Man as Wolf

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Uncover your dogma of affluences

What do you desire- love of self, or love of technology?

Warning: if you love both, there is destruction.

If you love one rather than the other, there is destruction.

Life as a human is not so different than life as a sheep or wolf.

Let's expose the true nature of both—there is destruction.

What is the meaning of life: full of justice, or full of egoism?

Do you see the moon, or do you see m-o-o-n?

By the end, you know where I'm Fromm

The poem "Man as Wolf" introduces the ethical tensions that shape how I understand teaching and learning. In the poem, I question whether human desire is rooted in justice or egoism, and whether devotion to affluence, technology, or self ultimately leads to growth or destruction. Drawing on the phrase "you know where I'm Fromm," I intentionally reference Erich Fromm's critique of modern society, where systems often value possession, efficiency, and control over humanity and care. These tensions are not abstract to me—they mirror the daily decisions classrooms make about what and who we value.

Teaching, for me, begins inside this tension. Education can reproduce systems of domination and egoism, or it can become a space where justice, dignity, and responsibility are deliberately cultivated. This belief grounds my teaching philosophy and shapes how I design learning environments, choose instructional approaches, and respond to students as human

beings rather than objects of compliance. Students learn when classrooms acknowledge the harm they carry into the room. Many students—particularly Black and Brown students—arrive at school isolated by social, racial, and economic forces beyond their control. They come shaped by racialized violence, economic insecurity, surveillance, loss, displacement, and daily reminders that their lives are undervalued. According to Love (2019), approximately 62 percent of children come to school each day having experienced some form of trauma. For these students, learning cannot begin with compliance or performance demands; it must begin with safety, recognition, and care. Students learn when justice, not control, shapes classroom relationships. When expectations are grounded in dignity rather than domination, students are more willing to engage, take intellectual risks, and trust the learning process.

Restoration requires relationships rooted in respect, consistency, and accountability, not fear or punishment. Students learn when their lived experiences are treated as knowledge rather than distractions. For Black and Brown students especially, learning accelerates when their languages, cultures, histories, and ways of knowing are affirmed rather than erased. Recovery is not a return to a neutral state—it is the creation of something new, where students reclaim agency, voice, and purpose through learning. In this way, learning is not simply the acquisition of skills or content. It is an act of repair. It is the process through which students reconnect to themselves, to one another, and to the possibility that education can serve life rather than diminish it.

Spring (2025) reminds us that much of Western education history operated under the belief that conquering and assimilating Indigenous, African, and Asian peoples was a moral good. Framed as efforts to “save” populations from so-called “backward” or “savage” cultures and “pagan” or heathen religions, European and later American colonizers often believed they

were acting benevolently, even as they destroyed languages, cultures, and entire ways of being. I am intentional about separating the systems that harm my students from the false belief that their lives reflect a deficit. As Hammond (2015) makes clear, poverty is not a culture; it is a condition shaped by structural inequities. Culture refers to shared ways of making meaning and learning, while poverty reflects systemic barriers that produce chronic stress and trauma.

As Settlage et al. (2017) argue in *Teaching Science to Every Child*, effective science instruction begins by using culture as a starting point rather than a barrier to overcome. Science itself functions as a culture, with its own practices, ways of communicating, and methods for making meaning. In this way, my goal as a science educator—whether through an ambitious middle school moon-base design challenge or other inquiry-driven experiences—is to generate authentic opportunities for students to engage in scientific practices, develop explanations of phenomena grounded in disciplinary core ideas, and connect those explanations to crosscutting concepts. When students design, test, revise, and justify solutions within a meaningful context, such as sustaining human life on the moon, they are not merely completing an activity; they are participating in the culture of science. This approach aligns with my belief that learning is an act of restoration—one that positions students' cultural knowledge, lived experiences, and ways of thinking as assets, while inviting them into rigorous scientific sensemaking rather than compliance-driven task completion.

I used to think learning was something that happened after students were ready—after they were calm, focused, and compliant. I now understand that learning is often what makes healing possible. Identity and joy are my starting points, not rewards to be earned after students prove themselves worthy of rigor. In my classroom, this means designing learning experiences where students see themselves as knowledge makers, where science is connected to place,

purpose, and possibility, and where rigor is built through belonging rather than control. It means holding students with care while inviting them into challenging, meaningful work. Teaching, for me, is not about saving students or managing behavior—it is about refusing to reproduce harm and choosing, daily, to cultivate dignity, curiosity, and life through learning.

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