin and destination and whether an entity is functioning as it can and should. This meaning we grasp somewhat intuitively.

According to Dooyeweerd, at the experiential level, we have significant ability to sense whether or not things are well-off or not. We easily grasp that a plant that is wilting or a cow not able to produce milk for her calf is not healthy, not living in accordance to their potential. In contrast, the flower that is blooming and the cow and calf that are lazily enjoying a pasture, are cause to celebrate. We can rejoice at our experience of the flower and the cows because we have a sense that they are existing according to their purpose, doing what is inherent to them, fulfilling their destiny. We can intuit, to some degree dysfunction. We can discern the dysfunction of the parent who shuns his child or the government which terrorizes its citizens. In Dooyeweerd's view, humans have such intuitive knowledge regarding our experiences because humans have an innate sense of meaning, purpose or destiny. On the other hand, we acknowledge that this sense is imperfect, and not comprehensive. We often are unsure as to what we are experiencing. Is the flower acting as it should, or is it acting in a way that is not good for it? What is its destiny, and is this act in accordance to its destiny? Due to the complexity of reality, the well-being of an entity is rarely clear. We may intuit a sense of it, but that sense is imprecise. While we may be tempted to simply throw up our arms and declare that we “just do not understand what is going on!” more often we intentionally engage in

theoretically thinking, a more careful study and deliberation of our experiences, in order to reach some conclusion.

One of the conclusions we might strive for is ontological; we might hope to answer the question: what is it? The question of Being is significant in the history of Western thought. Dooyeweerd, however, argues that Western philosophy has frustrated itself unnecessarily with ontological theories, and especially with theories of substance and essence. No thing exists independently. Rather, we know a thing by its meaning, which is understood as their coherence between their origin and destination. Origin and Destination are temporal concepts. Time and History are major themes in Reformational Philosophy (Basden, 2009; Dooyeweerd, 1986; McIntire, 1985). Existence is temporal; one cannot theorize about a reality devoid of time.

Thus far, we have discussed our experiences with the objects of reality and are sense of their destiny and whether or not their current state works for or against arriving at their destiny. An important part of Dooyeweerd's view of reality is the question of purpose, or meaning. Dooyeweerd's view is that the reality is meaning-laden, such that existence only makes sense in terms of meaning, "*meaning is the being of all that has been created and the nature of our selfhood. It has a religious root and a divine origin*" (1969, p. 4).

Each experience, each moment in time, therefore has significance, or meaning. For each experience, each moment in time, connects to the past and connects to the future. Each of my experiences, each moment in time, serves to connect my origin to my

destiny. When one interact with another thing, say a flower, one is contributing to the flower's experiences, its moment in time, adding coherence to its origin and destiny. To witness a flower blooming is to take part in the flower's meaning. Moreover, everything that exists, everything's moments in time, is the coherence of reality's origin and destination.

Reformational Philosophy's method of analysis centers on Dooyeweerd's theory of Modal Aspects. In Dooyeweerd's view, existence is supported by a cosmic framework of law, which provides the structure enabling totality but also true plurality. The word Aspect simply means “way” and signify an approach to the question of meaning. Dooyeweerd postulated that there must be a true plurality of ways that cosmic law functions. Aspects are domains of law-conformance, and serve as a “law framework” (Closer, 2006, p. 243). They are “law-spheres” (Basden, 2008). Aspects provide a structure by which to analyze the coherence of experience:

[I]n the theoretical attitude of thought we analyze empirical reality by separating it into its modal aspects. In the pre-theoretical attitude of naïve experience, on the contrary, empirical reality offers itself in the integral coherence of cosmic time. ... The aspects are not set asunder, but rather are conceived of as being together in a continuous uninterrupted coherence. (Dooyeweerd, 1969, p. 38)

Each Aspect is the domain of a particular way of expressing cosmic meaning; each is irreducible. Therefore, each Aspect is said to have a “nuclear meaning” or “meaning kernel” (Strauss, 2009, p. 74). An aspect's meaning kernel signifies the most intuitive sense we have for a mode of existence. For example, the aspect associated with

governing the ideals and activities which we associate with being a living organism, Dooyeweerd called the Biotic, and gave the meaning kernel as “vitality”. Others have described the kernel meaning of the Biotic aspect as “living” and “organic”. Similarly, Dooyeweerd postulated a Historical-Cultural aspect, and gave as its kernel meaning “formation”. Others have argued that “Formative” is a more appropriate label for this aspect. What follows is a table of Modal Aspects. It includes candidates for the kernel meaning:

Table 1. Aspects and Kernel Meanings

ASPECT ²	KERNEL MEANING CANDIDATES
Pistic	faith, vision, aspiration, commitment, belief
Ethical	love, sacrifice, generosity, kindness, troth
Juridical	due, tribute, rights, responsibilities
Aesthetic	harmony, play, enjoyment
Economic	resourcefulness, frugality
Social	relationships, roles, convention
Sign	symbolic, linguistic
Formative	culture, history, technology
Analytic	distinction, conceptualization
Psychic	sense, feeling, emotion
Biotic	living, vitality, organism
Physical	energy, matter, forces
Kinematic	movement, motion
Spatial	continuous space, extension

² This table combines suggestions by Dooyeweerd (1969), Clouser (2003), Basden (2008), Strauss (2009) and Troost (2012).

It is important to note that the labels associated with each aspect and its kernel meaning are truly signifiers, in that they reference something which is intuitively grasped and experienced. According to Dooyeweerd, an aspect and its meaning kernel cannot be directly known, for while aspects are irreducible, they are also non-absolute. Recall that according to the Christian worldview, everything that exists was created. To be absolute is to be radically independent, to be beyond time, and foundational to all of reality. Only God has this status according to theistic thought. In contrast, an aspect is said to be non-absolute, and is dependent. It has relations. In Dooyeweerd's theory aspects are radically inter-dependent. They are truly pluralistic. The Aspects inform, enable, and enforce each other, thus serving as transcendent “law framework”, a structure for relations. “In this inter-modal cosmic coherence no single aspect stands by itself; every-one refers within and beyond itself to all the others” (Dooyeweerd, 1969, p. 3).

We have knowledge of an aspect due to its relationship with the other aspects, In their relations, the aspects function to support each other in their meaning. They broaden and give depth to each other's meaning. Early I noted that the kernel meaning of the Biotic aspect is “living” or “vitality”. We may intuitively grasp the meaning of these concepts, but in order to approach them, we make use of the other aspects. The other aspects provide “analogous moments” for each others. To approach the meaning of living and the principles of functional, normative living, we inspect the relationship of the

Biotic Aspect to the other aspects. The Biotic aspect is preceded in the aspectual order by the Physical aspect, whose kernel meaning is given as “energy” or “matter”. Intuitively, “energy” is both similar and distinct from living. Analogies can be derived from their relationship and they aid us in understanding “living”. The laws of energy help us understand the laws of living analogical. Similarly, the Biotic is followed in the aspectual order by the Psychic aspect, whose meaning is given as “sense”, “feeling” or “emotion”. The laws of of the Psychic aspect also help us grasp and better theorize concerning normative Biotic functioning.

Central to the aspects relations is their position to each other. The aspects, as created and existing in time, are structured so as to reflect their temporality. They are orderly. Their order reflects meaning. Their relations also reflect origin and destination. Their order relates to how they serve each other. When an aspect appears in the order prior to another, the relationship is a foundational one. When an aspects precedes another in the aspectual order, its analogous relationship is said to be an anticipatory one. The Biotic aspect anticipates the Psychic, as well as the Analytical, Formative, and so on. This is to say, that the Biotic aspect “looks forward to” to the Psychic. In this sense, that in locating laws in the Biotic aspect one can expect that these laws will function to broaden and further reveal the laws in the Psychic. In contrast, when the aspect “looks back” to a foundational aspect, it is said to be a relationship of retrocipation. The concepts of Anticipation and Retrocipation are used in aspectual analysis to describe the kind of relationship of meanings being discovered.

The number of aspects, their meanings and position are discussed and debated by scholars (Basden, 2009; Clouser, 2003; Dooyeweerd, 1969; Geertsema, 2004; Strauss, 2009, van Woudenberg, 2003). While Dooyeweerd eventually described fifteen aspects, he was very clear that he did not think he had arrived at a comprehensive theory concerning their relations. He even claimed that human activity may serve to reveal additional aspects:

In fact the system of the law-spheres designed by [Reformational Philosophers] can never lay claim to material completion. A more penetrating examination may at any time bring new modal aspects of reality to the light not yet perceived before. And the discovery of new law-spheres will always require a revision and further development of our modal analyses. Theoretical thought has never finished its task. Any one who thinks he has devised a philosophical system that can be adopted unchanged by all later generations, shows his absolute lack of insight into the dependence of all theoretical thought on historical development. (Dooyeweerd, 1969, p. 556)

Aspects are described as having two “sides”: a factual side and a law side. (Basden, 2008, p. 87). The factual side is focused on particular entities (*this* tree, *this* hammer, *this* grocery), while the law side is focused on types (*a* tree, *a* tool, *a* business). The factual side is focused on functioning, while the law side is focused on normativity. The gateway between the two sides in Aspectual Analysis is a particular Aspect. This aspect's meaning impacts all the others and guides the destination, or the internal development, of the entity's structure. When encountered experientially, in other words, as a totality, this aspect best reflects one's intuitive sense of the entities meaning.

Now that the theory of Modal Aspects have been summarized, we can now discuss the method of Aspectual Analysis. The first task in Aspectual Analysis is to theorize the modal structure of an entity. Key to this process is the identification of what is called the Typical, or Radical, Structure. After a modal structure is theorized, the structural relations of the modal aspects are reflected upon in order to theorize principles governing the entity. These theorized principles are then used to reflect upon the objects of our experiences.

The identification of the Radical Structure of an entity is the first task in Aspectual Analysis. The Radical Structure is comprised of two aspects which provide character to the entity. Troost explains:

...in a theoretical approach, in which we come at a given reality from aspectual points of view using concepts of modal functions, we must, in order to grasp the thing-totality, link up with those modal aspects that play a very special role in the whole. For all entities we find two such aspects, which we call the *founding* and the *qualifying* aspects. (Troost, 2012, p. 106).

The Qualifying Aspect is the aspect which leads, or guides, the entity. It functions as an entity's integrator and organizer (Hart, 1984, p. 146). In doing so, this Aspect plays the most prominent role in the structure of the entity, in short, characterizing the interaction of the modal aspects. Basden (2009) lays out three qualifications for identifying the qualifying Aspect. The first is that the qualifying Aspect should “reflect the thing itself.” (p. 135). This is in contrast to how well or how poorly the thing performs. For example, a vegetable is qualified by the Biotic Aspect, whose kernel meaning is given as “living,

vitality, organism.” This is because a vegetable, a plant, if left to its own devices, would function to actualize the laws governed by the Biotic Aspect, laws such as growth and reproduction. A vegetable would not try to communicate, or create art. A human may utilize a vegetable to communicate or create art, but of its own accord, a vegetable does not actively function to actualize the meaning governed by these Aspects. Even if the vegetable poorly grows (due to environment, for example) or tastes poorly, according to our palette, we intuitively grasp that a vegetable, left to its own devices, would pursue an organic, living existence, a biotic destination. Secondly, Basden argues that the qualifying aspect is what primarily differentiates a type from other types. We intuitively grasp that a vegetable is different than a rock. This difference is reflected in the modal aspect structure. While one might have a “pet rock”, a rock is not a living entity. Both a rock and a vegetable are physical entities and possess energy, but the distinction between the two is sufficient to defend the position that a vegetable is something in addition to a rock. A rock is not qualified by the Biotic Aspect, but by the Physical Aspect. Thirdly, according to Basden, the qualifying aspect can be identified by way of how apparent it is to see that the other aspects orient themselves to the qualifying aspect. This character of the qualifying aspect is perhaps the most difficult to defend. We have already discussed how in the theory of modal aspects each aspect has a kernel meaning which is distinct, but which cannot be grasped without the aid of the other aspects. Each aspect is a way of accessing meaning. The aspects function together to provide a coherent, total meaning. For example, in order to fully experience and understand justice, the kernel meaning of

the juridical aspect, one must also experience and understand the kernel meaning of the other 14 aspects. But the individuality present in the aspects also enables true individuality in entities. Individuality corresponds to the role each aspect plays in the coherence. While each aspect plays a part in the meaning of an entity, the aspects play different structural roles in different types of entities. The qualifying aspect guides the other aspects and in doing so, the other aspects function to reflect the qualifying aspect, and to hone its distinct power. So, while a vegetable is a biotically-qualified entity, it is an entity which has a discrete amount (Quantitative aspect) a shape (Spatial aspect), movement (Kinematic aspect) and energy (Physical aspect). According to the theory of Modal Aspects, in a vegetable entity, these Aspects serve the Biotic aspect, helping it actualize its Biotic destination. This is to say that if we want to understand why a particular vegetable has a particular shape or capacity to move or weight or mass, it is best to see these things as all working toward fulfilling the destiny of a vegetable – to its continuity as a living organism. Clouser (2003) defines the qualifying aspect as “that aspect whose laws govern the overriding internal structure and development of a thing considered as a whole, and which is the highest in the sequential order of aspects in which the thing functions actively” (p. 261). The first part of Clouser's definition reiterates that the qualifying aspect is the location of the laws which shape the future of the entity, devoid of external influence. The second part of Clouser's definition speaks to the distinction between active and passive subjection to an Aspect. Recall that every entity is subject to every aspect. However, not every entity is actively subject. Earlier, I

noted that vegetables do not communicate or make art. They are not actively subject to the laws of Sign and Aesthetic aspects. However, they are passively subjected to those aspects. This is to say that an entity which is active in those aspects, a human, can apply those aspectual laws on a vegetable. A person can use a vegetable as part of message or as a work of some performance. In such a case, the vegetable demonstrates its subjection to those laws governed by those Aspects. However, Reformational Philosophy recognizes the distinction between an entity's capacity to actively actualize those norms.

Accordingly, an entity's qualifying aspect is the highest in the Aspectual structure it can actively actualize. A vegetable cannot actively actualize sensation; plants do not feel, in the same way that animals which have nervous systems and touch, taste, smell, etc. and experience pain. However, they are living organisms, and therefore, they are qualified as Biotic.

In addition to the qualifying aspect, which serves to guide the entity's destiny, Dooyeweerd identified another role a particular aspect could play. The founding, or foundational, aspect denotes the aspect whose laws govern the formation of the entity, those which give rise to the entity. Clouser (2005) says the founding aspect is “foundational in the sense that it provides the means for the accomplishments of the plan” (p. 264). Chaplin (2011) describes the founding aspect as “furnishing the indispensable support making [the entity's] destination realizable” (p. 67). Recognizing the founding aspect of an entity is important, especially in the analysis of social entities. Dooyeweerd argued that the vast majority of social entities were founded in the formative aspect,

meaning that they were dependent on particular historical and cultural principles having been actualized. For example, social entities such as the labor union make little sense outside of their historical and cultural context. In other words, the Industrial Revolution, with its harsh working conditions and employer-centric wage settings, created the environment from which Labor Unions emerged. Without the Industrial Revolution, or more appropriately, without the conditions similar to those present during that historical-cultural moment, the expectation of a normative Labor movement decreases. While the majority of social entities are theorized to be founded in the formative aspect, they are contrasted to the social entity of Family, which Dooyeweerd analyzed as being founded in the Biotic aspect. The presence of shared genetic material provides the bases for the family, and indeed familial relations appear to precede historical and cultural events. Theorizing the founding aspect of an entity is important because one should not evaluate an entity as dysfunctional if the conditions for its functionality do not exist. For example, to criticize an ancient culture for its absence of a particular social entities, for example labor unions, would be indicative of a poor analysis of the foundations of a social entity. In conclusion, the founding aspect is the location of the laws governing the conditions for the development of the entity.

A third role has been identified for an aspect to play in the structure of an entity. This role is called the typical aspect. The typical aspect functions as the location of an entity type law. It serves to better identify sub-types. The typical aspect provides

additional character and variability within entity groups. Chaplin (2011) suggests that the typical aspect contributes to "an 'inner articulation' that can be highly intricate" (p. 66).

It has been noted (Basden 2011; Strauss, 2009; Troust, 2012) that kinds of entities correspond to aspectual qualifications, and that groupings of entity types occur. The first three aspects, the Qualitative, Spatial and Kinematic, are "mathematical" aspects, while the Physical, Biotic and Psychic aspects have been identified as "pre-human" (Basden, 2011, p. 5). These three aspects qualify natural objects like rocks, trees and animals, and even natural habitats. The next three aspects, the Analytical, Formative and Sign "govern human cognition" (Basden, *ibid*). The Social, Economic and Aesthetic pertain to human interaction and the final three, the Juridical, Ethical and Pistic, are crucial to civilization.

Dooyweerd (1969, 1986) went to great length to analyze many social entities and offer theories as to their structures. Social entities offer an additional layer of complexity, for one is attempting to locate the laws which govern the collective acts of humans. While associations are entities, ultimately, their activity can be traced to individual human acts. Therefore, it is important to recognize that although Reformational Philosophy denies that a human and humankind are qualified entities and are passive in any aspect, social entities are qualified and are passive in some aspects. This is to say that social entities are the collective acts of roles that people actualize. Therefore, when we analyze a social entity for its qualifying aspect, we examine the activity of a person when acting as part of a social entity. For example, when a person acts in the role of a Judge, she is acting in a way which is qualified by the juridical aspect. Correspondingly, the

social entity of a court system is qualified by the Juridical aspect. While the human is active subject to the ethical aspect at all times, in the role of judge, a human act of judgement and the court system are passive in the Ethical aspect. This is to say that a court system and the role of Judge cannot actively actualize the laws of love. Rather, it is the individual human who fills the role of judge who must actively actualize the laws governed by the ethical aspect, and in doing so during the act of judgement, enables the role of judge and the court system to actualize ethical laws. This complex relationship will be further explained in the proceeding chapters.

Once the modal structure of an entity has been theorized, the relations between two entities can be further analyzed. Central to the structure of relations between two entities is Dooyeweerd's theory of interlinkages, or encaptic relations. In general, an entity maintains its identity by way of its internal modal structure, even when functioning with other entities. However, Dooyeweerd made a crucial distinction between relationships in which an entity is part of a whole or is the whole in which there are true parts, and an encaptic relationship in which two entities are mutually functioning in collaboration, but are acting according to their own distinct identity and principles. According to Dooyeweerd, a whole-part relationship can only exist when two entities share the same qualifying aspect, otherwise the relationship is an encaptic one, "One must make a principled distinction between the figure of encapsis and the relation of a whole and its parts. The latter relations can occur only between entities of which one, according to its nature as a whole, determines the inner nature of its parts." (1986, p. 66).

Dooyeweerd cites the example of organs of a body and territories in a state as examples of true whole-part relations. In each case, the modal structure of the part (organ, territories) is the same as the whole (body, country). Therefore, the significance of organs and territories can only be grasped when they are analyzed in relation to the whole of which they are part, the organs to a body and territories to a state. In other words, a failure to situate the part (the organ or the territory) in the whole (the body or the state), will undermine any ability to locate the principles governing that entity. For example, we can theorize that a more successful organ transplant will result when principles concerning normative bodily functioning are taken into consideration. In contrast, we intuitively recognize and our experiences seem to confirm that an artificial organ or limb must function with the body but are subjected to normative principles apart from the body. For example, the metal of an artificial limb may rust, and so its care must be guided by principles which are in addition to the principles of a organic limb. Apart from a common qualifying aspects, two entities may temporally function so as to mutually serve each other, but ultimately have the potential (and authority) to develop according to their different destinations, each according to their own qualifying aspects. An analysis of their encaptic relationship serves to describe how the different modal structures of the different entities interact. Encapsis serves to describe how the entities bind to each another temporally, and to facilitate theories concerning the conditions in which relationship may occur, and what particular benefit entities could provide and derive. Dooyeweerd was particularly interested in theorizing normative social functioning, and argued that a

failure to recognize that normative society was replete with complex interlinkages resulted in either radically individualistic or universalistic theories of society:

A lack of insight into the principal difference between the social relation of encasement and the social whole-part relation leads to a universalistic view of society. Sociological universalism--in all its forms and with consequences of varying importance--always constructs a temporal social whole, of which all other social wholes are merely organic parts. In opposition to this universalistic view, one finds the individualistic view. Its proponents regard society as an aggregate of individuals or of elementary relations between individuals. (Dooyeweerd, 1986, p. 68).

This insight is significant for analyzing any theory which makes bold claims about the family, the state and schools. An additional activity in Reformational Philosophy is to offer some analysis regarding the source of a failure to recognize complex relations. To do this, we transition to the Reformational Philosophical concept of religious ground motive, or Direction.

Lastly, Reformational Philosophy makes a major distinction between Structure, that is the framework of relations, and Direction, or one's absolute orientation toward reality. Direction accounts for the role one's worldview plays in one's theorizing. Dooyeweerd, however, argued that worldviews are actually expressions of commitment, which are personal, but which also reflect human activity. Therefore, worldviews both incorporate and produce culture and science. Worldviews function as an interpretation for the origin and a destination of reality. From its own explicitly theistic worldview, Reformational Philosophy locates reductionism and ideology from improperly locating the origin and destination of reality within some part of reality. According to

Reformational Philosophy, what ails reality is not anything that was created. According to the testimony of scripture, God created everything and declared it all good. Rather, what ails reality is the orientation of humanity toward God, toward Christ. This orientation toward God is a function of a spiritual organ, an organ which expresses its transcendency immanently. In contrast, Structure speaks to the expression of God's creative authority. According to Reformational Philosophy reality was created through Christ for Christ's glory. Reality is the expression of God's will and power. Because God spoke reality into existence, Structure is defined as the cosmic form of God's word, this form functions as law. Humans, as God's image, and as stewards of creation, have the capacity to shape reality, and actualize God's structure. Orientation toward God is the definition of good and evil. To be in a right orientation toward God is the definition of good, while to be in wrong orientation is to be evil. According to Christians, the mark of good orientation toward God is the recognition and submission to Christ's authority. One's Direction is the absolute orientation one has toward existence, and from which one's worldview emerges.

According to Strauss (2009), the confusion of Structure and Direction is what results in locating the distinction between good and evil in a specific part of reality, “the moment [direction and structure] are confused, the directional antithesis between *good* and *evil* in understood in structural terms, inevitably resulting in a *dualistic worldview*, where 'good' and 'evil' are respectively identified with *specifically opposed areas of life* within creation” (p. 43). In other words, all the aspects have equal authority and power and contribute to the coherence we experience. Each derives their power from Christ,

who transcends reality. An inability to acknowledge Christ's authority in some part of reality results in shifting absolute authority to some part of reality, and ultimately misconstruing the meaning of the aspects and violated their sovereignty. Apart from Christ, selfhood grants certain aspects the authority of the absolute origin or destination of all reality. As a result all the other aspects are misconstrued as being part, a subset, of this supreme aspect. The result is ideology, which manifests itself in theorizing as well as actions. The analogous relations the aspects possess appear to grant credence to reductionist views. A reductionistic thinker at first finds easy support for the collapsing of the aspectual structure, but ultimately, each aspect cannot be reduced to another. They have their own meaning, their own identity. The result is that the reductionism yields a dualistic orientation concerning reality. The dualist orientation is not just individual, it is cultural; it is an ethos, a spirit of the age. "The religious ground-motive of a culture can never be ascertained from the ideas and the persona faith of the individual. It is truly communal motive that governs the individual even when one is not consciously aware of it or acknowledges it" (Dooyeweerd, 2003, p. 9). Dooyeweerd analyzed the history of western thought and traced major shifts in dualistic thinking. His assessment of Modernity was that it expressed an unresolvable tension between "nature" and "freedom" (Troost, 2012, p. 207). An analysis of modern educational theories, including those embraced by homeschoolers, should include a reflection on the presence of indicators of reductionist thinking.

In conclusion, the methodology of this study is Aspectual Analysis, developed by Herman Dooyeweerd and central to Reformational Philosophy. Aspectual Analysis builds on a theory of Modal Aspects, a cosmic framework of law, which functions to provide meaning to reality. One's experiences and intuition are used to theorize a radical structure of entities. A radical structure has a qualifying aspect and foundational aspect. Entities also have a typical aspect as part of their structure. From these aspects, theories can be derived regarding the normative functioning of an entity. The interlinkages between aspects may be explored. Only entities which have a qualifying aspect in common may truly function in a whole-part relationship. Finally, reductionistic thinking is the result of granting a particular aspect ultimate authority, which is expressed in worldviews.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRUCTURE OF EDUCATIONAL ENTITIES

In this chapter I will postulate the modal structure of educational entities. I theorize that educational entities are qualified by the ethical aspect and founded in the formative aspect. Reflecting on this structure and its analogical meaning moments, I will then offer three principles for normative educational functioning. These principles will serve as a baseline for reflecting on the educational theories espoused by home school advocates including their criticism leveled against schools as centers of anti-normative educational functioning.

Recall that the goal is to develop some standard, some measure (informed by a Christian worldview) by which one might assess some theories concerning educating entities advanced by some homeschool advocates. Because many advocates claim support for their views from the Christian religion, a standard developed from a shared commitment is desirable. The chief claim is that schooling is dehumanizing. By what standard should we assess activities which we historically have associated with the school and schooling, activities such as lecturing, facilitating a discussion, avoiding certain topics and pursuing others, developing curriculum, directing research? Are these acts fundamentally different than bringing to the attention of a person a particular natural object and sharing what one has learned about the object? For example, how am I to

understand the distinction between the act of going on a hike through the woods with a child or a group of children, and upon seeing a mushroom, bringing it to their attention and then talking about the mushroom and the act of collecting a sample of some mushrooms, preparing a lecture on them and then scheduling some time to deliver that lecture to a child or even a group of children?

My experience is, and I intuit, that these two acts, while distinct, are both normative educational acts. Therefore, they can be assessed according to the same standards or principles, what I will call normative educational functioning. In both cases, the actors have a purpose and work to achieve that purpose. Both acts can provoke learning in the children which can result in knowledge. I say these educational acts “can provoke learning” and “can result in knowledge” intentionally, for ultimately I agree with the view that the student plays the crucial role in learning and knowledge. If the student does not play that role, the outcome is doubtful. The student role, however, is not the subject of this study. This study is not about learning or how people learn. Nor is it about the nature of knowledge. Rather, this is an analysis of educating. It is about certain actions of a person in a particular role, which one might call educator, or teacher or even curriculum developer.

Reflecting on my own experiences as an educator, as a curriculum developer, as someone who sought to educate, certain notions arise within me. When I flip my experiences, and consider when I witnessed what I deemed was a wonderful educational act, for example when I sat in on a Girl Scout meeting and listened to the educator talk to

the young girls about electricity, or was even I myself was considered a student, similar notions arise. Therefore, I recognize a strong relationship between the student and the teacher, between the learner and the educator. However, again, this study is focused on educational activity, and for my purposes, I wish to set aside learner activity.

Several Reformational scholars have hinted at a radical structure of educational entities and of schools, but the matter has not been settled within this philosophical community. While there is comparatively little published by Dooyeweerd on educational functioning and school, Reformational Philosophers (Taljaard, 1976; Clouser, 2006; Popma, 1947; Blomberg, 1999) have not been completely silent on the subject. Taljaard (1976) located the qualifying aspect of educational functioning in the Pistic aspect, whose core meaning is described as “faith”, “commitment” or “certainty”. In contrast, Roy Clouser (2006) intimates that educational entities are analytically-qualified (p. 296). Douglas Blomberg (1999) locates the qualifying aspect of educational functioning in the Formative aspect. He writes:

Teaching... is qualified by the techno-cultural way of knowing, requiring the exercise of formative power in loving service, as a teacher leads and guides students (the cultural dimension) and shapes the material environment (the technical dimension) so that the invitation to learn is issued. (Blomberg, 1999, p. 11)

I theorize that the difficulty in analyzing the modal structure of an educational entity is that educational entities are first and foremost conceptual entities. Educational artifacts, such as a lecture or a textbook, are also educational entities, but are ones that interlink a

concept with a cultural artifact. In other words, when a person experiences direct instruction or reads a textbook one is actually interacting with an entity which has already undergone a significant encapsis. In order to explain this interlinkage, I will first introduce a theory of the radical structure of an educational entity and then I will discuss how a textbook is a cultural artifact with its own modal structure which interlinks with an educational entity. This encaptic relationship provides a way to think about the complexity of educational entities and their normative educational functioning. Finally, I will argue that schools are social entities, which demonstrate additional encaptic complexity.

My theory is that educational entities are best understood as being qualified in the Ethical aspect, founded in the Formative and being typically Analytical. Recall that qualifying aspect provides the destination of the entity, and guides the structure to fulfillment. The foundational aspect provides the means and the typical aspect describes the character.

The kernel meaning of the Ethical aspect is best articulated as simply *love*. Reformational philosophers have put forth additional candidates, including: self-giving, generosity, sacrifice, and care (Basden, 2008, p. 64) and even “troth” or loyalty (Hart, 1984, p. 281). Strauss (2009) considers “love” sufficient, citing as evidence the intuitively grasped opposition between “love” and “hate” (p. 100). The Formative aspect provides the conditions for the entity. The kernel meaning of the Formative has been given as “culture” (Troost, 2012, p. 211) and “formative control or simply *power*”

(Strauss, 2009, p. 95). Finally, the typical aspect gives the entity its type, or character of individuality. The kernel meaning of the Analytical aspect has been given as “distinguishing, identifying difference” (Troost, 2012, p. 211). Therefore, I can quickly summarize the three-fold radical structure of an educational entity as ethical-analytical-formative.

Simply using these kernel meanings, one can deduce that an educational entity is characterized as a notion of worth. I derive the word “notion” from the Analytical aspect. An educational entity is an abstraction of a sort. It is a concept. The Analytical aspect has a retrocipatory relationship with the Psychic, which has a kernel meaning of “sense”. I derive the concept of “worth” from the Ethical aspect qualification. The Ethical aspect has an anticipatory relationship with the Pistic, whose kernel meaning has been given as faith, certainty and trust (Strauss, 2009, p. 101). From this relationship, the ethical aspect's kernel meaning of love reflects the concept of "trustworthiness". My basic analysis is that an educational entity is conceptually a kind of zealously for the distinction of the other. Its foundation of power (Formative) and qualification of love (Ethical) support my experience that educational entities exhibit the ability to provoke. But what is the character of their provocative ability?

Before I continue, I wish to avoid two possible wrong conclusion which might be drawn concerning a theory that educational entities are ethical-qualified. The first is that educational entities are not religious. The fact that I locate the qualifying aspect of an educational entity in the ethical and not the pistic, whose kernel meaning has been given

as “faith”, does not mean that educational entities are in any way religiously-neutral. Rather, by locating the qualifying aspect in the ethical, I seek to draw attention to my experience that educational entities function to yield their unique rights and responsibilities, their “sphere sovereignty”, with and upon pistically-qualified entities. The thrust of the theory of the ethical qualification of an educational entity is that many expressions of pistically-qualified entities are encapsulated. For example, a catechism exhibits a strong interlinkage between a pistically-qualified entities, creeds, and an ethically-qualified educational entity, what we might call a "provocative notion of worthiness".

A second wrong conclusion which might be drawn is that the ethical qualification of educational entities means that by way of education one becomes morally good. One challenge facing us is the question of Ethics. In everyday language, good behavior is described as ethical behavior. The theory that educational acts are ethically qualified is not meant to convey that education is good, that educating is a de facto good act, or that an educator is a good person. Rather it is meant to convey that existence is comprised of laws of love (and hate), and an educational entity is an entity actualizing these laws. That is to say, that every normative educational entity actualizes laws of love (and/or hate). Sometimes that actualization yields an act that is impassioned, at other times one that attempts to remain more objective. Both of these are potentially normative. What is not normative, however, in an educational entity is an attitude or act of indifference.

A significant implication of the theory regarding the ethical qualification of an educational entity is that only humans are capable of enacting educational acts.

According to Reformational Philosophy, only humans are actively subject to the Ethical aspect. Neither a rock, nor a tree, nor an animal, can actively function ethically, according to the theory of entities. In everyday language we say things like “the rocks and trees taught me” or “our pet taught us”, but according to my theory, it is crucial to make a distinction between what the rock or tree or animal did and what the human did. In the Reformational Philosophical view, these non-human entities acted, according to their own act structure, and in doing so, provoked humans action. Why is it that for some humans a rock or tree is educational, while for others is not? The difference, according to my theory is not the rock or the tree. Rather, the difference is the human. For some individuals, interacting with natural objects, like rocks and trees, and even animals, yields for them an educational entity. My theory is that it is best to understand this educational entity as emerging from selfhood. It emerges because as a human seeks to actualize the laws of love (or hate) toward that natural entity, the human compares and contrasts the natural entity's acts to human actions. In doing so, a human actor enters the relationship conceptually and as a result an educational entity exists. The human actor can even be one's self. For example, if I see a mushroom on my hike and I bend down to observe it to see what can be learned from it, that mushroom does not educate me. I am employing my senses, but ultimately my senses do not educate me either. My senses may provide me sensory information which is useful. But ultimately, it is better to understand this

educational moment, if it emerges, from my interaction with myself. My capacity for distinguishing emerges from my senses, and I have then the potential to craft an educational entity. It may simply be a question, for example: “what is this?” A question is a human artifact. There are no questions in nature. Only humans form questions. The plasticity of language and the analogical relations that are part of existences make it very easy, in everyday talk, to say, “my dog taught me...”, but scientific language requires us to say that the dog was the subject of an educational entity structure. Therefore, in my estimation it is more accurate to say “my love for my dog provoked me to learn”. The significance of this is that any criticism of an educational entity is ultimately a criticism of a human and his or her dysfunctional actualization of the ethical-analytical-formative structure.

The existence of the question in the previous paragraph provides the transition to discuss the encapsulated structure of educational entities. A question, such as “what is this?”, is a collection of words, a sentence. A lecture, and even a textbook, is also just a collection of words. Yet all of these things we recognize as being educational because they are more than “just” words. Each is an artifact with interlinkages with educational entities. The educational entity is encapsulated in the artifact. In order to better understand the encapsulated structure, we need to briefly analyze artifacts. Artifacts are founded on the formative aspect; they are the product of human formative control or power. They are also historically situated; every thing which is not “natural” and not conceptual reflects the influence of its historical and cultural context. Whether it is a

book, or a coffee mug, a computer or a play, each artifact depended on human activity to not only articulate it or give it shape, but to provide the culture from which that artifact could emerge. The presence of the rich variety of coffee mugs at the local store only makes sense in light of a culture in which coffee is appreciated. The qualifying aspect of cultural artifacts differ greatly. For example, a sofa is qualified by the Social aspect, whose kernel meaning is given as “sociality, social intercourse” (Troost, 2012, p. 77). On the other hand, a creed, is qualified by the Pistic aspect. When I reflect on my own educational experiences and the artifacts most often used, I recognize books, art, plays, and movies. These artifacts are qualified by the Aesthetic aspect, whose kernel meaning has been given as “beauty, harmony” (Troost, 2012, p. 77) , “play” (Basden, 2012), imagination and even allusivity (Seerveld, 1979, p. 284). For my purposes, I will use “harmony” as the kernel meaning. My analysis leads me to conclude that the aesthetic laws play a significant part in the encapsulated structure of educational entities. Their role is not one which changes the qualification of the educational entity, but one which functions to interlink the entity typically. In order words, there is a strong link between the analytical type laws of the educational entity and the aesthetic qualifying laws of many artifacts. The significance of this is that normative educational artifacts appear to function according to the laws of logic and the laws of harmony. They seem to “resonate” with the moment and help to give that “a-ha!” or “sweet spot” sensation, an retrocipatory meaning in the Psychic aspect. It might be the right question at the right

time, or an explanation that reveals what was missing (“reveals” demonstrates a Pistic anticipation meaning), or something which facilitates discussion (Social aspect).

This analytic/aesthetic-formative structure also helps me arrive at the concept of curation. To be curatic means simply acting so as to impose some order, taking care to group and sort according to some passion, some sense of appreciation. While curating one adds some items and rejects others; hones one's collection, making sure things fit well together. The concept of curation provides a powerful basis for normative educational functioning. I intuitively sense that educational acts (and artifacts) are the result of human formation. They are crafted, and this activity includes making significant choices about what to include and what to exclude, according to some system, some logic. However, in my estimation, in discussing the norms of educational functioning, the concept of curation alone is insufficient. While I enjoy places which exhibit highly curative activity, like library and museums, and in general, I believe them to be educational, I intuitively recognize that there is something going on in libraries and museums which transcends the curative acts of librarians and acquisitioners. It is not enough to simply group and sort and organize. The fact that educational entities and artifacts share the same foundational aspect, the formative, signifies that educational entities are powerful and have great potential to influence. Curative activity possesses great potential, but it also may lean too much toward analytical norms to become automated and mechanical, and in doing so, threaten normative educational functioning. To review, my analysis is that educational entities are experienced encaptically with

artifacts. The radical structure of an educational entity is ethical-analytical-formative. The common foundational aspect in the formative causes encapsulated educational artifacts to be powerful and provocative, while an interlinkage between artifact and educational entity yields a harmonious type. In order to move beyond simply curative activity to educational activity, I must further reflect on the presence of the qualifying ethical aspect in the aspectual structure.

The presence of an aesthetic-ethical relationship leads me to conclude that appropriateness, or propriety, is a norm of educational functioning. I use appropriateness and propriety to communicate the relationship of the kernel meaning of harmony and the kernel meaning of love, of the aesthetic-ethical structure. Normative educational entities are appropriate, in a provocative way, to a person's knowledge needs. Moreover, my experience is that exposure to inappropriate or disproportional educational entities functions to disrupt the learning process. It may function as a distraction, or it may function to undermine existing knowledge. The appropriateness of an educational entity is difficult to assess, and propriety demonstrates the care and skill of the educator. A person's learning needs may be utilitarian, for example, if I need to change my oil in my car and I do not know how, I do not need a lecture on the history of cars nor a transportation study. The directness and clarity of the owner's instructional manual, or a quick demonstration, is normative. Those educational acts are appropriate. On the other hand, if I am later curious about how it is that my oil leaked, my learning needs are different. I want to know how to inspect my car and possibly even repair it. Experientially

and intuitively we grasp that there is not a one-size-fits-all educational entity. Rather, there is great variability, and the measure is propriety, or how appropriate the educational entity is to the learner's needs.

I do not want the norm of propriety to be interpreted as non-challenging. My sense is that the appropriateness of educational entities is that they do present a challenge. Recall that I said an educational entity is provocative. It provokes a person. The distinction I want to make is that an appropriateness of an educational entity is that it is a challenge to which the learner can rise. Anti-normative educational entities fail to recognize a lack of capacity in a person, and as a result, threaten a person's hope and capacity to trust. Hope and trust are pistically-qualified concepts, and the Pistic aspect follows the Ethical. Anti-normative entities function to threaten the potential to actualize the laws in subsequent aspects. By failing to be appropriate, educational entities function to reduce a person's capacity to experience hope.

Examining the aspectual structure I propose, I surmise that educational entities are active in multiple aspects, in the Formative through the Ethical. The curative meaning of normative educational functioning develops from the “bottom” of the active structure. In reflects the meaning of the Analytical aspect in which is the immediate retrocipatory moment of the Formative aspect upon which the educational act is founded. From this concentration we can easily detect the systematic character of educational activity. Intuitively, and experientially, I recognize that an educational act simply doesn't happen. Rather, that there was intention behind it, a plan, that there was a goal or goals and that

something was being carried out. Moreover, some things were deemed part of the plan and others were not. Concepts such as gathering, ordering, grouping, sorting, and even eliminating are all present. Intuitively, this makes sense. We recognize that curated entities, like a library of books or a collection of artifacts, as being the product of someone with a plan. Yet, a simple collection of items, even if highly systematically structured, fails to meet the standard of a normative educational entity. A great collection of baseball cards is not necessarily an educational entity. It has the potential to be an educational entity, but it still requires certain kinds of laws to be actualized. What is missing? Recall that according to aspectual theory, a normative act is guided by its qualifying aspect. My theory is that normative educational entities, from a discussion about my baseball card collections to textbooks, all of which are human artifacts, are guided by the Ethical, and so the educational act is always one which seeks to actualize ethical norms by way of its structure. The guiding influence of the Ethical aspect with its kernel meaning of love, uniquely colors curative activity to make it distinctly educational. There is a strong sense that in educational activity one is sharing with another person. This reflects the encapsulated radical structure of love(ethical)-craft(formative). But still there is more. The presence of the Analytical aspect in the structure helps us to understand that the concepts of sharing or serving another is not sufficient. Rather, the Ethical leads the Analytical so as to arrive at the concept of honoring. In my final analysis, I propose that normative educational activity always seeks to bestow a kind of honor. Honor is an Ethical concept, and it has strong retrocipation in the Juridical aspect,

in the concept of respect. Respect is giving something its due, and respect can reference an object of love or of fear. In contrast, honoring is best understood as recognizing another not out of duty, but rather out of a motivation that expresses gratitude and appreciation for the the other. Honor also has an anticipatory meaning moment in the Pistic aspect, in concepts such as devotion. In devotion, we find the sense that one continues on in one's appreciation for another, despite doubt. The theory of modal aspects proposes that actualizing the laws of qualifying aspects results in the further “opening up” of anticipatory aspects, in which new actualization potential can occur. Given that the Pistic aspect is the only anticipatory aspect of the Ethical, in theory normative educational functioning should yield new expressions of pistic laws, of normative actualizations of faith, commitment, and of certainty. My experience has been that the educator typically has a deep commitment to learning, and is more likely to place their trust in the learner than in any particular pedagogy. The normative educator demonstrates a deep honor for a person's own experiences.

In libraries and in museums, the goal is never simply to collect items and organize them. Rather, it is to foster (Formative) the honor (Ethical-Analytical) certain items warrant. The curative activity facilitates that honor, but also functions to enhance it. When one educates properly, one is engaging in and performing an act of honor and respect toward the subject, as well as the object. The goal of that respect is that the subject, the student, should develop respect. Therefore, any activity which fails to be honoring and respectful, or develops dishonor or disrespect, is therefore educational

dysfunctional. Given the fact that an educational entity functions to reveal what is honorable and worthy of respect, it seems to be a kind of provocative (Ethical) technique or craft (Formative), and functions as an appropriate challenge and/or gift.

To summarize, I am offering three principals for normative educational functioning, which I derive from the my theory that the encaptic structure of educational acts is ethically-qualified, formatively-founded and demonstrates an aesthetic/analytical typical interlinkage. I do not believe these principles comprehensively describe normative educational functioning. Rather, they are offered as general principles from a preliminary analysis. The three principles I am offering are that of curation (formative-aesthetic), propriety (aesthetic-ethical), and appreciation (formative-ethical). In other words, the absence of a plan, appropriateness and finally acknowledgment of the way in which something is beneficial is indicative of major education dysfunction. These three principles provide the bases for the development and enhancement of characteristics associated with learning, characteristics such as curiosity and criticality. It is important to note that these principles are attempts to verbalize laws. They are normative laws and not deterministic. The fact that they are normative and not deterministic means they have some plasticity in them; they can be “bent”. I will discuss the distinction between deterministic and normative laws more later. The import of this is that it is very possible to poorly actualize these laws, that is act educationally dysfunctional, and still have some positive effect on a learner. However, my theory is that the fullest potential of an educational entity occurs when the laws are actualized. When an educational entity is

curatorial, appropriate (that is fitting) and appreciative, we can have great hope for learning and for shalom. The sphere sovereignty of educational entities should be understood in these terms. Educational entities have unique rights and responsibilities to curate, appropriate and appreciate.

The subject of this study, however, is a particular kind of educational entity, school. A school is an association of people; it is a socially-typified entity. Dooyeweerd analyzed many socially-typified entities, including the state, church, business, labor parties, and families. He did not, however, offer a detailed analysis of school. Dooyeweerd's taxonomy of social entities, however, provides insight into the structure of educational entities such as libraries, museums and even schools. Social entities, such as the church, state, business and school, correspond structurally to individual acts and artifacts that are experienced as part of one's interaction with these social entities. For example, the activity of preaching is structured similarly as the entity of the church; they are both pistically-qualified. The activity of purchasing a car structurally corresponds to the structure of a business. Both are economically-qualified. Recall that an educational entity is experienced encaptically, yielding an ethically-qualified artifact. An association devoted to educational entities, including acts and interactions, shares the same radical modal structure. Therefore social entities such as libraries, museums and schools are ethically-qualified. According to Dooyeweerd's analysis, the vast majority of social entities which are qualified by the ethical-aspect are organizations which are structurally "non-institutional" (1986, p. 95). By this he meant that members were not automatically

added to the ranks of these organizations. Non-institutional organizations differ from institutional organizations in that in institutional organizations, such as family, state and even church, the rights and responsibilities of the community are inherited. This is significant because schools are often considered institutions. Schools receive their institutional character by way of their encaptic relationship with a state. A normative encaptic relationship, one characterized by recognition of each entities' sphere sovereignty, enables each entity to express their individuality and contribute their unique power. As such, each entity contributes to shalom.

In this chapter I provided a theory for the structure of an educational entity. I theorized that educational entities are ethically-qualified, formatively-founded and analytically-typified. Educational entities are expressed encaptically with human artifacts, and as a result display a more aesthetic-typical character. Three norms for educational functioning were postulated. The sphere sovereignty of an educational entity is the right and responsibility to curate, appropriate, that is fit, and to appreciate. Finally, schools are described as socially-typified educational entities, which receive their institutional character by way of their encaptic relationship with other social entities, primarily the family, state and/or church.

CHAPTER V

HOMESCHOOL AND SCHOOL

In the previous chapter I theorized a radical structure of educational entities. Educational entities are ethically-qualified and formatively-founded. Educational entities are human entities and are most often experienced in an encaptic relationship with artifacts. The interlinkage between an artifact and an educational entity results in an ethically-qualified, formatively-founded and aesthetically-typified structure. This structure provided the basis for three normative principles of educational functioning: curation, propriety and appreciation. These broad normative principles provide the basis for an analysis of homeschool advocates' claims concerning education and schools.

Before I investigate the claims of some homeschool advocates, I will provide a brief analysis of the structure of the home and of familial relations. Intuitively, a homeschool means a combination of the social entities of home and school. Dooyeweerd theorized that the family was a socially-typified entity, ethically-qualified and biotically-founded, “The natural immediate family is...an institutional moral community of love between parents and their children under age, structurally based upon biotic ties of blood relationship” (Dooyeweerd, 1969, p. 269). This structure means that family is active not only in the Formative through Ethical aspects, but also the Biotic, Psychic and Analytical aspects. This fact warrants that the family be recognized as being one of a unique kind of

institution, what Dooyeweerd (1986) called "Natural Community" (p. 87), with the ability to actualize laws that other social entities could not. For example, the family actively actualizes the laws of the Biotic, Psychic and Analytical aspects, all of which anticipate the Formative aspect. This is to say that the family possesses a unique power to impact selfhood. Chaplin (2011) summarizes:

Parental nurture decisively conditions the future life of the child and cannot be replaced. Indeed the health of the family has repercussions for other relationships of a communal character. Family life offers an experience of communal solidarity that uniquely prepares children for participating in other communities. (p. 244)

This is not to say that the family exists ontologically prior to other social entities. Rather, it is more appropriate to say that the rich variety of society entity possibilities are latently present in each family. For example, the family is not a space exploration agency, like NASA. However, when family members sit in the backyard on a clear night and enjoy the stars together they exhibit a unique potential for the emergence of a space exploration agency. Rich family life therefore prepares a child for participation in other communities. Its ethical qualification serves to further the family's formative power allowing it to actively disclose biotic, psychic and analytical norms. This is to say that there is an intimacy present in the familial bond which is not present in other social bonds. This intimacy is reciprocated in the social aspect by involvement. Family members are more involved in each other's lives.

It was Dooyeweerd's analysis that idealism rejects the moral bond of the family because of its biotic foundation (1969, p. 272). Regardless, this biotic-moral bond exists

and is strong. Dooyeweerd argued that only marriage equaled it. This is significant. According to Dooyeweerd, the love-bond that exists between a married couple and between parent and child is such that its strength cannot be equaled by any other social entity. The existence of this bond, and its misappropriation in modern society, including the family, I theorize, is the key to the most strident anti-school theories. To understand this we need to contrast how the policies governing the modern institution of school differ from policies of other social entities in modern society in facilitating the expression of this bond.

People who have had positive experiences, and who have developed habits to facilitate those experiences desire to introduce these habits to others. At the same time, people are aware of inappropriate exposure to certain experiences. There is, of course, considerable disagreement in a pluralistic society about these experiences and the appropriateness of introducing them to others, especially children. However, while there is considerable disagreement, there is also considerable breadth in the variability of acceptable practices in modern society. Indeed, much of our society is organized so as to enable this variability to flourish. For example, a parent may be of the view that movies by a particular director are worthy of appreciation. But this particular director's movies typically include more mature themes. When would be an appropriate time for the parent to introduce his child to the movie and its themes? The benefit of modern society is that it has provided the social space necessary for a robust consideration of this problem. Modern society has developed entities such as a sophisticated rating system to help

potential movie-goers to reflect on whether or not a movie might be appropriate. Moreover, our society has developed a vast network of various movie reviewing outlets, all of which present different criteria for the quality of the film and function to help a person predict, to some degree, their experience of the film. What is more, the rating system does not absolutely prevent the parent from taking the child to see the movie. The policies of theaters is such that a parent's relationship to a child is recognized and honored; children of a certain age cannot see certain movies with the consent of parent or guardian. The policies of the theater reflect an appreciation for parental insight into the state of the child and their capacity to appropriately appreciate the film. The point of this example is to demonstrate that there exists in our society a capacity to develop a variety of social entities in which the parental decision-making authority is recognized and even respected. These social entities reflect a community which respects the sphere sovereignty, the unique rights and responsibility, of the family and the parent-child relationship.

This ethos is present in some educational entities in our society. Libraries and museums reflect a similar recognition of sphere sovereignty of the family. This recognition is actualized uniquely in each entity, but intuitively, we recognize that parents have considerable more input regarding a child's interaction with these entities. The common qualification in the ethical aspect of the family and voluntary associations including educational entities means that structurally these entities have the capacity to form a strong interlacement. Homeschooling success testifies to the power of this

interlacement. The fact that many libraries, museums and even newspapers have special days oriented toward homeschoolers, and are heavily supported by homeschoolers, is evidence that homeschooling parents actively seek robust relationships with their children by way of these entities, and as a result the familial bond is integrated and differentiated to a higher degree. When a family joins the zoo, and participates, as a family, in zoo visits, their familial bond is strengthened. Shared experiences strengthen social bonds. At the same time, the more a family visits the zoo together, the more capacity the parent develops for entrusting that child to explore the zoo without the family. The child might attend the zoo with friends, or they might with another family. The confidence the parents have that there is a shared knowledge amongst the children and the zoo regarding zoo visit policies and practices, the more confident the parents are giving their children more time to explore the zoo outside the immediate vicinity of the family. My point is that the more a social entity functions so as to enable parents to exercise their unique rights and responsibility to express their moral bond with their children the more parents come to trust social entities as places where their children can engage in activities in the context of different social relationships, like going to a movie or the zoo with friends.

The advocacy of homeschoolers can be understood as communicating that in contrast to other sectors of society, such as the arts (recall the movie example above), and even with other educational entities within our society, it would appear that the educational policies governing modern schools fail to reflect a comparable respect for parental insight in the state of the child and a capacity for parental involvement. The rest

of society functions as if it assumes that many parents have significant insight into educational entities which benefit their child. Contrastingly, it is argued, the policies of modern school system function as if parents do not much insight. Recall that structurally, an educational entity is one which is active in the Analytical aspect through the Ethical aspect. This includes the Formative, Sign, Social, Aesthetic, Economic and Juridical aspects. Normative educational functioning should result in actualizing the norms of these aspects. Previously I theorized that schools when functioning normatively should show evidence of appreciation, propriety and curation. The fact that the Juridical aspect immediately precedes the Ethical causes me to theorize that when a social educational entity, such as a school, library or museum is functioning normatively, a strong impulse to actualize the laws of justice will emerge. Schools today certainly exhibit an interest in justice. But is that interest normative? One would expect that the interest would extend out from the immediate beneficiaries, children, to their other social relationships, that is their family. Therefore, I think we should anticipate that a normative institution of school should contain a robust discussion on parental educational rights and responsibilities. Absent this discussion, an institution is susceptible to group-think. As such it appears that modern educational policy has failed to proportionally curate the wide variety of pedagogical methods and curricular components many parents recognize as having value.

The first insight some parents have is that religious education has value. It is not surprising to learn that Reformational Philosophy, a philosophy which seeks to be faithful to Christian creeds, supports this insight. However, Reformational Philosophy helps us to

better understand the claims advanced by some homeschool advocates that a neutral stance toward religion is evidence of educational dysfunction.

The claim that schools maintain a stance of neutrality toward religion can be understood as making the mistake that because educational entities are ethically qualified that they do not, structurally, have any rights or responsibilities regarding the pistic aspect. This is absolutely false. Educational entities are human entities. They provide structurally-diverse ways for human and humankind to socially actualize all the aspects. In other words, families and schools are both centers of human faithfulness or faithlessness, of fidelity or infidelity, of certainty or uncertainty. Family and School are passive in the Pistic aspect, which complicates their relationship to religion, but only some. The vast major of social entities are passive in the Pistic aspect. In everyday language we say that a business is committed to a course of action or that a state is committed to a policy of equality, but we must recognize that neither a business nor a state can perform an act of commitment. Rather, it is more precise to say these social entities function as powerful structures through which people socially actualize their commitments. A person may say that she is committed to social justice. She may actualize that commitment in a simple act of solidarity. But she cannot be everywhere at once. Her ability to directly actualize her commitment is limited. However, the state functions to enable that person to better actualize her commitments.

At the heart of the matter is the question why our modern public education system structurally expresses a commitment to pursue a stance of neutrality toward religion?

School expresses the commitment of society to have a neutral stance toward religion. The central question posed by many homeschool advocates can therefore be understood as saying: does this commitment to have a neutral position regarding religion represent the commitments of our society and more importantly, does it violate the rights and responsibilities of school?

Aspectual analysis leads one to conclude that the fact that modern public schools today completely eschew religious subject matter speaks to the presence of an anti-normative actualization. Schools, if functioning normatively, should exhibit appreciation, propriety and curation. The radical absence of religion points to a radical lack of appreciation for pistically-qualified entities. This impulse is uncharacteristic of an educational entity, for it fails to recognize that pistically-qualified entities have their own unique rights and responsibilities and can function normatively so as to contribute to shalom, to universal flourishing of humanity.

To understand the spotlight that Aspectual Analysis points on the severity of the neutral stance toward pistically-qualified entities which is part of our current educational policies, one can compare the normative functioning of different educational entities, for example libraries and museums. Both of these entities demonstrate what Aspectual Analysis seems as a more normative stance toward pistically-qualified entities. Walk into any public library today and one will find a section about religion. Regularly, public museums exhibit religious artifacts. These educational entities, according to my analysis using Aspectual theory, are more normatively functioning. They are not advancing a

religion, rather they structurally actualizing a commitment by society to exhibit appreciation, act with propriety and curate. Moreover, these entity can be understood as directly contributing to shalom by assisting children in fulfilling their inherited rights and responsibilities of the institutions into which they are born. If a person is born into a Christian family she inherits the rights and responsibilities of the institution of the Christian faith community. She will learn about her rights and responsibilities directly from other members of that faith community. But she can also her rights and responsibilities by the broader historical and cultural context in which that community exists. When a library provides educational material on the Christian community, it is functioning in a way which may help that girl in her rights and responsibilities. She may read books which affirm certain Christian commitments and practices, but she may also read books which may critically assess certain Muslim commitments and practices. From her interaction with these entities she may come to the conclusion that the Christian community is in need of reform. With increased access to educational artifacts, there is better hope in her ability to normatively actualize her rights and responsibilities.

A careful distinction needs to made, however, in the educational functioning of the family and of the school and how it can express its commitments. Recall that family is uniquely active in the Biotic and Psychic aspects. This distinction provides it with additional laws to actualize. The Biotic aspect governs laws of vitality, and they include things like eating. The Psychic aspect governs laws of sensation, and so includes acts which impact the nervous system. Both of these aspects anticipate the Analytical Aspect.

Therefore, according to Aspectual Analysis, by way of its structure the family entity has the capacity to normatively actualize its commitment to pistically-qualified entities which are active in these aspects. For example, one can argue that it is normative for a parent to educate their child actively in certain religious practices, such as taking communion, or enjoying a Love Feast (a communal meal), in which a person physically participates by eating food. Communion and Love Feasts can be understood as pistically-qualified acts, which are active in the Biotic and Psychic aspects. Because the family is also active in these aspects, a parent can normatively educate their child in these acts. In contrast, because the structure of a school is not active in the Biotic or Psychic aspects, it is not normative for a School to induce a child to participate in such activities, outside a parent's authority.

Dooyeweerd's theory is that many pistically-qualified social entities, such as Church, are institutional, meaning that one is born into them, replete with the rights and responsibilities of being associated with them (1986, p. 92). One develops in them, and depending on the nature of the commitment they require, one accepts those rights and responsibilities of the commitments or one rejects them. Recall again the theory advanced by some homeschool advocates that schools are bad for society because they fail to provide religious instruction. We can intuitively grasp why an adult who values a certain religion, who finds its creeds and practices crucial to a healthy existence would like their child to also appreciate these creeds and engage in these practices. We can intuitively grasp that if a father reads the Bible every day, he functions as if he thinks this habit has

benefit, and he would like his son or daughter to also experience this benefit and thus read the bible every day. If two parents go to church every Sunday, they would hope for their child to go to church every Sunday. If the parent believes that Christianity has significant power to shape history and culture, he would want a son or daughter to study this formative power. In other words, we would expect a parent to embrace educational entities which reflect his estimation of the significance of these subjects. Moreover, it is difficult to condemn the existence of this educational entity if society has deemed the activity of the adult within the boundaries of social acceptability. While one may not appreciate a certain families practice of reading a particular book every day, modern society is not prepared to say that doing so violates the norms of social intercourse, nor that it even violate the familial norms. That fact that modern society acknowledges such a wide array of these practices and yet they are not reflected in any way in schools would seem to reflect a structural deficiency in our educational policies, a failure to function with propriety, to appreciate their existence and thus to beneficially yield its curative formative power.

The complex interlacements which exist in social entities and in human relations can be difficult to navigate. It often can be very difficult to find what can be appreciated about certain human acts. It can be difficult to appropriately take that appreciation and craft something which articulates justly what is appreciable. However, it is my theory that educational entities are uniquely empowered and charged to carry out this task. The very practice, when done normatively, functions to widen and actualize analytical and pistic

laws. We can anticipate that when done normatively, a power to distinguish commitments will emerge. An educational entity which shrinks from this right and responsibility is dysfunctional.

The argument advanced by homeschool advocates, and advocates of confessional schools, that the stance of religious neutrality cannot be sustained is ultimately demonstrated to be true, that an educational entity which declares itself to be neutral regarding religion either fails to grasp the interlinkages present to society, or grasps it and seeks to actualize indifference, which is characterized by participation with a lack of critical awareness of their significance. This provides an entry point to discuss the accusation of conditioning. Prior to a discussion on conditioning, however, I will briefly discuss the claim that pedagogy is not a science.

Recall the argument that pedagogy is not really a science, and that teaching is not really a skill. Rather, it is argued, it is a ruse used to advance the power held by a select group of people. This accusation can be understood as an uncritical view of social and ethical relations. In other words, an assumption that norms located in the social and ethical aspect are rather basic, and even straightforwardly logical. We can see reflections of this view in books which tout that all one really needs to know about interpersonal relations one learned by age 5 or by watching backyard creatures frolic. The complexity of society and ethical relationships however refute this view. Recall that an educational entity, such as textbook or school, is ethically-qualified. Moreover, schools are socially-typified. They are associations of people engaged in social intercourse. The destination of

that social intercourse is to actualize a proportional appreciation for entities. This is a complex question of Ethics. How does one go about that activity? How does one actualize another person's appreciation for something without violating moral norms? The Reformational Philosophical view is that while we may have some intuitive sense of how to go about it, gained from our experiences, the intuitive sense is how things function normatively is not sufficient to fully disclose the principles. Experience and intuition aids us in the beginning of our journey of exploration, but ultimately, humans have the capacity to theorize. Some insights gained by theorizing have value. Some demonstrate that they can be reintegrated into our experience and contribute to shalom. Science is the process of locating principles and reintegrating them into experiences. Pedagogy is an ethical science. What homeschool advocates who argue that children have great capacity for self-directed learning and for a rich environment but who also dismiss pedagogy as a science fail to realize is that they themselves have been functioning pedagogically, and that their activity has been scientific. Their activity may not have had all the trappings associated with "hard" scientific activity, yet it is still scientific. It demonstrates the presence of theory which was reintegrated. It was pedagogical science.

My sense of this criticism is that it is trying to articulate the fact that pedagogy should not be understood as a branch of psychology, as it often is. Psychology is theoretical activity focused on the norms of the psychic aspect. Psychology has value, but educational entities are not psychically-qualified. According to Reformational Philosophy, animals are psychically-qualified. Humans, on the other hand are not

qualified by any aspect. They are active in the Psychic aspect, and so theoretically, some insight into ethical norms can be analogously arrived at by way of study of the norms of the Psychic aspect, but the kind of experimental activity that occurs in the scientific endeavor is likely not appropriate for the school. True educational experimentation requires significant ethical checks and balances. The history of homeschool advocacy demonstrates frustration that schools appear to be used for psychological experiments, often without parental consent or even notification. Moreover, homeschool advocates express dismay that society was encouraged to uncritically accept this arrangement. This leads us to the accusation that schools are centers of conditioning.

A major claim advanced by homeschool advocates is that schools are centers of behavioral conditioning. This claim also relates to the accusation that schools are engaged in social engineering. Both of these claims coincide with my assessment regarding the use of principles arrived at by way of psychology. Conditioning signifies a stimulus-response learning relationship. An uncritical view outright rejects this activity, while a more critical view recognizes that some degree of conditioning is practiced throughout human society, in the home, in the workplace, and in the school. It exists because humans are active in the Psychic aspect and in the Analytical aspect and as a result, the laws in these aspects can be actualized. The laws of the Quantitative through the Psychic aspect, however, are different from the laws of the Analytical through the Pistic. The laws of the Quantitative through the Psychic aspect are more deterministic, while the laws from the Analytical through the Pistic are more normative. What is meant by deterministic is

that the distinction between correctly enacting or incorrectly enacting those laws is clear, and the positive and negative result are clear. For example, an error in the process of mathematical addition results in an error of the mathematical sum. This is because the laws of addition are deterministic. One might say mathematical laws exhibit what feels like a strong cause and effect relationship. This effect of violating a deterministic law are often experienced relatively quickly. For example, if I touch a hot stove, I immediately feel the burning sensation. The experience of touching the hot stove was determined by the laws of the Psychic aspect, which governs senses, including my nervous system. In contrast, the normative laws of the Analytical through the Pistic aspect demonstrate more flexibility to the conditions of their actualization. Their relationships are such that they are typically much more interlinked and therefore they exhibit more of a correlation relationship, in contrast to a causation relationship. One can violate a law of logic and not immediately experience the repercussions. Often the negative impact to fail to enact some normative law is softened by the success to enact another. For example, politeness, a social norm, may work to counteract and reduce the negative consequences of a grammatical error, a law governed by the Sign, or Lingual, aspect. Also, in the normative aspects, there is typically a greater delay in experiencing the positive and/or negative consequences of one's anti-normative actions. The distinction between deterministic and normative laws helps to explain the aversion to excessive conditioning. Excessive conditioning develops an expectation of a tight feedback loop, one which is characterized as cause and effect. However, the reality of human existence and especially of social

relationship is more normative, more characterized by contingency. This is to say, there is frequently not a tight feedback loop. Very often it is not at all clear why someone responded to us a particular way. Was it something I said? Or was there something else going on with the person and I happened to catch them at an inopportune moment? Normative social relations requires a person to develop complex social strategies. The best way to do this, it is argued, is by a wide variety of social interactions. In contrast, the repetition of the same social interaction over the course of weeks and even years, is theorized to stunt one's capacity to develop more robust strategies for social interaction. In my estimation, this theory rings true. However, it must be noted that conditioning can exist as part of normative human relationships. In fact, because the Family and Home are active in the Psychic aspect, the very structure of a familial relationship will exhibit conditioning. Intuitively, I recognize this in my experiences. A couple condition each other into habits. This reality increases the necessity for family members to develop strong social relationships outside the home, not just for their children, but also for adults.

The success homeschoolers have experienced is sufficient evidence to support the claims of advocates such as Holt, Gatto, the Colfaxes and the Moores that children do not suffer intellectually or socially from self-directed learning in a resource rich home environment. While some educational theorists express concern that the practice would impede children's academic and social development, evidence suggests otherwise. Even the presence of a strong religious identity does not appear to negatively impact the benefits. Many homeschoolers participate in a wide range of learning activities with

people other than family members and are engaged in the community. Academically, homeschoolers are on par with or may even surpass their conventional school counterparts (Warner, 1999; Ray, 2004; Cogan, 2010). Robert Kunzman's (2009) *Write These Laws on Your Children* and Joseph Murphy's (2012) *Homeschooling in America* are two recent examples of educational scholarship which readily acknowledge that homeschooling is complex and place value on the more active role parents are taking in their children's education. What both men discover is a community growing in diversity and rooted in more than one identity. Kunzman's work is ethnographic study of six "Conservative Christian" homeschooling families across America. Through visits to the homes and interviews with parents and children he seeks to engage homeschoolers in critical dialogue. In addition, Kunzman interviews several high profile advocates. Through observation and interviews, Kunzman engages homeschoolers, often playing the devil's advocate. Throughout the study, he regularly acknowledges his ability to sympathize with the desire parents express to give their children what is best. While there are still issues of the state's interest in education and regulation, Kunzman concludes that homeschooling falls within the confines of reasonable disagreement concerning educational practice that one can anticipate would exist in a healthy pluralistic society.

In this chapter, I have attempted to respond to some of the claims made by homeschool advocates that schools are dehumanizing and are therefore bad for children and bad for society. Schools are analyzed not to be humanistic, but to be dysfunctional in their social functioning, failing to appreciate diverse pedagogies and degrees of parental

involvement. I affirmed the claim that children possess great potential for self-directed learning in a rich environment. I also affirm that the absence of religious training functions to provide a limited view of community. However, I refute the claim that pedagogy is not a science and that conditioning is an inherently ant-normative educational activity.

CHAPTER VI

APPRECIATING EDUCATORS

The homeschool rejection of the school can be understood as a response to modern educational policies which fail to appreciate the development power inherent in the integrated experience of normative family life, and therefore fail to proportionally curate that power in educational policies. However, the homeschool advocate who outright rejects the possibility of schools fails to grasp the structural significance of society and how pluralism contributes to the shalom of humankind. This lack of appreciation is equally dehumanizing and points to educational dysfunction. In this chapter I will explain how society functions to help its members normatively actualize identities. Ultimately, the identity of educator is distinct from that of a parent. An inability to appreciate the distinctive role of educator signifies a poor actualization of the norms of educational entity. Contrastingly, a parent who can recognize the role of educator in others will likely be a better educator.

On an intuitive level, one can grasp that the claim that schools are evidence of human dysfunction fails to recognize the very human impulse to serve, to assist others. Moreover, it fails to recognize the capacity some people have to serve their neighbor by way of their particular skill, their capacity to locate something appreciable in an entity and to appropriately curate. Intuitively, we recognize that some people excel at this skill.

This skill involves a keen sense of worth. This keen sense of worth reflects a person's commitments. A person's commitments, just like their physicality, their gender, their history and culture, their language, their social relations, their rights and responsibilities, their loves, are radically interlaced in a person. We can even say they are that person. A person's identity is multi-aspectual. The interlacements of a particular person form the totality that is that person. In everyday experience, these interlacements are experienced as a unity. Only in theoretical thought can they be set asunder and examined with some sense of distinction. This is important for it helps us to explore the multiple identities a person has and many roles a person fills.

It is my experience that some people are educators, that is to say some people identify as a person who seeks to actualize the norms of education. In addition, other people also identify them as a person seeking to actualize the norms of education. I am not saying that this identity expresses them totally. It does not. Instead I am saying that every person has some capacity to actualize this identity, and some, because the structure of their interlacement, do so. Nor am I saying that some people have more inherent knowledge regarding normative and anti-normative actualization. Rather, the Reformational Philosophical view is that God created humans in community, and that the benefits of community is that one receives knowledge concerning actualizing norms by way of others. To be human is to be active in the social aspect, and so part of actualizing one's identity is having others interact with you in that role. In other words, it is the goal, and it is normative, to seek to actualize one's different identities such that others

recognize and validate one's actualization. I may say "I'm an educator!", but the benefit of being in community is that others call me an educator. The benefits of community, of social intercourse, includes the validation of my actualizations. Of course, I may be a poor educator, someone who anti-normatively actualized an educational entity. The benefits of community, of this social process, however, is feedback as to my actualization of the norms of the identity I am attempting to actualize. With the aid of feedback from my neighbors I can work to better actualize normatively.

Of course, the feedback given me by my neighbors reflects their own sense of what constitutes normative actualization. I might fundamentally disagree with my neighbor about this standard. The more unified a culture, the more likely my neighbor and I will have much in common regarding the standard. There are benefits and drawbacks to this situation. The benefit is that I will quickly be able to locate the boundaries of this standard. The drawback is that if I wish to experiment in my actualizations, and touch upon these boundaries, I will likely draw either high praise or condemnation. It is more likely I will receive consistent feedback from the majority of the members of society. In contrast, in a pluralistic society, there is greater opportunity for me to experience a wider range of responses from others. The result is that I may develop an increasingly nuanced sense of the norms of the identity I am attempting to actualize.

How do I know if I am an educator? I need relationships with others who share my commitment to actualizing educational norms. In our pluralistic society there exists a wide variety of educational entities. The very existence of this variety means that

educational actualization is not monolithic. Rather, it is very diverse. The fact that our society publicly recognizes and appreciates the activity of teachers and the social entity which they have constructed to better carry out their commitments should raise serious questions in a homeschool advocate about their claims that these structures are comprehensively dysfunctional. What is more likely is that they express nuanced commitments. These commitments need to be challenged. Different challenges occur at different levels in communities. The reality of society is that the more one seeks to be in community with others, the more likely one will better understand the nuances of one's own commitments.

Ethically-qualified social entities, what Dooyeweerd called Voluntary Associations and Natural Communities, like families, uniquely reflect the commitments present in society. All human entities do, but ethically-qualified entities have unique rights and responsibilities in the way they do so. Commitments are pistically-qualified. They are governed by the laws of fidelity and faithfulness. Commitments have boundaries, in which certain entities are deemed outside the bounds of the commitment. Ethically-qualified social entities bring into focus the boundaries of the commitments present in a society. The more pluralistic a society, the more diverse its commitments and their expressions. The more pluralistic a society, the more variability will exist in expressions of these boundaries. The relationship between the ethical and the pistic aspects function to create a third space between love and hate, a space in which uncertainty in commitments can exist. The more pluralistic a society, the more

opportunity exists for one to interact with others whose commitments are similar and those whose commitments are different. However, the benefit of a pluralistic society is increased opportunities for interaction between differing commitments and avenues to explore and experiment with new expressions of commitments. The structure of an educational entity is such that it is uniquely empowered with the right and responsibilities to appreciate these boundaries and to appropriately curate them. A Christian therefore can interact with a humanist and as a result may come to appreciate humanist commitment boundaries. Any humanist, however, with a strident stance against particularistically-qualified entities raises questions about his or her willingness to receive certain feedback regarding their own actualizations of human relations. This is understandable; some feedback is difficult to comprehend. But it is also evidence of anti-normative commitment to a particular actualization of humanity. It is strident in its certainty about the destiny of humankind, and it punishes those who live with different forms of certainty and doubt. This is not to say that secular humanists are unique in this regard. At the same time a biblicist orientation also reflects an unwillingness to engage in broader discussion regarding the actualization of humanity.

One of the claims made by some homeschool advocates who identify as Christian is that biblical text dictates the expression of educational relations. It is argued that the bible is clear that parents have responsibility to direct their children's education and nowhere throughout the bible is the reader presented with a positive expression of education occurring outside the home. While this reading of the bible can easily be

challenged with several different histories contained with the bible, the issue is the impulse which generates this claim. This claim exhibits a biblicist hermeneutic which ultimately fails to recognize that the bible is not a guidebook for acceptable forms. Many homeschool advocates who identify as Christian exhibit what Clouser (2006) calls the "encyclopedic assumption", which is "the view that sacred scripture (or theology derived from it) contains inspired and thus infallibly true statements about virtually every conceivable subject matter. It is this assumption and its consequences that truly typify fundamentalist thinking" (p. 111). Reformational Philosophy rejects this view, and instead understands the bible to be a pistically-qualified entity which functions to express the structure of the commitments of a particular community, the Christian community. The claim that parents who ascribe to the Christian faith must, in order to demonstrate their commitment to the faith, directly provide the full range of educational services for a child functions to create an indicator, a shibboleth, which serves to identify those who are in the community. However, this indicator of the Christian faith deserved to be challenged. This is to say, that the homeschool advocate's claim that the Christian faith requires parents to directly educate their children erects barriers to a broader vision of community, a vision which transcends history and culture and circumstances. Instead, Reformational Philosophy argues that the biblical text provides a faithful vision of true community. It involves Christ sustaining creation in such a way that pluralism happens and should be celebrated. While the structure sustaining the rights and responsibility of the familial educational relationship are timeless, the human expression of these rights

and responsibilities reflect history and culture and civilization. Strauss (2009), writes, "we cannot biblicistically consider any particular positive form of the differentiated expression of the meaning of the central commandment of love as valid *per se* for all times" (p. 295). To make the claims that the particular practices presented in the biblical text are the form of today is to radically misunderstand the Christian faith and the purpose the Bible. Homeschool advocates who condemn parents who do not directly provide certain kinds of instruction to their children should resist this temptation to judge, for the act of schooling, of sending one's child outside the home to be taught by a non-family member, can express more than one commitment. It may very well express a lack of commitment to fulfill parental rights and responsibilities. However, it may also be evidence of a strong commitment to educate a child. It may very well be evidence that an adult recognizes that their child needs more than what the parent can directly provide. In that sense, the parent is demonstrating a deep appreciation for his or her own abilities. This appreciation for his or her own abilities then evokes the curative impulse and as a result the parent seeks to find an appropriate match for the child. This should be honored, and a society which develops social structures to serve this parent should be understood as seeking shalom.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

On May 30, 2013, the legal endeavor that North Carolinians for Home Education (NCHE) began in the fall of 2012 was successful. Governor Pat McCrory enacted Senate Bill 189, which redefined the term “home school” in North Carolina state law. This law sought to clarify the rights and responsibilities of parents engaged in home education. It provided them with additional latitude to developing educational relationships with others:

The intent in the wording of the new law is that the parent, legal guardian or member of the household provides at least some of the instruction, but that the homeschool instruction is not limited to only them. They may also go outside of the home for additional instruction. The old law was interpreted to require parents to provide all fundamental (first) instruction in core subjects (language arts, math, science and social studies). The new law allows parents to find additional sources of instruction for all subjects. This will allow grandparents to provide instruction, learning specialists to instruct homeschool students with severe learning disabilities, math tutors to provide fundamental calculus instruction, etc. (Mason, 2013)

This bill passed both the House and Senate unanimously. Nearly 30 years ago, homeschooling was not legally recognized in North Carolina, and the legislation to recognize it was fiercely contested. In contrast, the redefinition had bi-partisan support signifying a shift in education policy. That shift can be understood as one which further recognizes the value to children when families are encouraged to form relationships with

others to provide a wide variety of educational experiences for their children.

Interestingly, most active contesting the new law was a small, but vocal, group of North Carolina homeschoolers. At the root of their argument was the notion that if empowered to delegate their educational responsibility parents would diminish their educational power, and would ultimately result in less humanizing educational experiences for children. The fact that these notions failed to yield persuasive arguments gives me hope that homeschoolers will be able to resolve some of conflicting notions within the movement concerning educators and schools and instead continue to be part of the larger education reform movement.

In this study I explored the claims advanced by some homeschoolers that schools are dehumanizing and are not healthy for children and for society. In contrast, the home, and the parent-child relationship, is ideally suited to education, and reflects a divine design. Many, but not all, who advance this view, identify as evangelical Christian, and who claim a Christian worldview as the basis for this view. In order to investigate these claims, I sought to employ a philosophical framework which is rooted in the Christian worldview, according to the Reformed tradition. I first theorized the modal structure of educational entities, using the theory of aspects central to a school of philosophy known as Reformational Philosophy. I then analyzed the relationships of home, homeschool and school to arrive at a stance toward homeschoolers' claims which is critical, but also seeks to understand their meaning.

Aspectual analysis leads me to the conclusion that the modern homeschool movement signals the presence of dysfunction in modern society's conception of education of children, which includes its institutions. At the structural level, this dysfunction means a lack of appreciation, appropriation and curation regarding the biotic-ethical bond that exists between people, and which is strongest in the family social unit. This bond is expressed by many family members as a deep longing to be actively involved in the shaping of the commitments of one's children. Social entities which fail to develop the variability to accommodate this bond may indicate an inability to resolve the difference in the liberty and freedom expressed in historical and culturally-founded social entities, such as the State, with naturally communities, such as the Family. In other words, the tendency of modern society is either likely to reduce the State to an biotically-founded entity, resulting in states among family or ethnic lines, for example, Tribalism, or gravitate toward a complete disregard of normative biotic relations, and instead advance a view in which members of society are devoid of family, or inherited distinctiveness. Educationally, either scenario would mean a loss of access to knowledge, knowledge that comes from being "within", that is part of community with highly articulated shared commitments, and knowledge that comes from being on the "outside looking in", of the human experience of living in a highly differentiated, pluralistic society.

Aspectual Analysis also leads me to the conclusion that the unequivocal rejection of educational authority outside the family social entity by homeschoolers in modern society is indicative of a failure to do justice to the sphere sovereignty of the multiple

relationships which emerge in an highly differentiated society. In a highly differentiated society, members benefit from delegating particular work to particularly skilled persons. There is no reason I can discern to support the view that this differentiation should be discouraged or that it is wrong to benefit from some of the arrangements which inevitable would emerge. This is not to say that all these arrangements will be of equal value. Each will need to be critically assessed, to see to what degree positive integration can be achieved. But to preclude the possibility that mutually beneficial arrangements can be achieved would seem to do injustice to the inherent value others possess and the contribution they can uniquely make to others. This failure to do justice to these potential contributions threatens shalom. This failure points to an ideology which cannot resolve the fact that great variability exists within the human experience, and that to be human means to have the capacity to actualize different expressions of the educative power one possesses but also the presence of a potential to lack certain capacity. In other words, to be human is to inherit different capacities, which limit us but which also empower us. One person may be equipped with a make-up which empowers him or her to be a great educator. Another may not. Being a parent does not mean that one is equipped with the temperament or skills to be a great educator. Appreciating that fact about people allows one to better analyze what educational experience is best for one's children.

Together, my initial inquiry signifies that modern society manifests dysfunctional views of educational power which threatens shalom. This dysfunction seems part of modern culture. The worldview shaping modern culture impacts those who identify as

Christian as well as those who do not. It warrants further inquiry. Dooyeweerd (2003)

writes:

We are children of this culture; it has borne, bred and molded us. By and large, those living in the modern age have not reckoned with western culture's religious ground-motives and their origin. Even in Christian circles these have been taken too lightly. Unfortunately, however, the lack of critical reflection on the religious foundations of cultural development is one the deepest causes for estrangement among the different spiritual currents confronting each other in our cultural setting. It is essential for the welfare of contemporary culture that the religious roots of its various streams be uncovered and explored. (p. 15)

Christian Smith in *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want* (2000) writes:

Most Americans, including evangelicals, make a distinction between the "sacred" role of families and religion, and the complementary, "secular" role of public schools. In fact, evangelicals seem to hold an exaggerated version of the concept that family is a particularly sacred space, distinguished by direct, interpersonal and normatively governed relations. (p. 140)

It is my hope that this study will serve to advance an understanding of the source of this distinction, and even "exaggeration", present in American society.

In his sequel to *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, entitled *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*, historian Mark Noll (2011) advocates that some goals for evangelical Christian scholarship, including:

- to promote thoughtful Christian reflection that comes from theology based on the whole of Scripture and infused with insights from Christian tradition, rather than marred by sloganeering and proof texting;
- to promote thoughtful approaches to the problems of life that are heavy on analysis but light on ideology and simplifications

- to promote effective communication in forms appropriate both to Christian communities and modern pluralistic culture, instead of resorting to demagoguery and mindless grandstanding; and
- to promote broad engagement with the world that includes knowledgeable awareness of science, balanced approaches to politics, and active support for the arts, instead of reacting with fear and suspicion to the enterprise of intellectual culture. (p. 167).

Finally, this inquiry was an experiment in scholarship using the theory of Modal Aspects developed by Herman Dooyeweerd and method of Aspectual Analysis. It was my first major attempt. The newness of the experience and the uniqueness of the philosophy required a less than typical study. It was my view that the experiment required weaving together multiple elements, including stories highlighting the issues of this study, which I attempted by talking about specific North Carolina events of which I had familiarity, the various writings of advocates which helped form the current homeschooling ethos, and finally a highly abstract items, starting with the sphere sovereignty of educational entities and attempting to expand on some conception of inherent power. Reflecting on the experience, I am struck by how the theory and method convey complexity concerning relations. While I believe the insights of the Reformational Philosophical school of thought are fascinating and powerful, I am struck by how difficult the theory and method are for me to employ. They have exhausted me and I am not confident my inquiry did justice to them or my subject. The general theory of Aspects provides a framework which resonates with my intuitive sense of reality. I think the framework represents reality well. The difficulty lies, I believe, in grasping and articulating laws regarding non-deterministic aspects, aspects “above” the Psychic aspect. For example, I theorized that

educational entities are guided by the Ethical aspect, that is to say they they are guided by the laws of “love”. But what are the laws of love? My sense that Appreciation is a kind of law of love makes some sense, but it is a long way from there to educational policies in a pluralistic society. The plasticity of laws increases as one moves “up” the aspectual order, and so the Pistic and and the Ethical aspects are the most plastic, which is to say they are the most variable in their actualization, in the form that they take. Again, I find this explanation reasonable, and one which corresponds to my experiences. Yet, at the same time, I wish they were less plastic, that is, that they were like the laws of physics and could be articulated so concisely and generate simple cause and effect relations. I also theorized that homeschooling signifies a unique encapsis of the family social unity and the educational power of parents and that this encapsis can be anti-normative in that it precludes other kinds of educational encapsulations. I think this insight has some value, but deployment of the argument doesn't strike me as persuasive. This is to say that while Reformational Philosophy may be powerful, my first attempt at employing it seems rather imprecise and impractical. It feels like I've used a lot of words to ultimately arrive at very little transformation. Although, perhaps this is the point. You will recall in the introduction that some historians have criticized evangelical Christianity for being too populist, too oriented toward reaction and revolution. In contrast, they argue, what is required is something more deliberate, more intentional, and that is why they encourage the influence of the Reformed tradition. Perhaps that ethos is woven into the very theory of Aspects and the method of Aspectual Analysis, an ethos of slowing down, or being

constrained to go slow and of carefully considering the many-sidedness of things. That notion seems to be conveyed in even the language of the methodology, in the discussion of Biotic and Psychological, Ethical and Pistic aspects, of encapsulation and differentiation. Ultimately, it would be best to move through that talk, and to concentrate more on norms which emerge from their relations. In that case, I fear that this inquiry was little more than an exercise, and that this inquiry should have focused more on how it is that the educational norms I theorized, that of appreciation, appropriateness and curation, are reflected in the nuances of religious commitment of homeschoolers and their views of the state and its relation to education. But perhaps what I am experiencing is the inherent frustration of trying to connect the most transcendent of concepts with the most particular of instances; there are no easy answers. Aspectual Theory would appear to assist in theorizing, but only at the start. After that, it is up to the theorist to move past generalizations; that is difficult work. It is science and art. Ultimately, the experience of interacting with Aspectual Theory has generated in me a renewed wonder at the dynamism of relations. It is inspiring. It has helped renew my hope.

I do hope that this study will aid educational theorists. The practice of homeschooling presents new insight into the learning and development of children. Central to homeschooling is the claim that children greatly benefit from a less structured environment with sufficient time for self-directed exploration and discovery. Moreover, the practice of homeschooling suggests that cognitive development is related to sustained

presence in an environment which more fully integrates human relationships by way of a strong moral bond.

It is also my hope that this study will aid those who craft educational policy. Currently, the American public education system is being challenged by multiple calls for reform. My analysis leads me to advocate for a public educational policies which seek to acknowledge and provide equal support for the rich variety of method and curriculums which exist. I believe an educational policy characterized by methodological and confessional pluralism (Glenn, 2000; Itzkoff, 1969; Marty & Moore, 2000; McCarthy, Oppenwal, Peterson & Spyman, 1981; Thiessen, 1993) would result in schools functioning more as social structures which can mediate (Berger & Neuhas, 1996; Couto, 1999; Johnson, 2001) between complex relations and more justly represent society, including the insights garnered by parents regarding the best educational experience for their child. There is not standard for what it means to be educated, which raises serious difficulty in identifying educational neglect. Given the breadth of these methods and curriculum, as well as insight into the Ethical qualification and Formative foundation of educational entities, it would seem that the delimiter for theories regarding educational neglect should be Psychic aspect, which governs senses, and in which physical abuse can be more clearly identified. I'd like to see more study in this area.

Finally, it is my hope that this study will benefit the homeschool community. The homeschool community is comprised of passionate people who have demonstrated that they are capable of sacrifice. It is my view that their sacrifice is not in any way

diminished by sharing the responsibility to raise the next generation with those who are professional educators, a vocation which many of their neighbors embrace. Moreover, there is no shame in pursuing the assistance of someone outside the home in the fulfillment of the parental responsibility. In fact, there may be great wisdom and humility behind this decision. There is broad consensus that it is the inherent right of children to receive a quality education. Modern society demonstrates a serious commitment to this reality. Parents also have inherent rights in shaping a child's education, and have also demonstrated significant commitment to safeguard the next generation. Ultimately, the Christian commitment is to love God and neighbor. Christians can have great hope that God has empowered humanity to appreciate, appropriate and curate justly. In the introduction I introduced the concept of shalom, of human flourishing. Wolterstorff (2013) reminds us:

...shalom is intimately connected with the love for one's neighbors that Jesus enjoins on us. To love one's neighbor as one loves oneself is to seek the shalom of one's neighbors as one seeks one's own shalom. It is to seek the flourishing of the human community. And it is because shalom incorporates justice that biblical love incorporates justice. Shalom goes beyond justice. But shalom never falls short of justice. That's why it is that well-formed care never falls short of justice. (p. 117)

In the pursuit of love for God and neighbor, we should seek to do justice to the power others possess and their capacity to do good. In seeking to do so, we express our hope for the shalom of creation.

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